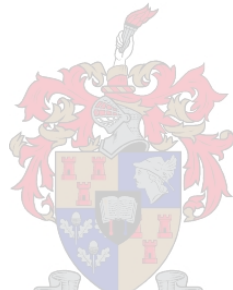


**PERI-URBAN AND RURAL DEBATE ON SUSTAINABILITY OF COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

**By**

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**Research assignment submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Master's degree in Theology (MTh): Community Development at Stellenbosch  
University**



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**8 YW'a VYf'2014**

### Declaration

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## **Abstract**

The basic purpose of the current study was to provide a means by which both peri-urban and rural communities could promote sustainability in their communities. The research was, hence, undertaken with the above-mentioned social purpose in mind, which was to promote people's well-being through applying measures that promote social justice and human empowerment. Such research was necessary in respect of the church's involvement in terms of applying ethical and socially transformative measures, particularly within the South African context, with its increasing levels of unemployment, corruption, poverty, vandalism, and violent riots.

The research attempted to provide communities, churches and development agents with measures that they could apply to sustain community development. The study took the form of reviewing literature, and then of proposing a paradigm shift affirming freedom and participation as the means by which sustainable outcomes can be achieved. Ideally, such a shift could contribute to all involved becoming accountable for their actions, due to the fact that the whole community is then likely to identify itself with the development concerned. The church's role in the shift would involve responding to the call to be the voice and the hand that reveals the whole counsel of God, which it would be able to do by making use of the contemporary measures put in place for promoting people's well-being.

The current study affirms that the agents, the government structures and the church should work together, although they have different agendas. The agenda of the church is for the glory of God and for the well-being of the people of God, and that of the government and other agents is the provision of infrastructure, in terms of goods and services. The desire for such cooperation lies in the awareness that, if anything goes wrong, we all suffer. Therefore, it is only right that we should all be stewards of what we have as a community, as the role-players in a government, and as a church. However, to achieve all the above, we all need to be empowered, one by the other, so that we are able to complement one another's efforts, by working in harmony with one another. Such mutual empowerment is to be done in the name of bringing about the well-being of all, and the promotion of a communal form of participation that encourages poverty alleviation and human dignity.

This study is based on an analysis of the church, as well as of the nature of community development that has, as its essence, a reliance on the redemptive act of God, which affirms people's dignity and sense of self-worth. Such a conceptualisation agrees with the proposed paradigm shift that suggests freedom and participation as being the key principles of our development.

## Opsomming

Die hoofdoel van die onderhawige studie was om 'n metode te voorsien waarop buitestedelike en landelike gemeenskappe hul eie volhoubaarheid kan bevorder. Dus is die navorsing onderneem met die oog daarop om mense se welstand te verbeter deur maatreëls aan te wend wat maatskaplike geregtigheid en bemagtiging aanmoedig. Die navorsing was bepaald nodig wat betref die kerk se betrokkenheid by die toepassing van etiese en maatskaplike transformasiemaatreëls, veral in Suid-Afrika, wat gebuk gaan onder toenemende vlakke van werkloosheid, korrupsie, armoede, vandalisme en gewelddadige protes.

Die navorsing het gemeenskappe, kerke en ontwikkelingsagente probeer toerus met maatreëls waarmee hulle gemeenskapsontwikkeling kan ondersteun. Die studie bestaan eerstens uit 'n literatuuroorsig, na aanleiding waarvan 'n paradigmaskuif voorgestel word wat vryheid en deelname voorhou as instrumente om volhoubare uitkomst te bereik. Ideaal beskou, behoort so 'n verskuiwing daartoe by te dra dat alle betrokkenes aanspreeklikheid vir hul optrede aanvaar, aangesien die hele gemeenskap hulle dan waarskynlik met die tersaaklike ontwikkeling sal kan vereenselwig. Die kerk se rol in hierdie verskuiwing sal wees om te reageer op die oproep om die stem en hand te wees wat God se volmaakte plan onthul. Dít sal die kerk bereik deur gebruik te maak van bestaande eietydse maatreëls om mense se welstand te bevorder.

Die studie bevestig dat agente, staatstrukture en die kerk behoort saam te werk, selfs al verskil hul agendas. Die kerk se agenda is die verheerliking van God en die welstand van die mense van God; die regering en ander agente s'n is die voorsiening van infrastruktuur wat betref goedere en dienste. Die belang van sodanige samewerking lê in die besef dat indien enigiets sou skeefloop, almal swaarkry. Daarom is dit niks minder as reg nie dat almal rentmeesters sal wees van wat hulle as 'n gemeenskap, as rolspelers in die regering én as 'n kerk het. Om ál bogenoemde te bereik, moet almal egter bemagtig word – die een deur die ander – sodat hulle mekaar se pogings kan aanvul deur in eensgesindheid saam te werk. Sulke onderlinge bemagtiging behoort te geskied om vir almal welstand te verseker en 'n gemeenskaplike vorm van deelname aan te moedig wat armoedeverligting en menswaardigheid teweegbring.

Die studie is gegrond op 'n ontleding van die kerk sowel as van gemeenskapsontwikkeling wat berus op vertrouwe in die verlossing van God, wat mense se waardigheid en gevoel van

selfwaarde bekragtig. Sodanige konseptualisasie strook met die voorgestelde paradigmaskuif wat vryheid en deelname as die kernbeginsels van menslike ontwikkeling voorhou.

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### **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

CBPWP	Community-Based Public Works Programme
CPC	Community Production Centre
FSC	Farmer Support Centre
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
PDP	Population Development Programme
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise

## Chapter One

### General background of the thesis and design

#### 1.1 Introduction

Since 1994, the new South African government has taken a giant leap on the path of sustainable development, focusing mainly on correcting the disparities of the apartheid era, and on building a better future for all people of South Africa than they might otherwise have had. The prioritisation of social service – in terms of education, health and welfare – is unmistakable proof that South Africa is investing in its people. However, the churches have not, as yet, joined in the process, in terms of participating in the initiative. Instead, the church has followed the trend of imposing herself as the source of relief rather than helping to enforce the process of communal participation. Bryant Myers, (2011:4) in engaging the plight of this approach states that, “the Christian faith, at its best, is an active faith, engaged with the world and seeking to make it more for life and for the enjoyment of life”.

For the local church to be most effective and loyal to its calling, we will have to reclaim the fundamentals of the gospel, by bringing harmony between the gospel and herself by means of deeds and word. In this way, the whole counsel of God will be manifested in our participation within the communities concerned. This research assignment focuses on the participation of the church in the creation of people’s well-being, and, especially, in terms of the perspective of social-economic development, and in terms of the church’s important present and future role in the sustainable development of peri-urban and rural areas. *Not nearly enough research has been done around the participation of the church within the terms of the sustainability of community development, especially across social-economic development, as we often find in South Africa. The churches will have to embrace one-mindedness, with people’s well-being as a goal. However, someone needs to lay down the foundation on which the bridges can be built. Consequently, this literature study will strive to consider theories on the sustainability of community development, ranging from considering the subject both in the initial, and in the emerging, context of development in South Africa.*

#### 1.2 Relationship between practical theology and community development

The perspective of practical theology is thoroughly defined by Heitink (1999:7) affirmed practical theology as the activities of God that are performed through the ministry of human

beings in the church. By implication, practical theology focuses on the mediation of the Christian faith. The mediation has to do with the core of the Christian conviction: “God’s coming to humanity in the world”. This constant and ever-recurring event takes place through the intermediary of human ministry (Firet, 1987:31).

Therefore, practical theology characterises the experience of human beings and, in the context of the current state of church and society, takes empirical data, with utter seriousness, as a starting point, and keeps them in mind as further theory is developed. In this context, it can be easily interpreted as relating to the international, or, more specifically, to the intermediary or meditative fields. The conjunction that binds practical theology with community development is not difficult to embrace; this is due to the fact that, according to Hendriks (2004:14):

Theology is one discipline, meaning it is missionary by its very nature and should not be divided into its many sub disciplines. Moreover, the church should understand that: God as our creator-redeemer-sanctifier is a purpose-driven God and as such theology and the church should reflect it, it should be part of our identity. Based on the fact that an inward focused church dies because it loses its identity.

In relation to the above quote, Osmer’s (2011:32) pragmatic task seeks to answer the question: “How should we respond?” He qualifies this relationship, because it strongly relates to the mission of the church. This task indicates that the church can find her driving force for community development by forming, and enacting, strategies of action that influence events in ways that are desirable. This fact concurs with Osmer’s (2008:27) assertion that “in practical theology moral life is best characterized in terms of responsibility”.

Therefore, when all this is thoroughly merged the concluding remark suggest it is through being responsible that practical theology cannot be isolated from the community development initiatives. This means that the church should realise that her transformational progress is always viewed in terms of how it relates to the community within which it takes place. This calls for every individual in the church to actively and fully participate in satisfying the needs of the hopeless in the community. For instance, Hinsdale (1995:213) explains:

God do[es] not come down and say, ‘I want you to do this and you to do that.’ It comes about in little ways that is [i.e. are] just laid there...God does call you to do things, but you interpret a lot of things.

Therefore, the church must understand that its primary responsibility, in terms of community development, is a call to service. This is ultimately God’s doing through the church, by which

I mean that God brings people to new birth, and their new life manifests itself in the service of others, both inside and outside the church, because we all have basic needs that should be met. Not only that, but also because, in stories of creation, human beings are portrayed as created in God's own image and, thus, are worthy of respect, in terms of personal relations, and of fair treatment by social institutions.

In terms of the above-mentioned perspective, the task of the church is portrayed as that of providing service to the community. By this is meant that the church should ensure that the community is able to obtain its rightful portion. Therefore, development organisations, whether faith-based or non-faith-based, should be sure that their development projects are geared towards the benefit of individuals, and towards that of the community in totality. This indicates that the relationship between practical theology and community development lies mostly within two streams: 1) the mission of the church; and 2) the observance of justice in all relations that the community and the church have in common.

### **1.3 Literature review**

In the field of community development, the concept of sustainability itself has become an important, and unifying, concept for people from different disciplines. It is viewed as an accepted form of discourse that is committed to the improvement of people's quality of life (Becker & John, 1999:104). Hence, Abraham Maslow (1970:96-97) (an American professor of psychology, who devised the hierarchy of needs from a psychological point of view) states:

Community development involves assisting communities and empowering them to attain well-being. This is done through advocacy, organizing communities and mobilizing resources. Other than theories of economics, development and politics, community development is also influenced by contributions from the field of psychology. Different branches of psychology help us to understand community needs, their cultural dispositions, and how communities form social cohesion and participate in community initiatives.

One of the influential definitions of the term 'sustainable development' is that of the World Commission on Environment and Development. In its 1987 report, entitled *Our Common Future* ('The Brundtland Report'), sustainable development is defined as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs" (Beckenstein, 1996:9).

The Hope Project article (dated from 25 September 2012) emphasises environmental,

social and economic concerns as three distinct, but interrelated, components of sustainable development:

Sustainability is the ability to provide in current human needs and to enhance and develop quality of life without increasing the consumption of materials and energy more than the current support systems can tolerate. The support system can be renewed per-se so that the ability of future generations to provide in their needs and enhance and develop their quality of life is not prejudiced.

Therefore there is a balance in nature (ecology), people (community of social networks) and the ecology which transcends one generation.

Most definitions consist of three interrelated elements. Firstly, the core objective of sustainable community development is to optimise human welfare. Well-fare includes issues of income and materiel consumption, along with those of education, health, equality of opportunity, and human rights. The second objective is that all physical and economic activities should be compatible with the surrounding biosphere. This element focuses on the maintenance of non-renewable resources, and emphasises that such resources should not be used at a rate that exceeds the rate at which they can be substituted by sustainable renewable resources.

The central meaning of the above, therefore, lies in the premise that there should be no net degradation of the wide range of indispensable services that is provided by the natural environment. The third objective is the equitable distribution of bio spherically compatible improvements that are directed at securing human well-being, both in the present, and for the future. Sustainability, in this context, according to Dresner (2002:73), implies both intergenerational and intragenerational equity. Human betterment on the part of any group should not come at the expense of other groups today, or of generations in the future. Rather, it should take place to benefit the community at large (Beckenstein, 1996:10).

Sustainable development is, however, a concept that can take an abstract form, and it can be difficult to relate to the priorities, and problems, of people in such places as the peri-urban and rural areas, where, in the past, the environment, the economy, and the community have all suffered from neglect, poverty, industrial decline, and unemployment, which are all summarised, in the policymaker's jargon, as being elements of 'social exclusion'. According to Davids (2009:19), due to the fact that the concept of 'development' has different meanings for different people, with its meaning being informed by such contextual issues as past and present experiences, circumstances, perceptions, values, and beliefs. It is, therefore,



important to reflect critically on, and to learn about, development from the point of view of the contextual reality of those who are to benefit therefrom (Davids, 2009:2).

Keeping in mind all of these views on sustainable development, it is clear that the church is an ideal institution for ensuring the sustainability of development, because it is already situated within a community, with its primary focus being on the people concerned. In this context, a healthy relationship plays a key role in keeping the situation harmonious. Very useful research has been done by Ignatius Swart (2010:15–36) on the religious sector, as it is represented within partnerships and networks working toward the development of greater community, so as to build mutual trust. Such trust is to be achieved through networks that are marked by collective effort and mutual responsibility, through which problems and social ills stand best to be solved. The problems that are associated with the force of modernisation in the rural areas have led to the above-mentioned approach being widely replaced with a people-centred development paradigm, which has, in recent years, been widely written about.

The focus of the relatively newly adopted approach is making communities more self-reliant, while it is also obtaining the participation of the communities in decision-making as much as possible in every stage of development, with all concerned contributing toward the common goal of social justice (Bosch, 1991:368–510; Kistner, 1995:100–107; Warren & Specter, 2010:27–72). While it has been proven that there will always be a need for relief, and for other charitable approaches, under particular circumstances, such approaches only address the symptom of poverty, rather than its cause. If those in need only receive relief, in the absence of sustainable people-centred development, they will tend to become dependent on the source of the relief, and thus remain mired in the cycle of poverty. The church should, therefore, use its ability to build healthy relationships that seek to harmonise participation in uplifting activities, so as to assist those who are in need to help themselves (Bowers du Toit, 2012:213).

