IN SEARCH OF ROOT CAUSES OF POVERTY
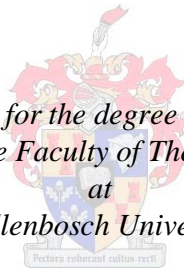# TESTING A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE IN DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUES

by
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in the Faculty of Theology
at
Stellenbosch University

Promotor: Professor Karel Thomas August

March 2013

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the content of this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously submitted it to any other university for a degree, either in part or in its entirety.

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ABSTRACT

Although there has been a significant improvement in terms of the quality of life for many South Africans since 1994, the reality for a significant portion of the population is still that of abject poverty. The South African government has made giant strides in terms of protecting the most vulnerable members of South African society through the Department of Social Development, the Department of Human Settlements, etc. The Church too, as a serious change-agent in civil society, continues to partner the government, the corporate world, and other institutions in helping to improve the quality of life for those who struggle with a daily poverty experience. In spite of the best efforts of many role-players, and the upward mobility of many people in the country, it would appear as though poverty is still a defining status for millions of South Africans.

Accordingly, this study seeks to investigate the critical need for understanding the importance of the root causes of poverty as opposed to simply considering the consequences of poverty. This study therefore aims to understand how the actions of individuals (poor and non-poor) and also economic, social and political systems contribute to either poverty, or poverty eradication. The methodological framework of the study is guided by the practical theological methodology of Robert Osmer and the correlational-hermeneutic approach proposed by Jurgen Hendriks.

Chapter 1 introduces the research, conceptualization and methodological orientation. Chapter 2, by means of the hermeneutical question, *what is going on?*, investigates and describes the socio-economic conditions in the world, Africa, South Africa, and the community of Factreton-Kensington in Cape Town, within a "quadrant" framework of economics, politics, religion and the natural environment. Chapter 3 builds on Chapter 2 and again asks the question: *what is going on in the world of development?* Chapter 3 also asks the question: *why is it going on?* Given the dialogical nature between theology and contemporary development discourse of this study, Chapter 4 asks the questions, *what do the Bible and theological commentators say about poverty?* and *what ought to be going on?* Chapter 5, building on the human rights approach of Chapter 3 and the ethic of love for one's neighbour of Chapter 4,

seeks to dialogically unlock the results that flow from Chapters 3 and 4. In Chapter 5, the questions are asked, *Why is it going on? What ought to be going on?* and *How might we respond?* Chapter 6 concludes with the researcher's perspectives, shared themes in the theological-contemporary development discourse, and recommendations and conclusions based on the study. The central question here is around: *How might we respond to poverty in South Africa?*

Findings indicate that a theological-contemporary development approach based on human rights and the ethic of "concrete" love for one's neighbour, has much to offer concerning the eradication of poverty in not only South Africa, but in all poverty contexts around the world.

OPSOMMING

Hoewel daar 'n beduidende verbetering in terme van die kwaliteit van die lewe vir baie Suid-Afrikaners sedert 1994 is, is die werklikheid vir 'n beduidende gedeelte van die bevolking nog steeds dié van uiterste armoede. Die Suid-Afrikaanse regering het reuse-vordering gemaak in terme van die beskerming van die mees kwesbare lede van die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing deur die Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling, die Departement van Menslike Nedersettings, ens. Die Kerk as 'n ernstige verandering-agent in die burgerlike samelewing, werk ook as 'n vennoot van die regering, die korporatiewe wêreld, en ander instellings om te help om die kwaliteit van lewe vir diegene wat sukkel met 'n daaglikse armoede ervaring te verbeter. Ten spyte van die beste pogings van baie rolspelers sowel as die opwaartse mobiliteit van baie mense in die land, wil dit voorkom asof armoede nog steeds 'n bepalende status vir miljoene Suid-Afrikaners inhou.

Gevolglik poog hierdie studie om die belangrikheid van die oorsake van armoede aan te spreek eerder as om net die oorweging van die gevolge van armoede te ondersoek. Hierdie studie het dus ten doel om te verstaan hoe die optrede van individue (arm en nie-arm) en ook die ekonomiese, sosiale en politieke stelsels bydra tot armoede, of die uitwissing van armoede. Die metodologiese raamwerk van die studie is gelei deur die prakties-teologiese metodologie van Robert Osmer en die korrelatiewe-hermeneutiese benadering voorgestel deur Jurgen Hendriks.

Hoofstuk 1 stel die navorsing, konseptualisering en metodologiese oriëntasie voor. Hoofstuk 2, deur middel van die hermeneutiese vraag, *wat gaan aan?*, ondersoek en beskryf die sosio-ekonomiese toestande in die wêreld, Afrika, Suid-Afrika, en die gemeenskap van Factreton-Kensington in Kaapstad, binne "n "kwadrant" raamwerk van die ekonomie, politiek, godsdiens en die natuurlike omgewing. Hoofstuk 3 bou voort op Hoofstuk 2 en word die vraag gevra: *wat gaan aan in die wêreld van ontwikkeling?* Hoofstuk 3 vra ook die vraag: *Hoekom is dit aan die gang?* Gegewe die dialogiese aard tussen teologie en kontemporêre ontwikkeling diskoers van hierdie studie, vra Hoofstuk 4 dus die vrae, *wat sê die Bybel en teologiese kommentators oor armoede?* en *wat behoort aan die gang te wees?* Hoofstuk 5, wat bou op die

menseregte benadering van Hoofstuk 3 en die etiek van die liefde vir die naaste van Hoofstuk 4, soek om dialogiese die resultate te ontsluit wat van Hoofstukke 3 en 4 uitvloei. In Hoofstuk 5, word die vrae wat gevra, *wat is die rede waarom dit aangaan? wat behoort aan die gang te wees?* en *hoe kan ons reageer?* Hoofstuk 6 word afgesluit met die navorser se perspektiewe, gedeelde temas in die teologiese-hedendaagse ontwikkeling diskoers, en aanbevelings en gevolgtrekkings gebaseer op die studie. Die sentrale vraag hier is dus: *Hoe kan ons reageer op armoede in Suid-Afrika?*

Bevindinge dui daarop dat 'n teologiese-hedendaagse ontwikkeling benadering gebaseer op menseregte en die etiek van "konkrete" liefde vir die naaste, het baie om aan te bied met betrekking tot die uitwissing van armoede nie net in Suid-Afrika nie, maar in alle armoede kontekste regoor die wêreld.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beautiful wife, Sylvia and our two sons Jared and Simeon. Sylvia, you have sacrificed much and you are an irreplaceable pillar of love, strength and support. Jared and Simeon, you give me motivation to keep working towards a brighter future for all the people of our country.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey of this work is part of the journey of my life that started in 1964 in District Six, Cape Town. My journey from District Six to Kensington-Factreton was one of hardship, poverty, loss of human dignity and survival. My journey through Kensington, the country, and now Stellenbosch has brought to me the restoration of a God-given identity that affirms my human dignity.

Along the path on this journey, I have met many people, and I thank all of you for your unique contribution to my making my journey meaningful.

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To Jeremy Smith and the life-coaches and volunteers of Life Zone Ministries International; the Assemblies of God Church, other local churches, the schools, and the people of my community in Factreton-Kensington: thank you that we can learn together, work together, grow together, and overcome the challenges of poverty together. Thank you for allowing me to partner you in transformation in our community.

To all of my friends and acquaintances that have always showed an interest in my research, thank you for your warm support.

To my beautiful mother-in-law, Insaaf and her husband Karriem, and my sister-in-law Shantill Matthews and her son Kyle, thank you for supporting me with my parental tasks during my studies.

I thank my parents and dedicate this work to my mom, Sybil and my late dad, Sydney who have sacrificed much on my behalf and through whom my life's journey had begun. I cannot repay you for your sacrificial love toward me, my brothers Malcolm and Selwyn, and my sisters Lezelle and Cheryl, and all of your grandchildren. Thank you for being a prayerful mom to me.

And of course, more than anyone else, I thank my Creator, who has journeyed with me up until now, who will always journey with me throughout this life, and who has promised to journey with not only the poor, but also with the non-poor. All glory to God!

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA – Affirmative Action

AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

AGF – Anti Globalization Forum

BEE – Black Economic Empowerment

BNC – Beyers Naude Centre

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CMC – Cape Metropolitan Council

CODESRIA – Council for the Development of Social Science Research In Africa

CPRC – Chronic Poverty Research Centre

CROP – Comparative Research Program On Poverty

ELP   Ethical Leadership Project

GBS   Global Biodiversity Strategy

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GNP – Gross National Product

HDI – Human development Index

HDR – Human Development Report

IBASE – Brazilian Institute of Social And Economic Research

ILO – International Labour Organization

IMF – International Monetary Fund

LSE – London School of Economics

LWTC – Local Welfare and Transformation Committee

LZMI – Life Zone Ministries

MDG –Millennium Development Goals

MNC – Multi National Corporation

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

PLAAS – Programme for Land And Agrarian Studies

QC – Quadrant Concept

RBA – Rights Based Approach

SAHRC – South African Human Rights Commission

SANPAD – South Africa-Netherlands Partnership for Alternative Development

SAP – Structural Adjustment Programmes

SAPS – South African Police Services

SLF – Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

TB – Tuberculosis

TNC – Transnational Corporation

TSSA – Theological Society of South Africa

UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN – United Nations

UNASA United Nations Association of South Africa

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNEP United Nations Environmental Program

UNGC – United Nations Global Compact

UNRISD – United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

USA – United States of America

UWC – University of the Western Cape

WARC – World Alliance of Reformed Churches

WB – World Bank

WTC – World Trade Centre

WTO – World Trade Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH PROBLEM AND DESIGN

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this thesis is to study the causes of poverty that still largely defines many communities in South Africa and also across the world. This thesis (a literature study) also aims to rediscover the capabilities, skills and assets that people possess in order to overcome the causes that lead to poverty. A motivating question for this research is, *why is poverty still so rife in South Africa after nearly two decades of democracy?* The impending research will shed more light on this question later.

The first section deals with the problem statement and poses the question that seeks to address the possibility of poverty eradication within affected communities. In the light of the problem statement, the hypothesis that addressing the root causes of poverty will contribute significantly to the eradication of poverty and will enhance transformation. The aims of the study follow and reinforce the importance of this epistemological study. It is at this level that the research can add value and significance to the current development discourse both within the Church and also within civil society. The motivation for this study then follows. Here the researcher's grassroots experience of working with poor people in his local and other poor communities are brought together with a theological understanding of poverty and transformation. Flowing from a successful Masters' degree in Practical Theology: Community Development at Stellenbosch University, the researcher undertook preliminary reading for a Doctoral degree (DTh) along the same line.

The research methodology for this study is essentially conceptual (Ballard & Pritchard, 1996) as portrayed in the ensuing discussion, while the framework draws from Osmer's (2008) four tasks of practical theology. A literature study therefore forms the basis of this research. This is then followed by the theological conceptualization, which serve as an important point of reference for this research. Lastly, the introductory chapter concludes by outlining each chapter in logical arrangement, each of which focuses on the key issues relevant to the research.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESIS

1.2.1 Problem statement

How can the understanding of root causes of poverty assist rich and poor communities in South Africa to eradicate poverty?

We do not live in a perfect world. The human race is, on the one hand, a good creature capable of marvelous exploits, yet on the other, able to commit the most horrendous atrocities imaginable. In fact, the Bible declares in no uncertain terms that, although created *good*, humankind has become a sinful creature and is in need of restoration and reconciliation to its Creator. Humans are a species very prone to making mistakes. Very often, however, these mistakes wreck the lives of others and bring upon the victims immense hardship and emotional strain. In most of the cases of fraud taking place in the corporate sector and in some South African Government departments, it is the poor who suffer the most – as well as the families of the perpetrators of these and other crimes. How then should these problems that result in poverty and the further demise of the poor in society be approached? How can academics, Government, the corporate sector, the general public and religious institutions, especially the Church, combine its resources to make *development* more meaningful and efficient in the South African context?

 Nearly twenty years after South Africa has become a democratic country for the first time in its history, the rampant poverty, crime and violence that people are confronted with daily seem to be on the increase. Although the South African government has made significant inroads into the domain of poverty, there are still millions of citizens who are living in abject poverty. The biggest percentage of these people is unemployed and millions have to fight for survival in informal settlements. Others have to struggle to make ends meet in cities where the race for jobs and space is relentless and the "actors" ruthless. In many rural areas the hope of escaping the harshness of poverty is virtually non-existent. It appears that the more houses are built for the poor, the more people there are who need houses.

Furthermore, and sadly too, many individuals of the corporate arena, public services, religious institutions and the political elite are being investigated for unethical financial practices, while some are being found guilty of squandering or stealing money designated for the poor. It seems as if the poor are constantly getting the

proverbial shorter end of the stick. The rich are getting richer and the poor are being whipped into the dust with an increasing degree of intensity.

The threat of HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis, violence, alcoholism and illicit drug trafficking in our beautiful country are also causes for concern and further compound the problem of poverty. The causes and effects of poverty are many and are both historical and current. Civil society, the government, the corporate world, non-governmental and faith based organizations (NGOs and FBO's respectively), and the Church, need a joint venture or collective effort to help with the transformation of society. If poverty is to be eradicated, then will be important to examine its causal relationships. This examination is imperative because, according to Korten (2001:226), society cannot continue to avoid the difficult questions. Furthermore, if society withdraws from declaring the seriousness of the human condition, then we are doing more harm than good. Thus, the point of departure of the writer is that people who are engaged in development issues, particularly in the realm of community development, must begin to engage more deeply with the concept of "cause and effect" and "consequences versus cause".

Therefore, it is imperative that people engaged in development must begin to "confront difficult and seemingly irresolvable political, social, economical and spiritual issues that are more comfortable to avoid" (Korten, 2001:226). Agents working in poor communities often fail to question the politics that led to the human misery they seek to relieve. Here Korten (et al) reinforces this point by stressing that:

> We have consistently avoided asking the difficult questions. Perhaps this explains why human misery appears to be on the increase around the world, even after decades of international assistance directed to relief, welfare and conventional development. There is every reason to believe that the number of people needing relief assistance will increase at a growing rate during the coming decade, while the availability of surplus food stocks to relieve it is almost certain to decline.

This scenario described is so true on our continent. For decades Africa has been a war-zone. The amount of arsenal available to ordinary people and governments is phenomenal. Africa's development, to a large extent, has been hampered by decades of civil wars in many countries such as Angola, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda are countries that

have struggled to develop meaningfully because of violence, genocide and gross violations of human rights between its peoples. In this regard, Castells (2000:114) elaborates extensively on Africa's current plight.

How then should these development issues be addressed? What are the questions that need to be asked in order to achieve good, sustainable and rewarding development in Africa? What are the issues that we need to scrutinize and analyze more closely in the South African context in order to achieve a better quality of life for all of our citizens? Which approaches should we consider as we engage in the process of development? The answers may be many but we need to move away from the position of avoiding the difficult questions. A new consciousness is necessary. A consciousness that will consider as its central principle the Golden Rule: *Do to others, as you would want them to do to you* (Confucius). Similarly, people need to *"love your neighbour as yourself"* (Jesus Christ).

If people intend to be change-agents and participants in the transformation of the country in which they will work together to eradicate poverty, then they must not forget to ask the most crucial questions. From a theological perspective then, this would necessitate the asking of a most important and difficult two-tiered question: *How do we identify <u>and</u> address the root causes of poverty?* Will the asking of this seemingly critical question help in bringing about a better understanding of sin as the root problem in the poverty issue or will it create even more unanswered questions or problematic situations? Will the asking of this question stir up controversy in the debate on development? Will the asking of this question really help all the different role-players involved in development?

The research problem is therefore based on the conviction that:
- *Sin* has a destructive effect on development and dehumanises people
- Sin is the chief destructive problem in the fight against poverty
- The causes of poverty need to be addressed at every level of development, viz. socially, economically, politically and globally

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- Sinful and evil causes of misery should be considered as the central issue in contemporary discussions about poverty eradication, development, ethical leadership and moral regeneration.

It is in this light that the writer agrees with the Wheaton[1] "Transformation" statement of 1978 in Samuel & Sugden (1987: xi):

> According to the biblical view of human life, then, transformation is the change from a condition of human existence contrary to God's purposes to one in which people are able to enjoy fullness of life in harmony with God (John 10:10; Col. 3:8-15; Eph. 4:13).

While one can never give any hard-and-fast solutions or a "blue print" in response to the difficult questions posed earlier in this paper, one would hope that the perspectives and reflections in this paper will be helpful to others as they begin their own process of discussion and questioning in the holistic development process. However, it must also be stated that the writer does not intend to shame or castigate people. On the contrary, the purpose is to empower people who are suffering in their poverty. We need to explore our life experiences in order to distinguish "just how it is that sin sows its poisonous seeds and reaps its polluted harvest" in our lives and in society.

In this dissertation, the researcher will examine *sin* in the following categories: *individually, communally, socially, politically, and structurally.* As the research unfolds it is also anticipated that other categories will be explored with the hope of establishing ways of applying, in relevant fashion, possible solutions in the fight against poverty.

Lastly, the writer agrees with Peters (1994:7) "there is a need in our time for a better understanding of the experiential dynamics of sin and their evil effects." This discernment is necessary because it will give us a clear vision of what good *can* be accomplished in individual lives, poor communities and every other sector of society.

1.2.2 Hypothesis

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[1] The Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Need met in Wheaton, Illinois, in June 1983 as the third track of a larger conference sponsored by the World Evangelical Fellowship under the title "I Will Build My Church."

Addressing the theological construct of *sin* as a root cause of poverty in society will help to contribute more effectively to the transformation of poor and rich communities in South Africa and provide a better quality of life for all of its citizens.

Based on the earlier discussion concerning the question of what the root causes of poverty are, the following hypothetical propositions are postulated:

- Poverty will be eradicated when its causal relationships are examined and acted upon

- Dealing with the root causes of poverty will produce transformation in people and, subsequently, also in any poor community

- There is hope for people trapped in poverty especially when non-poor (and also poor people), participate justly in the process of caring for the marginalized

- In order for poverty to be eradicated in the lives of poor people, there is a need for non-poor people to demonstrate concern for the poor in a loving, just, and practical way

- Consequently, non-poor people can make a powerful contribution to transformation, especially Christians, when they embrace their critical role in the poverty eradication process

In contemporary development discourse, such a framework could be an important tool if it is hoped for poverty to be eradicated.

1.3 AIM OF STUDY

The study is guided by the following goals:

- the central aim of this study is to investigate the critical need for understanding the importance of the root causes of poverty as opposed to simply considering the consequences of poverty

- to understand how the actions of individuals (poor and non-poor), and also social, political and economic structures contribute to poverty

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE AND LIMITATIONS OF FIELD OF STUDY AND PROPOSED CONTRIBUTION

Firstly, in the words of Korten (2001: 226) people and researchers need to contribute to "activities directed to eliminating the causes of these conditions" of poverty. Secondly, this study will hopefully expand more on the impact of personal, communal, national, and economic and other forms of sin on the poor and society at large. It is envisaged that this view will contribute to the on-going discourse revolving around development issues and offer a different perspective of what can be achieved on behalf of the poor (and everyone else) if the difficult issue of *sin* and *evil* is addressed and not avoided.

This thesis is intended to provide supplementary coverage on the topic of *sin* and *evil* as it relates to *poverty*, *development* and *transformation*. The expanding number of literary sources within the Department of Practical Theology: Community Development is also encouraging, and will help to give this topic considerable momentum in the debate on poverty. Thus the researcher has chosen to dedicate most of this project to discuss causal relationships that are evident in poverty and development studies, and, in so doing, provide a document that will help Churches, FBO's, NGO's, communities and development workers to understand in which way sin influences the perpetuation of poverty, and how society could respond to .

Furthermore, it is hoped that the research done could be utilized by individuals, communities, the Church, the South African Government, NGO's and FBO's, as well as all interested individuals who are willing to play a proactive role in reversing the plight of the poor and thus creating a society of hope. This could be done through regular discussions between representatives of the Church, Government, NGO's and the community. An organization such as the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM), for example, would also be able to champion the cause of the poor even more effectively if it should seriously consider the impact that sin (whether societal, structural or personal) has on the poor and society in general. The South African government's call for moral regeneration will not succeed if we do not face the problem, head-on, at the heart of all of society's ills – *sin*! By choosing this topic the researcher is particularly aware of the possible controversy that could result from a discussion that links *sin*, *poverty*, *transformation* and *development*. However, it is anticipated that the outcomes of the research may lead to others, especially Christians in positions of influence, to consider how best to use some of this material, in

conjunction with their own expertise, to understand holistically the current situation around poverty and act with conviction on behalf of the poor and the well-being of humanity at large.

1.5 MOTIVATION

Several factors have influenced the researcher's choice for the project. These factors are as follows:

Calling and passion for the poor

Having been exposed first-hand to the suffering and dehumanizing circumstances of many poor people in my own community of Kensington-Factreton, there has always been a deep desire to assist as far as I could, in the best way possible. I have been doing voluntary community work in our area since 1993 with the aim to contribute to a better quality of life for those living in abject poverty. Voluntary work has now become part of my full-time ministry. I am currently involved in ministry at a squatter camp (or informal settlement) where I am participating with the more than 50 families in a process of trying to understand that we need to face the difficult issues of human sinfulness as well as human limitations in the process of development. By no means an easy task, the road ahead still appears to be a long one but the future reward of seeing people's lives transformed gives us hope that we can address the chief cause of poverty effectively.

Ministry in the workplace through Industrial Ministry of South Africa (IMSA)

As a direct result of my postgraduate studies at the University of Stellenbosch I am currently involved in the Western Cape with IMSA, an ecumenical ministry serving the world of work. Besides being engaged in conducting Bible studies in the workplace, I am also part of a research team composed of four IMSA members. The research done for my Doctorate would also serve the organization's purposes.

Addressing *causes* as a high-priority development issue

As a final motivation, the researcher is of the opinion that it is more important to investigate and act upon the **causes** of poverty and human misery than it is to keep dealing solely with the **consequences** of poverty. Circumstances and inhumane conditions such as poverty need to be interpreted and understood and require a

hermeneutical approach. In the light of this position, the writer agrees with Korten (2001:226) and therefore borrows from him:

> *Consequences* versus *Causes*. There is a strong tendency to respond to human suffering with direct action intended to obtain an immediate relief of that suffering. The starving child needs food. There is neither time nor inclination to ask: Why is the child hungry? We have consistently avoided asking the difficult questions. Perhaps this explains why human misery appears to be on the increase around the world, even after decades of international assistance directed to relief, welfare and conventional development. There is every reason to believe that the number of people needing relief assistance will increase at a growing rate during the coming decade, while the availability of surplus food stocks to relieve it is almost certain to decline. *Can we continue to avoid the difficult questions?*

1.6 PRELIMINARY STUDIES ALREADY UNDERTAKEN

During 2002 and 2003 this researcher was a post graduate student in the Department of Practical Theology at the University of Stellenbosch for the program Master of Theology, Practical Theology: Community Development (MTh.). I successfully completed the course with a *Cum Laude* distinction. Some of the modules covered addressed issues such as *globalization, economic injustice, God's preferential option for the poor, the rich-poor divide, the role of the Church in development* and *self-reliant participatory development*. These issues stimulated my interest to do further research in the poverty discourse. As partial requirements for this course I completed a community analysis[2] of the area (Kensington-Factreton) where I live and minister, as well as a mini-thesis, *Reconciliation will secure a better quality of life in violence-stricken poor communities*. The nature of the MTh. program was both qualitative and quantitative.

The outcomes of this program under the expert guidance of Professor Karel August, inspired me to consider the possibility of researching more intensely the topic which I have now chosen for my Doctoral studies, viz. the role of *sin in development* and possibilities for positive action by all people, especially those in the ecclesial community.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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[2] The researcher has utilized a modified version of the MTh community analysis assignment in Chapter 2 of this research.

1.7.1 Nature of research

This research project, although influenced by the qualitative research methodology (Henning, 2004:1-11, Hendriks, 2004:226 and Mouton 1996), is essentially a literature study and is also conceptual in nature in order to achieve the most meaningful results. Similarly, while reference is also made in the research to certain quantitative aspects as a result of the researcher's Masters' studies and engagement in community development work, the study remains a predominantly literature review project. This literature study, in which the unit of analysis (Hendriks 2004:225) is focused on a group (in this case referring to people who are perceived to be poor), draws from the examination of key concepts as well as the interpretations of observations for the purpose of discovering the underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. According to Henning (2004:5), when one refers to 'qualitative research', you are using the term that denotes the type of enquiry in which the quality, type of characteristics or the properties of a phenomenon are examined for better understanding and explanation. Therefore, this literature study will draw from some aspects of qualitative research methodology (such as observation of and listening to people's stories), which helps one to understand and explain better what the root causes of poverty entails and how that it could be addressed.

At the same time, this study engages with experts in the field and it is used first and foremost in the contextualization of this study to argue the researcher's case and to identify the niche (root causes of poverty) to be occupied by this research (Henning 2004:27). This demarcation of the field of study is critical and the subsequent usage of relevant scholarly literature provides the necessary grounding for the main argument in this literature study. In addition, the chapters deal with conceptual analyses and also work with the most relevant and important documents and statements in the public arena, in so far as it is possible.

For the purposes of this research, the researcher's experiences stemming from personal observation and interactions with poor people from his own community will intersect with the concepts emanating from the literature sources that have been engaged. These observations have come about as a result of living in a relatively poor community (Kensington-Factreton) since his family was forcibly removed from District Six, Cape Town in 1966. The researcher has also been engaged in social

ministry/community development work in Factreton since 1997 and he will also refer to his experiences for this purpose. The research therefore has a conceptual framework that "is an alignment of the key concepts of the study" that also facilitates the dialogue between the literature and this study (Henning, 2004:26) as well as between the literature and the researcher's own experiences at grassroots community level. This conceptual research project therefore draws extensively from authorities in theology, economics, sociology, and politics.

Here follows a brief summary of the experiential, qualitative nature that have influenced the researcher:

Observation

The researcher has spent fifteen years in active grassroots community work in Factreton and has made several observations through this practical experience. Observations and interaction with poor people are strong sources for understanding some of the root causes of poverty. These observations will be discussed in more detail throughout this thesis. This research will thus draw from the researcher's conclusions of his "participant observation" (Mouton, 2001:104) of his years of living amongst poor people and participating in the field of voluntary community work.

Interaction with people

Relevant information was gathered and based on the analyses of conversations, discussions and unstructured (informal) discussions with members of poor and non-poor communities.

Preliminary literature search

A fourteen-month preliminary literature search was done to guide the researcher in the selected field of study. Studies in *Theology* and *Development* at the University of Stellenbosch proved to be indispensable for this research topic. This study's conceptual framework will highlight three key concepts namely poverty, sin and "other". These key concepts as well as other ideas will be used to contribute to the thesis in order to find relevant, practical and meaningful ways to address the root causes of poverty that adds to human suffering.

All of the above tools and "objective" procedures will be employed to obtain the most truthful results (Mouton, 2001:56), however, it must be reiterated that this research project is primarily a literature study.

1.7.2 Design and procedure

This literature study follows Osmer's (2008:1-29) practical theological interpretation of four tasks (See figure 10). These tasks prove to be a respected model for accomplishing the goals of this study. When keeping in mind that "practical theology is a single activity" (Ballard & Pritchard, 1996:85) and that a Christian approach to community development is holistic (August, 2010:45-47), then Osmer's four tasks are of an invaluable nature for this study. His framework is delineated as follows:

1. The first task is the *descriptive-empirical* task that calls for the interpretation of episodes, situations or contexts. For Osmer (2008:32) practical theology is a call for "students to interpret the texts of contemporary lives and practices…, "living documents". The key question of the descriptive-empirical task for Osmer (2008:4) is: *What is going on in this situation?* Pertaining to the central concept (poverty) in this research, this question is the starting point for interpreting why poverty still exists. When asking this question, *priestly listening* is necessary (Osmer 2008:35).

2. The second task is the *interpretive* task that seeks reasons for the phenomena that were observed in the descriptive-empirical task. The important question here is: *Why is it going on?* Here the research identifies the issues embedded in the episodes, situations, and contexts which have been observed through drawing extensively from contemporary development sources (especially economic an social sciences) as well as theological sources. For Osmer (2008:82), the interpretation of these life situations requires *wise judgment*. Osmer (2008:89-100) grounds his method of wisdom in the meaning and patterns of nature and human life. Here he draws strongly from two sources namely biblical wisdom literature and Jesus Christ. For the purposes of this research, the prophet Amos's writing and the Lukan account of Jesus will be used to reflect on the life situations of the poor.

3. The third task is known as the *normative* task for which prophetic discernment is necessary, and asks the question: *What ought to be going on?* (Osmer, 2008:132). The normative seeks to discern God's will for the present realities

and have three approaches (Osmer 2008:161) which are essential for this research:

> i. Theological interpretation: using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, and contexts, informed by a theory of divine and human action;
>
> ii. Ethical reflection: using ethical principles, rules, or guidelines to guide action toward moral ends;
>
> iii. Good practice: deriving norms from good practices, by exploring models of such practice in the present and past or by engaging reflexively in transforming practice in the present.

4. The fourth task is the *pragmatic* task and calls for servant leadership while asking the question: *How might we respond?* Here, Osmer (2008:178) proposes three forms of leadership that are needed:

> i. Task competence
>
> ii. Transactional leadership
>
> iii. Transformational leadership

Osmer's context here is the local congregation. Nevertheless, when these forms of leadership are applied to this research's focus on the community where poor people are found, then *transactional leadership* could play a significant role. However, in the pragmatic task, both task competence and transforming leadership are important forms of leadership because, "transforming leadership, grounded in a spirituality of servant leadership, takes risks on behalf of the congregation to help it better embody its mission as a sign and witness of God's self-giving love" (Osmer, 2008:29).

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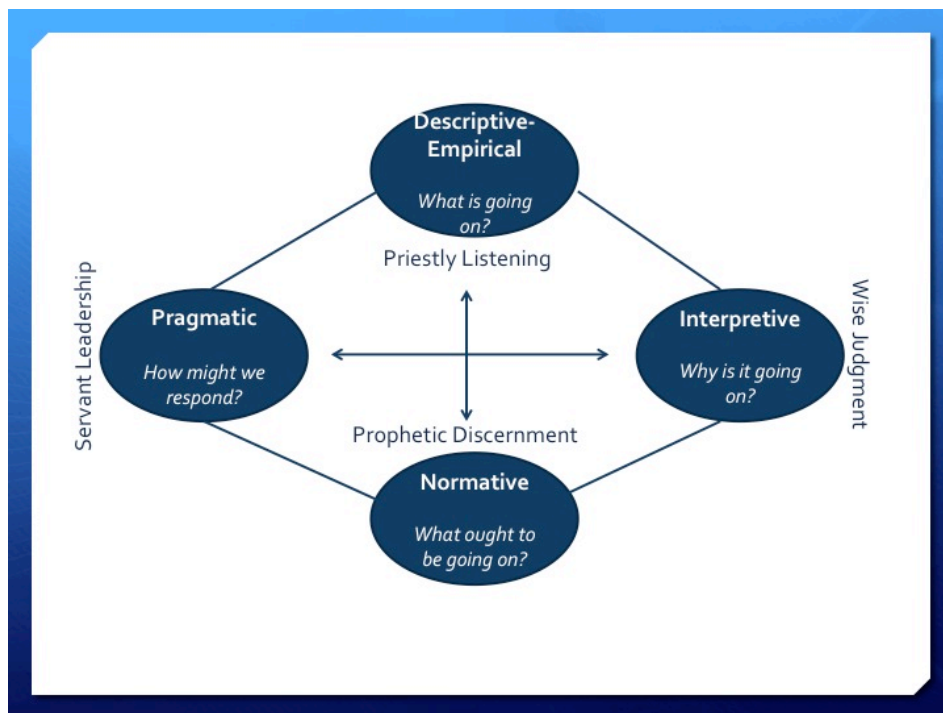
Figure 1 Osmer's four tasks of practical theology

This research therefore has a basis in Osmer's four of tasks of practical theology[3] and is also supported by Ballard & Pritchard's (1996:22-3) understanding that modern practical theology and "Christianity makes universal truth claims about the nature of the world and of human life. Therefore there has always been a concern for every aspect of our existence – from personal behavior to politics and economics, from the creative arts to the sciences and technology". This interplay between theology and the sciences also shows the dialogical nature of practical theology.

Within the framework of the above "Osmerian" model, the research is also strongly influenced by a practical theology that is done from below, meaning that it starts in the concrete reality of where people are at, and which means a 'preferential option for the poor' (Ballard & Pritchard, 1996:80-1). Within the understanding of this explanation of practical theology, the research will investigate what the root causes of poverty are because "the poor are the standing sign of contradiction in the world. As those most sinned against, they demonstrate the presence of sin" Ballard & Pritchard (1996).

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[3] The researcher has adapted Osmer's (2008:11) model here.

To return to Ballard & Pritchard's (1996:85-6) assessment that practical theology is a *single* activity, it must be emphasized that the researcher takes up such a position. The concrete realities of people cannot be dichotomized because people experience social, economic, political, religious and all kinds of pressures as a collective reality. Thus, the experiences of the poor, and the reality of sin as so clearly illustrated by Ballard & Pritchard above, demonstrate that people, all living creatures and the natural habitat are all enveloped in one life-experience. Thus, the methodology of this research is guided by a holistic approach.

1.8 POSSIBLE VALUE OF RESEARCH

It is hoped that this project would help the Church, NGO's, FBO's, the South African Government, corporate business, and Civil Society to:

- Discern or differentiate between the consequences and causes of poverty in South Africa
- Understand the importance of addressing not only the consequences of poverty but more importantly the chief causes of poverty
- Participate jointly in action geared at tackling the sinful and evil destructive causes of poverty
- Receive prophetic and pastoral insight as to how to deal more meaningfully with both the consequences and the causes of poverty
- Participate in the government's drive for moral regeneration in South Africa
- Contribute to the on-going debate for the need for value-driven development, ethical leadership, integrity, transparency and accountability

1.9 CONCEPTUALIZATION

Poverty

The fact of poverty is of real concern to the church. Today the worldwide Church seems to be stepping up its fight against this evil. Ecumenicals, Evangelicals, Protestants, Catholics and all Christians are joining the fight and looking at addressing the problem together. It is no wonder then that many books, over the past forty years or so, have been written by leaders of a variety of denominations that address the issue of poverty. Many secular writers like Manuel Castells (2000) are also making

phenomenal contributions in the fight against poverty, especially with the emphasis on addressing the systemic causes of poverty.

Poverty as *evil*

Santa Ana (1977:2-6) indicates that poverty is an evil and should be considered as abnormal especially if the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer. In their efforts to eradicate poverty people need to understand what must be changed. And it becomes very necessary to strike at the roots of poverty – whatever those may be. Arguing in a similar way, Santa Ana (1977:101) asserts that the problem cannot be addressed by merely alleviating the consequences of poverty. The matter is so complex and the Church needs to organize itself to help the victims of this injustice and attack the causes of this evil.

Christians are challenged by Santa Ana (1977:102) as believers in Jesus Christ to reflect on their own contribution to alleviating poverty. The *sin factor* is something that needs to be understood. Sin appears to be both the cause and the effect of poverty. Sinful humankind is a creature of selfishness and greed. Humans struggle to share their wealth with others. Why? Is it because of humankind's sinful nature? What then is needed to change this crisis? Santa Ana rightfully argues that this scandalous condition ought to be eliminated through a continual struggle for justice, equality and well-being for all, which demands a sustained effort over several generations.

Samuel & Sudgen (1987:12) indicated that by the year 2000 the future of the global poor would have worsened. During the time of the writing of their work they showed deep concern for the church and Christian organizations' inadequate mobilization and response to the growing issues of hunger and poverty. Disappointingly, twelve years later, we can still see a large number of local churches going about their business unconcerned about the plight of the poor. How then can we make the church and all Christians aware of the growing challenges and then motivate them to mobilize their resources to provide a more adequate response to future needs?

The various authors mentioned in this paper are unanimous about one thing: the eradication of poverty from our global society must receive priority. It is thus very

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encouraging to note that people from across the globe and from a broad spectrum of religious and political persuasions are not just talking about the problem but are actually initiating programs to provide sustainable solutions for the excluded, marginalized poor. As individuals we must therefore continue to be hopeful that poverty can be eradicated. This hope must spur us on to meaningful participation in this struggle for social, political and economic justice.

The causes of poverty around the world are numerous. For instance, Hughes & Bennett (1998:x) indicate that the economy, culture, religion, society, politics and structures (especially governmental) are most often the causes of poverty. As in the case of South Africa, the apartheid system that existed between 1948 and 1991 has been the major cause of the current poverty situation in our country. Wilson & Ramphele (1989:203-227) point this out emphatically. People were dispossessed of their land. They were denied education. They worked for very low wages. They were exploited for financial gain.

In many Old and New Testament biblical references such as in the books of Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Luke and some of the writings of Apostle Paul, this point is also made. Not only does poverty occur as a result of selfish human decision-making, but it is also caused by inherently corrupt political, economic and religious systems. Samuel & Sudgen, Santa Ana as well as Hughes and Bennett make this point of *systemic* or *structural* sin. According to Elliot (1987:137) there are powers that control systems in the world. These powers bring with it chaos, distortion, destruction and dehumanization. Similarly, Castells (2000:183-187) alludes to the *structural perspective* that results in poverty. Using the example of the *institutional chaos* that resulted when the former Soviet Union broke up, he shows how the pillage of Russia took place (and apparently is still happening) and how the widespread presence of international criminal cartels in Russia and the ex-Soviet republics have established organized international crime networks.

Many of the root causes of poverty today are the structures that institutionalize oppression and social, political and economic injustices at world level. In his definition of *sin* and *evil* Peters (1994:8-9) distinguishes between the two, although the terms can often be used interchangeably. Although the words nearly mean the

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same thing he points out that *sin* is the cause and *evil* the effect of sin. For instance, a sinful act of murder will result in the evil of an unjust death. He also lists two categories of evil, viz. *natural evil* and *radical evil*. In the first instance, natural evil refers to the effects of natural disasters, disease, and so forth which most often is unintentional. Secondly, he refers to the term *radical evil* that is symbolized by Satan. This is an evil pursued in the name of evil and is deliberate. The researcher will probe this assertion to see how it relates to transformation, development and poverty alleviation.

Evil, explains Chan (1994:128), is the results of sin. Such *evil* (Hebrew word, *ra*), says Chan, is not necessarily sinful in itself but it is a result of sin. In other Old Testament passages the word *ra* refers to moral evil as a condition or state resulting from sin (Genesis 2:9; 6:5; 1 Kings 3:9). A typical example of such an evil condition would be people enduring great hardship because their country is engaged in war.

Thiessen (1998:171) complements this view by asserting that "there are two totally different kinds of evil: *physical* and *moral*". Natural disasters and wild animals are associated with the former category. In the latter category where the interest for this thesis lies, Thiessen describes sin as a moral evil. Since humankind is a rational creature, people know that when they violate the law of God then they are chargeable with sin. They become both guilty and polluted.

Thus, if meaningful development or transformation is to take place at all levels of society in South Africa then all of our people must be challenged and equipped to make not only good decisions but also right choices. In such a process the seeds of transformation of whole communities will be sown and people will then experience the blessings of God if they let "good overcome evil" (Romans 12:21). Qualities such as justice, peace, equality, hope and righteousness are what we need to push for. People, rich and poor, are crying out for this. And the church has a great opportunity to introduce Kingdom principles that the world so desperately longs for.

Development

Development is a rather broad term used freely in all walks of life, especially in the economic world. For the purposes of this dissertation though, I would use the term in a simplistic sense as meaning that development is the struggle to secure a humane quality of life for all people of the world. According to Elliston (1989:153)

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"development is the struggle of a social segment to transform itself toward improved life quality and participation for…its members." Wilson & Ramphele (1989:262) emphasize that "genuine development work is that which empowers people; which enables them to build organizations that…pool their resources and generate power where previously there was none".

Burkey (1993:35-39) provides a comprehensive list of definitions for the term "development". First he speaks of a human or personal development (the foundation of development) that implies that the motivation to change must come from within an individual. This is the first prerequisite for sustainable development. Secondly, he mentions that economic development is a process by which people through their own individual and/or their joint efforts boost production for direct consumption and to have a surplus to sell for cash. Thirdly, political development according to Burkey is a process of gradual change over time in which the people increase the awareness of their own capabilities, their rights and their responsibilities and use this knowledge to organize themselves so as to acquire real political power. Lastly, social development refers to those investments and services carried out or provided by a community for the mutual benefit of the people of that community whether as a village, a district or a nation. Burkey (1993:39) admits too that development is a complex and slow-moving process but emphasizes that it should ultimately be a sustainable process. Although Burkey presents a useful and practical model on development, his omission of "spiritual" development is quite noticeable, yet understandable, because he writes from a secular perspective. Here one could add that people also need spiritual transformation (restoration to God) if they are to experience holistic development. When the researcher talks about spiritual development then it also implies those values and ethics that are held by other religious groupings (such as Judaism and Islam) but that are not contrary to the teachings of Jesus or the word of God, the Bible. God cannot be excluded from the equation because humankind is not only a physical, economical, political and social creature but is also a spiritual being. Therefore consideration to the spiritual aspect of development cannot be overlooked.

With further reference to transformation, Korten (1990:123-128) describes his *fourth generation development strategy* as one in which social movements for global change is brought about. Basically he encourages his readers not to stay at first to third

generation stages of development. He says that the relief and welfare assistance offers little more than temporary alleviation of the symptoms of underdevelopment and should not be confused with development assistance. At the same time, first and second generation strategies still have the tendency to create long-term dependency on the Non Governmental Organization (NGO). Instead he prompts development workers to move on to the third and fourth generation strategies. Here Korten (1990:120-121) prompts us to look beyond the individual's community to seek changes in specific policies and institutions at local, national and international level.