The other sociological concept to be explored is that of social-economic development, which has to do with a process that can bring a poor community to fruition (Schweitzer, 1999:816). Midgley (1986), to prove that social-economic development is people-centred, writes: “it is a process of change and transformation in a society, which insures human dignity, social reconstruction, and improvement in life expectancy, literacy, and high level of employment”. Through adopting such an approach, the general well-being of people within a social setting, including an improvement in their living standards, is likely to be attained. The improvement may very well benefit the community as a whole. One of the main goals of the current study

was to connect the theology and sociology surrounding those participating in development.

The concept of sustainability formed the great middle ground for the present study, with the church being seen as a community of believers, who can play a leading part in benefiting their community, through working with both government structures and church organisations to impact on the peri-urban and rural areas. The work will entail using the gospel, and other available resources, to portray the whole counsel of God to the communities concerned. Through adopting the aforesaid approach, churches will come no longer simply to rely on their individualistic initiatives, but, through collaborating with other churches in their vicinity, they will be able to communally strive to satisfy one common purpose (i.e. the well-being of the community). The key is not to 'maintain the existing conditions', but rather, as a group, to merge around goals that are associated with the problems arising from the collective occupation, and utilisation, of habitation space. Such an advance is based on embracing a certain measure of local autonomy, and degree of local responsibility (Zentner, 1964:420–423).

Although, historically, the church has been involved in initiating sustainability at the grassroots level, there has been a lack of common understanding around the topic, due to the diversity that exists within the practice of sustainability, which has been proven to be the common issue pervading all South Africa. The lack of understanding is seen as an obstacle to securing well-being within a divided society, such as ours. Turok's (1994:1) overview of the above-mentioned situation is based on the fact that:

[t]he 'new' South Africa born after what has come to be known in development literature as lost decade for Africa (the 1980's), called forth a lot of expectation. South Africa, with a much more diversified industrial base than most sub-Saharan African countries, is expected to provide a strong growth pole for the sub-continent.

The above, it is held, can be achieved through collectively embracing both a spirit of determination and the jointly felt aspirations in terms of a common understanding, which acknowledges that "development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment" (Turok, 1994:1).

In theological terms, participation within the community is not passive, but it is an active and deliberate working together as the church (the body of Christ), based on the fact that the church is a structural organisation, and a living organism. Therefore, the element of participation is the initiative that eternally belongs to the Lord, who says: "I will build my church." The structure is like that of a company that has come together on the basis of

command, and not as the result of a free agreement. Such an understanding is affirmed clearly in Nicholls (1986:163–164), in terms of whose thinking the church is viewed as “the community of believers, gathered by divine election, calling, new birth, and conversion, which lives in communion with the Triune God, is granted the forgiveness of sins, and is sent to serve the world in solidarity with all mankind”.

The above having been said, some denominations and congregations still prefer not to participate in community work at all. Such non-participation is often rooted in past experiences that fail to take the present into account, with apartheid having being the biggest barrier within the South African context, with its resultant stagnation and tribalism. However, at present the transition towards the new South Africa is based on spiritual balance, as well as on social and economic regeneration, on mental emancipation, and on national self-determination (Maloka & Le Roux, 2000: ii). This, therefore, implies that there is a need for a change of mind-set within the churches that still resist the undertaking of this new initiative.

When we investigate who should be in charge of encouraging participation, the quick and uncomplicated answer will always be that the “God of the church is the centre of its initiative”. Myers (2011:207) has this in mind when he states the following:

[T]he church needs to help the community to recognise the activity of God in the story of the community. Whether the community is Christian or not, whether religious or not, our theology tells us that God has been doing creative and redemptive work in the life of the community, if only we look for it. Whether a disaster was averted or a blessing was unexpected, God and grace were at work. Wherever things worked for life and against death, Christ's fingerprints can be seen – “All things were created by him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together.”

(Colossians 1:17 NIV).

When engaging the plight of this investigation it is clear that the church have no concrete reason to not participate in the development initiative because it is called to participate in all that God is doing.

The above is only made possible through the manner in which the church leaders approach the participation of the church in sustainable development as its priority. In the same context, all this should involve a process, in which the capacity of people is built up, so that they can take responsibility for their own development, through which their human dignity can be enhanced (Swanepoel, 1998:102). Thus, the purpose of the current study was to guide the church leaders in championing a journey requiring participation towards sustainable

development in our vicinity.

#### **1.4 Research question and aims**

The research question asked in the current study was: In what way can the church participate in the quest for sustainability of community development in the peri-urban and rural areas? The following aims flow from the above question:

- To discuss the relationship between community development and sustainability;
- to identify and describe the mission of the church, with regards to sustainability in the peri-urban and rural areas;
- to investigate the extent of the success or failure of the current sustainability of the community development programmes in the peri-urban and rural areas;
- to explore the theology of sustainability within the context of community development, and to suggest ways in which it can inform both churches and government structures in community development projects; and
- to investigate a suitable approach (i.e. a model that can be used by the church) that can be adopted, and to propose a suitable paradigm shift, in terms of sustainability, in the given context.

#### **1.5 Methodology and approach**

The focus of the current study was on the participation of people in sustaining their development communally, with the objective of embracing their well-being as a community. The usefulness of the study will mostly lie in the words of the predecessors on the subject of sustainability in community development. The key themes in the literature review are encapsulated in such terms. (The theories of the sustainability of community development thus appear in both an initial, and in an emerging, context.)

The research includes two presentations gathered from two areas, one being the Delft South Peninsular (i.e. a peri-urban area), and the other being that of the Ncora district counsellors (i.e. a rural area). Both focus on the critical analysis of economic empowerment issues, and on the social development strategies, relating to the communities concerned. These presentations helps in bringing about the conjuncture in which to view reasons for these communities to lack sustainable outcomes in development. Thereafter, the attention of the peri-urban and the rural communities is called to the fact that sustainability should be their primary concern in the course of development, in order that they might be more effective and efficient in promoting the well-being of, and in increasing the newly evolving possibilities,

for the future of those involved.

One of the limitations of this approach is that it proposes homogeneity, which means that the findings should be embraced as a norm, in relation to the concept of people participation in peri-urban and rural development. However, due to the diversity of economic empowerment that is considered in terms of the sustainability of the communities, as Midgley (1986:25) indicates, the shift is anticipated through the conducting of a comparative evaluation of both regions, which will help in transforming the uniform process into a need-driven initiative.

## **1.6 Headings of the thesis**

**Chapter 1:** As an introduction to the study, a broad definition of sustainability, in terms of the purpose of community development, has been given.

**Chapter 2:** After discussing the origin and the use of the term 'sustainable development', a review of the differences between peri-urban and rural development is given. The challenges related to the sustainability of peri-urban and rural communities are traced, and the reason for the lack of sustainability in peri-urban and rural communities is debated. The overview includes the consideration of such contextual issues as past and present experience, with the findings of the presentations ultimately being discussed in detail.

**Chapter 3:** Reflecting on an understanding of contemporary perspectives, and of the mission of the church in community development, the detailed discussion in this chapter will cover both the mission of the church, and contemporary views of community development.

**Chapter 4:** The chapter includes a debate on the position of the church towards the sustainability of community development.

**Chapter 5:** In this concluding chapter, the research is summarised, and suggestions for a new paradigm shift for community developers are mooted.

## **1.7 Thesis plan scheduling**

The schedule for the thesis plan identified the following stages in the thesis to be undertaken:

- From October 2013 to November 2013, the theoretical research was to be conducted, and clearance from the relevant research ethics committees was to be secured, to allow for the conducting of an investigation of the subject. Aim to establish clear

understanding of the subject.

- From December 2013 to January 2014, the initial, and the emerging, context of sustainability, in terms of community development, was to be analysed.
- From March 2014 to April 2014, the presentations from the two regions (peri-urban (Delft South), and rural (Ncora District)) were to be given, after which they were to be analysed, in terms of the subject of economic empowerment.
- From May 2014 to June 2014, the findings were to be analysed, and redrafted for inclusion in the thesis.
- From July 2014 to August 2014, the conclusion of the findings was to be redefined.
- During September 2014, the final editing, the printing, and the handing in of the thesis was to take place.
- During the ongoing stages, the relevant literature was to be searched for new references, and for the re-evaluation of the research findings previously obtained.

## Chapter Two

### The origin and use of the term 'sustainable development'

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter is aimed at exploring the concept of sustainable development. The historical understanding of the term can be traced back to Malthus (1766–1834), and to William Stanley Jevons (1835–1882), as well as to other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinkers, who were concerned about resource scarcity, especially in the face of population increases, and the related energy shortages (Baker, 2006:18–19). The principle of sustainable development was first raised in the 1950s, in the writings of Fairfield Osborn (1953), and Samuel Ordway (1953). It was not until the 1960s and the 1970s, however, that a significant segment of public opinion contained expression of such unease. The decades concerned were marked by the intensification of anxiety about the environment, particularly in relation to the health hazards that were caused by industrial pollution. This led to environmental critiques of conventional, growth-orientated economic development.

Hence in the 1980s up to the present day. This history includes landmark international events such as: the 1987 Brundtland Report, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the 1997 Rio+5 Conference and the 2000 Millennium Summit in New York, and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

Much has been written in academic terms about the meaning of sustainable development and the need to integrate ecological and economic principles into personal and public decision-making. However, there is no agreed definition of the concept and perhaps there is no need for one. This is because sustainable development concerns a process of change and is heavily reliant upon local contexts, needs and interests. Thus, sustainable development is an 'emerging concept' in two ways, first, because it is relatively new and evolves as we learn to grasp its wide implications for all aspects of our lives, and, second, because its meanings emerge and evolve according to local contexts.

As an ideology, sustainable development originally appealed most to those preoccupied with the tendencies of capitalist development to lay waste to the world in its haste to convert anything and everything into commodities which could be sold for a profit. Many advocates of sustainable development have seemed to reason within Western traditions that see humans as stewards of Nature, with responsibility for its care.

In contrary this thesis goes against neoliberalism capitalist ideology according to the World Bank article (1992:16) which suggested that “neoliberal capitalism seeks to worship the market and the subordination of all of life to its demands, including government, individuals and Nature all carefully defined in terms of its own logic.” This is done in a form of helping men and women in the communities concerned believe that social institutions should be elaborated for the welfare of society and earth as a whole rather than for the power and wealth of a few. But that is not an easy juncture due to complexity of theme concern unless we propose a new approach.

Thus the reason Baker (2006:7) explains that, because the term is a dynamic concept the following applies:

It is better to use it in terms of promoting, not in terms of achieving, because promoting sustainable development is an ongoing process while achieving assumes that in a certain period we will be done with the process. Whereas it is a proven fact that sustainable development cannot be achieved but is promoted to a certain degree.

In promoting sustainable development, three pillars are at the centre of the development, as argued by Baker (2006:7):

- *social sustainability*, relating to human mores and values, as well as to relationships and institutions;
- *economic sustainability*, concerning the allocation, and the distribution, of scarce resources; and
- *Ecological sustainability*, involving the contribution of both economic and social factors, and their effect on the environment and its resources.

The above indicates that the debate on sustainable development focuses mainly on exploring the means by which sustainable development can be promoted. The three pillars should be encapsulated in the process, so that the main ideal contained therein is achieved. In other words, the ultimate focus of sustainable development, as affirmed by the three pillars is, and will always be, rooted in “maintaining a positive process of social change through living within boundaries established by ecological limits, but linked with ideas of social equity and justice” (Baker, 2006:7–8).

## **2.2 The differences between peri-urban and rural development**

In its essence, development is a complex and slow-moving process, involving people on the



one hand, and the factors of production and organisation on the other. Hence, Burkey (1993:48) affirms the following:

Development is more than the provision of social services and the introduction of new technologies. Development involves changes in the awareness, motivation and behaviour of individuals and in the relations between individuals as well as between groups within a society. These changes must come from within the individuals and groups, and cannot be imposed from the outside.

Further, Table 2.1 below clearly shows a useful way of understanding the complexities of people's livelihoods, which often include some form of mobility, as well as the diversification of income sources and occupations. In addition, the table outlines the obvious differences manifested between peri-urban and rural development, as viewed from the perspectives of Burkey (1993:41–56), Tacoli (2006:18), and De Beer and Swanepoel (2011:25).

**Table 2.1: The differences between peri-urban and rural development**

In general, a rural area is a geographic area that is located outside cities and towns. As encompassing all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area. Whatever is not urban is considered rural. Typical rural areas have a low population density and small settlements. Agricultural areas are commonly rural, though so are others such as forests. Different countries have varying definitions of "rural" for statistical and administrative purposes.

In contrary, Peri-urban areas (also called urban space, outskirts or the hinterland) are defined by the structure resulting from the process of peri-urbanisation. It can be described as the landscape interface between town and country, or also as the rural—urban transition zone where urban and rural uses mix and often clash. It can thus be viewed as a landscape type in its own right, one forged from an interaction of urban and rural. The table below clearly translates these differences:

<b>Peri-urban development</b>	<b>Rural development</b>
Peri-urban development has little sense of local community, especially in terms of an atmosphere of openness and relative freedom to pursue goals of interest.	Rural development has relied mostly on the local community, especially in terms of an atmosphere that is not conducive to freedom. Only limited resources are present for the pursuance of goals of interest.

<p>Most peri-urban societies lack a socio-economic structure of their own. They rely solely on their capacities to promote development activities.</p>	<p>Every rural society has some form of socio-economic structure. Rural development workers would, therefore, be wise to analyse the structure in the area where they will be working, before they try to promote development activities.</p>
<p>Peri-urban development strategies can realise their full potential through the commitment of the residents to their development, and to the resources that they have for achieving such an initiative.</p>	<p>Rural development strategies can realise their full potential only through the motivation, active involvement, and organisation at the grassroots level of rural people. A special emphasis is placed on the least advantaged, in terms of conceptualising and designing appropriate policies and programmes, and in terms of creating administrative, social, and economic institutions, including cooperative, and other, voluntary forms of organisation for implementation.</p>
<p>Peri-urban development depends on the service provided by the municipality for the mutual benefit of those living in the area.</p>	<p>Rural development depends mostly on the services that are provided by a community for the mutual benefit of the community members.</p>
<p>Many of the economically active population in peri-urban areas derive their living from manufacturing, or from the service industries.</p>	<p>Most of those living in rural settlements derive a living from farming and/or forestry.</p>
<p>Most peri-urban areas include several settlements with far fewer than 20 000 inhabitants.</p>	<p>The population of rural settlements lives in settlements ranging from farmsteads to a few hundred inhabitants.</p>
<p>The livelihood of those living in peri-urban areas is drawn from the labour markets that are concerned with non-agricultural production, or with the making/selling of goods or services.</p>	<p>The livelihood of those living in rural areas is mainly drawn from crop cultivation, livestock, and forestry, or fishing (i.e. the key to their livelihood is access to natural capital).</p>

Access to land for housing is very difficult for those living in peri-urban areas, as the housing and land markets in such areas tends to be highly commercialised.	Accessing land, for purposes of housing and for obtaining the building materials required, tends not to be a problem.
Most peri-urban income is derived directly from both agriculture and industrial projects, relying mostly on development initiatives.	Much rural income is not derived directly from agriculture, but takes the form of off-farm and non-farm income that is generated by farm households, which are often found in small rural towns.
Accessing infrastructure services is difficult for low-income groups, due to the high prices involved, as well as to the illegal nature of their homes (for many), and the poor governance that tends to prevail in such areas.	Access to infrastructure and services is limited (largely because of the distance, the low population density, and the limited capacity to pay).
There tends to be extensive reliance on cash for accessing food, water, sanitation, employment, and garbage disposal.	There are fewer opportunities for earning cash, so that there is greater reliance on self-provisioning, with more reliance on favourable weather conditions.