This reminds one of the influences of biblical figures such as Joseph, Esther and Daniel who rose to prominent political positions and influenced the decision-making processes of their nations. They used their positions not to harm others but to promote the well being of everyone. But fourth generation development poses the ultimate challenge. Here society should look at how it can become a facilitator of a global people's movement where all the participants share a common vision. Networks and coalitions work in synergy and energetically to eradicate the problems that prevail in the global village. Poverty, illiteracy, lack of medical resources, etc. can be tackled more effectively with the support that such networks can provide. Thus these people's movements can do much to help the global church play a more critical role in community development.

Transformation

This thesis will strongly utilize the word *transformation* as the expression of choice instead of the commonly used term *development*. The motivation for this is strongly argued in Samuel & Sugden (1987:40): "Whereas "development" tends to be a term that the West applies to the Third World, *transformation* (italics mine) is equally applicable to both the "overdeveloped" and the "underdeveloped world". In Samuel & Sugden (1987:39), Bragg defines transformation as "a part of God's continuing action in history to restore creation to himself and to its rightful purposes and relationships". The researcher will employ the idea of transformation as meaning the holistic process of human and social change in which both the Creator and the created (humankind) participate.

Included in this definition and analysis of transformation would be some of the biblical themes such as the *Imago Dei* (the image of God), reconciliation, restoration

and abundant life. Finally, as an important step to bringing about transformation in society, Monsma in Stackhouse (1995:43) appeals to humanity by quoting Isaiah 1:16-19):

> Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.

To speak of the development of people in the holistic sense I would like to take up a position in line with Samuel & Sudgen (1987:39). The topic here is "transformation" as opposed to "development". They indicate that transformation is a part of God's continuing action in history to restore all creation to Himself and to its rightful purposes and relationships. The oppression, injustices, hatred, selfishness, and exploitation caused by sin places man in need of restoration and transformation. This involves a transformation of the human condition, human relationships, and whole societies and is applicable not only to the poor but also to the rich.

This idea of transformation is not an alternate development plan but is a Christian framework for looking at human and social change. If we want to uproot poverty and participate in effective development then we need to investigate the root causes of poverty. Some Christians speak of development as "transformation". They believe that holistic development can only be called just that if people have a spiritual transformation. This transformation refers to the "new birth" spoken of by Jesus. They claim that no development theory that ignores our relationship with God can give us a true picture of what a meaningful human life is.

A common observation made by most of the authors referred to in this paper is the fact that poor people must participate in their own development. In other words they must become part of the process in which they analyze their problem, act upon the problem, and finally reflect on whether or not the process of development is working for them.

An assertion made by Chambers (1997:157) with regard to the principles for participatory learning and analysis encourages organizations to "hand over the stick". This implies that the poor must be allowed to participate in their own development and ultimately become self-reliant. They must facilitate investigation, analysis, presentation and learning themselves so that they can generate and own the outcomes, and also learn. Samuel & Sudgen (1987:40-47) similarly present a list of principles against which any theory of development may be measured. These principles are life sustenance, equity, justice, dignity and self-worth, freedom, participation, reciprocity, cultural fit, ecological soundness, hope and spiritual transformation.

Sin

No teaching about "sin" will be complete without understanding its biblical meaning. The biblical reference of The Fall (in Genesis) gives a clear indication of the origin of sin. Romans 3:23 and Psalm 51:5 further reinforce the fact that humankind is born sinful and in need of a reconciled relationship with our Creator. However, my point of departure in this thesis will be an analysis of the systemic nature of sin. Here the work of Wink, Burkey and Castells will be very helpful.

According to Chan (1994:125) the terms that emphasize the character of sin are: missing the mark, ungodliness, unrighteousness, lawlessness, injustice, rebellion, lust and evil. An example in the Bible of sin that is defined as *missing the mark* is found in Psalm 78:56-57. Like Peters (1994:7), Chan indicates that the Greek words that are translated as "sin" in the New Testament include *hamartia*, meaning, "to miss the mark" (in the same way as an archer's arrow would miss its intended target). The afore-mentioned concepts such as "injustice" and "unrighteousness" (Greek word, *adikia*), and "lawlessness" (*anomia*), as well as many other Hebrew and Greek translations also describe "sin".

However, this thesis will focus primarily on "sin" as *hamartia* and as *injustice*. The reason for this is that *hamartia* refers to making a moral choice that is offensive to God (Chan, 1994:125), and this notion of morality is what needs to be explored if we want to engage effectively in community development or social transformation. Peters (1994:8) cites Reinhold Niebuhr by saying that "at the heart or essence of all sin is the failure to trust God. Sin is our unwillingness to acknowledge our creatureliness and

dependence upon the God of grace. We pursue sin in the illusory and vain effort to establish our own lives on an independent and secure basis", sometimes at the expense of the "other". Monsma in Stackhouse (2000:43) affirms the importance of people needing to make good moral decisions at every level of existence and states the consequences if immoral choices are made:

1   Sin causes individuals and societies to be unfaithful stewards of the resources God has entrusted to them.

2   Sin distorts both our knowledge and our wills, and both of these distortions lead to sinful economic actions, as well as sinful actions in other areas of life.

Likewise, according to Bragg in Samuel & Sugden (1987:39) *sin* is the social and cosmic anti-creation that has distorted God's original design and purpose for creation. This is apparent in the way every dimension of life has been distorted from the original design of the Creator, and can be seen in the oppression and injustices towards people, racism, alienation, and exploitation in communities and structures (especially of the global financial institutions and wealthy Northern countries).

Thus, the researcher will describe "sin" (*hamartia*) not just as it occurs on a personal level, but also how it is manifested economically, socially, politically and globally.

1.10 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This dissertation consists of six chapters dealing with the following:

Chapter1

Introduction: Research problem and design

An introduction outlines the main research problem, hypothesis and methodology of the literature study and shows why the topic was chosen and what the objective and possible value of the research of the study is. This chapter also presents the research framework and utilizes concepts to provide a basis for the rest of the study.

Chapter 2

A global socio-economic overview

Chapter 2 applies a logical "funneling" framework when it engages the condition of the global village, Africa, South Africa and the researcher's local community, Factreton-Kensington in a categorized sequence. The condition of the global village is

engaged in terms of the four quadrants of economics, politics, religion and environment. Chapter 2 then proceeds to consecutively deal with the notion of the African Renaissance, a brief overview of the "condition" of South Africa and concludes with the condition of Factreton. While focusing on the topic of poverty, Chapter 2 employs Osmer's first strategic question: "what is going on…"

Chapter 3

Contemporary development discourse

Chapter 3 continues to provide greater conceptual depth to the study and mainly focuses on the significance of human rights and human freedom proposals and concerns in contemporary development discourse. The position, role, and labour of women receive special attention as well the views and models of Wilson and Ramphele, Nussbaum and Sen. Chapter 3 also gives attention to the notion of *globalization* as understood from the perspectives of Sachs, Stiglitz, Mkandaweri and other experts in the field. The approach for Chapter 3 is to build on Osmer's first strategic question, "what is going on…" and deepening the discourse by asking Osmer's second strategic question, "why is it going on…"

Chapter 4

A biblical-theological perspective of poverty

Chapter 4 draws from Osmer's two previous strategic questions and asks a third imperative question, "what ought to be going on…" Through asking this question, chapter 4 explores a biblical-theological perspective on poverty by drawing on Biblical discourse and thus focuses on the moral-ethical question pertaining to poverty.

Chapter 5

Poverty, relational sin and the "other"

Chapter 5 reflects on Osmer's three earlier strategic questions and asks the pragmatic question, "how might we respond…" While Chapter 5 asks this vital question, it also investigates the deeper meaning of the concepts of *relational sin*, *poverty*, and *human dignity*.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: The root causes of poverty: results, perspectives and contribution to the development discourse

Chapter 6 returns to the research question in pursuing to explain and examine the extent to which the root causes of poverty could be understood. In doing so, Chapter 6 draws on the research conducted and encapsulates the different chapters of the thesis. This chapter also proceeds to test and answer the implicit question related to the thesis: "the root causes of poverty". The hypothesis presented in Chapter 1 is also tested to determine the relevance of discussing the theological construct of sin as a root cause of poverty. In this chapter, the research also points out the academic contribution that this literature study makes to development discourse.

CHAPTER 2
A GLOCAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

An understanding of global and local socio-economic trends is pivotal to a holistic understanding with regard to the key development question, *why does poverty exist?* Therefore, when embarking on any research about poverty, one has to ask the important question, *what is going on?* In this respect, Osmer's (2008:4) framework of analytical questions serves as a guide for asking important questions that could lead to the desired results of this research. In this regard, his framework assists in the asking of further questions: *What is happening in poor people's lives? How do the poor experience poverty? What is the relationship between the poor and the non-poor, the poor and economics, the poor and politics, the poor and the environment?* In addition, what relevance does a study on the state of the rest of the world hold for a country such as South Africa, or for one of its cities (such as Cape Town), or even for one of this city's poor communities such as *Factreton* or a poor rural town a mere 40 kilometres outside of Cape Town?

In the light of current global trends, especially that of economic globalization, it has become apparent that we are now living in times where accessibility to any place in the world has become a lot faster and easier. It is the opinion of the writer that research on the topic of *poverty* cannot be looked at in isolation without considering what is happening elsewhere. With the world having moved so swiftly into an intense globalized mode, there are no doubt that the effects of globalization[4] are far-reaching. Very often, global events have local effects. This phenomenon is best summarized in the term "glocalization", as referred to by Robertson in Robertson & White (2003:31). The increase of wealth in the world, mostly as a result of economic globalization, is benefiting many people globally. However, it would appear that there are still millions of people across the globe that are excluded from access to this wealth. Many people are still experiencing dehumanizing lifestyles because of the effects of

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[4] *Globalization* is described by Kiely & Marfleet (eds.): 1998:2 as a world in which societies, cultures, politics and economies have, in some sense, come closer together. For the purposes of this study, the writer will favour this simplistic yet most easily understood conceptualisation of the term *globalization*.

poverty. There is a definite correlation between the increasing wealth of some nations and the increasing poverty of others. This is a crucial part of what will need to be researched in this conceptual study of the root causes of poverty. The world we live in is a place where billions of poor people are being de-humanized. Writing nearly 2 decades ago the well-known and respected development practitioner, David C. Korten (1990:1) wrote:

> The decade from which we have just emerged, the 1980's, was a time of growing recognition that we live in a world in profound crisis – a world of dehumanizing poverty, collapsing ecological systems, and deeply stressed social structures. Awareness is dawning that these are not isolated problems. They represent worldwide phenomena. Each is to some extent both cause and consequence of the others. Each points to important institutional failures.

Korten's view of a world in crisis is not unfounded. Many years after his claim that the world is a place of dehumanizing poverty and, paradoxically, technologically advanced, it would appear that the quality of life for billions of people across the globe have gone from bad to worse. The rampant poverty in almost every corner of the globe continues unabated in spite of ongoing attempts to break its wicked cycle. The imminent threat to human civilization that often leads to this *dehumanizing poverty* is brought about, in Korten's estimation, by the principle actors that include all the people of the world – rich and poor, educated and uneducated, North and South, East and West (Korten, 1990:1). In Korten's view, *everyone* is to blame.

To gain a deeper understanding of, in Korten's words, "who is to blame" for the root causes of poverty, the researcher is of the opinion that it would therefore be crucial to explore and analyze these four key areas, viz. economic, political, environmental and religious, in the light of the key question, *what is going on?* In order to accomplish this task, a *Quadrant Concept* (QC) will be used as a simple analytical framework for research in this chapter. The researcher has chosen to name this concept as such because it explains the four-tiered framework used in this chapter in simplistic fashion. The descriptive nature of this chapter is therefore supported by the use of this larger, more logical framework used to analyze the "glocal" *geographical* spheres where poverty is manifested.

1 THE GLOBAL VILLAGE	2 AFRICA
3 SOUTH AFRICA	4 FACTRETON/ KENSINGTON
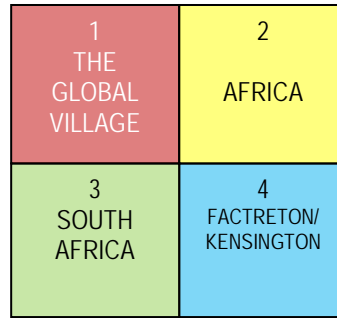
Korten's (1990:1) approach to analyzing the poverty-problem is mainly three-dimensional (economic, political and social). The researcher's approach to the first section of this chapter (the condition of the global village) however, would include two of these dimensions (economics and politics) but would also include an overview of current *religious* and *ecological* conditions around the world. This section will therefore be limited to four core interrelated research sectors viz. *economics, politics, religion and ecology/ environment.* The following quadrant diagram is a representation of these sectors (framework):

1 ECONOMICS	2 POLITICS
4 ECOLOGY	3 RELIGION
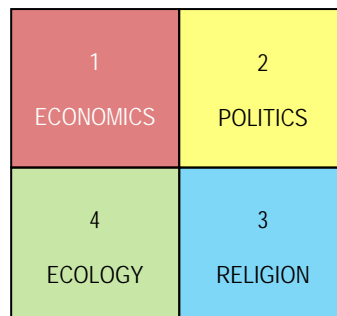
The nature of this research topic is complex in every sense. Contemporary society, is a complex environment. Having to make sense of all of the political, economic, social and environmental episodes is altogether another challenge that adds even more complexity to an already chaotic state of affairs. News on television and in the printed media show that the rise of nationalism in many countries, global terrorism, ethnic violence, rising unemployment, energy crises and the rapid increase in technological advancement are contributing to the rapid exclusion of more people around the world. At the same time many more millions of poverty-stricken people in the South are being further marginalized through famines, and other natural and people-made catastrophes such as civil wars. The picture that is seen here adds to the extremely complex nature of poverty, and sometimes even borders on hopelessness. Therefore one needs to approach any discussion about poverty with a sense of realism and

optimism, and also with caution, in order to avoid any type of reductionism. A view that would seem too idealistic or utopian should also be avoided but this does not mean that the problem areas around poverty should not be addressed. After all, we do live in a world fraught with ambiguity, uncertainty, instability, and, in many instances, indifference to the plight of those people living in extreme poverty and misery. Is there any hope for a turnaround in the plight of the world's poor people? Through applying the key question, *what is going on...* to this analysis, it is hoped that one would see how all of these factors interact with each other and how these further impact people who are at the receiving end of poverty.

2.2 THE CONDITION OF THE GLOBAL VILLAGE: PERSPECTIVES FROM MANUEL CASTELLS[5] AND OTHERS

2.2.1 Economics in the global village

The point of departure for this section is based on Korten's (1990:1) perspective that we live in a "world of profound crisis" in which economic, political and social emergencies are evident. For this reason, the researcher has chosen to draw from the work of Manuel Castells, a leading sociologist who also happens to specialize in studies on globalization. Castells provides tremendous expertise and invaluable insights to students in the field of sociology. As an expert in his field, Castells presents unique perspectives in the quest for humanity to understand or make sense of the world. This researcher will draw extensively from Castells' thoughts in relation to the question, *what is going on?*

In line with Castells and Korten's view on economic matters, Thabo Mbeki postulates that the world that we live in is a world of greed (Mbeki in Makgoba, 1999: xvii). The ongoing global financial crises have exposed the fact that the accumulation and

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[5] Manuel Castells is Professor of Sociology and Professor of Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, and Research Professor of Information Society at the Open University of Catalonia, Barcelona. Before being appointed to Berkeley in 1979 he was Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Paris. He has been a visiting professor at 16 universities around the world, and has received honorary doctorates from several universities. He is the recipient of numerous academic awards, including the C. Wright Mills Award, and the Robert and Helen Lynd Award from the American Sociological Association. He is a member of the European Academy. He has published 25 books, among which is the trilogy *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, first published by Blackwell in 1996-8, and translated into 20 languages. In this sub-section the writer has chosen to use the work of Manuel Castells because of his in-depth and authoritative contribution to sociology and also development studies. He provides remarkably fresh insights about dominant world systems and these are especially helpful for studies in Practical Theology: Community Development.

squandering of vast quantities of financial capital in the developed countries of the North is a "regular", almost normative, occurrence. The rapid movements of this capital from one corner of the globe to the other in search of immediate profit have contributed greatly to the economic problems that the world is experiencing today.

The beginning of the new millennium has brought with it dramatic changes in the technology of transportation, communications, and production. According to Alger in Robertson & White (eds.) (2003:3), these are exemplified by air travel, the transnational production of automobiles, communication satellites and the Internet. It is therefore true that people in human settlements are linked to other people in distant settlements more closely now than they have ever been before. This scenario illustrates the inter-connectedness of people in today's globalized world and trends in the world-economy. The force of the current world-economy penetrates spatial barriers and influence social relations at many different levels (Alger, in Robertson & White (eds.), 2003: 6). The current world-economy or economic globalization is the manifestation of a system that, at best, is impersonal and dehumanizes billions of people across the globe. In his discussion about *centres and peripheries,*[6] (figure 2)*,* Nurnberger (1999:43), supports Alger's view concerning these power relationships within the economy. Here he emphasizes that only a certain percentage of people at the *centre* benefit in an economic sense while the vast majority on the *peripheries* suffers untold misery because of the indiscriminate, relentless pursuit for profit in the centre. This phenomenon often happens at the expense of the poor, especially the rural poor, who are on the geographic as well as economic peripheries.

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[6] *Centres* and *peripheries* (illustrated in the diagram below) are two interlinked concepts that are explained in Klaus Nurnberger's work *Prosperity, poverty and pollution: managing the approaching crisis*. Centres and peripheries interact within an economic network where centres together form a hierarchical system in which each group of smaller centres forms the periphery of the next larger one. According to Nurnberger, the organization of this system typically follows a radial pattern: lines of transport and communication spread from larger centres over medium centres to smaller ones.
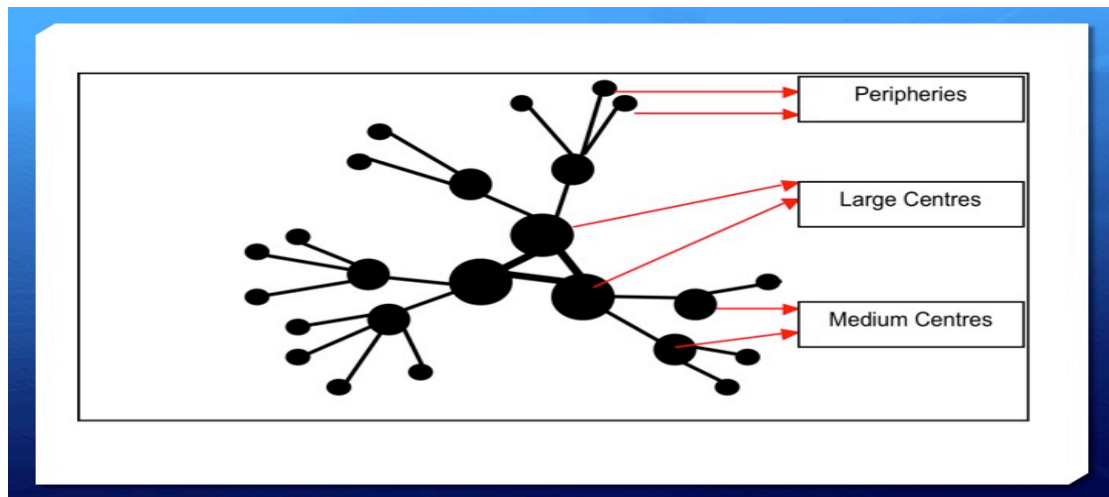
Figure 2 Nürnberger's Centres and Peripheries Relationship

Nürnberger illustrates the network's radial pattern where lines of transport and communication spread from the larger centres over medium centres to smaller ones. These smaller centres become satellites of larger ones that hold the overall network together. Furthermore, this diagram also illustrates how the intensity of economic interaction decreases in the following order:

1. Within centres (where it is highest)
2. Between centres (for example the economic integration of countries in the European Union)
3. Between centres and peripheries
4. Between peripheries.

Nurnberger's geographical "spider-web" helps us to understand the importance of socio-economic structures and how that it determines affluence and poverty in nations. In this "web" the smaller centres are dependent on the next bigger ones, i.e. the more dependent a centre, the more vulnerable it becomes. It helps us to understand too, why the distribution of potency/income in many populations is so disproportionate across the globe. Nurnberger (1999:50) addresses this issue and exposes the irregularities that cause so much harm to many countries.

The modern sociologist of considerable authority, Castells, (2004:303), in one part of his trilogy, *The power of identity*, indicates that the *identities* of countries are mostly determined by how wealthy they are. It is all about money and the flow of it between people and between countries. A country that is able to provide jobs for most of its

citizens would most likely be called a "First World" nation. These are mainly the so-called "developed" nations of the Western world that have been industrialized for many decades now. Another country that has very high unemployment figures would most likely be categorized as a "developing" nation. These types of countries, mostly geographically south of the Equator, are the nations experiencing the negative implications of globalization. According to Castells (2004:303), the nation-state is seemingly losing its power against this global capitalist onslaught, although not its influence.

As the world forges ahead into the new millennium, Korten (1990) suggests that there are ominous signs that all is not well on Planet Earth. Our "home" is under threat from so many angles. There appears to be considerable global consensus that the world's poor is increasing in number while more and more people are at the same time becoming upwardly mobile (millionaires, billionaires, etc.). Thus the paradox of our times: while the wealth of the world is concentrated in the First World Northlandian [7] nations, the poverty that exists in the Third World South seems to be escalating at an alarming rate.

In contrast to the idea of the *first world* Castells (2000 (b): 68) introduces the interesting concept of the "Fourth World" in part 3 of his trilogy (*End of Millennium*). When he writes about the "Fourth World", Castells conceptualizes *Fourth World* as the universal grouping of people across the globe that are being further marginalized, excluded and impoverished through the rise of *informationalism* or "informational capitalism" at the turn of the millennium. He asserts that the rise of informationalism at the turn of the millennium is intertwined with rising inequality and social exclusion throughout the world. Here too Castells implies that capitalist restructuring and its hardened logic of economic competitiveness have jointly produced new faces of human suffering. In a somewhat philosophical tone, he suggests that the new technological and organizational conditions of the Information Age are still largely

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[7] According to Korten (1990:7) *Northlandia* (or the North) is synonymous with First and Second World, industrial or developed countries. Similarly, the term *South*, is used here essentially as a synonym for Third World or developing countries. *Korten sees Northlandia* as the economically wealthy countries such as the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Japan, Germany and other rich European Union countries. Geographically, most of these countries are positioned north of the Equator, hence the name *Northlandia*. These terms will be used throughout this dissertation when referring to the developed and underdeveloped countries.

profit-driven rather than people-centred. More soul-searching, as he puts it, is what is required.

 Therefore one could say that a people-before-profit[8] approach is what is required if the profits of the current global economic system are to benefit all the people of the earth in a just manner. This strongly suggests that national economies should not experience increases in profit margins at the expense of the well being of people. This means that people should not be dehumanized in the process of wealth creation.

Economically, it would seem, that the majority of the population of Northlandia (i.e. especially in Western Europe and in the United States) are enjoying ever-increasing wealth and the highest living standards in the world (Castells, 2000(b):78). In comparison to the levels of poverty in many regions of the South, the degree of inequality becomes tremendously stark. To emphasize the nature of inequality that exists in our time we need to look at an extract from a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report cited by Castells (2000:78):

> In 1998, the assets of the three richest people in the world were more than the Gross National Product (GNP) of the 48 least developed countries, comprising 600 million people. The gap in per capita income between the industrial and the developing worlds tripled, from US$5,700 in 1960 to US$15,000 in 1993 (and) by 1991 more than 85 percent of the world's population received only 15 percent of its income – yet another sign of an even more polarized world.

Thus, as this *polarization* of peoples intensifies and worsens along economic lines, so too is the quality of life for billions of people in the South. This point is emphasized by Castells (2000:80):

> What appears to be a global phenomenon…is the growth of poverty, and particularly of extreme poverty. Furthermore, this acceleration of uneven development coupled with the inclusion and exclusion of people in this growth process translates into polarization, and the spread of *misery* among a growing number of people.

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[8] The idea of *people-before-profit* is intensely promoted and advocated by development practitioners such as Burkey, Carmen, Chambers, Duchrow and Hinkelammert. This concept is strongly suggested by the writer as a basic fundamental principle that every community development practitioner should apply in development work. Without a people-centred approach, development will just not work. Two main category of development in this regard are conceptualized as 1) *Human Development* and 2) *Rights-based Development*, which will be discussed in a later chapter.

Castells' notion of *misery* is another concept that is very illuminating (2000:80). *Misery* is a category in which people have to survive daily on consumption equivalent to one US dollar a day. It is also defined as the extreme poverty line, under which 33 percent of the developing world's population has been categorized in the mid-1990s. This accounts for 1.3 billion extremely poor people, who experience a daily fight for survival.

Similarly, Duchrow (1995:15) illustrates (figure 3) the vast chasm in the world's present distribution of income in the following diagram and illustrates that global economic growth rarely filters down. For Duchrow, this unacceptable inequality is as a result of economic globalization that benefits only very few people, while at the same time causing abject poverty for more than 2 billion people across the globe.
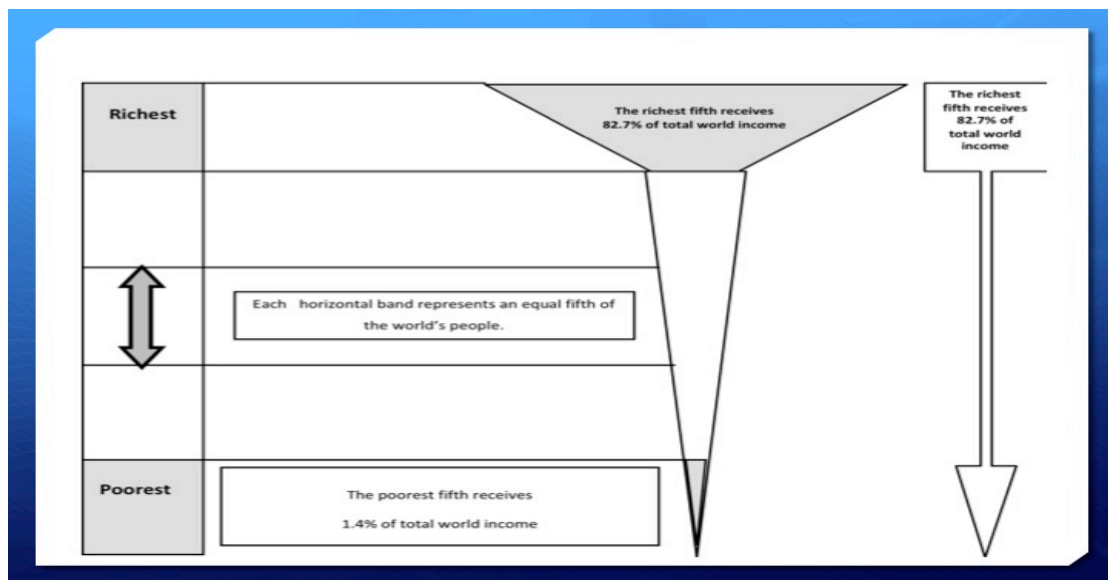
Figure 3 Duchrow's rich-poor divide of inequality

Therefore, the world that we live in (as is illustrated in the above diagram) is a place of gross *inequality* and *imbalance* in the distribution of its wealth. Mbeki in Makgoba (1999: xvii) complements this finding when he points out that "…the reproduction of wealth by the countries of the North has led to the creation of poverty of the South. There has to be something out of joint where wealth begets poverty!" This imbalance must be addressed and solutions found to create an economic system that would be just for all – both rich and poor, developed and under-developed. This unequal distribution of wealth and resources can thus undoubtedly be regarded as both a

symptom of a failing global economic system and at the same time, one of the many root causes of poverty.

While the mainstream global economy is steamrolling ahead, another economy is growing ominously as well. According to Castells (2000: 169-182), the world we live in is being attacked by a "perverse connection" called the "Global Criminal Economy."[9] Based on the 1994 United Nations (UN) Conference on Transnational Crime, he identifies seven illicit activities that dominate this "economy": 1) drug trafficking, 2) weapons trafficking, 3) trafficking of nuclear material, 4) smuggling of illegal immigrants, 5) trafficking in women and children, 6) trafficking in body parts and 7) money laundering.

Although it may appear as if people are unaffected by this phenomenon at local level, it is becoming increasingly apparent that global events, such as this global criminal economy, are also having local effects. One only has to notice the internationally linked drug trafficking cases that are being exposed right here in Cape Town and other parts of South Africa. The world, in a sense, has become just like a village where every space within that village is all too easily accessible to every inhabitant through modern technology and burgeoning transportation systems.

We are thus compelled to pose certain questions in view of a post-modern age of so much technological advancement and where so much capital and resources are available for alleviating the plight of the poor. Why is so little being done? Why is inequality and polarization of people so rampant? What can be done to bring about meaningful change in our world, especially uprooting poverty? How can the wealth of the North and the minority rich in the South be redistributed in a meaningful, equitable way to those on the so-called fringes or peripheries of society? What is driving people to participate in dehumanizing "economic" activities such as human trafficking? Surely there must be something amiss in the world that we live in! This world that we live in, according to Childs (2000:43), should be a place where "…the purpose of business is to serve the well-being of all its stakeholders – employees and

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[9] In a later deliberation on the "Local Criminal Economy" as opposed to the "Global Criminal Economy", I will give examples of how this phenomenon manifests itself in the local community on which some of the research of this thesis is based.

their families, communities, customers, the environment, and so on – not just the shareholders. That is, the interrelatedness of business with other orders of God's design clearly favours stakeholder capitalism over stockholder capitalism".

Stakeholder capitalism as opposed to stockholder capitalism is in my view the key here. Only when all the aspects of social capital[10] and human capital[11] (such as trust and healthy relationships amongst people) are utilized optimally, humanely and justly in the process of generating economic or financial capital[12], will the world see serious inroads being made and visible successes achieved in eradicating poverty at both local and global levels. Stakeholders must be given the opportunity to participate in a just manner in the decision-making processes that affect them. It is therefore untenable that only those with financial power and influence (stockholders) should be left to make critical economic decisions (many that could have negative outcomes) on behalf of those who are poor. If the poor are marginalized in these types of processes, then it is highly unlikely that significant participatory development will be achieved. However, if decisions, especially at state level, are made with the intention of finding ways to address the plight of the poor, this will undoubtedly assist in the improvement of the quality of life of this important part of society.

In view of these facts, it would be essential to ask how role-players like NGO's, the Public Church Desk (at Governmental level), the Public Church (such as the Beyers Naude Centre at the University of Stellenbosch), and civil society[13] can contribute

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[10] At the provincial governmental launch of the Western Cape Social Capital Formation Strategy that I attended at the University of the Western Cape in 2006, *social capital* was defined as "…the connectedness between people that enables mutual benefit and collective action. Social capital is the wealth that common values give to a community. It is the general attitude of a community that brings about social and economic development." This definition was agreed upon after the concept was thoroughly researched by those tasked by the then Premier, Ebrahim Rasool, to do so. Amongst some of the definitions explored was that of R.D. Putnam (1993) who described the term as follows: "Similar to the notions of physical and human capital, the term social capital refers to features of social organization – such as networks, norms, and trust that increase a society's productive potential." However, I prefer to align myself with the following concept of social capital that is alluded to in the Premier's *foreword* of the Social Capital Formation Strategy manual: "Social Capital refers to the institutions, relationships, norms and networks that shape the quality and quantity of society's social interactions and enables collective action."

[11] *Human capital*, along with *social capital*, is among five core concepts (known as *livelihood assets*) found in an important Development Theory model called the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF). The SLF will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter.

[12] *Financial capital* is the third core concept in the SLF.

[13] For the purposes of this dissertation I have chosen to limit the definition of the term and use Batista's "neutral" notion of *Civil society:* "Civil society is an ideal and a reality because it offers a way of

meaningfully in alleviating the predicament of the poor and addressing the root causes of poverty. To what extent could all such role-players play a role in defense of the stakeholder (in this case, the poor)?

2.2.2 Politics in the global village (The Second Sector)

In trying to understand what is going on in the world of poverty, one needs to consider the glocal political landscape too. The question needs to be asked what is the correlation between poverty and politics?

The political world that we live in is also a world where the nation-state has become less powerful than TNC's. As a starting point for this section, Kiely and Marfleet (1998:10) allude to the correlation between politics and economics. Kiely & Marfleet (1998) suggest that the globalization of the world economy refers to the ability of capital to move freely across national boundaries. Radice in Kiely & Marfleet (1998:10) agrees that the ability of the nation-state to direct "national economies" is being undermined by this type of "hyper-mobility". Thus, in doing so, and because of the importance placed on healthy economic growth, governments around the world have in a sense become very dependent on transnational corporations (TNCs). Finance capital is moved around the globe so rapidly via modern communications systems that nation-states' ability to control national currencies are being undermined.

The propulsion and effect of global neo-capitalism to the world's center-stage has been very profound to say the least. It has become obvious that the lure of money and the promise of economic prosperity have caused many countries to sometimes abandon those good values that are meant to take care of its marginalized and most vulnerable people. By this it is meant that some leaders in influential positions in countries could wittingly or unwittingly sell off the country's wealth to foreign companies who promise the expertise to make the poorer countries prosperous or "great". These foreign companies are almost always dependent on what is known as Multi National Corporations (MNC) or Trans-national Corporations (TNC).

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orientating and organizing society which seeks sustainable life, good sense and the common good of all members in society" (in Koegelenberg, 1995:223). Since this concept cannot have the same meaning universally due to present social complexities and diverse cultures across the globe, I have selected this version as it potentially possesses no real inconsistencies.

In his comments about the political conditions necessary for a capitalist market economy, Duchrow (1995:43) emphasizes that it is important for the state or government to exercise responsibly its duty to regulate laws around property, contract law, the organization of money and foreign (trade) policy. These are some of the vital factors necessary for ensuring that equality and justice is to be enjoyed by everyone in any given country. But is this happening today? Do politicians and political institutions *really* protect the rights of their people or do they contribute to the further demise of the *already poor*?

Also, with regard to the United Nations (UN) one should ask: do political institutions like the UN really help the plight of the poor today? The current crisis in western Sudan's Darfur Region is a case in point where already-impoverished people are experiencing even more hardships while the rest of the world is spectators. Peoples' lives and their human dignity are at stake while all that is happening is discussion but little action. If powerful institutions like the UN are unable to intervene and provide minimum humane solutions for embattled people all around the globe, how then is it possible for this institution to be a serious role-player in bringing about positive changes to the millions of poverty-stricken people still with us today?

Furthermore, the flagrant violation of human rights and human dignity is a trend across the world. For example, people are being dehumanized in Europe (especially African refugees), Iraq (violent conflict), Sudan[14] (the western Darfur Province and the southern Sudan) and in many other places across the globe. While speaking of Sudan where apparent ethnic conflict is destroying so many lives, Castells (2000(b): 110) explains how that ethnicity has overtaken politics in Africa. The recent (1996)

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[14] During a brief visit to Sudan in 2003 I visited the Jebel Aulia Refugee Camp ("home" to thousands of war-displaced Southern Sudanese people) about twenty kilometres outside of the capital, Khartoum. The exclusively Christian refugees lived in atrocious conditions such as in dilapidated mud houses, were persecuted just for being Christians, and were severely restricted in terms of general movement around the country by the military police. The camp was located in the desert and the sand was like talcum powder. Add to that the extreme heat (averaging above 40 degrees Celsius for most of the year, and having no potable running water in their homes, these people's immediate environment was one in which it could be said that they literally experienced "hell on earth". There, the absolute *misery* of poverty was evident. One year later (June 2004), I visited three cities in the United States (Cleveland, Philadelphia and Denver). The amazing gulf between the poor people in Sudan and the wealthy folk in the United States of America (USA) can only be described in absolute terms – *absolute poverty and persecution* visa vie *absolute wealth and privilege*. These two trips over the period of a few months helped me to gain a first-hand continental and global perspective of poverty and wealth as two opposing realities.

Hutu-Tsutsi ethnic massacres in Rwanda reinforce his point. All of this is happening at a time of great technological and financial advancement. This paradox of extreme wealth and extreme poverty in our times highlight the best and worst of human beings as well as the limitations of humankind that we are faced with daily. Politically, African leaders are faced with the same dilemma of trying to overcome the problems that cause so much hardship and misery of millions.

The activities aimed at producing justice and equality for every human-being on earth must continue. The struggle to overcome the dehumanizing side of globalization must be embraced by especially politicians. Their positions of influence must be used in the spirit of "Ubuntu[15]" where they recognize their identity and role as interdependent on that of other human beings. They ought to make a concerted effort to stamp out corruption in their ranks as a means to secure a better life for the poor.

Due to the tremendous increase in economic globalization and the flow of capital across borders, the tendency for corrupt economic practices has also increased. Not only are company directors (such as those of the company, Enron[16] in the United States) and employees being exposed for corruption but also people in influential political positions. This worldwide phenomenon is also prevalent in the South African context. One of the trends in our times, and especially in the South African political landscape, is the tendency of corrupt officials to pilfer money and/or resources earmarked for the poor. Newspaper articles, radio and television broadcasts are a constant source, unfortunately, of this type of bad news.

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[15] According to August in Bosman, Conradie & Mouton (2005:15), the term *ubuntu* was popularised by Archbishop Tutu. August comments that the term *ubuntu* derives from the Xhosa expression *"Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye Bantu"*. This proverbial expression generally means that "…each individual's humanity is ideally expressed in relationship with others and, in turn, individuality is truly expressed". Researchers of the Western Cape Social Capital Formation Strategy manual (2006:17) also define the distinctly South African concept of *ubuntu* as "…the notion that a person is a person only through other people. It thus reflects a concern about the well-being of others, and a realization that one's own well-being will be harmed when the well-being of others is threatened."

[16] *Enron* was a giant American TNC that was shaken by massive fraud in 2001 when corrupt directors were exposed for unprecedented fraudulent practices. The Company posted a billion-dollar loss in October 2001 and struggled to avoid bankruptcy. At the same time they had to lay off at least 4500 workers (Cruver, B. 2003:230-237). Can one ever imagine what kind of repercussions this had on the thousands of employees who now suddenly became anxious about their future and that of their families? What utter devastation!

The Ethical Leadership Project (ELP) [17] is a South African Non Governmental Organization (NGO) that has as one of its primary aims to contribute to the development of ethical leadership in various spheres of society, viz. politics, economy and civil society. At two of their most recent conferences issues such as the *equality of all people* were discussed. With the current wave of corruption filtering through so many institutions it is becoming evident that organizations such as ELP are playing important roles in social transformation and, indirectly, to poverty alleviation. The global organization Transparency International18 is also an important group dealing with governments to operate in a just way economically.

In reviewing what has just been discussed, it is imperative therefore, that politicians and political organizations also play their part in harnessing meaningful social capital. It is critical that political leaders set the trend of good, moral and ethical leadership. Such an attitude would only encourage large-scale support from the masses of our country's citizens, especially those who are presently alienated from the country's economic capital. Thus, building effective social capital in political circles, where influence to bring about change is potentially the greatest, is of paramount importance. But building social capital with ethical leadership strongly entrenched will enhance the cause even more in the fight to overcome the new "apartheid" - *poverty*. Those who find themselves on the peripheries of society should be helped to come as close to the centres as possible. Then the idea of a truly "ubuntu" experience can be radiated throughout the nation and also across international borders. Thus it is evident that strong, ethical, political leaders have the potential have a positive

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[17] The *Ethical Leadership Project* is a joint research and teaching project of the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM), the Beyers Naude Centre for Public theology/University of Stellenbosch, University of the Western cape and Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The ELP is aligned with the constitution of the South Africa and has a strong human rights culture. Part of this research paper is based on findings from my attendance and participation at various conferences since 2005.

[18] Transparency International (TI): TI is organised as a group of some 100 national chapters, with an international secretariat in Berlin, Germany. Originally founded in Germany in 1993 as a not-for-profit organisation, TI is now an international non-governmental organisation, and claims to be moving towards a completely democratic organisational structure. TI says of itself:
"Transparency International is the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption. It brings people together in a powerful worldwide coalition to end the devastating impact of corruption on men, women and children around the world. TI's mission is to create change towards a world free of corruption."
It rejects any idea of "northern superiority" regarding corruption, and is committed to exposing corruption worldwide. Since 1995 TI has issued an annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI); it also publishes an annual Global Corruption Report, a Global Corruption Barometer and a Bribe Payers Index.

catalytic effect on issues deeply connected to the quality of life of an increasing number of poor people in our country. It is precisely at this point that organized religion, as a supporting role-player to "political capital", could make a significant "moral" contribution in addressing the root causes of poverty.

2.2.3 Religion in the global village

The world we live in is also a world in which a "global religious revival" is occurring. In Marfleet's estimation and that of other global theorists (in Kiely and Marfleet, 1998:186), the socio-cultural changes that are taking place at a world level are elevating the importance of religion. Referring to Haynes, Marfleet (1998:186) proposes that there is a "…global religious revival" taking place. This "revival" is seen daily on television screens across the globe, especially in places in the Middle East.

Many armed conflicts around the globe are based along cultural-religious lines. The Tamil-Hindu strife in Sri Lanka and the sporadic Christian-Islam tensions in Nigeria and elsewhere are examples of clashes of civilizations. Marfleet (in Kiely & Marfleet, 1998:187) refers to Samuel Huntington, a respected academic and strategic analyst on the theories of globalization and the role of religion: "His theory of world affairs suggests that states will no longer be the main players in international relations: the future will be shaped by cultural blocs defined by their religious heritage. Assuming a "kin-country" loyalty cemented by awareness of religious heritage, Huntington argues that world events will turn on the conflicts between such blocs, producing a global "clash of civilizations".

Since Huntington's prediction in 1993, we can clearly see that religion, as has been the case throughout the history of the world, is again coming to the fore, as witnessed in violent clashes between peoples of different religious persuasions across the globe. Another phenomenon that we see taking place in the globe is the new wave of what has now been labeled "global terrorism". The now well-documented events of "9/11" (the terrorist acts that resulted in the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York, USA, on 11 September 2001) and the response of the USA, Great Britain and other allies, have forever made the world's citizens even

more conscious of the differing ideologies of people along the lines of religion, economics and culture.