An overview of Table 2.1 above illustrates the existing differences between peri-urban and rural areas, as commonly manifested in the communities concerned. The overview goes a long way to showing that attaining sustainable development requires a different approach in the two contexts. It can also be argued that, even though it would be ideal to use a 'one-size fits all' approach in these communities, there is, in fact, a need to analyse the community context before the start of any project.

The above analysis concurs with that of Sargent (1991:5), who argues that the inhabitants of peri-urban areas, as opposed to those in rural areas, tend to place a high value on self-reliance and self-determination. This is because they tend to have experience with adopting certain techniques for their cultural and economic survival, which makes it possible for them to make decisions regarding their long-term interests, as well as to design, and carry out, programmes, to evaluate the results of their work, and to make the necessary adjustments to suit their particular conditions. Grassroots development is also shown to affirm freedom, with participation of the local communities being the way to go in both the peri-urban and the rural areas. Due to the prevailing contemporary and contextual issues, applying grassroots development in our given context is ideal, due to the fact that, in both

communities studied, community development had not yet been initiated as the duty of all community residents. Hence, grassroots development should seek to affirm the communal duties of all members in each given community.

### **2.2.1 The challenges relating to the sustainability of peri-urban and rural communities**

The challenges to communities living in peri-urban and rural communities are rooted in a lack of understanding of the concept of sustainability; Hopwood (2005:40) outlines this concept in the following words:

The concept of sustainable development represents a shift in understanding of humanity's place on the planet, but it is open to interpretation of being anything from almost meaningless to of extreme importance to humanity. Whatever view is taken, it is clearly an area of contention. Whilst recognizing the deep debates and ambiguities about the meaning of sustainable development.

Hence, the concept of sustainability itself has become an important, and unifying, concept among those who come from different disciplines. It is viewed as an element in accepted discourse that is committed to the improvement of people's quality of life, as revealed by Becker and John (1999:36). This, in terms of a development point of view, is rooted in the idea that "[d]evelopment is about the people and for the people". In other words, authentic community development is that which reflects the reality of human well-being, within their contextual realities.

Exploring the concept of sustainable development is essential for all students of community development in South Africa. As a citizen, one sees that understanding the challenge of sustainability, in respect of peri-urban and rural communities, is crucial for enhancing community development activities in the country as a whole. Such a finding is obvious when it is viewed through the lens of the past, and in terms of the current issues in the country, considering the value and beliefs of the local people regarding such development. When undertaking the current exploration, the only justice that could be applied was in relation to the adoption of Bagnall's (2004:5–6) definition of the cultural context, as follows:

The notion of 'cultural context' is that of the values, beliefs and assumptions that constrain human perception, commitment and action. It embraces not only the epidemic, normative and metaphysical realities of the human condition, but also the consequential effects of those realities – the way in which we relate to each other, the works of art that we produce and value, the social infrastructure that we

develop, preserve or destroy, the ends to which we direct our energies, what we do with our time and other resources, and so on.

The concern here is not so much with particular values, beliefs, or assumptions, but, rather, it is with their combined, or cumulative, nature (Bagnall, 2004:15–29). It is about the ways in which participation can bring about sustainability, in spite of all the pros and cons that are present in the cultural context.

### **2.2.2 The reason for peri-urban and rural communities lacking sustainability**

De Beer and Swanepoel (2011:25) are of the view that peri-urban and rural communities might lack sustainability when there is failure to understand that development is encapsulated in the firm process of contributing to development by delivering simultaneously economic, social, and environmental benefits towards those who reside in a specific community. Hence, De Beer and Swanepoel (2011:25) emphasise the following:

Sustainable and equitable community development requires strengthening administrative capacity of relevant institutions. It implies expanding participation, strengthening a wide variety of public and private organizations, and increasing the access of individuals to resources and opportunities.

Treurnicht (2000:17) clearly explains that local people understand their area, and know what to do to ensure sustainable development. For Davids (2009:2):

The concept of 'development' has different meanings for different people – its meaning being informed by contextual issues such as the past and present experiences, circumstances, perceptions, values and beliefs. It is therefore important to critically reflect on and learn about development from the point of view of the contextual reality of those who are to benefit from development.

The beneficiaries in this case are those who resides in per-urban and rural areas, the contextual issues to be reviewed consists of broken relationships that exposes these communities to lack all that is benefited through relations.

Hence Becker and John (1999:33) emphasise that “sustainable development imposes a strong commitment to action directed towards reshaping the relations between people and their environment”. Lastly, Dresner (2002:72) summarises all these definitions by affirming: “Sustainability means meeting those physical requirements; and beyond that, meeting those social requirements that have to be met so that the system does not blow itself apart social.”

Therefore, as the meaning of sustainability is clearly articulated in the above quotes, we

should feel compelled to strongly affirm that sustainable development does not take place in a vacuum. Such development requires accountability, and a strong sense of ownership from the community that resides in a given area. We should keep this perspective in mind when approaching the lack of sustainability in peri-urban and rural communities. Thus, this is the reason for the current chapter to focus on introducing the notion of sustainable development as a key element in terms of the attainment of quality opportunities in the future.

According to Skerritt and Teare (2013:12), the above is centred in the fact that:

Sustainable development begins and ends with what it terms 'viable' people who are to change themselves, their circumstances and help others. If people's behaviours are viable, then their involvement in the projects and community endeavours is more likely to succeed.

Considering all that has been covered so far, in terms of this perspective, it is clear that both 'unity' and 'viability' are the key driving forces for sustainable development, in spite of the individualism that is enforced by the powers granted to individuals by the communities.

### **2.3 Contextual issues in peri-urban and rural communities in South Africa**

The most common issues that are addressed in this section as being the contextual issues of South African communities include past experiences, circumstances, perceptions, values, and beliefs. The issues concerned are linked to their core existence from their traditional background. It is important, therefore, to suggest that the proper translation of traditional background is of great value in bringing about understanding of the issues. According to De Peter and Dankelman (2009:43), the way in which we see the issues that are at stake here should be justified by the fact that: "Capturing a single aspect of traditional knowledge is difficult. Traditional knowledge is holistic and cannot be separated from the people. It cannot be compartmentalized like scientific knowledge, which often ignores aspects of life to make a point."

Acknowledging the above should give us a way of approaching the issues with a clear view of what is to be expected from them.

#### **2.3.1 Past and present experiences**

As Louw and Venter (2010: xi) specify: "Africa needs to find its own voice and its own solutions to its challenges in order to play its rightful role in the world economy." The debate below clearly affirms that both the peri-urban and the rural areas need to find their own voice,

and their own solutions to the challenges that they encounter, so that they can play their role in the development of this country. This means that these communities should overcome the belief that community development is not a communal duty; it should be transferred to them by the well-developed allies. In addition, a new belief should be invented that affirms people as the pillars of their own development, in terms of them taking ownership when undertaking the development themselves, no matter what the cost might be. The reason for them to do so is summed up by Coetzee (1989:15) as “[d]evelopment is for the people.”

In doing the above, much still needs to be considered concerning the contextual issues in terms of our historical background. This review, according to De Beer and Swanepoel (2011:9–11), consists of “[c]ontradictions and vagueness in community development literature. This is basically caused by the fact that, historically, there has been a failure to develop local leadership and encouraging inability of community initiative.”

Marchettini (2009:18) points out that such vagueness is rooted in what can be referred to as ‘free translation’, meaning that words mean whatever you want them to mean. Such a perspective, therefore, could open up a platform for whoever initiates development to focus on their personal benefits, instead of on the communal benefits involved, in the name of community development. As a citizen of South Africa living in a peri-urban area (Delft South), it is possible to argue that the former approach is still evident in the peri-urban and rural areas. It is demonstrated by the existence of matchbox houses, which are claimed to be a sign of development, while they are not.

The above is the result of the fact that, in most cases, in the initial stages there has been no consultation, no firm commitment to stimulating the participation of the community, and no proper teaching given to the communities that are being developed, which might have allowed them to attain a clear understanding of what development means to them. This approach can, therefore, be viewed as didactic, instead of facilitating.

Consequently, one can echo Marchettini (2009:iii), who argues that “this instead affirms a need to critically reflect on and learn about development from the point of view of the contextual reality of those who are to benefit from development”, hence, as has already been stated, “development is about people.” Affirming this point, De Beer and Swanepoel (2011: xviii) insist that “[c]ommunity development must involve a process in which the capacity of people is built so that they can take responsibility for their own development through which their human dignity is enhanced”.

By implication, development should be done in such a way that the local development effort

must be in harmony with the local ecology, in the sense that local people are the experts on their local ecology. More so, they are the ones who can embrace, and support, an initiative better than outsiders can support it, because it belongs to the former.

To achieve the above, according to United Nations General Assembly Vietnam (2014:5), both peri-urban and rural areas can use culture as their main resource. This is due to the fact that:

[C]ulture can contribute to the three pillars of environmental sustainability, economic development and social progress. Culture can help promote harmonious and sustainable interaction among human beings, between humankind and nature, and improve the spiritual and material life for all individuals and all nations.

The above is also the goal of the type of sustainable development that we strive to have in our communities, as well as in South Africa, as a whole.

### **2.3.2 Circumstances**

The core challenge that leads to the whole spectrum of these circumstances in a South African context, according to Martin (1972:27), can be understood in twofold, namely as political imperatives, and as an incapability to apply developmental measures in the process.

In terms of political imperatives, centralised planning lacks legitimacy, which leaves most planning decisions to be taken, both formally and politically, at the local levels. In relation to this perspective, the planner is forced to decide on the responses to political questions as well, but without the help of the participation of supportive public institutions. Even though it is such institutions that play a vital role in sustaining this development, it is consequently initiated without their involvement, or without them being invited to participate in the planning process.

The incapability to apply developmental measures in the process leads to insecurity for the planners, because they cannot practise 'value-free' and 'rational' development. They, then, tend to feel unhappy about the existence of a critically concerned public that could, otherwise, provide them with general criteria for the evaluation of planning goals and results.

The above shows that planning has been proven to be crucial to the application of all measures when undertaking development in the rural areas. The lack of planning that has occurred in reality, in contrast, has always been the cause of development failures, as Sargent (1991: xi) explains in the following remark: "The primary social value of rural people is to enhance a community's long-term visibility by respecting the carrying capacity of the



natural environment.”

Moreover, both the peri-urban and rural areas have continuously experienced an imbalance of political power and representation between the urban areas or cities, and the peri-urban and rural communities. As a result, the urban areas and their residents continue to be powerful, while the peri-urban and rural areas remain powerless, and continue to live in a state of dependency on the governments concerned.

Furthermore, for such political reasons, the government has not acted to restrict the ever-increasing ghettoization of affluent suburban, and of poor inner city, communities. Neither have there been any plans to make cities viable as whole environments, while the need to transition from a rural to an urban society is still being ignored.

In addition, I firmly believe that the above-mentioned measures have led to the South African case today, with rioting not only being found to be the case in urban or rural society, but throughout the whole country. This means that we should ask two questions pertaining to two key themes in this research project, namely whether there is harmony in our political imperatives, and whether we can develop ourselves. If these questions continue to be ignored, the risk would be run of having no room for sustainability in our development, or just an assumed sustainability, which is distanced from transformative action.

Also, if the above factors are ignored, the manifestation of the following, according to Turok (1994:16), will continue to trouble South Africans:

A stagnating economy; glaring poverty, socio-economic imbalances and backlogs; widespread unemployment; neglect of human development; a high illiteracy rate; closure of opportunities for acquiring human and physical capital for most South Africans; highly unequal distribution of wealth and income; inadequate healthcare; poor housing conditions; a high rate of violence; and a vast web of market distortions and rigidities.

However, if the questions are addressed, the chances of possibly finding building blocks to build from in a quest for transition from where we are, as indicated in the quote above, to the sustainable communities for which we all long would be possible. When all the existing issues are addressed, individuals will be able to acknowledge their position in terms of the spectrum of what is actually happening. In this way, the realisation should come about that what defines people as good citizens is key to improving their lives, and that is that being a good cooperative citizen, and leading a sustainable lifestyle, are inseparable. Hence, from the mere fact of being good citizens, people will automatically be able to sustain their

development, while, on the contrary, by not being good citizens, they are capable of destroying, or distorting, their own development.

### 2.3.3 Perceptions

The outcome of the perceived perception that community development is not a communal duty (which should be transferred to the communities by their well-developed allies) is the root of all pitfalls that are encountered on the sustainable side of development in the peri-urban and rural areas. The situation remains such, while, according to Turok (1994:1), it continues to contradict the belief of many:

[T]he 'new' South Africa, born after what has come to be known in development literature as lost decade for Africa (the 1980's), called forth a lot of expectation. South Africa, with a much more diversified industrial base than most sub-Saharan African countries, is expected to provide a strong growth pole for the sub-continent.

The above therefore means, as is clearly manifested in each and every corner of both urban and rural area, that South Africa is the hope of Africa as a whole. However, such hope is difficult to satisfy, because the economic system is mostly rooted in a macro level pattern of development. This is despite it having already been proven, on a global scale, that Third World countries should be using micro (grassroots) development to develop and sustain their development initiatives.

This clearly implies that the perception that we can start where the previous developers left off is a dream that will never be realised. All this is because, according to the World Bank (1995:16): "Real change cannot be a top-down process. To be really meaningful, changes have to spring from the ideas and experiences of the people themselves."