As a symbol of the values of the Northlandian nations to whom economic prosperity is of paramount importance, the demise of the WTC buildings was also an attack on the god of the current global economic system. Although the institutionalized WTC has been attacked physically, it would appear that this has not dented the current neo-capitalist system that is appearing to be responsible for extreme prosperity but also extreme poverty across the face of the world. Referring to the religious nature of the attacks on the WTC in 2001, Duchrow and Hinkelammert (2004:111) write the following:

> Up until then only God in the heavens was greater than this god…The power that held itself to be godlike and was worshipped in the world as a god was badly hurt. This was parricide, regicide, deicide…The Twin Towers were the holy shrine of this god. What the Vatican in Rome is for Catholics, and Mecca is for Muslims, these towers were for the bourgeois society based on property, money and capital. The towers were, on the one hand, a centre for worship as well as for business. The attack on the Pentagon – or the possibility of an attack on the White House – is of only secondary importance in comparison with the attack on the Twin Towers. From the perspective of finance people, the attack on the towers was a sacrilege. This is how global capitalism thinks. Parliament and White Houses are simply a decoration peripheral to the hard core of property, money and capital mysticism, which regarded the Twin Towers as the royal throne and divine residence.

This illustration shows us how that the priorities of many wealthy people and nations have become self-serving without giving due consideration to the plight of the millions of have-nots in society. This self-serving attitude shows that people can so easily replace the worship of God with the worship of other gods, especially the *money god*. When this happens, then people's focus on money causes them to become oblivious to the suffering of others in diverse cultures and contexts, let alone the poor in other parts of the globe.

Since the world we live in is a place of diversity, there are diverse people groups, diverse cultures, diverse religions and diverse worldviews that interact with every other facet of life. These contrasting and clashing dispositions could be cause for concern in a world that is being polarized as a result of the current religious rhetoric

and armed conflict in certain parts of the globe. Consequently, it rings true that "what has attracted attention, is the idea that religion can be a focal point for conflict within a *global* system" and that it is becoming the key category for understanding world society and "global order" (Marfleet in Kiely & Marfleet, 1998:188).

In conclusion, one has to be optimistic about the future. The above observation of Duchrow and Hinkelammert, although projecting a picture of negativity, also helps one to see that religious cooperation and tolerance could be a tremendous positive catalyst in the fight against poverty around the globe. Instead of the terror of religion or the violence of religion that is all too prominent in our times, people of all faiths should work together towards an environment of tolerance and focus on shared values that would undoubtedly promote more humane conditions for the eradication of poverty.

If religious leaders around the world can use their God-given influence to promote religious tolerance and cooperation around the world then this would boost the quality of life of, not only the poor, but also the rest of the earth's inhabitants. Here it is important that institutions and people such as the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the Pope as leader of the worldwide Catholic Church, as well as leaders of other denominations and religions constantly engage in efforts to promote harmony for the sake of helping those living in the poverty trap. Utopian though it seems, we all need to be hopeful of such a scenario and work individually as well as collectively in bringing about changes that will benefit all of humankind.

But if religion is to become the key category to talk about in a new global order, then the environment, our common habitat, must certainly be another major priority in discussions about sustainable human and economic development.

2.2.4 Environment and global pillage

What are some of the other problems that contemporary society face? Why are there so many problems associated with poverty and wealth? Nürnberger (1998:1) provides some insight:

> We are witnessing explosive growth in all directions: growth in productive capacity among
> the rich; population growth among the poor; wasteful opulence and grinding misery; meteoric
> success stories and mass marginalization; globalized competition for markets rapid depletion
> of fossil fuels; increasing erosion and environmental pollution; growing conflict over
> diminishing resources and the proliferation of increasingly lethal weaponry

Thus, it can be seen that one of the central deliberations in contemporary development dialogue and in theology revolves around ecological matters and environmental awareness. Nürnberger (1998:235) categorizes human needs according to 1) immanent needs and 2) transcendent needs. Immanent needs belong to the group that is accessible to human understanding and under human control. These would include physical, psychological, intellectual, communal, social, economic, political and ecological needs. Transcendent needs, however, go beyond human accessibility and control for him. They include a valid system of meaning, assurance of one's right of existence, , and the authority to use one's powers to achieve one's goals. For Nürnberger (1998:197; 265), the environment is the natural context on which human life depends. Human life is embedded in a natural environment and therefore humans have immanent, ecological needs. For human life to survive and prosper both the natural and the social order must be healthy.

What makes the natural environment unhealthy? The world we live in is a place that is experiencing relentless environmental degradation as a result of irresponsible behaviour by humans. The indiscriminate exploitation of the world's natural resources in the quest for money continues at a rapid rate. Rain forests, the ozone layer, masses of ice at the poles, marine life and land-based life are some of the natural areas that are being depleted. Meanwhile, as production increases in an escalating consumerist world, the natural environment, our natural habitat called Earth, is under threat and is experiencing inconsistent weather patterns that threaten to cause irreversible harm to all of its inhabitants. The 2007 UNGC Report, in one of its themes, *Climate Change and Environmental Responsibility*, emphasizes the call that TNCs and all businesses should practice responsible, eco-friendly economic development. This may sound like a contradiction in terms but this is exactly what is necessary for the human race's continued existence on earth. With reference to the need for this ecological soundness, however, Klaus Nurnberger (1999:345) believes that "sustained economic growth" is a myth. Although the term has been bandied about for decades, sustainable

economic growth is not possible under today's circumstances. Nurnberger (1999:345) asserts that affordable and ecologically safe alternatives are nowhere in sight. It is thus unreasonable to think that economic growth can persist especially while so much people are suffering and ecological devastation remains unchecked. In fact, Nurnberger (1999:6-8) equates the deteriorating condition of the environment to "…the cancerous pursuit of self-interest at the expense of wider social and natural contexts." Perhaps this is why Stiglitz (2006:190) shows that,

> For the economy to achieve efficiency, corporations must take into account the impact of their actions on their employees, on the environment, and on the communities in which they operate".

What Stiglitz introduces here is a sense of ethical responsibility on the part of companies with special reference to the well being of not only people, but also the environment. For this reason, Myers (1999:83) argues that people "need an environment that supports life". The natural environment is the source of life on earth. For Scobie (2003:157) human beings are to exercise responsible care over the environment or creation and this implies that they have to ensure that a healthy environment is always in place.

Kiely & Marfleet (1998:13) express their distress at the way in which the First World countries are mainly responsible for the current state of the declining environment and a counter-life ecological trend. If it is true that First World countries consume about 50 percent of the world's energy resources as compared to only one-sixth in the Third World, and that the former emits roughly 80 percent of the world's greenhouse gases and 90 percent of carbon gases that destroy the ozone layer, then it is not surprising that the United States of America refused to sign the recent Kyoto Protocol[19] (Duchrow & Hinkelammert, 2004:90) aimed at countries who were most responsible for this type of catastrophic pollution that is causing concerning levels of climate change. These statistics complement those of former USA President Bill Clinton, who, at in address at the Labour Party of the United Kingdom Conference on 27 September 2006, cited that "cities are the source of 75% Carbon Emissions in the world." Based on these facts, First World countries are contributing towards an environment that can be considered to be anti-life.

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[19] The Kyoto Protocol is an international signed agreement between countries aimed at protecting our natural habitat from all types of pollution that are responsible for drastic changes occurring in the earth's climate.

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The world we live in, according to the United Nations, is a world that is fast being depleted of its natural resources. Biggs in Kiely and Marfleet (1998:116) indicates that the Global Biodiversity Strategy[20] (GBS) of 1992 identified fundamental causes of biodiversity[21] loss. The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) in 1995 found that these causes were demographic, economic, institutional and technological. The increasing demand and exploitation of biological resources were found to be the causes of loss, fragmentation and degradation of natural habitats. Interestingly, it was also found that inappropriate technologies used for food and livestock production also contributed to the "bio-loss" scenario. At the same time, the economic market has failed to see the true value of biological diversity, especially in the African context.

Writing about an approaching global economic crisis, and compatible with Moltmann's view on environmentalism, Nurnberger (1999:3) lists five problems as the most important ones requiring the world's attention and action:

1. The cumulative destruction of our natural habitat

2. The uncontrolled growth of the human population

3. Economic imbalances between rich and poor, growing unemployment and impoverishment of millions of people

4. Rapidly growing, and immensely dangerous, powers provided by modern science and technology, especially nuclear, chemical and gene technology

5. The deterioration of the moral fibre of society and the growth of conflict potential

Like Stiglitz and Moltmann, Nürnberger is very aware that the future of the earth is at risk and that economic globalization is one of the major factors posing the most significant threat to the natural environment. In *Beyond Marx and Market*, Nürnberger (1998:160) reinforces this notion that the well-being of the earth, and by implication, people, is of paramount importance:

> If economic success happens at the expense of the natural environment, future generations are the losers in the game.

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[20] The Global Diversity Strategy is a United Nations program aimed at protecting the natural resources of the earth from harmful exploitation, especially exploitation for economic gain.

[21] According to Biggs in Kiely & Marfleet (1998:116) biodiversity (biological diversity) is the word currently used to describe all living organisms, their genetic make-up and the communities they form. Genetic diversity describes the variation of genes within a species; species diversity describes the variety of species within a region; and eco-diversity refers to the number and distribution of ecosystems.

Thus ecological processes need to be followed to ensure a healthy environment. In this respect, Nurnberger ((1998:111) cites the example of "Germany who now spends millions to clean up the impact of industrialization on the environment".

In *God for a Secular Society*, Moltmann (1999:127-133) takes the problem of environmental degradation further and prefers to correlate the theme with what he calls *economic human rights*. For Moltmann (1999:127)), economic human rights and ecological obligations are inseparable because a part of human dignity is the right to lead a life of dignity. This human dignity implicates certain "minimum social and economic preconditions", and includes such necessities as protection from hunger and illness, and the right to work and to personal property. Moltmann's idea here correlates well with Martha Nussbaum's (2000:5-7) concept of the need for people to experience a "basic social minimum". A recent addition to these minimum requirements of human dignity for Moltmann is the protection of the natural environment. In this respect, Moltmann (1999:128) calls for justice through the "democratization of the global economy" because he foresees that humanity is going to be confronted with an economic and ecological calamity, and motivates as follows:

> The increasing exploitation and indebtedness of countries in the Third World are compelling the people there to cut down their rain forests, and to over-exploit their arable land and pastures to the point where they become dustbowls and deserts. And in this way they are destroying parts of the foundations from which the whole of humanity lives.

Consequently, Moltmann (1999:128) insists that the human struggle for existence cannot be pursued at the expense of the environment, because the ecological ruin of nature on the earth would be the start of the end for all human life. He rightly argues that since fundamental economic rights of each person are inherently related with fundamental ecological obligations, ecological limits must be set to economic growth. Thus, economic rights must therefore be brought in harmony with the cosmic conditions of nature on the earth in which humanity is living. Drawing from Hans Küng, August (2010:57) implies that this impending global environmental crisis constitutes a relationship between human beings and nature. It speaks of a "symbiosis of human society and the natural environment".

In conclusion, it is no surprise then, when Nürnberger (1998:181) alludes to this much-needed healthy symbiosis and warns against the dangers of not taking the

ecological problem seriously. Here Nürnberger addresses, in particular, capitalist liberalism. Considering the increasing carbon dioxide emissions in the earth's atmosphere through unrelenting industrialization, it is therefore reasonable to assume with Nürnberger (1998:181) that "capitalist enterprises and their supporters have tried to play down the problem, to shift the blame, to shirk their responsibility, to ridicule 'ecological romanticism…' Although organizations like the UNGC are only starting to adopt an environmental-friendly approach, it seems that much still remains to be done by corporations and society in general to reduce pollution and other human-induced environmental dangers.

Through the application of the descriptive task and its key question regarding *what is going on* in the environment, the contextualization of the *ecological problem* demonstrates that environment is a core issue in the discourse on poverty and development for theologians as well as for economists and sociologists.

2.3 AFRICA IN THE GLOBAL SPHERE: PERSPECTIVES FROM THABO MBEKI AND MANUEL CASTELLS

Having discussed the different events that are taking place globally, the research asks the question, *what is going on in Africa?* What is happening politically, economically and sociologically in Africa? What is happening with people in the different countries on the African continent? What is happening with the natural resources that Africa (or TNCs) possess? These questions further reinforce the basis of this research and are aimed at guiding this research closer to its stated goals. A brief response to these questions now follows.

As indicated earlier, Castells argues that the world in which we live is a technologically advanced world. Or is it? In the post-modern revolution of information technology, Africa, our beloved motherland, has become a forgotten place. Diop in Makgoba (1999:5) addresses Africa's exclusion from mainstream global economics:

> The so-called present marginalisation of Africa thus appears as the predictable or even
> expected result of her forced and structurally dependent integration into a global market ruled
> by the law of unequal exchanges, from the early stage of capital primitive accumulation to that
> of financial globalisation.

As the rest of the world (including South Africa) is "developing" technologically and also economically, most of Africa is perceived to be too risky to invest in. Her marginalization from the developed world is increasing at a time when things should be getting better. Castells (2000:91-92) in *End of Millennium* reinforces this point:

> The consequence of this process of disinvestments throughout Africa, at the precise historical moment when the information technology revolution has transformed the infrastructure of production, management and communications elsewhere, has been the de-linking of African firms and labour from the workings of the new economy characterizing most of the world, while linking up African elites to the global networks of wealth, power, information, and communication.

Likewise, Diop in Makgoba (1999:3) reinforces this notion of Africa's economic exclusion:

> At the end of the millennium, Africa finds herself at a crossroads. Having only just completed her formal decolonization process, crowned by the abolition of apartheid, and needing to consolidate it through the work of reconstruction and development, Africa is already said to be under threat of 'marginalization' within the global market, and even of 'recolonisation' by the new masters of a changing world, which is subjected to the cult of private property and monetary profit, a world so Darwinian it fringes on inhumanity.

Consequently, Africa's technological apartheid or exclusion at the dawn of the Information Age is not a good sign (Castells, 2000:92). Historically, the effects of centuries of colonization and violent conflicts have had a negative impact on the development of Africa as a whole. The physical infrastructure that Africa lacks is further exacerbated by the lack of adequate human skills to operate information technology (Castells, 2000:94). The position that Castells takes here is questionable because it implies that there are no Africans who are technologically equipped to utilize the technology that is being used by the rich "developed" countries. Nevertheless, since the global economic system is intrinsically linked to information technology, it becomes obvious that most African nations will become even poorer as they are further alienated from the economy that is supposed to help them. South African President, Thabo Mbeki in Makgoba (1999: xvii) substantiates this fact when he asserts that we cannot win the struggle for Africa's development outside the context and framework of the world economy. But if the key stakeholders of the world economy are reluctant to invest in Africa as a whole, how then can this

"technological development" become a reality? One way to ensure Africa's development, according to Mbeki (1999) is:

> We must insert ourselves into the international debate about the issues of globalization and its impact on the lives of the people, and make our voice heard about what we and the rest of the world should do to achieve the development, which is a fundamental right of the masses of our people.

For Mbeki, it is a matter of Africans taking their own destiny into their hands and asserting themselves in contemporary development matters. However, Castells (2000:95) appears to be cautious in his estimation that "the disinformation of Africa at the dawn of the Information Age may be the most lasting wound inflicted on this continent by new patterns of dependency, aggravated by the policies of the predatory state…". Thus, the degree to which Africans participate in their own development and global issues is crucial in determining the successful future of the continent.

Castells' view that new patterns of dependency, the oppressive actions of predatory states, and especially the disempowerment of African states by exclusion from technological development, appears to be bad news for proponents of an *African Renaissance*[22]. But Makgoba (ed.) (1999: xii), however, reflects optimistically that "the African Renaissance is a unique opportunity for Africans to define ourselves and our agenda according to our own realities and taking into account the realities of the world around us. It is about Africans being agents of our own history and masters of our own destiny". In this regard, Makgoba (ed.) (1999: iii) proposes that an important question be asked: "What is the place and role of African social values in a globalizing world?"

The world we live in is also a place where the de-humanization of African people has become a reality of our times. Castells' suggestion that the interplay between global systems of economics, technology, politics and society is the "making of a process that denies humanity to African people" is plausible, especially when one looks at how underdeveloped most of Africa is in comparison to any other region in the world

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[22] The African Renaissance is accurately described by Makgoba (1999:xii) as "…a unique opportunity for Africans to define ourselves and our agenda according to our own realities and taking into account the realities of the world around us. It is about Africans being agents of our own history and masters of our own destiny." In view of Africa's recent subjection to colonial forces and her subsequent liberation, there is now an opportunity for Africa to arise and make a positive, unique, distinctly African contribution to both local and global issues that affect her.

(2000:83). The de-humanization of Africa according to Castells (2000:82-83) has come at a time when "the rise of information/global capitalism in the last quarter of the twentieth century coincided with the collapse of Africa's economies, the disintegration of many of its states, and the breakdown of most of its societies." This has resulted in famines, epidemics, violence, civil wars, massacres, mass exodus and social and political chaos.

The hope of an African Renaissance *must* be embraced. It may become the means for the liberation of the masses from economic and technological apartheid. Thus Mbeki in Makgoba (1999: xxi) speaks of the African Renaissance as a mission of joint partnership and collective effort:

> What we are speaking of is the education, organization and energisation of new African patriots who, because to them yesterday is a foreign country, join in the struggle to bring about an African renaissance in all its elements. Our first task…is to transform our society consistent with this vision. Our second task is to join hands with all other like-minded forces on our continent, convinced that the peoples of Africa share a common destiny, convinced also that people of goodwill throughout the world will join us in the sustained offensive which must result in the new century going down in history as the African century. Yesterday is a foreign country – tomorrow belongs to us!

To conclude this section, it is important to consider that the African Renaissance is indeed a vital concept in the further unshackling of the continent from economic and technological exclusion. However, several years later, there appears to be more questions than answers about the "new" Africa's real influence in critical African and global events that threaten to undermine a renaissance. Perhaps the last few years since the declaration of an African Renaissance have served as a watershed period - maybe not. But the African resolve in the spheres of leadership, intervention and crisis management have severely been tested. Despite the attempts of the African Union (AU) to mediate in crises in Zimbabwe, Somalia, Sudan (Western Darfur) and other central African countries, it would appear that it has extremely limited influence over these autonomous nations. Such situations only serve to undermine the notion of an African Renaissance. However, this does not mean that we have to step back and not work for this ideal to materialize. The moment that we concede to the notion that an African Renaissance is too utopian, is the moment we concede defeat and ignore

the plight of millions of impoverished people who are hungry not only for sustenance but for a humane, better quality of life.

Thus it is imperative that theory be translated into praxis. Without the practical demonstration of what it means, the African Renaissance would simply become a myth. The values of this renewal of the African continent must become embedded in every culture, city and nation. This would require committed leaders of countries in Africa who want to see the ideals of the African Renaissance become a reality but more importantly, see the situation of the poor being reversed.

The existing ideal of the African Renaissance should continually be promoted in meaningful, practical ways to help the masses to understand that a bright new destiny is possible on the continent. It is possible because, in the view of Mazwai in Makgoba (1999:417), the "bricks and mortar for the African Renaissance do not lie in the discourse between African scholars but…it is work on the ground in which ordinary people participate that will herald this revolution." If the African Renaissance were to become a reality, then it would be important for South Africa too, to position itself meaningfully within the world at large, but equally importantly, within Africa too. South Africa has the potential and is favorably placed to be a prime mover of such a vision, if only because of its advantage of being more technologically developed than other African countries. This advantage could be used to serve the rest of the masses on the continent, especially the poor. But what is South Africa's current condition really like? How can South Africa country contribute meaningfully to the eradication of poverty within its borders and also beyond it?

2.4 THE CONDITION OF SOUTH AFRICA: PERSPECTIVES FROM CASTELLS

How is South Africa inserted in the global sphere? What is happening in South African society? Theses are further questions that aim to discover the nature of people's experiences in South Africa, and also at assisting with the achievement of the goals of this study.

As has already been alluded to, the world that we live is both global and local in nature. In the global context people in one country are affected by events in another. An example in case is the spiralling fuel prices in South Africa caused by, amongst other factors, global economic influences such as instability in the Middle East nations. Thus people's lives are impacted locally by events that are taking place globally. This basic illustration allows us to see the interconnectedness and interdependence of people across the face of the globe. Therefore, South Africa is a glocal country, just like every other country across the world.

In the current international context South Africa, therefore, cannot exist in isolation in a globalized world. It would appear at first glance that South Africa, in comparison to other nations in Africa, is the most favourably positioned in the global economic market. It is no secret that South Africa is one of Africa's elite when it comes to economic and development issues. Together with its neighbour Botswana, South Africa appears to be a sign of hope for Africa's "re-humanization[23]". Castells (2000:121-126) affirms this position when he speaks of South Africa as the *connection* to facilitate Africa's inclusion in the global economic sphere. He qualifies his proposition by indicating several facts about South Africa: 1) its level of industrialization is much higher; 2) its economy is more diversified; 3) it plays a more significant role in the global economy than the rest of the continent and, 4) it is becoming a competitive emerging economy.

The changing political environment since the *apartheid* era has helped to reincorporate previously isolated South Africa into the global economy (Castells, 2000:121-122). Castells (2000:87-98) regards South Africa as Africa's elite with regard to its position in the world economy and its infrastructure. When he speaks of Africa's *technological apartheid*, he excludes South Africa because of its global-friendly infrastructure. Based on this alone, South Africa is reasonably well positioned in the global economy while the rest of Africa is not. The following

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[23] In the writer's opinion *re-humanization*, in the light of Castells' theory of de-humanization, is a concept speaking of the need to bring about holistic justice (economically, politically, socially, etc.) to the millions of suffering, poverty-stricken people across the world through the restoration of a person's sense of humanness or human dignity from a previous condition of dehumanisation or of having been dehumanised in one way or another.

statistics underline the relative strength of the South African economy as compared to other states on the African continent:

> South Africa accounts for 44 percent of the total GDP of all Sub-Saharan Africa, and 52 percent of its industrial output. It uses 64 percent of electricity consumed in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 1993, real GDP per capita for Sub-Saharan Africa (including South Africa) was $1,288, while for South Africa alone it was 3.127. There are nine times more telephone lines per capita in South Africa than in Sub-Saharan Africa.

But what are the prevailing conditions like in the country? What do all of these statistics (of GDP) mean to most people in South Africa? What is the one main factor that hinders the overall welfare and progress of South Africa?

2.4.1 Unemployment in South Africa

One area that needs to be given closer examination is the scourge of unemployment in South Africa. Castells (2000:122-126) provides valuable insight in analyzing such conditions in South Africa. Having inherited a fragmented country in every sense of the word, the new democratic South African government had to deal with a history of unfair labour practices, high unemployment rates (officially at 32.6 percent in 1994), low wages for African workers and a host of other problematic realities (Castells, 2000:123-124). Furthermore, the recent apartheid policies were a system that hindered black urbanization and also prevented the vast majority of blacks from reaching their potential as entrepreneurs and was therefore systemically unjust. This same apartheid policy systematically deprived blacks from access to the best education, skills development opportunities, and the experience essential for the emergence of dynamic entrepreneurship, and especially informational skills. By the dawn of South Africa's new democracy in 1994, many millions of people were already officially unemployed. As Feinstein (2005:148) shows:

> By the end of the apartheid era there were over 6,000,000 people of working age who were either unemployed or so discouraged that they had withdrawn from the labour market because they saw no hope of finding a job.

However, while the present government is becoming more proactive and working very hard through creating many initiatives at all levels to redress the imbalances of the past, unemployment figures are still considerably high as more and more people

are entering the job market. Through its Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and Affirmative Action (AA) policies to bring about positive change and brighter economic prospects to the previously disadvantaged people of South Africa, the deracialised economic policies have not been without some serious challenges. In this dominant theme of the deracialisation of economic distribution in the South African context, two major components appear (Seekings & Nattrass, 2008:343):

1. the government completed the process of removing racial discrimination from public policy…with reference to labour market and welfare policies
2. it pursued policies designed to open up new economic opportunities for black – especially African – South Africans via policies of affirmative action and "black economic empowerment

While AA or employment equity required accelerating the promotion of previously disadvantaged designated groups in the labour market (and specifically moving them to higher-paid occupations), the BEE policy necessitated advancing the expansion of black entrepreneurial and business-owned classes (Seekings & Nattrass, 2008). The hope was that, through this important legislation, the Employment Equity Act of 1998 and the 2003 Black Economic Empowerment Act, "this kind of economic deracialisation would transform more than the top end of society" (ibid). Here, people began anticipating the imminent uprooting of poverty – as described for in the work, *Uprooting Poverty*, of Wilson & Ramphele (1989). However, on the issues of BEE, Affirmative Action and general economic policy since 1994, Seekings & Nattrass (2008:343-344) demonstrate a great deal of caution and skepticism. For them:

> BEE has not been benefiting all but it has especially let the most-poor people down. While proponents for BEE policy argue that "the policy was presented as a growth or developmental strategy that would have a wide reach via 'broad-based empowerment'…in practice BEE focused on the very top: first, the transfer of equity, especially in the major corporations that dominate the high-profile sectors, and second, procurement policies that reserve government and parastatal contracts for black-owned contractors. There is no reason to believe that these resulted in any increased employment…

Borrowing from Moeletsi Mbeki, the brother of former President Thabo Mbeki, Seekings & Nattrass (2008:345) suggest that BEE has been/is for the 'enrichment of the few' where black economic empowerment is mainly for the black middle class and for big business while "the overall opportunities for 'ordinary folks' remained

small. If this is true then the country is in real danger of allowing the gap between the "new rich" and the poorest people in the land to increase, thereby fuelling the root causes of poverty. It is at this juncture that Seekings & Nattrass (2008:350-356) point out that the reason why poverty still persists in South Africa are due to the difficulties with implementation of many of the transformational policies. Some of these poverty-inducing problems are mostly related to policy and can be enumerated as follows:

1. Failure to synchronize fiscal, monetary and labour-market policy is one of the many reasons for the decline in employment
2. Short-term poverty-relief programmes (such as the 1998 public works projects) have also failed to deliver jobs
3. The inability of the Departments of Welfare (now Social Development) and Public Works to spend funds allocated for job creation and poverty alleviation programmes
4. Global crises (such as the Asian financial crisis of the 1990's) that were beyond the government's control
5. The restructuring of companies and down-sizing of their workforces in order to become more profitable
6. In the farming sector especially, permanent employment was largely replaced by part-time or seasonal employment
7. Continued "deagrarianisation" due to the high cost of unsubsidised farming resulting in the eviction of farm workers and their families thus pushing these largely unskilled, poor people into an even more "disadvantaged position" yet.

For Seekings & Nattrass (2008; 356) though,

> Government policy has not succeeded in being pro-poor. Farm workers have experienced continued retrenchment and dispossession, despite supposedly protective legislation. Land reform has not benefited the poor significantly. The reforms that have been implemented have generally been to the benefit of the constituency that was already relatively advantaged. In this crucial sector, the post-apartheid distributional regime has not resulted in improved livelihoods for the poor.

Since each of these points here reflects something about the reasons for unemployment, it would be pertinent then to ask the question: how does unemployment affect an unemployed individual? In their treatment on the issue of *the attitudes and behaviour of the unemployed* Nattrass & Seekings (2008:295-299), with reference to Moller, provide an interesting response.

First, unemployed people "experience a range of psychological problems arising from unemployment". They experience, anxiety, fear and depression. Some of them also experience, insomnia, anger and find it difficult to concentrate. Second, the unemployed often experience disrupted relationships, produced boredom and, very significantly, low self-esteem. The feelings of loneliness and rejection are also common here, since many feel that their friends desert them due to their unemployment status. Many unemployed people also feel that the employed do not really care about their plight. Third, quoting Klasen, Woolard and Simkins, Nattrass & Seekings (2008:296) assert that unemployment can delay marriage and independent household formation, while further "delays in marriage as a result of unemployment increase the risk of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infections". Fourth, Seekings & Nattrass (2008:297) affirm, "that the overwhelming majority of South Africans identify unemployment as the most important problem facing the country".

Based on some of the above effects that unemployment has on individuals, the sociologist Vander Zanden (1988:422-423) corroborates with the views of Seekings & Nattrass that "unemployment has adverse effects on physical and mental health". Furthermore Vander Zanden (1988:423), with reference to Kaufman, suggests that the painful experience of unemployment has four stages that can potentially conclude with devastating effects:

- **Stage 1** (one month): people undergo a "sequence' of emotions that include "shock" when they anticipate that they may lose their jobs; "relief" when they actually lose it; and relaxation" as they become "confident and hopeful that they will find a new job" while normal relationships with their families and friends are maintained

- **Stage 2** (four months): this stage is centred "on a concerted effort to find a new job". Their anger at having lost the previous job is evaporated as they focus all of their resources and energy

- **Stage 3** (six weeks): when a person has been unsuccessful in finding a job during stage 2, he or she reaches this next critical stage. It is here where "their

self-esteem begins to crumble, and they begin to experience high levels of self-doubt and anxiety"

- **Stage 4** (indefinite period): at this stage, unemployed people are at a point of complete emotional and mental fragmentation where they "drift into a state of resignation and withdrawal". They are so discouraged and convinced they will not find work that "they either stop looking for work or search for it only half-heartedly or intermittently". Others may make a deliberate decision to change careers or to settle for a different type of job that they were previously accustomed to. At the same time, "they may look for other sources of self-esteem, including family, friends and hobbies".

Thus, for pastors, community leaders and officials in strategic government departments (such as the Department of Labour) it would be important to ask a further important question, *how does long-term unemployment (beyond six months of not having a job) impact society?* Vander Zanden (1988: 423) shows what this impact of long-term unemployment means in reality:

- Financial pressures accumulate. People become unable to afford the repayment of home and vehicle mortgages, furniture, or they may go into arrears with their rent, thus threatening their basic human need of having good shelter
- There is a deterioration of family life. At the same time. the divorce rate soars and "many men feel emasculated when confronted by an involuntary change of roles in the family, and they lash out with destructive reactions". This loss control often leads to "child abuse, violence, quarrelling, alcoholism, and other evidences of maladjustment…"
- Long-term unemployed people feel that they have lost all self-control and are vulnerable to an "unjust" economic system
- In societies where unemployment is sustained over a number of years, there is also a tendency in the increase of suicide and admission to mental institutions

These potentially lethal effects of unemployment indicates its oppressive nature – as opposed to employment that provides (or ideally) should provide a sense of positive self-esteem, liberation and accomplishment. With unemployment so high in South Africa, the consequences of this phenomenon require urgent attention.

2.4.2 Unemployment as oppression

Given these effects of unemployment, it is plausible to assert that unemployment can be understood as a form of oppression. Feinstein (2005:149), with special reference to the economic history of South Africa between 1974 and 1994, illustrates this point and shows how that the country's extremely weak economic performance that resulted in mass unemployment was one of the causes that resulted in the people revolting against the oppressive, racially-based economic and political systems:

> The government's inability to prevent, or bring to an end, the economic downturn was only one of the causes of this extraordinary revolution, but the distressed state of the economy increased the militancy of the oppressed and undermined the confidence of the oppressors. It was thus a major factor in the collapse of white rule and the transition to a government representative of all the people of South Africa.

The intolerable levels of unemployment during this period were but only one critical symptom "of a more fundamental, chronic disease which fatally weakened the economy" (Feinstein, 2005: 224). If unemployment could be described as oppression, then there are always two parties: the oppressed and the oppressor (Rieger, 1998:84). For Rieger (1998) "the oppressed never exist independently from the oppressors". The two sides co-exist in an environment of symbiotic tension where "the oppressive system's only future is to maintain its presence of affluence" (Gutierrez, 1973:235). However, Gutierrez claims in Rieger (1998:131) that "to be with the oppressed is to be against the oppressor" – in this case, the oppressor is the political and/or economic system that creates the current unacceptably high levels of unemployment and the people who actually ensure the perpetuation of oppression. And it is in such an environment to which the Church is called to exercise its prophetic role, as stated by Nürnberger (2005:149):

> the church will engage in advocacy for the less privileged over and against state agencies and the private sector, if they neglect their duties and allow corruption, crime violence, discrimination, oppression and exploitation.

It is then logical to reason that, through inheriting unacceptable levels of unemployment, the current South African government have also been handed down shocking levels of poverty. Castells (2000:124) indicates that in 1996, just two years after the country's first democratic elections, that between 36 and 53 percent of South

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Africans were estimated to live below the poverty line. The spread of poverty among the population groups in South Africa in 1996 are represented in Table 1 as follows:
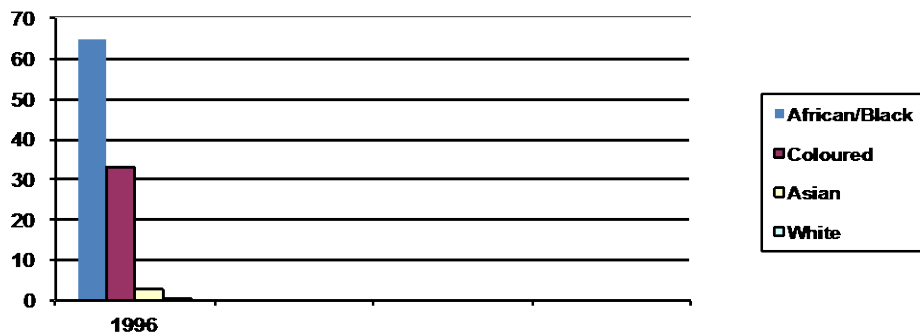
Table 1 Poverty Prevalence in South Africa, 1996

These figures indicate that in 1996 there were a very high percentage of desperately poor people living below the poverty line. The most affected group was the African/Black group in which 65 percent of that specific group was poor. As the least affected group, the White population group only had a small sector of 0.7 percent who was deemed to be impoverished. Of the two remaining groups, it was found that 33 percent of Coloureds as opposed to 2.5 percent of Asians at the time had to fight for survival below the poverty line. Similar trends, shown in table 2 reinforce the scope of the unemployment and poverty problem that South Africa is experiencing. These statistics also show one of the harshest realities of the apartheid era: *unemployment had a particularly strong gender-base*. In all provinces, unemployed women outnumbered unemployed men – probably because of the strong paternalistic features that accompanied past racial policies.
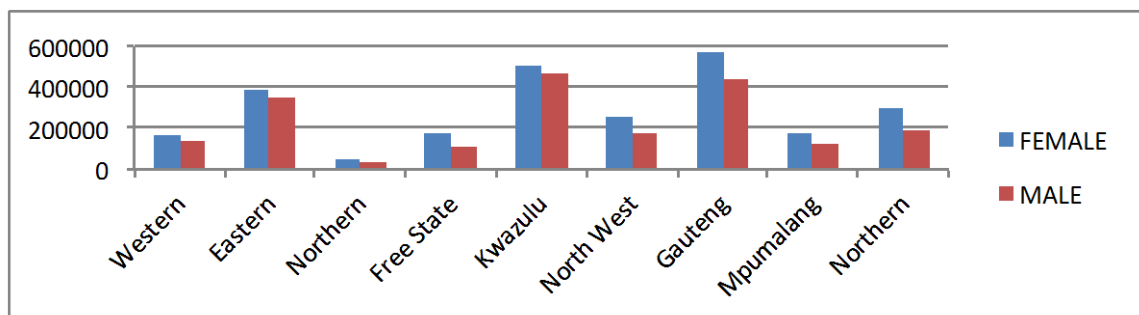
Table 2 Unemployment Figures by Province, 1996

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The above tables are indicative that the task to combat unemployment is an immensely complex task. Nearly two decades after South Africa's first democratic elections, the trends of poverty continue seemingly unabated – and this despite the government's best efforts and on-going commitment to eradicate poverty.

Research done by the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC)[24] at the University of the Western Cape reveal that these trends of poverty have become increasingly complex and unmanageable, as more research shows that poverty, deprivation, low household income and unemployment is still very strongly entrenched in many rural and urban settlements across the country. Du Toit (2004:7) provides a table (table 3) that displays how thousands of people in poverty areas still have to live:

Selected Urban and Rural Settlements	Expenditure per adult Equivalent per month	Often went without Sufficient food	Often went without Sufficient food	Often went without Sufficient shelter
Urban Cape Town				
Brown's Farm	R174.51	35%	20%	46%
Village 4	R191.62	64%	45%	55%
Lusaka	R220.01	36%	36%	36%
KTC	R226.88	25%	25%	50%
Site C	R229.88	30%	24%	38%
Site B	R242.70	32%	17%	27%
Barcelona	R273.05	43%	23%	50%
Town2	273.90	28%	14%	38%
Samora Machel	R294.25	24%	20%	39%
Village 2	R309.67	20%	25%	15%
New Cross Roads	R318.01	14%	9%	14%
Ceres				
Nduli Mooiblom	R272.42	36%	29%	33%
Nduli Hostels	R289.42	19%	23%	33%
Bella Vista	R391.76	15%	17%	1%
Op Die Berg	R520. 27	4%	1%	1%

Table 3 Income and Poverty in Poor SA Communities, 2004

Du Toit's research on chronic poverty and that of CPRC is of indispensable value. It serves as a reminder that poverty cannot be studied only in a monetary sense but that

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[24] The Chronic Poverty Research Centre focuses on chronic poverty and development policy. The research is run under the auspices of the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), school of Government, University of the Western Cape (UWC), Bellville.

it should also be looked at from a *multidimensional deprivation* perspective (Du Toit, 2004:4). In comparison to one's understanding of unemployment based on Seeking's & Nattrass' perspectives, Du Toit's table (table 3) here shows cases of "under-employment" which means that, while people are receiving an income for work done, their actual income is very low and hardly enough for them to meet their basic human needs. Therefore, while they may be employed, they receive significantly low wages.

Based on the information presented here, four points are of significant value for this research:

1. Poverty, unemployment and under-employment in South Africa is still largely race-based, strongly feminine in nature, and has a strong rural manifestation.

2. Despite the South African government's drive to create more jobs through BEE and AA there is still an extremely high percentage of unemployed and under-employed people, especially in rural settings.

3. Unemployment and under-employment are oppressive, dehumanizing, creates poverty and is the single most problematic phenomenon that faces most individuals.

4. Poverty, unemployment and under-employment need to be addressed with a multi-dimensional approach and not just in terms of financial capital, although this is the one area that very often defines who is poor and who is not.

For Sen (1999) unemployment and poverty are strongly correlated with the lack of a decent education. Assuming the above scenario of unemployment, what role can education play in breaking the poverty trap? How can a good education help to reverse unemployment and poverty?

2.4.3 Basic Education

Research based on the 1996 and 2001 South African population Census[25] under the theme of "Achieving a Better Life for All" indicate that education levels in terms of percentage had improved somewhat. The census shows that the country's education levels had improved significantly between 1996 and 2001. It illustrates that the percentage of people aged 20 years old or more by highest level of education attained,

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[25] www.statssa.gov.za

clearly shows a decrease in the proportion of people with lower levels of education, and an increase in the proportion of people with higher educational levels between 1996 and 2001. However, in reality, the census report shows that the *number* of illiterate people has actually increased:

> In 1996…there were approximately 4,1 million people, aged 20 years or more with no schooling. This number had increased by about 500 000 to 4,6 million in 2001. Even though there were larger numbers without any schooling in 2001 than in 1996, this is a smaller proportion of the total in this age group of 20 years or more (19,3% in 1996 and 17,9% in 2001).

In their book *Class, Race and Inequality in South Africa*, Seekings & Nattrass (2005:201) speak of the "human face of inequality" in their discourse about income inequality, unemployment and the South African economic landscape. While it is indeed commendable that the government has managed to help increase the literacy levels of millions of people during this five-year period, it is still painful to realise that half a million people had "slipped through the net" in such a short period of time, and are at serious risk of experiencing the negative effects of unemployment.

Seen from a broadly based integrative rural development perspective Korten in Swart (2006:108) asserts that one way by which "equity-led sustainable growth" could be achieved would be through "massive investments in basic education…" implemented through government structure and policy. While Collier (2008:93) views "education as a form of wealth" Amartya Sen (1999:293) proposes that education can make a person more efficient in commodity production, which then is clearly an enhancement of human capital. This can add to the value of production in the economy and also to the income of the person who has been educated. More importantly though, Sen (1999: 90) suggests that education promotes the enhancement of a person's capabilities and that it "would tend, typically, to expand a person's ability to be more productive and earn a higher income". In this regard, Sen (1999) gives more value to his concept of "human capabilities"[26] as opposed to "human capital. Therefore, it can be seen that, besides the potential economic benefits of education, there are also intrinsic, more personal benefits, which would in turn benefit the rest of society. By

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[26] Amartya Sen's ideas of "human capabilities" and "human capital" will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

reflecting on the topic relating to the root causes of poverty, it becomes evident that being well-educated will not just enhance people's opportunities in life, but it would also improve their quality of life. Furthermore the UN, through its MDG Project[27], considers basic education as one of the most crucial goals on their agenda. In the community analysis of Factreton that follows (utilizing the framework by Dudley (1991)) it can be observed that there is a correlation between education and poverty and also between education and unemployment. This qualitative research that has been done highlights the prevailing realities that most people of this community have to experience daily.

2.5 THE CONDITION OF FACTRETON (CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA): PERSPECTIVES THROUGH GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

During the writer's research of his Master's studies at Stellenbosch University, and also by continued observation and interaction in the community as a community development practitioner, he has perceived certain trends in his local community, Factreton. Research done with the Unit for Congregations and Demographic Research (UGDR or EGON in Afrikaans) at the Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Theology also contributed to the data. However, he will not discuss every facet of the social fabric of Factreton but will consider key issues deemed relevant for this dissertation and will make reference to these in the following section.

2.5.1 Discovering trends in Factreton

Major trends or changes in the Factreton community in the past ten years in this community are:

❑ *Education*

The levels of education of the general population are cause for concern. In 1996, out of a total population of about 25 000 residents, 18 151 had a qualification less than Matric (72.6%). Furthermore, 8556 (34%) only had primary school education while

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[27] Life Zone Ministries International (LZMI) is a Faith Based Organization that was established in 1997 in order to provide holistic Christian-based ministry to youth in the Cape Town suburbs of Kensington and Factreton, and is engaged in a development project promoting basic education in primary schools and the broader community. Through a partner organization, the United Nations Association of South Africa (UNASA), LZMI has also been conducting these activities through the medium of sport, using UNASA's "Sport-In-A-Box" MDG life skills programme.