Consequently, what is required is the application to apply the principle of harmonisation to transforming our development, with such harmonisation starting from the bottom, and not from the perspective of the agencies concerned. This, by implication, suggests that, sustaining development should be on the agenda for both the underdeveloped, and for the developers (which means the perception that development is not a communal duty should be denounced by both parties involved). This should be done in order to embrace the principle of harmony at all levels of participation, because it should be people who plan, and strive, to achieve their goals for their own benefit. Moreover, there must be awareness of the fact that "sustainable development needs a strong, civil society, it demands enlightened social intervention and thrust in an interventionist state [such] as ours" (Stokke, 1991:3).

## 2.4 Values and beliefs

### 2.4.1 Values

The role of cultural and traditional values in the development of Third World countries has been largely overlooked by development planners, who have, for the most part, imported development strategies and models from western countries (Sinha & Holman, 1984). More recently, psychologists have entered into the field of development, resulting in an increase in the number of social psychological studies that have been aimed at determining whether culturally contextualised development strategies might be more successful than non-culturally contextualised development strategies have been (Sinha, 1983).

According to Graaff (2003:23), “[v]alues, and the general consensus which people have around values, are what anchor society. It is values which hold all the other parts, all the other subsystem, in place.” Berry (as cited in the World Bank, 1995:13) affirms that we should keep in mind that: “Our behaviour depends on the values we put on ourselves, our community, the future, and nature itself.”

Also, Turok (1994:15) probes more deeply to ask:

[S]urely African development goals and objectives should be guided by African values and perceptions of needs, resources and possibilities? Is development not a process that has to be internally generated and sustained? Does this not entail the transformation of the economy and society, and the internalisation of the factors of production, distribution and consumption?

The above, therefore, means that concerning the values involved, our focus has to be more on how we behave in the process of developing these communities than it was previously. Based on the fact that the lack of behaviour to developers in the process, in each and every context, is seen as the ways of seeing no value to the development of those that are being developed. At the same time, those who are being developed are expected to behave accordingly, to show the value that they perceive in their own development. This is based on the fact that wrong behaviour, in both groups in a South African context, is perceived as being a way of showing a lack of respect for the dignity of those at whom it is directed. This is based on the fact that what is being said or done negatively could perpetuate the patterns of interpersonal relations.

Furthermore, according to Brock (2007:94):

Poor people or people in underdeveloped communities are not just victims or 'good

simple people', but just as complex as contradictory as everyone else, as individuals and in the ways they relate to other people. Inequalities which cause so much suffering are perpetuated not only by the better-off or men, but also by poor people and by women.

The above leaves neither the underdeveloped, nor the developers themselves, solely responsible for maintaining dignified development, but both parties are regarded as equal partners, who share the same amount of responsibility for the task ahead.

All this, according to Turok (1994:7), is derived from the fact that “at the centre of the development process are people, and every development process must reflect that reality”. This means that there should be a positive attitude towards people, rather than a positive attitude towards the objects used in the process. The process must be undertaken while valuing the resources that are due to them, too. This is because “human beings by nature are intended to develop, not just to survive, they are capable through each person’s ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being” (Sen, 1999:30).

#### **2.4.2 Beliefs**

Beliefs are widely known to come from the conviction of the truth, or from the reality of something, which, in the present instance, is development, and its sustainability. The root of all beliefs in these communities is seen as being the outcome of the perceived perception that community development is not a communal duty (as it should be transferred to the communities concerned by means of their well-developed allies). According to Brock (2007:41–43), the above is based on forgetting that there is much that is included in development, under which concept the following issues fall:

- contextual issues (which will always draw the attention of the community as a whole);
- the process itself (which requires approval at the beginning, and at the end); and
- the politics, or challenges in terms of the process (forgetting that politics are portrayed in action) in this case, the act at stake being the development itself.

The above means, therefore, that whoever is allowed to initiate development in their own territory will have contextual problems, and will automatically push their political agenda, against the context of their own, background, which might not, necessarily, apply in terms of the current territory (meaning the given community). Moreover, it must be kept in mind that all development is born out of the needs of people, and will always require their attention for it to be sustained. Stokke (1991:2) emphasises that “what is needed is the general mobilization of our collective resources, both in the public and private sectors, to achieve

a shift of direction of the world economy into tracks that would make it truly sustainable”.

The above means that the community should first believe in the strength that they gain from the support of all stakeholders, in terms of being able to sustain their development. This matter, according to Brock (2007:70), should be tackled in the same way as it was when striving for empowerment was under way. Simply because both the situations are closely related, in the sense that their background is the same (with neither owning any assets, nor being part of any important decision-making processes, while holding a poor view of their own capacity to achieve anything), is to “put the values of these communities in its objective of initiating and sustaining a process of change deep within the mind of the community members; helping them to dream and take steps to attain their vision”.

To achieve the above, Richard Teare's (citing a Global University for Lifelong Learning participant from East Africa) ideology concerns the proper format that should be used to help individuals in the community to come to share the same belief that “I am a seed that will be planted. I will help to transform my community – I will not be the same again” (Skerritt & Teare, 2013:65).

The above, according to Swanepoel (1997:13), focuses not only on the individuals concerned, but also on the group as a whole, due to the following:

Community development is not the action of an individual or a few individuals. It is a collective activity in that a group of people sharing a mutual interest, sentiment or concern, act together and in concert. This does not mean that all people who stand to gain from community development will act together. It means that a group of people that can be defined as exclusive will be involved. The exclusivity of the group enhances the learning process because the same people are involved throughout and learn to work as a team. As Kent (1981:316) says that people's power is realized by groups working together.

However, this process alone is insufficient if our communities are to be transformed, and if the action is required from the bottom upwards. Such a process can, according to Human (1998:5), be achieved through “[c]reating new organizations that will respond to the needs of the people, which imply [sic] that new ‘revocrat’ will have to learn from the community”.

The above, in its key essence, is aimed at helping the community members to reflect on their situation, and to determine that they can – individually and collectively – bring about, in terms of transformation. Wherever possible, the use of indigenous systems for people development should be used, so as to encourage the participants to sustain their efforts,

and to recognise the outcomes of their work.

## 2.5 First presentation

### 2.5.1 Ncora District (rural area)

Sigcau, S. 2000. Ncora Irrigation Scheme in the Eastern Cape: a presentation on sustainable economic growth and development in a relatively underdeveloped area

This case study deals with one of the major objectives of the project, which is the sustainable economic growth, and development, taking place in a relatively underdeveloped area, according to its local inherent economic potential. The objective of the project is to generate long-term and sustainable employment for the local inhabitants of the area. It is a requirement of the investment in this project that small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) opportunities be identified and promoted, thereby ensuring sustainable development of the Ncora/Qamanku Irrigation Trust and the neighbouring communities, with spin-off benefits to the broader region.

The CPC concept is an initiative by the Department of Public Works, in conjunction with the Ministry for Agriculture and Land Affairs, to rehabilitate rural irrigation schemes, and to provide agricultural infrastructure. The main object of this approach is to ensure that poverty alleviation programmes in this region have broader impact on improving the quality of life of many people in rural areas, in a productive and sustainable way. By working together to alleviate poverty, we are not only creating a better life for all, but we are restoring the dignity of our people.

The Community Production Centres (CPCs) have been conceptualised on the same basis as the Farmer Support Centre (FSC). Such centres are established with a view to promoting community ownership, and to engage emerging farmer participation in production activities for the market. To make these CPCs vibrant economic nodes, the programme promotes value-adding processes, so that the CPCs can also be used as centres for skills development.

CPCs have been funded by the government only during their initial stages. Thereafter, they have been self-funding, through the generation of marketable crops. Joint ventures

between the communities have been made possible.

Pilot projects are under way in Makhathini Flats (200 000 people) and Ndaya (15 000 people) in KwaZulu-Natal, in Lambasi (56 000 people) and Ncora (40 000 people) in the Eastern Cape, and in Veeplaas (30 000 people) and Elandskraal (15 000) in the Northern Province.

At Ncora, the Trust has been established and registered for the purposes of acquiring and administering the fixed and movable assets of the Ncora Irrigation Scheme. Treasury Regulations have been adhered to, and the assets for use have been handed over to the communities, as agreed.

Giving practical effect to the Integrated Rural Development Strategy, the Department has initiated a new approach of clustering projects to serve a greater number of people in the surrounding villages than might otherwise have been reached.

The other arm of this programme manifests in multi-purpose centres. The provision of such infrastructure allows for the integration of service delivery by different government departments, with the purpose of achieving better social cohesion than would else be the case. These are one-stop service and activity centres, with multi-purpose facilities. For example, the idea is that, apart from the social cohesion facilities, specific service-rendering facilities, such as a post office, a pension pay point, a crèche, a library, and clinics are required to be included.

The confirmation of funding through the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) over the last three years has presented an opportunity to accelerate the implementation of the Community-Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP). The planning for CBPWP projects that normally takes about six months can now be done ahead of each financial year.

By expanding on this clustered infrastructure development, the communities concerned should benefit optimally in opening up future development potential around areas of collective use and activity, made more accessible by transport, so as, eventually, to become economic nodes in themselves.

This is where the continued participation, and dedication, of all members of the community

to care for their environment, and to build lasting and sustainable working entities from these premises, is of the utmost importance.

It is realised that the infrastructure that is created through the CBPWP provides but a drop in the ocean of need. It is through the sustained operation, and the further spin-offs in the utilisation of the facilities created, that the real empowerment and economic participation will have a maximum impact on addressing poverty.

We want to believe that, as an intrinsic element of poverty alleviation, these larger scale CPC projects, with a strong agricultural bias, will integrate not only greater cooperation with our sister departments in community development, but also a revitalisation of existing, albeit neglected or abandoned, infrastructure. We want to ensure maximum utilisation of what is already there, and to build onto that.

These projects illustrate coordinated development, operationalization and management by various levels of government in such fields as agriculture, water affairs, and communication, health, welfare and others, embarking on community public-private partnerships. As public works, we will continue to work with the communities in creating the infrastructure, for public works is ideally positioned to impact on a broad spectrum of infrastructural and capacity-building needs of local communities. This is because our products span a wide range of sectors, which then creates the opportunity for our sister departments, the provincial and local governments, to continue with feasible and sustainable sector-specific development and operation.

Through the investment in business entities, rural people are afforded an opportunity to become proud owners of businesses, and to benefit from the success of their enterprise in an orderly environment that is conducive to successful irrigation farming.

Ncora, for instance, has five such business entities:

- a security company, mainly comprising youth to secure the estate;
- a dairy production cooperative for dairy farmers;
- a crop production cooperative for interested farmers;
- a women's consortium attending to poultry, a piggery and juice-making; and
- a nursery project, comprising a small group of farmers.

The Restructuring Authority has acknowledged that turning these schemes around to



become productive units owned by groups of people in the community could be a means of addressing rural poverty in some areas.

The success of the CPCs depends on the accurate identification of lucrative local and international marketing opportunities, and the planning of production in accordance with such opportunities.

The success of this programme also lies in the effective partnerships, and the coordination of the respective policies and strategies by the relevant government departments, private and community role-players.

The Trust is the custodian of the scheme on behalf of the community, with it being responsible for the provision of services, either directly or through privatisation thereof.

The Ncora/Qumanco Irrigation Trust provides the infrastructure to create sustainable employment and income-generating opportunities for the farmers, especially women. It will continue to be an important objective of ours to improve the lot of women and youth, and to enhance job creation. It is anticipated that the Trust will be able to raise sufficient operating income from its constituents, the farmers and the business units set up on the estate, so as to be able to maintain the property, and to promote further economic development of the estate, and the surrounding communities.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry is dealing with bulk water supply to the scheme, for irrigation and other uses.

The financial model is based on the assumption that the Trust will be able to secure funding over the first three years of up to R10 million. For the 2000/2001 financial year, Public Works has allocated R2.5 million. These funds are used for the infrastructure restoration and repairs, and to facilitate the development of the business units on the estate. They are also used to provide at least R1 million for the purposes of the capital seed funding for the new businesses.

Repairs and upgrading of roads, some 25km of service and access roads, and a 20km link to the national road, are necessities, and need to be dealt with. This is an effort that will need a number of years, and it has to be dealt with in priority order.

A number of existing buildings need refurbishment, and some have to be built to ensure productive use. Attention should be given, for example, to the dairy and grain-handling facilities, storage tanks, and canning factory.

An investigation needs to be done into the salvage and possible repair of vehicles, tractors, farming equipment and workshops, dairies, and office furniture that have deteriorated through neglect and disuse.

For in-field irrigation, R379 150 has been budgeted for in the financial year 2000/2001. Stores, fencing, and a start-up seed fund have also been provided for.

I am pleased to have been informed that the Trust anticipates achieving self-sufficiency within four years, if it is able to fund the aforementioned restoration and repairs, and to return the farming operations to profitability.

The investment in this project is in line with the government's policy of ensuring the continued development of farming projects, and the economic development of the rural areas. The project provides the means to create employment for at least 6 000 people, and the support of an estimated 12 000 dependents, in an economically deprived area of the country.

It is my sincere wish that this CPC project will continue to reap the intended benefits to the local economies and communities, and to make a positive impact in an effort to fight poverty, create employment, and run rural business ventures in a sustainable way.

Issued by the Department of Public Works, 20 October 2000, and amended.

Most of the above initiatives towards sustainability have been successful in their initial stages, but a lack of long-term planning including the preservation of natural resources, and to the lack of training of individuals in these communities, or at least of individuals who are in leadership positions, has proven to be their main restraining factor. This can be considered in terms of De Beer and Swanepoel's (2011:19) finding that: "Through history it has been proven that in communities such as this the use of local resources has remained an important focal point."

The proof of the above is manifested both in the fact that, up until this point, some of the

projects in the emerging stages still depend on government financial support, whereas they are supposed to be already benefiting the surrounding communities of Ncora District. Some of the negative outcomes involved might have arisen from ignoring certain fundamental, irreversible processes that require a different way of conceptualising the development process itself. The lack of improvement, despite the efforts of the vast majority of the initiatives, in terms of both maintaining their standards, and in managing the capital, has militated against them making a solid contribution to the communities.

The above shortcomings have been caused by the failure to build the capacity of people, and to enhance their sense of human dignity. As De Beer and Swanepoel (2011: xviii) affirm: “The paradigm of sustainable development requires the empowerment of the people to be responsible for their own development. According to sustainable development, the local development effort must be in harmony with the local ecology.”

Lastly, according to Sargent (1991:5), the above can be reversed through:

[I]ncreasing the self-reliance of citizens because in rural communities that can be the basis for sustainability. Based on the fact that a self-reliant community possesses the knowledge, skills, resources, and vision to identify changing conditions, locate appropriate technical assistance, and initiate actions in a manner that conserves the environment and distributes benefits in an equitable manner.