7% have had no schooling at all. In comparison with the neighbouring Pinelands community, this statistic shows that a higher level of education will enhance one's chances for a better quality of life. It is evident that a low level of education has impacted negatively on the quality of life for many residents in Factreton. It has probably meant that they become unemployed or hold down low-income jobs. This is one trend that needs to be stopped and we should look at ways to help more people to achieve higher education levels.

❑ *Household structure*

Through the researcher's community-based work through the NGO LZMI in the Factreton area, it has been observed that there are many orphaned or single-parent children. Many of these children who have lost their parents claimed that events such as divorce, gang-related violence, long prison terms and tuberculosis were the causes of their orphanage. Many of them live with their relatives, mainly grandmothers. Others do not even know their fathers because these men were already married to someone else before their children were conceived. A significant number of households have also been impacted by gang violence. Due to this gang violence, it is not uncommon for some households to be without fathers, sons or brothers in certain sections of the Factreton community. Maybe this is a contributing factor to the increasing number of the female population here. Newspaper reports often show that young males under eighteen years old often die in gang violence in our community. Many of these younger teens are also fathers. This sketches a picture of the unnecessary fragmentation of family structures locally and is a trend that needs to be given serious attention by the community.

❑ *Lack of dignified houses/shelter and uprooting (relocation)*

A significant number of families are currently living in wood and iron structures in our community some for as long as fourty years. Many of these people have been moved around like objects to different locations within the community by the local municipality, some over a period of twenty years. In one informal settlement there are currently around forty families. Many of these people suffer from diseases such as tuberculosis (to which many succumb) mainly because of the unhygienic conditions that prevail in their "living" spaces. In this informal settlement, the unemployment rate is as high as 85 percent and it increases sometimes. There is also a noticeable

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number of children, some as young as ten years old, that have dropped out of school and who are abusing substances such as drugs while many of the adults have a low level of education or are semi-illiterate.

❑ *Business/ Industry*

The entire southern boundary (Voortrekker Road) of the Factreton-Kensington community is accentuated by factories, industrial/business parks, grocery stores, filling stations, and other forms of businesses. Through observation and informal conversations with local people, it was established that only a small fraction of people from Factreton are employed by these businesses, while most folk who work there are from other communities.

❑ *Foreigners/refugees (Interview with Hassan Dogo' Q & Safari from Burundi)*
Since South Africa's first democratic election in 1994 there has been a noticeable influx of foreigners into our community. Most of them come from central and southern Africa while others come from northern Africa. There is a distinct presence of Nigerians, Rwandans and Congolese (Democratic Republic of Congo) as well as Egyptians and Pakistani nationals. Through interaction with some of these refugees, it was established that nearly all of them have a job or are entrepreneurs. It was noticeable that the majority of these people were hard-working and motivated to succeed economically. These foreigners have been accepted in our area and are conducting successful small businesses. They constitute less than 1% of Factreton/Kensington's population but their numbers seem to be increasing.

2.5.2 A Major socio-economic problem in Factreton

Unemployment
Through interaction with residents of Factreton as a result of LZMI's weekly children's program at primary schools in the community, *unemployment* was said to be the single major socio-economic problem in the community.

According to the LWTC up to 75% of the adult population in the greater part of Factreton is unemployed. This area includes Glider Crescent, Acre Road, Ventura

Street, Lugmag Avenue, Albecore Crescent, Sunderland Street, 18th Ave., Dapper Rd., Salmander, Dromedaris, Eiland, Skepe, Hawe, Skutter, Matroos and Waarnemer Squares. The majority who are unemployed are those in the 25-34 years age group. In a talk at a local church on 2 February 2003, a representative of the LWCT said that the unemployment rate for Factreton and Kensington combined was a staggering 52%. This illustrates the potential impact that unemployment could have on whole families and the general community.

Furthermore, Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC) statistics indicate that this is also the group that represents the largest percentage (nearly 20%) of the Factreton/Kensington population. The correlation between the age group and unemployment per se is quite significant. Many of these unemployed young adults may also have children. Their unemployment therefore means that most of them may not be able to adequately provide for themselves and their offspring. This lack of income may cause further tension in relationships with their parents, partners, children and broader community.

Although unemployment cannot be accepted as a reason for legitimizing crime, it has been noted that unemployed young adults (who may most likely also be substance abusers) commit most of the crimes (such as house break-ins, car theft, etc.). Therefore the challenge to the church and the broader community in Factreton is to seek ways to address the issue of unemployment in an effective, meaningful way.

Unemployment can therefore be regarded as the single feature that has the greatest impact on the lives of the people in Factreton. It is evident that the levels of poverty and crime have increased in recent years mostly due to unemployment. It has also impacted on the levels of people's education. Many school "drop-outs" can be seen roaming the streets during school hours. These children are also the softest targets for gangs who are always on the lookout for new recruits. LZMI often encounter children who should be in school but are roaming around aimlessly in the neighbourhood. Others have served judicial punishment in reformatories mostly for crimes such as house and vehicle break-ins, violent crimes and possession of drugs.

Children also push trolleys around and drive on horse-driven carts in search of scrap metal and other waste that they can sell for food. Teens often leave school

prematurely either to support their family or their own children. In this regard, teenage pregnancies have also contributed to the decrease in the quality of life for many as many of them are added to the "unemployed" statistics.

In some specific sections of the community, many unemployed middle-aged parents often sit idly outside their premises drinking alcohol to pass the day by. Since many of their education levels are low they find it difficult, if not impossible, to find good jobs. Others have criminal records against their names and this also adds to the negative unemployment trend. In the broader area of Factreton there are also many vagrants and homeless people who most of the times appear to be intoxicated. They beg daily or are seen collecting cardboard, refundable beverage bottles, metal or anything of value that they can sell.

2.5.3 Poverty and unemployment in Factreton

Our community is characterised by a significant economic divide where people living in Factreton are noticeably poorer than those from Kensington. There are exceptions, however, and one finds that some of the inhabitants from Factreton have made significant renovations to their houses and drive expensive cars. These are generally the folk who have overcome their historical economic disadvantage and difficult financial circumstances. They have risen above their hardships and obtained personal and economic success. However, the biggest problem remains unemployment, with approximately 55% of the adult population still economically inactive (Statistics SA, 1996) and 52% unemployed (LWTC, 2 Feb. 2003).

Unemployment has often resulted in people experiencing a lower quality of life in Factreton. Lower education levels and people's individual criminal records mean fewer opportunities for (1) employment and (2) reasonably good remuneration for employment. Thus, by ensuring that more of our youth complete their Matric (Grade 12) could be just one way of countering the massive unemployment problem in our community. In this regard civil society through NGOs, sports clubs, the Church, local businesses and the general community could help by mentoring, financing and empowering children and youth to successfully complete their schooling and to move on to higher or tertiary education levels to enhance their chances of securing good employment.

2.5.4 Safety and Security/ Crime in Factreton

The general feeling of residents about the effectiveness of the local police service is that the police are highly inefficient and mostly unreliable. Some people in the community believe that the police cannot be trusted because many of them are corrupt and do not serve the community's interests in providing justice. It is sad that the "protectors" of the people are not perceived in a positive light by many of the residents of Factreton. Although the people mostly perceive the police service negatively, the South African Police Services (SAPS) nevertheless provide an essential presence in the community that helps to restrain the forces of lawlessness. It is the researcher's view therefore that the general community should begin to support the SAPS and become more pro-active in making Factreton and Kensington a safer area to live in.

Many streets of the community are "designated" to rival gangs[28]. This "turf" is identified by the name of the gangs (e.g. the "Americans" or "Wonder Kids") and its organizational number in the underworld (e.g. "26s" or "28s") that are sprayed on walls. Gang-related violence often occurs and for many reasons too. However, gang warfare is often "turf war" for the control of strategic places in the community for drug-selling. Most of the victims in gang warfare are those under 20 years old. Many of the newspaper articles covering crime in our area highlight this fact.

2.5.5 Power and influence of gangs

Gangs wield power and influence and always control the lives of its members. Once a person has joined a gang it is nearly impossible to come out of the organization again. The leaders of these gangs are like army generals whose commands must be obeyed. Many violent activities also occur, mostly by people who abuse alcohol or drugs. According to an Inspector at the local police station, rape, murders, assaults, robberies, house break-ins, car thefts, etc. are some of the identifiable crimes (common crimes) that one is confronted with in Factreton/Kensington. The many

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[28] Part of Castells's examination of the world that we live in speaks of the "Global Criminal Economy". In Cape Town, and more specifically in Factreton, the gangs across the city form a major part of the "Local Criminal Economy". School-going children and youth who are living in certain parts of vulnerable communities such as Factreton, and young men who are the victims of long-term unemployment are especially at risk to the "Local Criminal Economy".

illegal shebeens in the area could be a contributing factor to the unnecessary violence that sometimes takes place.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed both contemporary and historical global and local socio-economic and political trends in order to obtain a better understanding of what the root causes of poverty could be. In this chapter, the hypothesis has been sustained that the root causes and complexity of poverty are multi-dimensional and therefore cannot be treated superficially. What happens at global and national level will have a profound effect at local level. Causes of poverty in one country can create problems of a different nature in a neighbouring country.

Following the research done here, Chapter 2's overview of what is happening in the world today reveals certain aspects about poverty

- Poverty dehumanizes the poor
- Poor people are dehumanized when economies are exclusively profit-driven as opposed to people-driven
- Poverty is thus caused by unemployment, underemployment and exploitation
- Poverty is caused by indifference towards the poor
- Poverty means the exclusion of poor people from economies
- Poverty implies the polarization of people
- Poverty is caused by an unequal distribution of natural and financial resources
- Corruption and "the cancerous pursuit of self-interest" (see pg. 43) cause poverty
- Poverty is also caused by, and causes, environmental degradation and ecological ruin
- Oppression and crime can cause poverty and also creates a life of misery for the poor

Considering these results so far, and reflecting on Osmer's question, *what is going on…* the following diagrammatic representation (figure 4) illustrates how the poor are constantly being impacted negatively (de-humanized) by factors such as violence

in all its forms, as well as corrupted economic, political and environmental systems that prevail in our times:
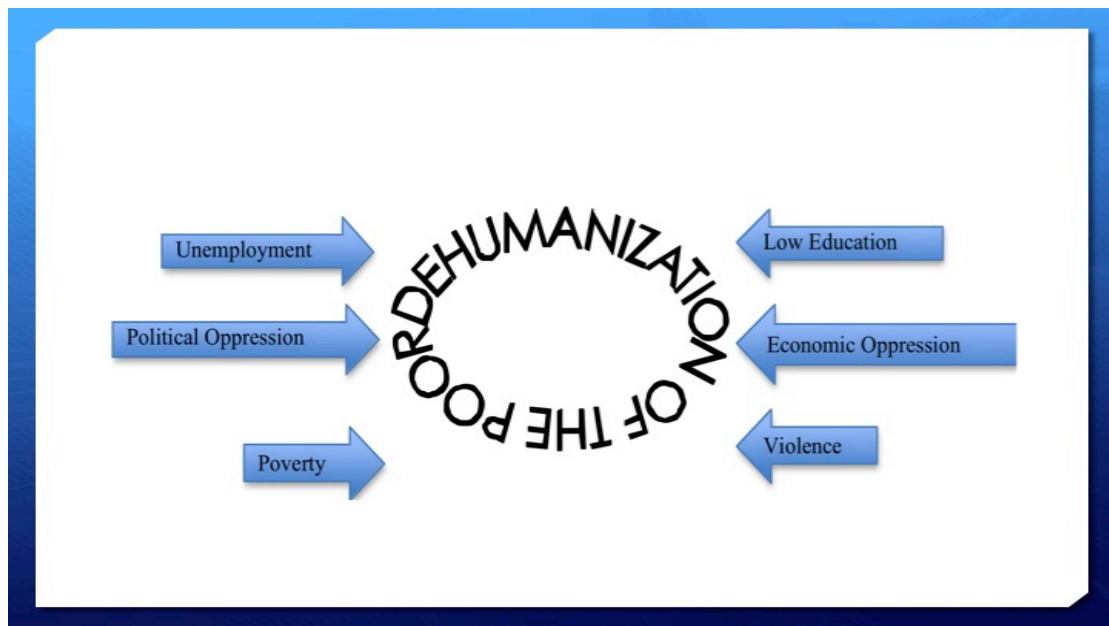
Figure 4 The Dehumanization of the Poor

Based on the research presented in this chapter, the idea is reinforced that an exploration of the topic of poverty is fraught with complexity. To unravel concepts such as globalization, chronic poverty, transformation and biodiversity require intensive application because there are so many people who interpret these themes so diversely. To make sense of our "runaway world" (Giddens, 2002) is an even more daunting task than understanding the complexity of poverty. However, keeping in mind the daily assault of poverty on people *development* ought to be taken seriously as the non-poor help to fight against the dehumanization of people, particularly the poor.

Chapter 2, drawing from Osmer's question, "what is going on…" demonstrates that poverty is not just a matter of lack of financial resources. In fact, poverty is more than that. Poverty is often the result of unethical actions by people, structurally flawed policies and institutions, the dehumanization of people and much more (see Castells page 33). In the light of the preceding evaluation of the current conditions that exist at global, African, national and local levels, it has to be said that the plight of poor people (who for too long have been seen as mere objects or the proverbial *pawns* in an economically globalized world) requires an integrated response from all sectors of

society. The world should continue to embark on a mission to bring about the *rehumanization* of the poor. This alienated part of humanity should receive the highest priority from economists, TNC's, governments, civil society and the Church, who should form a type of "moral" coalition in the pursuit to eradicate poverty. Without such an approach it is unlikely that humankind would be able to address the root causes of poverty very effectively. People should use all of the resources at our disposal to address the plight of the poor more meaningfully.

Having completed this socio-economic-political overview in Chapter 2, and reflecting on the results about *what is going on* in the world of poverty, an examination of some key perspectives in the contemporary development and root causes of poverty discourse will follow in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3
CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to determine what contemporary development experts have to say about *what is going on* in the world of development, while it is also important to investigate *why* certain things are happening that seemingly cause poverty. Therefore, flowing from the previous chapter, which asked the question, *what is going on...* the process of inquiry in Chapter 3 follows a similar path, except that the question is no longer only, *what is going on in the world of poverty...* but also, *what is going on in the world of development discourse?* In addition, a second important question is necessary: *Why is it going on?* With due consideration given to Osmer's (2008:11) four-tasks model that is utilized by this research, it is thus imperative to ask these, as well as other supporting questions. The answer to these critical questions will therefore be investigated in the ensuing chapter in order to reach the goals of this study.

It is evident that development aimed at improving the lives of people is an integral part of current global trends. It is also clear that, at the heart of all social and economic injustices people are involved. In a significant shift from purely economic-driven development, the United Nations (UN) asserts that "people are the real wealth of a nation." With these words the 1990 *Human Development Report* (HDR) began a forceful case for a new approach to thinking about development. That the objective of development should be to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives may appear self-evident to most people today. But that has not always been the case. A central objective of the HDR for the past 20 years has been to emphasize that development is primarily and fundamentally about people (Human Development Report, 2010:1).

Based on recent global trends, the need to place people at the centre of not just development but also in political and economic decision-making processes is becoming increasingly necessary in the twenty first century. The HDR (2010:9) affirms:

fully realizing the human development agenda requires going further. Putting people at the centre of development is much more than an intellectual exercise. It means making progress equitable and broad-based, enabling people to be active participants in change and ensuring that current achievements are not attained at the expense of future generations. Meeting these challenges is not only possible—it is necessary. And it is more urgent than ever.

Towards the end of the last millennium, this position had been held by academics, such as Chambers (1997) and Burkey (1991) who believed that a "people-centred" approach was the most effective option in any process of development. The titles of their work, such as *People First* and *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the first last* illustrate the preeminent thought in contemporary development discourse that people must be placed at the heart of development. The question therefore remains: *What does a people-centred development approach imply for development?*

3.2 IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT POSITIONS

3.2.1 Reflections on a people-centred approach to development

For Roman Catholic theologian Sobrino (2008:31) a people-centred focus demands that, "…the poor of this world…must be explicitly placed at the centre". Quoting J. Comblin, Sobrino (2008:32) emphasizes that 'human rights are the rights of the poor". When Sobrino (2008) shifts his argument to an ecclesiological level, he demands of the Church to "…not only help the poor, but consciously place them at the centre of reality". In essence, this approach of placing people right at the centre gives the poor *life*, *word* and *name*, and can also imply that, through helping to place the poor at the focal point of contemporary life, they will:

- have the opportunity to enjoy a fuller life and have a real sense of hope because there are others who would like to participate with them in their human development journey and through becoming central actors in national and international development policy

- have their human dignity [29] enhanced or restored as governments, organizations and all strands of society help the poor to regain their true identity as human beings

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[29] Human Dignity is the central theme in the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights and emanates from the dominant human rights tone presented in these laws.

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Contemporary development discourse is dominated by discussions on poverty, economic development, human rights, social justice and, also, alternative economic paradigms. Just as understanding the root causes, and also the complex interaction between the causes and effects of *poverty* is a challenging task (Wilson & Ramphele, 1989:14), so too is the task of understanding the idea of *development*, which is currently biased towards a Western understanding of economically-driven development that assumes "that the only civilized way of life is that of Western society" (Davids, I. et.al. 2005).

Contemporary development discourse is also an evolving field of research in which ordinary people, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), researchers and practitioners attempt to contribute to the improvement of the lives of people who live in poverty.

Development discourse in the twenty first century also implies the attempt to bring about radical change in systems (political, economic, social, etc.) that contribute to poverty and the dehumanization of people (see Wilson & Ramphele, 1989). Also, it would appear as if the more that the idea of *development* evolves, the greater the poverty-challenge seems to become.

3.2.2 Thoughts on poverty: Wilson & Ramphele

Having already conceptualized the ideas of poverty and development in the first chapter, and before discussing in this chapter one of the most prominent contemporary debates in development, it is, however, imperative to emphasize the significance of poverty in the South African context. Wilson & Ramphele (1989:4) proposes four reasons why poverty is significant in the South African situation:

1. The first is because of the *damage* (one could assume *mental*, *emotional*, *physiological* and *sociological* damage) it inflicts on people who endure it. When speaking about the "damage" that unemployment brought to many many people during the apartheid era in South Africa, Nolan (1988:54) asserts that "To have no work, to have nothing at all to do in life makes one feel even more useless[30] than a mechanical unit in an assembly line". For

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[30] Used in this context, the term "useless" in Norman's terms imply the loss of human dignity (dehumanization) and self-identity.

Wilson & Ramphele (1989:5), "poverty is partly a matter of income and partly a matter of human dignity[31]."

2. The second is its utter inefficiency in *economic* terms i.e. hungry children cannot study to get a good education that would most likely lead to better jobs; and "…malnourished adults cannot be fully productive as workers; as a result of unemployment[32], people also often resort to anti-social behaviour and crime such as theft, thus causing "economic problems"for others

3. The third reason relates to the adverse results for any society where poverty is also the manifestation of great *inequality[33]* that makes human community impossible (see also Seekings & Nattrass's "Class, Race and Inequality in South Africa", 2006).

4. Lastly, poverty in many societies is itself symptomatic of a deeper malaise, for instance, the consequences of *apartheid* as an economic-political process which simultaneously produced wealth for some whilst impoverishing others, and, citing C.T. Kurien, 'is the carcass left over from wealth acquisition.'

3.2.3 Towards a *humane* development approach

By simply walking through a local "squatter" camp (the politically-correct term is *informal settlement*) and talking to people who live there, it becomes evident that poverty can deny people a dignified life and a sense of fulfillment. Poverty can strip people of their human pride and even make them to feel less human. However, this

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[31] Wilson & Ramphele (1994:5) argue that the lack of income as a result of deliberate discriminatory actions or policies could be termed "human impoverishment", where low income plus harsh disrespect converge to bring about human degradation and undermine any reasonable and decent standard of human life.

[32] Nolan (1988:54) discusses the facts of unemployment during apartheid South Africa. He argues that many millions of people in South Africa at that time had no work, no land and no income., meaning "…hunger, starvation and death". He then asks the important question: "Is there any wonder that the crime rate in South Africa is so extraordinarily high in South Africa?

At the height of the legalized apartheid system, Pieter le Roux called unemployment "the South African time bomb" and almost prophetically stated that it, together with other social problems such as malnourished children, would be later inherited by a new government (in Berger & Godsell, 1988:227-8).