## 2.6 Second presentation

### 2.6.1 Delft South Peninsular (peri-urban area)

Julie, K.M. 2013. Mandela Peace Park. Delft South Peninsular: A presentation of the City of Cape Town Community Participation in the Maintenance of Parks

The Delft area is said to be approximately 34km north-east of Cape Town, and approximately 7.5 km from Bellville. Delft was established to be one of the Cape Town's first mixed race townships, including both 'coloured' and 'black' residents. It is a historically disadvantaged area, and experiences all the effects and shortfalls that are associated with township establishments of that era.

The project's scope of work entails, as required, provision of:

- pedestrian walkways;

- children's play areas, and play equipment;
- park furniture: branches; bollards; litter bins; and fencing; and
- landscaping: tree and lawn planting; irrigation, etc.

Mandela Peace Park has a number of issues that have to be addressed in its development regeneration, with the issues being articulated as follows:

- The desired lines are obstructed.
- There is evidence of soil erosion, and of inadequate ground cover.
- The play area is dilapidated.
- The recreational facilities are unattractive.
- There is a lack of onsite maintenance.
- The eucalyptus trees have to be replaced with indigenous plants.
- The alien trees are depriving the indigenous flora of their required nutrients.

Further to the above, there are numerous other points to be made in this respect. The recreational facilities and play areas are in disrepair, and the children's playground lacks adequate facilities. Hazardous obstacles, such as rocks and boulders, can be found in the play areas, making them unsafe for the children.

The braai areas and stone structures, which are an eyesore in the park, have to be demolished. The existing buildings are not well maintained. The existing onsite surfaces are degraded, as a result of little or no maintenance being done, making the site vulnerable to soil erosion and to degradation.

Problems of vandalism are rife. The park needs to be developed and maintained. The indigenous trees that are found in the area, and which degrade the park, will be removed. The new trees that will be planted will require protection from vandalism. Adequate seating and lighting will be provided to increase visibility for the surrounding residents, thereby increasing the security of the park.

The employment opportunities that will be created by the above project will be as follows:

- There will be 134 beneficiaries.
- The project will last 16 months.
- The project started in November 2012, and will end in April 2014.

The above-mentioned initiatives have proven to be successful, although, at the same time,

they have been lacking in sustainable measures. This is because there are centres that promote community ownership in the projects, but they have not, as yet, been implemented. Due to the community not having been engaged properly in the initial stages of the projects, when the government transferred their management to them, they were just expected to appreciate them, and then to move on.

All the above proves that sustainability was not the primary concern in the initial stages of the Delft South peninsular project, and even at the time of the current study there was a lack of sustainable measures, which is believed to be a repetition of the same era, despite the extent of the project being larger than before, with no long-term potential measures being adopted for communal benefit. Because the project lasted only 16 month, thereafter only the security guards were retained. This works against the ultimate goal of development, which is to grow, and to develop, individuals within the context of their own collective fellowship (e.g. the family, the group, the community, and the nation). The effect of the project is also measurable in terms of the effect that it has had on the individual, and on the collective fellowship.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

Any development seeking to be sustainable requires a change from the old values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour patterns of the citizenry to those that are supportive of the new approach, which prioritises sustainability. By this, I mean that changing the old ways requires removal of the obstacles hindering sustainability. In addition, such transformation differs from community to community, because of the diverse traditions in place, and the mind-set of each of the given communities.

However, if a transformation is to be achieved, the developers themselves, together with the community members, should take into account the sources of motivation, so as to be able to implement, in advance, plans that will be successful, rather than merely seeking to rectify the situation after a project has failed to achieve its ultimate goal. This is because, on all occasions where development fails to achieve its desired end goal, all community members are negatively affected, including even those who were not directly involved in the project concerned.

## Chapter Three

### Reflection on the contemporary and theological perspective of Community development

#### 3.1 Introduction

The focus of the current chapter is on exploring the contemporary understanding of, and the biblical perspective on, the issue of community development, as has previously been discussed in the current research project. The question will then be considered of how to bring about sustainable community development in the peri-urban and rural areas. This chapter also considers ways in which people's 'well-being and dignity' can be produced as an outcome of sustainable development. Such an outcome can be achieved by community members through their communal participation in their own development.

To achieve the above-mentioned goal, the contemporary and theological perspectives are merged, so that there can be mutual understanding of the issues at stake, allowing for unity to be attained in terms of the support of community development.

#### 3.2 Contemporary perspective on community development

De Beer and Swanepoel (2011:35) assert that the practice of community development dates back to the history of the early civilisations, when mankind initiated actions from which groups, or parts of groups, benefited in some or other way. In reference to Brokensha and Hodge, De Beer and Swanepoel (2011:35) further explain that it is:

To bring back life in all its completeness making the villagers self-reliant and self-respectful, acquainted with the cultural tradition of their own country and competent to make an efficient use of modern resources for the fullest development of their physical, social, economic and intellectual conditions.

A number of literature studies reveal that the subject of the poor and poverty is at the heart of the community development debate. De Beer and Swanepoel (2011:18) echo Midgley (1986:25), who warns that:

The poor are not a homogeneous group: based on the fact that the deprived rural communities and urban squatter settlements are comprised of the poor, the very poor and not so poor who have differential access to resources.

At the time of the current study, and particularly in South Africa, both peri-urban and rural areas, according to Swanepoel (1997:10–11), were affected in the following way:

Community development was not very popular in the initial stages, but it was acknowledged and pursued at various levels in the former Homelands. One such level was that of local self-help groups. In most cases this did not require policy decisions at central level. Local officials either made use of local groups to start projects that accorded with the goals set by the officials.

The above means that not all the government departments involved adopted community development as a general approach to rural development. At most, some commitment was made to community development as an underlying 'principle' of rural development, which meant that, if more attention were to be paid to grassroots participation, that the result of adopting such a focus would go a long way to making a positive contribution to the community development of peri-urban or rural areas.

The challenge is that, in fulfilling the requirements of development communally, the approach has not, as yet, produced fruitful outcomes in transforming the communities, due to the limited resources that these communities have. Louw and Venter (2010:7) make it clear that the strategy that was being used at the time was not working for that particular period. This might be so because it transcended the generations, even though doing so did not manifest sustainable outcomes in the communities. The strategy concerned, according to Louw and Venter (2010:7), consists of three basic questions that they continually ask themselves:

- 1) *Where are we now?* (The answer to this question is encapsulated in the clear acknowledgment of who they are, and what their positions are.)
- 2) *Where do we want to go?* (This question refers to the strategic direction that they believe must be adopted.)
- 3) *How will we get there?* (The answer to this question depends on how their strategic plan is formulated.)

All the results that were expected from their development were evaluated on the basis of the capacity of the questions to obtain the right answers. However, the strategy adopted in this respect has been proven to be manipulated by the developers themselves, resulting in the production of negative results, which are still seen as the consequences of the strategy to this day.

In addition, De Beer and Swanepoel, in their discussion of this perspective, state that the principle of community development has been abused over the last five decades. They argue:

[T]his is because, it was used to placate unsatisfied people; get development done in a cheap way, soften up people before the government's bulldozers moved in; indoctrinate the people to get their blessing for programs that had very little benefits for them; and westernize them especially women to demonstrate that they too subscribe to the western notion of the wholesome wife.

(De Beer & Swanepoel, 2011: xvii–xviii)

In line with the same perspective, the outcry has been, and still is, that there is a need for a change of agency mind-set towards becoming supportive of such ventures, instead of being the primary role-players therein, so as to enable effective decision-making to take place, instead of making the decisions themselves. Freeing up the decision-making in this way should serve to enhance the ownership of development, instead of them themselves being the owners of such development. Making such a move should remove the temptation for the agencies to corrupt the development initiative in a way that prevents the harmonising of the procedures and measures, which should take place in the initial stages. The failure to do this will result in a failure to respect the fact that “at the centre of the development process are people, and every development process must reflect this reality” (Turok, 1994:7).

In view of the above, one can strongly argue that the deleterious situation in which people find themselves is not because they do not know where to start, in order to reach the point where they ought to be. It must be kept in mind that the above questions are still basic, and are mindful of the realities that are considered when undertaking development, even in this age (with the hope that success will be achieved in future). My argument is that the development agencies and practitioners have always found themselves to be bedevilled by the same problems, because development initiatives tend to lack both honesty, in terms of the driving forces, and loyalty towards those who are being developed (meaning those who reside in the peri-urban and rural areas). All this serves to exacerbate the situation, in which people end up destroying what they already have, because the realities only slightly, but surely, manifest themselves gradually.

Moreover, the truth is that an expectancy of sustainable development cannot be attained while the above-mentioned chaos, as portrayed above, remains. De Beer and Swanepoel (2011: xviii) affirm this:



Sustainable development requires the empowerment of the people to be responsible for their own development; this is to be done in a way that will bring harmony with the local ecology. It must involve a process in which the capacity of people is built so that they take responsibility for their own development through which their human dignity is enhanced.

The above means that community development workers have, so far, failed, by and large, to implement all the above-mentioned required measures among the communities under consideration. To expect the attainment of sustainability under the prevailing conditions would be expecting the realisation of the impossible.

All the above proves that, even 'traditionally', community development has been robbed of its real meaning, value, and concept, due to the negative way in which such development has, so far, been applied by the agencies. This is due to the agendas that are opposed to transformation, and which were founded in self-centred programmes that did not show any evidence of caring about the poor. The clear result is the situation in which we find ourselves, because, in terms of the development literature, it has been proven that “[d]evelopment is about people and those people are the poor people, if its focus is not the poor it is just a dream not development at all” (Coetzee, 1989:30).

In support of the same perspective, Marie (1998:8) cites Shabecoff (1996:16), who argues that:

Neither economic development nor environmental protection can be achieved without consideration for the welfare of the people at the grass roots levels of society. Because poor people's movements in both the wealthier and poorer countries of the globe have played a significant role in advancing the notion of sustainability to include the harmonization and integration of environmental protection with economic and social well-being.

The above, therefore, leads to the following summative statement regarding the above: “The failure to sustain our development is not the outcome of the lack of knowledge or the lack of acquiring strategies; it is because of ignorance and carelessness from those who should develop the underdeveloped” (Dresner, 2002:73).

Ultimately, in this wilderness, there is still hope for the future, but the move forward requires a courageous tackling of the central issue of progressive transformation. Dresner (2002:73)

submits that pursuing such transformation must take place in a rigid social and political setting, within which attention must be paid to the implementation of policies that can help reinforce changes in the way in which resources can be accessed, and the way in which costs and benefits can be distributed, which must all take place in the name of social equity between the generations.

In addition, the above means that, for the agencies to be able to rechanneling the purpose of development (i.e. people's well-being), there is a need to seek introspectively where they went wrong. After doing so, they should apply measures that put people at the centre of development from beginning to end.

### **3.3 Theological perspective on community development**

From a theological point of view, it is evident that community development is not an explicit injunction, as we would have expected, but its meaning is thoroughly revealed in the light of a proper understanding of what the church is intended to be in being a 'community of God'. Such a perspective is firmly revealed in the activities that the church performs, and the principles for which it stands. This all has to do with the following basic two questions:

- What does God expect to do through his people as they come in contact with the unbelieving world?
- Why does the church exist as a gathered community?

The questions imply that what God intends to happen to believers as they meet together as members of the body of Christ is of pivotal importance to the community concerned.

Therefore, the above questions should be answered on the basis of an understanding of the church as a group of people who is concerned about the quality, and the characteristics, of both its spiritual and its physical life. Lindgren (1965:38–58) sums up this fact in the following description of the nature and mission of the church:

- The central concept of the church in the Old Testament was that of God's chosen community, because Israel, as the church, was chosen to make known God's love. Therefore, the church is of God, and God will preserve it till the end of time.
- In the New Testament, the most significant concept is based on the fact that the church is the body of Christ, with Christ being the head of the church. Therefore, the Christian church rests solidly on the conviction that Christ founded the church, and is its head, with his resurrected presence continuing to direct it.

- The common mission in both of the above concepts is that the church is a fellowship of redemptive love, because Christianity is basically concerned with the matter of relationships.

The above, therefore, means that the nature and the mission of the church is to bring about a healthy relationship between God and human beings, within the context of a given community. This clearly indicates that giving, communicating, and responding to love is an integral part of the church mission (Myers, 2011:32).

However, the church, having been proven to be a living organism, is also a structural organisation. That is, it is conceived as a living organism that grows and develops by transformation from within, in relation to the outside arena. It is also because of the fact that the church is the body of the resurrected living Christ, who continues to speak and act through it.

Therefore, it is in the light of the church being both an organism, and an organisation, that the development perspective on the church is evolved. Such evolution, in the church or biblical context, embraces the four features to be discussed below, which ought to be of primary concern to the church. However, the features tend to be portrayed with a negative connotation, as compared to the positive connotation that is given them in Gilbert Bilezikian's (1985:37) article on Community No. 101, in which he states: "The worst disease in today's world is not leprosy or cancer: it is the feeling of being uncared for, unwanted, of being deserted and alone."

In other words, whenever the church does not embrace the above-mentioned attributes, the possibility exists of losing out on developmental philosophy. One could argue here that all of the above is rooted in a lack of acknowledging the reality of what God is doing in the church. As Mother Teresa (1982:7) affirms, this in stating that "[s]ince community alone will survive from this world into the next, it is ultimately the only thing that God is doing today that has eternal significance."

Jesus, as well, as described in Matthew (5:14 NIV) has the making of such a transition in mind when He states that: "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden."

In the light of this perspective, Rist (2010:20) views the church as a community of believers, which "is the belief of a given social group in certain indisputable truths, which determine[s] obligatory behaviour in such a way as to strengthen social cohesion". The reason for it being

so “is because the act of belief is performativity, and if people must be made to believe, it is so that they can be made to act in a certain way”.

The above means that, to be able to identify gaps in development, the church has to know both its standpoint, and the reasons for its position. Therefore, the current study portrays this as the calling of the church, because such calling is primarily communal. This is affirmed both inside (meaning within the local church) and outside the church (meaning within the community, or society, at large).

To sum up, the above, according to Denny (2002:12), means that:

[L]ike any development initiative agency, the church has to revisit its four chief stones to be able to make impact in developing communities in any given context, those are:

- recognise the needs of the community;
- organise neighbours and local agencies;
- draw on untapped community resources; and
- create new community connections through group activities.

The above, according to Bosch (1991:79), proposes adopting an approach of seeing “the mission of the church as mediating salvation”, whereby the mission itself can be used as a tool for attracting people to the church, where they could access salvation itself. In terms of this perspective, the well-being of individuals and society is a priority. The kingdom of God is viewed as the objective of the whole counsel of God, as it should always have been.

Lastly, all the above, in its essence, is a responsive activity of the church to the passing of time within the community, with the response of the church being: to bring people together; to devote herself full-time to the healing of the fractures in the community of humankind; and to uphold principles of justice, charity and peace. It is only through placing herself at the disposal of others, in the fulfilment of the above-mentioned goals, that she might rightly justify her own being.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the challenge of promoting sustainable development has been shown to be about more than just finding more effective, and more efficient ways, of achieving development. Such development is also about making a genuine commitment to a common interest, by means of developing a new approach that binds all stakeholders and socially based values together, in a way that focuses on the humans involved, rather than on the government. It is, ultimately, about the distributing of power to the residents concerned.

The above is to be done so that people can come to identify themselves with their initiative, and be able to make decisions about their own future. This means that the community itself, in place of outsiders or developers, will be accountable for its own sustainability.

## Chapter Four

### The position of the church in community development

#### 4.1 Introduction

The essence of sustainable development is dealing with the continuous flow of benefits (August, 1999:27). Such ongoing flow of benefits, or resources, is a restricted process, especially in terms of the degradation of development, as well as of the ecological, and environmental, resources concerned. In other words, the general requirement for sustainability, as a vector of development, is that it must be “non-decreasing over time” (Bryant & White, 1982:17). As such, the church can be viewed as being in a more favourable position than it might otherwise be, in terms of promoting the sustainability of human development. Hence, August (1999:35), quoting from Ephesians 1:21–22, affirms that, even more than promoting sustainability:

The church is the establishment of God’s rule over the cosmos, which means it, serve as a sign of God’s rule, His plan to govern all things established in the Old Testament is not fulfilled in the church alone. Its fulfilment is a universal one, as His rule extends over all creation and all nations. God’s present activity in the world, in part demonstrated by His care for the Church, gives it reason to see His kingdom building activity in the history of all the nations and human society.

Therefore, the main question to be asked of the church concerning nature and God, according to Bryant and White (1982:17), is whether it sees nature as nothing more than a collection of passive, malleable resources, to be used in development activities, or whether it sees the natural order in more sacred terms, as being filled with the presence, and purpose, of God. What the theology of earth-keeping entails is up for consideration. The key question appears to need to be answered, in order to be able to affirm the position of the church in regards to the sustainability of community development.

In simple terms, according to the statement above it is clear that the kind of a church concern is the church that: (1) seeks to disclose God’s purposes in creation; (2) striving to reveal the whole counsel of God; and (3) partaking in the redemptive activities within the communities concern. Those include applying ethical measures in a quest for justice to all activities concerned. This is not the single denominations initiative but the initiative of the universal members of the body of Christ from various denominations in the given vicinity that are concern with sustaining development in the communities concern.

## **4.2 The position of the church, in terms of the sustainable community development**

Human beings, and their surrounding community, are an integral part of development. If their development is under threat, or is hampered for one or other reason, humans themselves will be under threat, or are likely to be subject to harm. This fact is the basis on which the principle of sustainability is built. Elliott (1994:1–6) clearly articulates this when stating:

Sustainable development does not comprise a single universal goal. It is rather a broad direction which is context specific. It means different things to different people according to their context.

(Elliott, 1994:1–6)

In this section, a critical understanding of the position of the church, in terms of the sustainability of community development, is presented. In this section of the research assignment, the church is seen as a community of faith that seeks to restore, and to build, a peaceful relationship, as an element of sustainable development, in all areas of life.

### **4.2.1 The church as a community of faith**

The church has been identified as a community of faith that is called from a diverse sort of bondage to freedom, with it being called to develop a sense of identity that is founded on a common bond with a God of righteousness and compassion. The church is called to the twin vocations of worship and participation, in terms of the creative redemptive purpose that unifies all history, and which is directed to the restoration of the whole creation, within a universal order that is dominated by a spirit of shalom (August, 1999:30). Moreover, the church is a community of the faithful, who seek to live true to the biblical model, with its institutional structures being central to its confessions and missions (August, 1999:31).

It is clear, then, that the church arises, and exists, neither according to nature, nor according to historical human decision, but as a divine convocation. The initiative for the church coming into being, therefore, eternally belongs to the Lord, who says: “I will build my church.” The church can, thus, be seen as a company that, from the very first, has come together on the basis of command, and not as the result of an agreement that has been freely entered into (Nicholls, 1986:163–164). Because, according to David Bosch (1991:125):

The church as the community of believers, gathered by divine election, calling, new birth, and conversion, which lives in communion with the Triune God, is granted the forgiveness of sins, and is sent to serve the world in solidarity with all mankind.

First and foremost, the church, in order to stand in a firm position in relation to the sustainability of community development, must recall its traditional foundations. By doing so, it will be able to use its identity as a basis for each and every step on the way towards engaging more closely with the community than it has done in the past (that is, in terms of participating in the redeeming initiative of God, as the redeemed community). As Braaten (1997:3) suggests: “If there is to be a community of redeemed sinful creatures, the immediately involved creatures must be sinners.”

Therefore, in terms of the insight provided by most radical Christian thinkers, God allows sin, and the allowing of sin cannot be fully separated from the allowing of creatures: to be a part of his creation. As Luther once said: “God created us just in order to redeem us” (“*Denn er hat uns eben dazu geschaffen dass er uns erlosete*”; *Bekennnisschriften...*, 660:33–34).

When viewing the church as a community, and as it is presented in the New Testament, Kirk (1997:43) states:

[I]t is clear that church is not an institution which owns property, performs rites and organises meetings, or even one that plans strategies to evangelise the unreached people. Rather, it is a group of ordinary people who, because they are experiencing the immense grace of a compassionate God, are learning how to overcome hostility between people, forgive and trust one another, share what they have and encourage one another in wholesome and joyous relationships.

In support of the above, Hendriks (2004:37) affirms:

- The local congregation should:
  - know its identity (meaning that the local congregation should know that it is, first and foremost, the manifestation of the church);
  - realise the importance of empowering the laity; and
  - not ignore the reality of diversity and pluralism.
- All congregations should take it as their mandate to witness in a world where rapid transition is taking place, and where they are confronted by global events.
- The local congregation should also realise the importance of working from the bottom up (meaning that it must start with the individual members of the congregation). However, it should also, simultaneously, be able to speak beyond its local context (meaning that it must fulfil a universalising function).

The above points imply that sustainable development is that which ensures that the local congregation comes to: know its own identity; realise the importance of empowering the



laity; and be aware of the reality of diversity and pluralism, so as to be able to take, as its mandate, the need to witness in a world where rapid transition is taking place, and where it is confronted by global events. Above all, it must realise the importance of working from the grassroots level up, with people's context being the focal point of the way forward.

#### **4.2.2 The church and society**

As viewed in the light of the above-mentioned theological conception of the church, a community of faith should have a keen interest in building up a peaceful, and harmonious, relationship, so that its role, within the wider society, cannot be ignored. In such regard, the church, in relation to sustainable development, can be seen, in terms of Moltman's (2000:11) argument, as the foundational application of God's word to society as a whole, and as an overarching concept governing all His dealings with His people. The above is articulated, by Moltman, in terms of the following four points:

- 1) There is no Christian identity without public relevance; 2) There is no public relevance without theology's Christian identity; 3) since for Christians sake theology is kingdom-of-God theology; 4) while on the other hand kingdom-of-God theology gets lost in the clouds of utopia unless it is based on the person and history of Christ; and 5) unfolded out of the experiences of his Spirit.

All the above has come about because God, after the Fall, did not just let go of Creation, and watch it from a distance, but continued to interact with it, as well as to sustain, to guide, to rule, and to direct it. This means that the church, in terms of the sustainability of community development, has found its identity through striving to be relevant. Such striving for relevance, according to Hendriks (2004:19), is rooted in the understanding that:

God as our creator-redeemer-sanctifier is a purpose-driven God and as such theology and the church should reflect it, it should be part of our identity. Based on the fact that an inward focused church dies because it loses its identity.

The above proposes that the church, to be true, faithful and effective, should develop its leadership, and empower its congregations with a vision, and with a methodology, that will enable it to deal with the major challenges facing the community at large.

The challenges concerned include the need to satisfy both the physical and the spiritual needs of the community, because God's interest in dealing with His Creation envisions the satisfaction of both. As Myers (2011:7–9) affirms: "Holistic ministry means combining evangelism (meeting spiritual need) with relief and development (meeting physical need)."

All the above is rooted in the phenomenon of love, in terms of which a loving God is proven to be the work of the Spirit, while loving neighbours are present in the material world. Moreover, the above concepts are both inseparable, because having the one without the other is the proof of having neither. According to Myers (2011:7–9), this is because: “When we separate the spiritual from physical, we not only separating the evangelism from development, but we separate gospel-as-word from the gospel-as-deed, and provide no home for gospel-as-sign.”

To achieve all the above, according to Myers (2011:207):

[T]he church needs to help the community to recognise the activity of God in the story of the community. Whether the community is Christian or not, whether religious or not, our theology tells us that God has been doing creative and redemptive work in the life of the community, if only we look for it. Whether a disaster was averted or a blessing was unexpected, God and grace were at work. Wherever things worked for life and against death, Christ's fingerprints can be seen – “All things were created by him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together.”

(Colossians 1:17 NIV)

In doing the above, the church should first seek to be recognised as part of the community, rather than the community first seeking to be part of the church. With the view of acknowledging God's omnipresence in all positive activities in the community, the community will then, hopefully, in return see the purpose of their existence in terms of the given community. In doing so, relationships leading to transformation are likely to be created. As Bragg (2003:15) states: “True transformation also depends on the establishment and the affirmation of all people's dignity and self-worth – especially as society is changing. People need self-esteem to be fully human.”

Being 'fully human' can mean different things to different people, who all have different experiences, but, in terms of the experiential nature of sustainability, in relation to community development, the perspective involved should be participatory. This means that individuals are capable of recognising their potential for maintaining their surroundings, and for improving on their development. Such recognition includes consideration both of the environment, and of the resources that are available in a given area. The above implies that, as long as there is a sense of dependency between the developed communities and the developers, there will not be accountability in terms of the maintenance of resources, and the results concerned will always be lacking in sustainability within the communities involved.

However, according to Burkey (1993:208), the above can be achieved,

Only if people's well-being is embraced in a form of letting them to participate in their development which is based on the beneficial attainment of access to resources and the mobilization of resources by the poor in order to address their development needs.

The success of the above lies mostly in six of the seven principles regarded by Baker (2006:108) as being the kingpins of good governance:

- *Partnerships*: Alliances need to be established among all the stakeholders concerned, so as to ensure their acceptance of the need for collective responsibility, decision-making, and planning.
- *Accountability*: All the stakeholders involved need to take responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
- *Participation*: All the major groups in a society need to be directly involved in striving to implement, and maintain, sustainable development.
- *Transparency*: The public should have access to all relevant information.
- *Equity and justice*: Environmentally sound, socially just, and equitable economic aspects of development must work in unison.
- *Concern for the future*: Plans and actions should be undertaken that address both the short-term and the long-term trends, as well as which consider the needs of future generations.

When the above are applied correctly, according to Griggs (2013:307), it should be possible for the communities to see an “end of poverty and improve well-being through access to education, employment and information, better health and housing, and reduced inequity while moving towards sustainable consumption and production”.

Such improvement entails that the definition, and practice, of ‘sustainable development’ must be undertaken in the context of both showing good governance, and considering the environment. However, according to Stokke (1991:3): “Sustainable development needs a strong, civil society; it demands enlightened social intervention and thrust in an interventionist state.”

The above should be done so that the inclusion of all the stakeholders takes place in a neutral and unbiased way that is harmonious in its essence. As Korten (1980:498) affirms, it requires organisations: “With a well-developed capacity for responsive and anticipatory adaptation – organisations that: (a) embrace error; (b) plan with the people; and (c) link

knowledge building with action.”

However, at the same time, according to De Beer and Swanepoel (2011:41–42), there is a need to consider that:

Community development is not the action of an individual or of a few individuals. The individual is important, and it is therefore a collective activity in that a group of people sharing a mutual problem, needs, sentiment or concern, act together and in concert and share a certain responsibility for the action. Such a collective action is a human activity, dealing with human problems and needs. It is also a voluntary action. Not all people who stand to gain from community development will act together. There is a personal freedom for individuals to join a collective activity or not.

Lastly, the clear application of the above precepts should serve as a channel that will enable both participation and freedom, with the result being sustainable development in any given community. Nevertheless, if the above are not thoroughly considered as being pillars of good governance, we will face the same challenges in the future as we do today.

#### **4.2.3 The church and human empowerment**

Human empowerment is an essential element of sustainable development. This is because modern models of development have failed to alleviate the existing levels of poverty. The result is that the emphasis has been on rapid economic growth, with the failure to consider human development as being a component that can enhance sustainable development. Focusing on production needs without minding human needs is doomed to failure (Ajulu, 2001:11). Moreover, empowerment brings hope where there was none before; it recharges the despondent, and provides a reason to live, especially where people’s lives are threatened by all kinds of social economic conditions (Speckman, 2007:132). This is because empowerment has to do with a method, or manner, of doing things in such a way that the powerless feel liberated, rather than oppressed (Speckman, 2007:132). This is because, according to De Beer and Swanepoel (2011:52), citing Taconni and Tisdell (1993:413), “[e]mpowerment is to have decision-making power.”

Yet, in order for people to be able to make decisions, they do need certain skills, although such skills are not the primary ingredient of empowerment, but only a tool of enablement. Hence, the duty of the church is, in addition, to provide the required information and knowledge, because people can make enlightened decisions only if they have the correct information available to them (Swanepoel, 1997:52).

Therefore, the empowerment of people in their community is the most urgent, and the most crucial, means of poverty alleviation. Theologically speaking, the way to empowerment requires that the church deals with the manifestations of human sin, such as greed and self-centeredness, which are the underlying causes of poverty. This is because the empowerment of people must lead to the creation of a caring community that is characterised by neighbourly love, stewardship, and justice.

Moreover, empowerment must enable individuals and groups of people to learn how they can resolve their differences. But, ultimately, they have to deal with human selfishness, greed, and corruption, and to pursue the building of human character, which determines the maintenance of proper relationships among people (Ajulu, 2001:13). The end result of all this is said to be justice (among those who are involved in the process); well-being (focused mostly on those who are being developed); and on sustainability (of community development itself). In the light of the above, Swanepoel and De Beer (1998:23) argue that empowerment requires to be facilitated in terms of: skills and orientation training; credit; income-generation schemes; appropriate technology; education; and access to basic services. This is because the poor have specific needs, and require specific knowledge about the environment, as they only need assistance to overcome the challenges that are present in their current situation.

Lastly, I firmly believe that the church is one of the social departments that can help eradicate both individualism and human selfishness, when it is given the platform to do so. This is due to the church's proven record of always standing up against injustice, and against the elements of prejudice that communities have consistently encountered since ancient times. By so doing, communities experience the type of human empowerment that comes to the people from within, and not from outside, their immediate surroundings.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

The position of the church towards the sustainability of community development does not receive the amount of attention that it should, and it is, therefore, often neglected. Many development projects do not even consider the church as a participant at all. One of the main reasons for this is that it is regarded as complex and time-consuming to involve the church in the projects concerned. Another reason is that the church's role, in terms of it having the potential to empower people, tends either to be missed out on altogether, or is tends to be misread as a threat to 'orderly' development. This results from its poor, or inadequate, participation with the community, which is detrimental for both the projects, and for those who are supposed to benefit from them. The positive elements of the situation can be seen in Swanepoel's (1997:29) statement: "It is also important to note that if the

ownership of projects is in the hands of the community, that community will be the initiator of coordination.”

This chapter has discussed the position of the church, and the ways in which it is realised, in an effort to counter the shortcomings of its current condition. An attempt has also been made to engage with the issue from the biblical perspective, so that the church can become a tool in the service of learning and empowerment.

## Chapter Five

### **Summary of the research, and suggestions for a new paradigm shift among community developers**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Sustainability, in terms of development, has come to clearly mean a wide variety of things, depending on the given set of culturally defined assumptions that prevails in a given instance. Theologians and Christian development workers, like their secular counterparts, have struggled to understand the true meaning of sustainable development. In the light of this ongoing discussion, an alternative framework is suggested for the understanding of human, and social, needs from a communal perspective, which I call a new paradigm shift that can enhance community development activities in both peri-urban and rural communities within the South African context.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold – first, to introduce the two words (freedom and participation) that are proposed, by the paradigm, as being relevant to the focus of this text, and, second, to provide a guide to the structure, and to the content, of this text, in the light of the aforementioned concepts. This is illustrated by means of both a figure and a table, and it is also explained throughout the entire chapter.

The following discussion highlights the above-mentioned understanding, and draws strength from two concepts, freedom and participation, that are debated in this chapter. The concepts are proven to be interdependent, based on the fact that the one needs the other for the maintenance of its core value. My point of argument is that the above can be portrayed in terms of the value of freedom being manifested in the realisation of participation, and the value of participation being manifested in the realisation of freedom. Under such conditions, it might be worthwhile to observe the various ways in which people can actually participate within their communities.

#### **5.2 Suggestions for a new paradigm shift, directed towards participation, among community developers**

In anticipation to introduce the concept of participation, in relation to the subject of sustainable community development, it is clear that a reasonable mind would ask why participation should take place in the first instance. It is because participation in the decision-making process is more important than either the advice, or the technical assistance, that is

provided by the developers or agents. This is because both peri-urban and rural residents, like the current researcher, neither profit, nor benefit, from development unless they themselves are directly involved in the decision-making process. Where there is no participation from the local people in projects or development programmes, they are ignorant of the benefits that such endeavours can bring to them. Villagers nowadays tend neither to be as easily deceived, nor as easily persuaded, as they were in the past. Those who currently live in the rural areas tend to have awareness of their own circumstances, and to know the intricate details of their own surroundings.

In the light of the above, De Beer and Swanepoel (1997:128–129) indicate that, in the literature, the practice of participation is always connected to the 'doing' by communities, groups, and individuals, of things that are related to the development, improvement, or change of an existing situation, to something that is, presumable, better than before (Moser, 1989:81). The researchers suggest two ways of looking at participation: either as a system-maintaining, or as a system-transforming, process. Wisner (1988:14) distinguishes between a 'strong' and a 'weak' interpretation of the phenomenon of participation. The strong interpretation is described in the following terms:

Advocated a new style of development which was radically participatory and in which land reform, assets redistribution and other necessary preconditions set the stage for the poor to take control of their own development, usually through grassroots organizations. On the other side was the weak interpretation of participatory development, promoted mostly by the bilateral and multi-literal aid agencies. This version saw participation as a limited, formalized process, stripped of the political volatility of direct popular involvement.

The division between system maintenance, with a weak, or conservative, interpretation, and system transformation, with a strong, or radical, interpretation, is of great importance in the debate on sustainable development, because it enables us to be aware of what best suits our present context.

Further, De Beer and Swanepoel (1997:27) refer to the above, in strongly affirming:

Different people can interpret the term participation differently. Because, for some people participation merely implies providing information, while for others it can imply total control of a process. Therefore, the views on participation influence the view on basic needs. On the one hand, it is regarded as the government function to provide the necessities to the poor. On the other hand, it is seen as a right of the poor to prioritise their needs and make decisions on how these needs should be addressed (Wisner, 1988).



There are both normative, and functional, reasons for participation being an essential condition for the promotion of sustainable development. Taking the normative perspective, it can be argued that participating in decisions that shape one's life is considered a hallmark of democratic practice. This is due to the promoting of sustainable development involving the making of difficult decisions about one's life circumstances. Also, it is only through increasing participation that society can construct "a shared public basis" on which to ground the legitimacy, and the acceptance, of such restrictions and corrections (Achterberg, 1993:26).

The functional argument builds upon Brundtland's belief that effective participation in decision-making process by local communities can help them articulate and effectively enforce their common interest" (WCED, 1987:47). To this end, functional reason has added the argument that participation is the only approach to policymaking that can incorporate the needs of all segments of society, as well as of future generations, and of other species (Dryzek, 1992).

By implication, both the normative, and the functional, modes of participation are important, because they help in dealing with the fact that, in our communities, there is some disagreement about ideals, or values. This means that, if participation is not allowed in the explicit terms that these principles suggest, the legitimacy of the process is undermined. De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:22) shed light on this point in saying:

It is not clear whether involvement is synonymous with participation. In recent literature, involvement seems to refer to co-option or, at best, the mobilization of communities to participate or be involved in the execution of top-down determined development plans projects. A more radical interpretation of popular participation (as distinct from involvement) is found in the literature on empowerment.

In this study, we have looked at ways in which participation can be applied within the communities described, in a manner that will help promote sustainability. The starting point to applying the measures involved, according to Brokensha and Hodge (1969:48), lies in the premise that people must be thought the fundamental basics for participation, as Brokensha and Hodge (1969:48) stipulate: "Community Development is the educational process by which people change themselves and their behaviour, and acquires new skills and confidence through working in cooperation."

### **5.3 A development project as means of participatory development**

The above means that the poor themselves can define, and control, the conditions of their own struggle. A development project, in other words, becomes a means of participatory development, whereby the project is self-sustaining (meaning that it is controlled by the community). In this kind of a project, the ultimate control is given to the communities, so that they can make the relevant decisions regarding their own affairs. In making such decisions, they are able to govern their own lives towards achieving their basic human rights, because participation, in this sense, is a basic human need.

The above corresponds with Wilson and Ramphela's (1989:262) argument that empowerment is not co-optional, because "[g]enuine development work is that which empowers people; which enable them to build organisations that, like a hydro-electric dam, pool their resources and generate power where previously there was none."

As was clearly articulated in Chapter Three, the lack of empowerment of the residents of both peri-urban and rural areas could be the core problem that has resulted in a lack of successful, or sustainable, development in the poor, and underdeveloped, areas. This calls for the expression of a genuine interest that will affirm learning through participation by the change agent, as well as by all members of the community, as a way forward that will empower people to develop themselves.

In the above regard, revisiting the 1983 proposal of the President's Council regarding the Population Development Programme (PDP) can bring light onto this matter. This is especially in terms of the last two points noted by Aardt (1994:21), as follows:

- Local communities should be involved in the application of the PDP in their areas by means of the planning of community development programmes by the local community development committees that are responsible for planning for their communities.
- The members of community development committees should be involved in training, and retraining, courses, so as to enable them to do their planning on an informed basis.

These points should be used by the developers in the communities concern as the key tasks to achieve expected results in the development programmes. This is to be done in order for the people to commit and own their development. At the same time other forms should be considered and applied if needed due to the diverse challenges inherited from the old South Africa.

Hence Louw (2005:448–449) explains that, because communities suffer from having to cope with various challenges, the use of Maslow's hierarchy, which is vital to the catering for the needs of each community, is highly relevant in relation to their functioning in each and every social sphere. Therefore, Louw (2005:449) proposes a hierarchy of needs. Within this hierarchy, the lower needs must be largely taken care of before people can exert effort on satisfying their higher needs, as Table 5.1 below affirms.

**Table 5.1: Louw's hierarchy of needs**

Level	Need for	Concerned with	Example
<b>Highest</b>	Transcendence	Finding an identity beyond oneself	Experiencing life as sacred, and experiencing the world with awe.
	Self-actualisation	Fulfilling all one's potential	Experiencing life fully; developing one's own unique values, and capacities.
	Esteem	Recognition and achievement	Setting goals and achieving them; mastering something difficult.
	Love and belonging	Affiliation and acceptance	Being with a group, being cared for, being understood, and being intimate.
	Safety	Long-term survival and comfort	Order, stability, having a steady job, owning a house, saving money.
<b>Lowest</b>	Physiological	Immediate survival and comfort	Shelter, food, sleep, sexual relations.

Source: Louw (2005:449).

To a certain extent, Table 5.1 above should assist developers to gain an understanding of, and knowledge about, the needs and wants of the community that might, otherwise, be ambiguous, and which often tend to be marginalised, due to the misunderstandings that the community has about them. It must be kept in mind, in this respect, that needs and wants are two different concepts. Needs refer to the specific category of universal goal that is relevant to all humans in their effort to protect themselves from harm. In contrast, wants, or desires, are possessed in relation to something that is preferred by an individual, and which

is present in the cultural environment (Lavers, 2008). The above has resulted in many of the development programmes that have been planned by the government to improve the quality of life of a community being unsuccessful (Ngidang, 2002; Ngidang & Abdul, 1999).

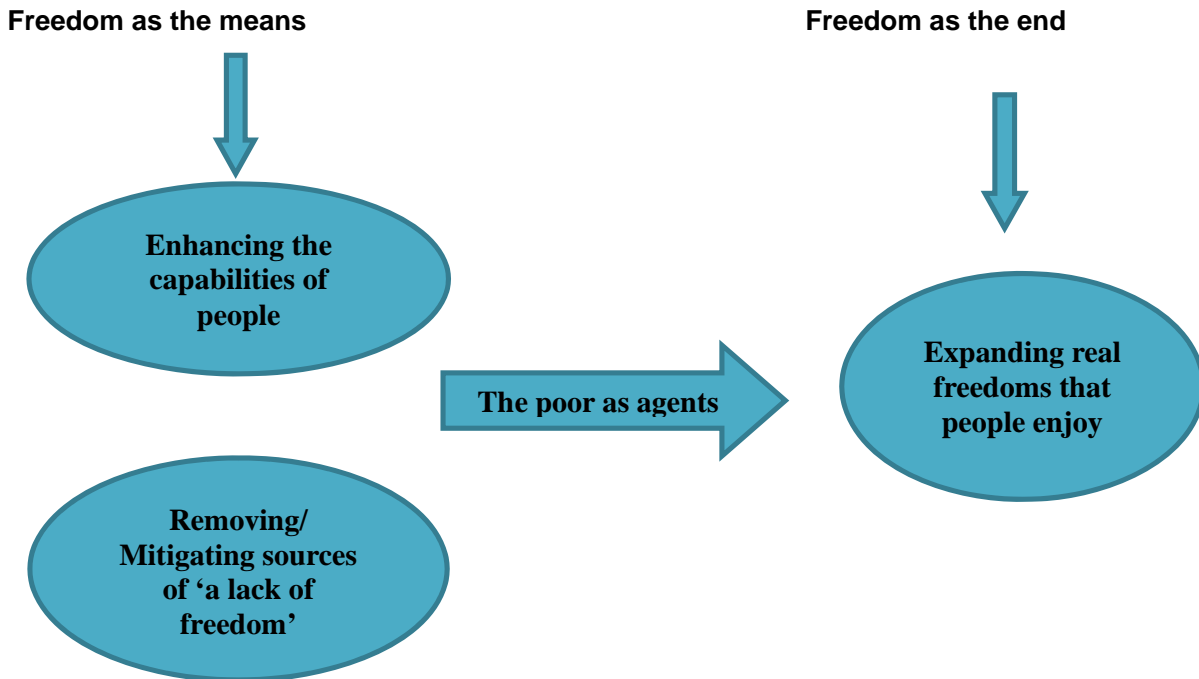
The above has been proved in many communities, with, through the adoption of the above approach, the dynamics, the trends, and the challenges of sustainability in relation to community development being easily addressed. This is because, when there is harmony between the higher and the lower needs, there is also a communal willingness to participate in development projects from both the poor, and the relatively better off, residents of any given area. In addition, at the same time, this works best in terms of recovering the well-being of the people, as well as in terms of rebuilding their dignity. This is done in order that they can feel the need of each other's contribution to the process, without prejudices being aired among the people, due to their diversity.

#### **5.4 Freedom of participation in terms of a development project**

The other strategy that should be embraced, in order to be able to move forward, is to create an atmosphere that enables freedom of participation. In terms of such a strategy, the community is given the freedom to participate in the strategizing, from the initial stages of development, so they will be able to assume accountability for the outcomes concerned, whether or not they are to their advantage. By this, we mean that freedom is both the means, and the end, of development. Myers (2011:29–31) speaks of this approach in stating:

Freedom is both the goal and the means to human development. The goal of development is to create the environment and conditions within which all people have the freedom to seek the better human future they desire. Freedom is the means of development in two ways. First, the poor themselves must be the actors if their capability is to be increased. Second, the poor should be supported in removing the impediments to their being actors and making choices.

All the above is conceptualised in terms of the fact that people are only free when they can freely identify, and be a part of, their development in its wholeness, which leads to them being responsible for its sustainability. The possession of such freedom affirms both the sense of individual autonomy, and the sense of communal autonomy. This is because, when individuals are free to decide whether or not to participate in a certain development, the whole community will, automatically, be free to participate therein (see Figure 5.1 below).



**Figure 5.1: Freedom as the means and the end in terms of sustainable community development**

According to Myers (2011:30–31), freedom enables both the change agent, and the beneficiaries, to participate freely in serving, and receiving, the service. It helps the above-mentioned individuals to better love God and their neighbours when they humbly submit to each other, in the spirit of learning from one another in the process of development. Also, if those involved are free to participate in the development, they will be likely to experience positive change. However, if they are less free, then the development policy, or process, concerned is likely to be suspect. The above indicates that both parties should reach a consensus, because they need each other to be able to improve their environment. In addition, such a consensus should be reached as the result of no one owing the other anything. Accordingly, they should both be driven by one mandate (i.e. social justice), which should work towards the betterment of people's lives.

By implication, freedom could help in driving these communities to embrace the transition that both Maloka and Le Roux indicate as being manifested in the New South Africa, in the following terms: "At present the transition towards the New South Africa is based on spiritual balance, social and economic regeneration, mental emancipation and national self-determination" (Maloka & Le Roux, 2000:ii).

The above clearly implies that there is a need for a change of mind-set within the communities, with both they, and the change agents of these communities, starting to work

together for the people's well-being, and so as to reclaim the dignity of those concerned. By doing so, everyone will become voluntarily involved in strengthening the empowerment of the community at large, and not just of a few. The results should be that everyone will be held accountable for their own community's sustainability, while simultaneously being actively involved in its development.

Moreover, it is in capturing the harmonisation of the highest, and the lowest, needs of people that we can come to apply freedom as both the goal, and the means, of human development. It is only through freedom that we can find a firm ground on which to embrace participatory development within the aforesaid communities. In essence, this should be the driving force for the church's active engagement in prioritising the issue of participation in terms of community development. This is because the mission of the church is not limited to the spreading of the gospel of spiritual salvation of the human soul, but is also to respond to human physical needs, which are both transcendent and immanent in nature. As Moltman (2000:43) affirms: "People's participation in the process of their development will lead to a just, sustainable and inclusive development. Dialogue in the process of development between the 'uppers' and the 'lower' is very crucial."

Consideration must be given to the reason for the need for participation. According to Burkey (1993:54), participation is necessary because:

Participation is an essential part of human growth that is the development of self-confidence, pride, initiative, responsibility, cooperation. Without such a development within the people themselves, all efforts to alleviate their poverty will be immensely more difficult, if not impossible. This process, whereby people learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems, is the essence of development.

The above entails that, if people are given the freedom to participate in the process of development, the chances of failure are likely to be few. In other words, participation and freedom, in terms of the development process, cannot be separated, because they both qualify each other. This means that, if they are lacking in our communities, the result might be a serious dilemma, which could hinder development. The absence of free participation in development has always resulted in rioting, as the only way that the rioters feel that they can gain an opportunity to be heard, or to be taken seriously. This means that there is a need to revisit our strategies, and to find them in the above-mentioned pillars if we want to be able to sustain our development effectively.

According to Palskar (2011:130), in walking together with others, mutual trust should be present, because:

If you put trust in people they start becoming responsible for their thought and action. When the people feel that they have the freedom to think, act and relate to each other, they take on a lot of responsibility.

Lastly, when implementing all the above, an analytical strategy should be used in order to be able to affirm whether we have reached our desired form. All this is indicated in Cameron's (1993:94) table, which is given below.

**Table 5.2: Cameron's analytical strategy**

<b>Narrative summary</b>	<b>Objectively verifiable indicators</b>	<b>Means of verification</b>	<b>Important assumptions</b>
Goal			
Purpose			
Output			
Input			

Source: Cameron (1993:94).

Use of the analytical strategy enables identification of strengths and weaknesses, which allows for self-perception in terms of the project, and in terms of the wider community. The adoption of such a strategy allows for coverage of the interests of the community, thus empowering community members to participate freely in both the project and the community, in order to satisfy the prevailing needs. Thereafter, as a community, we can then be held accountable for the sustainability of our own development. This is in keeping with Swanepoel's (1997:5) application of the principle of participation:

It has now been established that people who do not participate in their own development have no affinity for developmental efforts and their results. The huge problem of sustaining development and maintaining facilities instituted by development is resolved if the affected people participate, knowing that they have a stake in the effort and results.

The above means that such an evaluation should be undertaken so as to enable

communities to be equipped to assess their own situation, and so as to generate baseline information that the communities could use to envision, to plan for, and to achieve a better future than they might otherwise have had. Ideas and Action (1981:82) affirms, in this regard, that “[i]ndividuals and groups must assume responsibility for planning, managing and assessing their actions if they are to control them. This insures maximum self-reliance and continuity of activities when outside support is withdrawn.”

The reason for the above being so is because development, in any meaningful sense, must begin with, and within, the individual. Unless motivation comes from within, any efforts that are made to promote change will not be sustainable by the individual concerned, particularly when they remain under the power of others. This means that human development is essential for sustainable development, as Burkey (1993:35) explains:

Human (personal) development is a process by which an individual develops self-respect, and becomes more self-confident, self-reliant, cooperative and tolerant of others through becoming aware of his/her shortcomings as well as his/her potential for positive change. This takes place through working with others, acquiring new skills knowledge, and active participation in the economic, social and political development of their economy.

The above-mentioned process is crucial, since people do not wish to feel left out of the learning about, and the decision-making and understanding in relation to, their problems. If people are a part of the initiative, and accountable for it, they are not viewed as a 'group', terms of direct action, as 'unpaid hands' in terms of self-help, or as being excluded from the democratic process of participation.

Therefore, people need to be conscientised and stimulated to express their interest in their own development projects, so as to produce concrete results. Such results can be achieved through proper management, and through the proper use of democratic measures in decision-making.

Therefore, the current researcher maintains that both freedom and participation must be viewed as the means and the end of the process of sustainability in terms of community development. In this regard, both of the concepts can be viewed as the means to achieve a way forward, in terms of their ability to serve as a catalyst in the process of community development, as well as an end, in that they represent the ability of a community to exercise control over their own reality.



## 5.5 Concluding discussion

Lastly, to be able to pursue all this, relationship building is essential for successful activities, both of which depend on trusting and mutually supportive relationships among both the church and the community leaders. Without relationship building, leaders are likely to experience all sorts of problems those can arise from competition, envy, shyness, denial, dominance by some and silence by others, and other personal qualities that can fuel tensions. Achieving positive team results takes much longer if people do not trust each other from the beginning of community projects. But trust which affirms participation according to (Swanepoel, 2011:51) can solve this problem because: “The huge problem of sustaining development and maintaining facilities can be solved by having the local people fully present” (Swanepoel, 2011:52).

Finally, relationship-building will due to the important roles as means and end within the development process, serve as the main criteria with which both the developers and the church have to comply, if it is to be judged as an effective agent of development with this paradigm.

## 5.6 Summary of the research

Human individualism can impede progress, especially if individual interests conflict with the perceived need to exert a relatively broad cooperative effort. This is because, according to Baker (2006:3):

The development model that is based on individualistic consumption, rather than fostering social cohesion, leads to increased inequality, especially in an economic system subject. It prioritizes individual self-attainment at the expense of consideration of the common good.

In terms of the same perspective, the above is true because individualism always works against the common good in a society. Karp (1994:11) states, in this connection:

It is clear, then, that if you presume society is built on a horde of individuals working rationally in their own self-interests, we must explain the organization of society as a consequence of self-interest or the exercise of individual volitions.

Hence, it has been proven in this research that individualistic consumption, rather than fostering social cohesion, tends to lead the communities concerned (i.e. those in the peri-urban and rural areas) into a state of increased inequality, especially in terms of social well-being. For this reason, communal participation in development is encouraged, because it is in this way that sustainable community development can be promoted.

For the above-mentioned reason, the adoption of a participatory approach that affirms freedom has been emphasised in the current research, so as to encourage entering into interactions that reflect a shift from operating in terms of individualistic initiatives, to engaging in communal participation within the communities concerned. Doing so enables community members to fully participate in the decision-making about their own development.

In terms of the above perspective, both community and church leaders are expected to champion the mobilisation of community members, for it is through mobilisation that the success of leaders is assumed to have the most significant outcomes, with it being more likely to sustain a sense of collective motivation over an extended period than it might otherwise do. In contrast, Skerritt and Teare (2013:136), with whose writings this research has mostly agreed, affirm that it is the “[c]ommunity groups that opt to assume responsibility for development on behalf of others [that] are less likely to sustain their effort.”

The above therefore means that, although leaders should be granted credit whenever they succeed in their efforts, in terms of sustainability, communal responsibility has to be the

priority with any action taken. This is due to the fact that the most sustained communities are those that adopt sustainability as a communal duty. In other words, the application of the paradigm shift that has been proposed in the current chapter of this research assignment is the key to sustainability in relation to a form of development that affirms both freedom and participation as the dual pillars of sustainable community development.

Further, in the South African context, unity is the key to success, as it is clearly articulated in the research that sustainability is always an outcome of communal oneness. In terms of such thinking, community members voluntarily come together to facilitate the undertaking of a participatory decision-making process.

The effort that is made in relation to the above assumes that, when a state of readiness is achieved, the community is likely to be able to solve its own problems, and to cope with sustainable development challenges. In this context, the concept of the combined effort being greater than the total individual effort equates with having an enhanced cooperative capacity to bring about people's well-being, based on following through on a collaborative action plan.

I believe that the current thesis has the potential to transform development in both the peri-urban and the rural areas, which has, up until this point, failed in many communities in the areas concerned. Success is much more likely to be achieved with a form of development that is oriented to the future, and which is transformational in nature, or sustainable. This, in its core essence, demonstrates how people can be empowered through the making of a paradigm shift that centres the community in a process-oriented approach towards managing change. The people themselves recognise the inherent value of engaging in a people-centred, facilitated process.

The multiple aims of personal growth and community enhancement are admirable, and the current thesis has demonstrated the benefits and advantages that the adoption of such systems can provide. All the effort that is exerted in this respect is directed towards the common goal of 'people's well-being'.

Lastly, in summary, the current thesis proposes that, in exploring the means by which to become more sustainable, individuals and groups need a reference on which to rely, so that their efforts can be sincere, relevant, educative, and successful. The current research has placed the focus on the lack of sustainability in communities into a conceptual framework that will have striking transformational effects when it is applied to decision-making. Through

this thesis, practitioners and community leaders will be likely to find effective and comprehensive tools and resources at their fingertips, which will enable them to facilitate sustainable community development. A diverse range of sustainable community development methods has been examined in the course of this research, which has also assessed community needs and resources; created community visions; promoted the principles of freedom and participation; and analysed community problems.

## 5.7 Conclusion

The environment in which peri-urban and rural development takes place affirms the need for the emphasis to be placed on knowing about sustainability in terms of community development, as well as about resources, self-reliance, initiative-taking, and decision-making. Knowledge of the above should help community members to participate in their own development, rather than merely waiting for government attempts to develop them, although they have a right to be assisted by the government. Their ability to take an active part in their own development will come from them being well informed of the functions that they can fulfil.

I have argued, and demonstrated, in this thesis that sustainable community development is the outcome of freedom and participation being bestowed on those living in communities. Such bestowal affirms the sense of social well-being and justice among those who have to satisfy both their lower, and their higher, needs, so as to survive. In this perspective, the agents, the leaders, and the community as a whole work together towards attaining unity and constant change, and are bringing about an improvement in local conditions through participating meaningfully in transformative activities.

Yet, in order to optimise the potential of the existing challenges to our communities, it is important that the participatory measures indicated be adapted accordingly. Only when such participatory measures truly become a priority in terms of our development, will we be able to experience meaningful, and sustainable, development.

Participating in sustainable community development is not only a matter of relevance, nor does it only reflect a basic idea (i.e. participation) that develops into something more (i.e. sustainable community development). The idea of participation is practised and accepted among some of the most powerful development agencies and governments on the globe.

Sustainable community development, as a radical expression, directly affirms the need for participation. This is because such development is not merely participation that is taken a step further, but it is development with a totally different objective. Whereas participation aims to promote the positive outcome of development projects, sustainable community development aims to promote human beings, and, in particular, the poor or the oppressed.

In addition, a few cautionary notes on the principles of participation or sustainable community development must be added. Firstly, in spite of what has been said about such

development being “a process that can bring a poor community to its desired form” (Schweitzer, 1999:816), the idea is also open to misinterpretation. Midgley (1986:27) states that sustainable community development “is a process of change and transformation in a society, which insures human dignity, social reconstruction, and improvement in life expectancy, literacy, and high level of employment”.

The above might be true, if it is argued that no special measures are needed to make sustainable development possible. With stagnation and tribalism having been abolished in South Africa, some might argue that opportunities for equal access and competition now exist. Communities with a historically created disadvantage will, however, need special support in order to achieve sustainable development.

In contrast, the concept of sustainable development might be in danger of becoming homogenous, in terms of a ‘one size fits all’ outlook. Development institutions with an altruistic attitude might, for example, under the theme of sustainable development, simply provide disadvantaged communities with structured patterns from which they can initiate their own development, in the belief that ‘having a structure to begin with’ is equal to ‘sustainable development’. Such an approach might, misguidedly, then see that skilled workers are provided to the communities, in spite of the community members being enabled to develop themselves. The latter requires the community development process to be regarded as a learning process for the local community members.

The above is based on the fact that, in order to be able to sustain community development, educational patterns should be implemented, with a multidirectional exchange of knowledge taking place in the interactions between individuals, groups, change agents, and external institutions. The implementation of educational patterns should be characterised by the development of a sense of self-awareness and mutual respect. In the given context, it would only be possible to determine the above in terms of the long-term impact of community mobilisation, for it is through mobilisation that we can prove whether or not our development is sustainable. In this sense, the concept of sustainability of community development can be seen to refer to a living, evolving process, with the capacity for independent self-renewal.

Further, it is clearly articulated that sustainable community development cannot rest on the input of the national government alone. The model of such development promotes the implementation of a governance process that engages both state and non-state actors, and both the public and the private sectors, as they wrestle with reaching agreement on priorities, and on devising action plans to put the commitment to sustainable development into practice, through embarking on concrete development projects.

It is only through the putting in place of governance structures that are invigorated through an awareness of the need for partnership and shared responsibility; through the expression of empathy for the needs of the many, over and above the wants of the few; and through the acceptance of humans as being part of, rather than dominant over, nature, can conditions be created to bring the desired development model into operation (Baker, 2006:218).

Above all, it is clear that communal participation is the key to any form of community development, and that it is through such participation that sustainable development can be promoted, because from communal participation comes a sense of commitment to attaining one's end goal.

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