[33] Inequality: in the 2001 UNDP World Development Report it was shown that the poorest 10% of South Africa's population had 1.1% of the country's income, while the richest 10% of the people in the country had a stake of 45.9% of the income (in Erasmus, 2002:3, MTh class material at Stellenbosch University: Armoede en ongelykheid – die roeping van die kerk). In another example of inequality, Palagummi Sainath, the first journalist in the world to win Amnesty International's Global Human rights Journalism Award, stated at the South African Netherlands Partnership for Alternative Development (SANPAD) Conference on Poverty Reduction in Durban on 27 June 2007 that "the aid that Africa gets is far less than what they lose through neo-capitalist trade", thus again illustrating the gross inequalities resulting from current global economic arrangements.

phenomenon of poverty is not limited to South Africa and is prevalent in nearly every part of the world where gaping inequality between the rich and the poor are visible everywhere (Wilson & Ramphele, 1989:4) and exacerbate the problem of the loss of human dignity. In the preface to his iconic book, *Development as Freedom*, Amartya Sen (1999:xi) concurs:

> We live in a world of unprecedented opulence…And yet we also live in a world with remarkable deprivation, destitution and oppression. There are many…problems…including persistence of poverty and unfulfilled elementary needs, occurrences of famines and widespread hunger, violation of elementary political freedoms as well as basic liberties, extensive neglect of the interests and agency of women, and worsening threats to our environment and to the sustainability of our economic and social lives. Many of these deprivations can be observed, in one form or another, in rich countries as well as poor ones. Overcoming these problems is a central part of the exercise of development.

The complexity of poverty therefore brings with it the complexity of differing development approaches. *How should the inseparable ideas of development and poverty be approached and how could these deprivations be overcome?* In order to make sense of the world in which we live, *how should poverty be looked at and what would an appropriate response be to this all-too-common global feature that dehumanizes and disempowers billions of human beings?*

It is to this extent that world-renowned academics, economists and development practitioners (such as Martha Nussbaum[34], Thandika Mkandaweri[35], Walden Bello[36],

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[34] Professor Nussbaum, though not a lawyer, is currently Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, a chair that includes appointments in the Philosophy Department, the Law School, and the Divinity School. She also holds Associate appointments in Classics and Political Science, is a member of the Committee on Southern Asian Studies, and a Board Member of the Human Rights Program. She previously taught at Harvard and Brown universities.

[35] Professor Thandika Mkandawire is former Director of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and the first person to take on the new position of Chair in African Development at the London School of Economics (LSE). Prof. Mkandawire was formerly Director of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Development Research in Copenhagen and has taught at the Universities of Stockholm and Zimbabwe.

Thandika Mkandawire was appointed Director of UNRISD in 1998. He has published broadly on the social sciences in Africa and on problems of policy making, adjustment and democratization.

Thandika is a member of the editorial boards of *Africa Development; Africa Review of Books; Development and Change; Global Governance; Journal of Development Studies; Journal of Human Development and Oxford Development Studies; Africa Review of Books,* and *Feminist Economics;* and has recently served on the executive committees of the International Institute for Labour Studies, the Swedish NGO Fund for Human Rights, the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP) of the International Social Science Council, Care International, the Steering Committee of the UNU Project on Intellectual History, and the African Gender Institute.

[36] Professor Walden Bello is an Akbayan Representative in the 14th Congress of Republic of the Philippines. He is also a senior analyst of Focus on the Global South and professor of sociology at the

Jeffrey Sachs[37], Joseph Stiglitz[38] and Amartya Sen[39], and organizations such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) contribute significantly to the field of human and social development (Table 1). In their specialist, respective fields of social, alternative, economic, human, rights-based, and asset-based development, these professionals provide development practitioners with deeper insight into the causes, effects, alternatives and solutions to poverty, and through it, help to address the issue of human dignity of poor people.

ACADEMIC/ECONOMIST	CAUSE OF POVERTY CONCEPT	DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSE TO POVERTY
Thandika Mkandiweri	Maladjusted Economies	Autonomous National Economic Policy implementation or a Context-specific development approach
Martha Nussbaum	Unequal social and political arrangements	Capabilities Approach
Walden Bello	Neo-liberal Globalization	Equality-based Alternative Development
Jeffrey Sachs	Lack of Political will	Syncronization of *capital*; MDG's; Global Compact; Global Fund
Amartya Sen	Human Unfreedoms	Development as freedom; Human Capabilities
Joseph Stiglitz	Economic Globalization	Values-based Economic Globalization

Table 4 Contemporary Development Discourse Authorities

University of the Philippines, and is one of the leading critics of the current model of economic globalisation, combining the roles of intellectual and activist. As a human rights and peace campaigner, academic, environmentalist and journalist, and through a combination of courage as a dissident, with an extraordinary breadth of published output and personal charisma, he has made a major contribution to the international case against corporate-driven globalisation.

[37] Professor Jeffrey Sachs, a world-renowned economist and author of the book *"The end of poverty: economic possibilities for our time"*, is a proponent of the idea of "economic development" as well as economic globalization. In this book, Sachs essentially asserts that there is enough wealth in the world to end poverty everywhere. The only problem is that it is about the wealthy nations like the United States of America to make "the right choices – choices that can lead to a much safer world based on a true reverence and respect for human life" (Sachs, 2005: 1-2).

[38] Joseph Stiglitz is one of the world's best-known economists. He was Chief Executive at the World Bank until January 2000. Before that he was Chairman of President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers. He is currently Professor of Finance and Economics at Columbia University. He won the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2001 and is the author of the bestselling Globalization and its Discontents and The Roaring nineties, both published by Penguin. Professor Stiglitz is Chair of the Management Board and Director of Graduate Summer Programmes at the Brooks World Poverty Institute, University of Manchester.

[39] Amartya Sen was awarded The Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1998 for his work in welfare economics. He is a Professor of Economics and is regarded as especially recognized as a welfare economist. He revolutionized the image of Indian society with his socio-economic policies and introduced innovative solutions to help underdeveloped countries cope with social problems like poverty, famine, gender inequality, human rights, and biased liberalism.

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While there are a multitude of causes of poverty (such as *burdens of the past*, *apartheid's assault on the poor* and *macro-economic factors,* in Wilson & Ramphele, 1989:189-256), and also many development perspectives to glean from, the focus of this chapter about contemporary development discourse will mainly (but not exclusively) draw from the ideas of five key thinkers on development, viz. Sachs, Stiglitz, Sen, Nussbaum and Mkandawire. Together, Sachs (2005) and Stiglitz (2006) provide impeccable coverage of the area of economic and ecological development which are much-needed to break the poverty trap and extreme poverty, while Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2000) direct the conversation to the critical need for the expansion of human capabilities, human dignity, freedom and thus, human development, in contemporary development discourse. Also, Mkandawire employs a social development lens when he concentrates on the implications of structural adjustment programmes (SAP) that were (and still are in different ways) autocratically imposed on poorer countries by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) over many years. The writer will also draw extensively from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) primarily because of the organization's universal appeal in modern-day development dialogues.

3.2.4 A foundational development question

With the causes of poverty being so innumerable and complex (Wilson & Ramphele, 1989; Myers, 1997; Burkey, 1991) what is the most fundamental cause of poverty and what strategies can be employed to bring about change? Wilson and Ramphele (1989:5) propose the following basic, yet essential, starting point:

> Strategies against poverty involve not only pulling up the roots of processes that impoverish people but also planting (and nurturing) those seeds that will produce good fruit.

While the above question is a relevant question in this discussion, there is yet a more important foundational question to be asked. Given Wilson & Ramphele's proposal here, together with their context during an era of poverty-inducing human rights abuses, as well as the current global "push" to halve poverty [40] by 2015, the foundational question concerning these development areas should be: *Within the realm of current development discourse, how would a human rights-focused approach*

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[40] See the discussion on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Project in Chapter 2.

to development contribute to the eradication of poverty and the promotion of human dignity?

For the purpose of addressing this vital question, the writer has chosen to limit his response to the views and ethos of two authoritative sources in development discourse:

1. Reflecting and assessing on the contribution of the United Nations in development, with specific reference to the United Nations Development Programme and

2. Examining key concepts in Sen's book, *Development as Freedom* that are relevant to the contemporary discourse on development.

From this point on, and for the purpose of a more focused approach on the idea of the human role in development as opposed to the economic role, I will also limit my arguments to Sen's philosophical points as opposed to his economic analyses and statistics presented here. The rest of this chapter will be supported by limited discussion on the other connected modes of development, for example, economic development and alternative development.

3.2.5 Towards a human development-human rights[41] position

The discourse that currently dominates the development world revolves around the notion of human rights. This view took on a concrete meaning at the 2007 SANPAD Poverty Reduction in Durban. At this well-attended conference many esteemed experts and NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) from around the world (including Brazil, India, the Philippines and the United Kingdom), and also local people[42] from a nearby Durban neighbourhood, Umlazi, confirmed an increased preference towards, and advocacy for, a rights-based development (RBA) approach in every facet of life. Specific themes such as *The Feminization of Poverty* were discussed and showed the need for gender justice through a rights-based approach. As the conference unraveled during that week, many speakers, especially those aligned

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[41] Appendix 2

[42] There were a few hundred people who protesets and they presented a letter to the organizers of the SANPAD Conference not to allow the City Manager to speak at the conference because of his seemingly indifferent attitude to Durban's poor people.

with what is called the *Anti-Globalization Forum*[43], also advocated a rights-based approach (RBA) for development – a position that was well-founded and widely supported by most attendees. This section will therefore focus on the merits of human rights and human development in a rights-based approach development, of which Jody Kollapen is a leading exponent.

3.2.6 Human Rights

Jody Kollapen, Chairperson[44] of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) explained the importance of human rights in the development "agenda at the 2007 SANPAD Poverty Reduction Conference:

> If we embrace human rights and democracy, we should automatically embrace the fight
> against poverty.

Kollapen's claim is especially viable from a South African perspective. Being a young democracy dealing with inherited socio-economic problems such as unemployment and racial discrimination in the workplace, the embrace of human rights through the new South African Constitution (created in 1996) and the Bill of Rights has become the first important step in helping millions of South Africans to escape the *poverty* trap and to live with *human dignity* – two key rights-based concerns which are recurring themes in the HDRs of the UNDP.

Section 7 in the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution highlights the human value with which all South Africans (and, by implication, non-South Africans in the country) are accepted:

> (1) This Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.

> (2) The state must respect, protect, promote and fulfill the rights in the Bill of Rights.

In terms of the equality of the individual and the implied position of the restoration of human dignity that it adopts, the Bill of Rights (7.3) states clearly that " The state may

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[43] Based on the writer's experience and observation at the 2007 SANPAD Poverty Reduction Conference, he encountered the anti-globalists, or the Anti-Globalization Forum as it is known in academic circles, as an emerging international network of economists, academics, civil society, and even governments who reject the current form of the capitalist economic model.

[44] In *Book of Abstracts Poverty Challenge 2007: Poverty and Poverty Reduction in South Africa, India and Brazil – A SANPAD Conference* (pg. 11)

not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth". Given the people-centred, rights-based standards of the UNDP, these rights legislated in the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights are indeed an exemplary position – or at least a good starting point – for other countries to consider. Stated more profoundly, the HDR on *Human rights and human development — for freedom and solidarity* (2000:1), and Botman (in Sporre & Botman, 2000:26) observe respectively:

- South Africa, since ending apartheid, has put human rights at the core of its development strategy, with the government establishing one of the world's most forward-looking structures of rights
- South Africa's constitution (is) hailed by many scholars as the most democratic constitution currently in the world…

However, the *disconnect* between the legitimizing of human rights in this empowering, dignity-restoring Constitution, and the delivery of services and socio-economic policies that could help poverty-stricken South Africans to attain a better standard of living, remains as one of the biggest challenges in the new millennium. Botman (2003:25-6) reinforces this notion while also pointing to the potential impact of economic globalization on human rights in South Africa:

> The rights debate in South Africa is a debate of entitlement given its dignity-enriched meaning. However, the achievement of this contextual challenge is seriously hampered by economic globalization. It takes on the form of policy options in a global context in which the political deconstruction is in progress. The question is not so much whether globalization will strip Africans of human rights. The question is whether it will allow the country to restore human rights.

While the South African government aims to build a strong economy it is hoped that its current and future rights-based economic policies will be of such a nature that both the contemporary and future generations would be able to benefit meaningfully from it, thereby offering its citizens the hope and real opportunity of a better life for all.

The HDR (2000:16) indicates that human rights can be understood as follows:

> Human rights are the rights possessed by all persons, by virtue of their common humanity, to live a life of freedom and dignity. They give all people moral claims on the behaviour of individuals and on the design of social arrangements—and are universal, inalienable and

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> indivisible. Human rights express our deepest commitments to ensuring that all persons are secure in their enjoyment of the goods and freedoms that are necessary for dignified living.

Upon closer examination, the scope of these human rights provide four main assertions (HDR (2000):

1. *Universality of human rights*

Human rights belong to all people, and all people have equal status with respect to these rights. Failure to respect an individual's human right has the same weight as failure to respect the right of any other—it is not better or worse depending on the person's gender, race, ethnicity, nationality or any other distinction.

2. *Inalienability of human rights*

Human rights are inalienable: others cannot take them away, nor can one give them up voluntarily.

3. *Indivisibility of human rights*

Human rights are indivisible in two senses. First, there is no hierarchy among different kinds of rights. Civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights are all equally necessary for a life of dignity. Second, some rights cannot be sup- pressed in order to promote others. Civil and political rights may not be violated to promote economic, social and cultural rights. Nor can economic, social and cultural rights be sup- pressed to promote civil and political rights.

4. *Realization of human rights*

A human right is realized when individuals enjoy the freedoms covered by that right and their enjoyment of the right is secure. A person's human rights are realized if and only if social arrangements are in place sufficient to protect her against standard threats to her enjoyment of the freedoms covered by those rights. This scope of human rights therefore highlights the importance of the need for governments and corporates (as proposed by the United Nations Global Compact [45], or UNGC) worldwide to advocate and implement rights-based development policies for social development, and especially for economic development. The question that is crucial

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[45] The United Nations Global Compact brings business together with UN agencies, labour, civil society and governments to advance ten universal principals in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Through the power of collective action, the United Nations Global Compact seeks to mainstream these ten principles in business activities around the world and to catalyse actions in support of broader UN goals. With over 4000 stakeholders from more than 100 countries, it is the world's largest voluntary corporate citizenship initiative (Embedding Human Rights in Business Practice II: A joint publication of the United Nations Global Compact and the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 2007).

at this point is: *How can people, governments and institutions ensure the realization of human rights for people?* For Sen (1999:14-5) the answer is in expanding the freedoms that we have reason to value.

Here, the writer proposes that the "freedoms" that Sen speaks about can be brought about through both individual effort as well as a collective approach – if there is enough political will to do so. In this regard, the UNDP's HDR (2000:6-13) provides seven key features that are needed for the attainment of human rights for all:

1. Every country needs to strengthen its social arrangements for securing human freedoms—with norms, institutions, legal frameworks and an enabling economic environment. Legislation alone is not enough.

2. The fulfillment of all human rights requires democracy that is inclusive—protecting the rights of minorities, providing separation of powers and ensuring public accountability. Elections alone are not enough.

3. Poverty eradication is not only a development goal—it is a central challenge for human rights in the 21st century.

4. Human rights—in an integrated world— require global justice. The state-centred model of accountability must be extended to the obligations of non-state actors and to the state's obligations beyond national borders.

5. Information and statistics are a powerful tool for creating a culture of accountability and for realizing human rights. Activists, lawyers, statisticians and development specialists need to work together with communities. The goal: to generate information and evidence that can break down barriers of disbelief and mobilize changes in policy and behaviour.

6. Achieving all rights for all people in all countries in the 21st century will require action and commitment from the major groups in every society—NGOs, media and businesses, local as well as national government, parliamentarians and other opinion leaders.

7. Human rights and human development cannot be realized universally without stronger international action, especially to support disadvantaged people and countries and to offset growing global inequalities and marginalization.

3.2.7 Participation of people in the human rights process

Community leaders, religious leaders, business leaders, parents and teachers all have a responsibility in building norms and preserving the values of respect for human dignity, freedom and equality. And they all have rights and duties in this process. The state also has to promote awareness. As in the case of South Africa, many countries have introduced human rights education in all schools. (HDR 2000:7).

However, it must be understood that laws alone cannot guarantee human rights. This brings into view the issue of *enforcement* whereby acknowledgment under the law lends legal power to the moral imperative of human rights and mobilizes the legal system for enforcement while human rights activists and movements can also press for legal reforms—to give people access to legal processes, with institutional barriers removed. A growing economy is thus essential for human rights, especially for poor countries but that growth must be pro-poor, pro-rights and sustainable by implementing appropriate policies and ensuring that human rights commitments and goals are incorporated as objectives in economic policy-making.

Thus, in this participatory process of human development, it has to be reiterated that a decent standard of living, sufficient nutrition, health care, education, decent work and protection against disasters are not just development goals but they are also human rights. This point therefore highlights the fact that the challenge to build a culture of human rights awareness and commitment is non-negotiable.

Finally, this urgent drive to secure human rights for all people in every part of the globe, coupled with the imminent need for international action, is underscored in a five-point proposal in the UNDP's report on *Human rights and human development – for freedom and solidarity* (HDR 2000:12-16):

1. **Strengthening a rights-based approach in development cooperation, without conditionality.**

Development cooperation can contribute directly to realizing human rights in poor countries in three ways. The first is to increase support to capacity building for democracy and the promotion of civil and political rights. The second is to increase support for the eradication of income and human poverty. And the third is to introduce an explicit rights-based approach to programming.

2. **Mobilizing the support of international corporations for human rights.**

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The Secretary-General's Global Compact is seeking to mobilize corporate engagement to promote respect for human rights as a norm and a value in the corporate sector. Speaking at the Globalization Project Symposium hosted by the Beyers Naude Centre at the Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Theology from 19-20 February 2008, one of the chief architects of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), Professor Oliver Williams, gave insight into the relevance and need for the UNGC in society. He showed that a rights-based corporate sector, based on ten key principles, could have a positive, phenomenal impact in enhancing the overall well-being of people. His paper, *The UN Global Compact: The challenge and the promise*, presented at this Symposium, has since been published in the book, *Globalization: The Politics of Empire, Justice and the Life of Faith*.

Firmly supporting the work of the UN, the ten life-enhancing principles of the Global Compact can be summarized in four strategic areas, as follows:

(i) Human rights

Principle 1 – Business should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Principle 2 – make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses

(ii) Labour

Principle 3 – Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

Principle 4 – the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

Principle 5 – The effective abolition of child labour; and

Principle 6 – the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

(iii) Environment

Principle 7 – businesses are asked to support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

Principle 8 – undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

Principle 9 – encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

(iv) Anti-Corruption

Principle 10 – Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

3. **Strengthening regional approaches**.

Many regional initiatives for human rights have built on shared concerns and shared values of neighboring countries—the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Human Rights Commission, the European Social Charter, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. These initiatives need to be supported and carried forward to fulfill their potential for sharing experience, political pledge and financial support.

4. **Embarking on new efforts for peacemaking, peace building and peacekeeping.**

While conflict and war lead to atrocious human rights abuses, the idea that prevention is always more cost-effective than later intervention, should be a strong motivation for implementing rights-based initiatives in conflict zones. Governments need to be attentive and act on this fact of experience to generate the political support needed to resolve conflicts before they escalate.

5. **Strengthening the global human rights machinery** such as the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Proposals are on the table to increase efficiency and effectiveness, to ease the reporting burden on countries and to achieve greater policy attention.

With these human rights-enhancing proposals in mind, it would then be fair to say that the world needs stronger guarantees to universalism combined with high regard for cultural diversity in the overall human development agenda. Implementation of policies, it seems, will always be a major obstacle, as evidenced in the current South African milieu where delivering those basic rights to previously disadvantaged people (should perhaps read *still-disadvantaged* people) are still painstakingly sluggish. However, this should not dampen the individual and collective drive of people in ensuring that the human rights of millions of people are afforded them.

3.2.8 Human Development, Human Rights and the UNDP

The concept of human development gained great impetus after the introduction of the first Human Development Report (HDR) in 1990 – at a time of great international political change, just after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and just before the world's pariah state, South Africa, made the remarkable transition from apartheid to democracy.

From the perspective of the UNDP, "human development is about enlarging people's choices and enabling them to live long, healthy and creative lives. It is about much more than the rise and fall of national incomes. Human development is about fighting poverty but it is also about living with dignity. The goal is human freedom." Thus the single goal for the UNDP is putting *people* back in the centre of the development process rather than markets.

Immediately after the Second World War in 1948, the United Nations (UN), made up of many member states, introduced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), thereby "acknowledging human rights as a global responsibility" and in order "to secure the freedom, well-being and dignity of all people everywhere" (HDR 2000:1). In this declaration, it is stated that the "…recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world". The Preamble of the UDHR further affirms:

> The peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom…

For the UNDP, the concept of human rights is therefore central to its mission to ensure that every human being is free to expand their choices and opportunities so that they can lead a life of respect and value. Human development for Sen, is concerned with this task and what he takes to be the basic development idea: namely, *advancing the richness of human life, rather than the richness of the economy in which human beings live*, which is only a part of it (online video on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) website[46]."

In the UNDP's 2000 Human Development Report (HDR), the strong emphasis on human rights and human development showed why a rights-based approach (RBA) is so important for all people (poor and rich) across the world. A key aspect of the Report shows that two key ingredients, *freedom* and *solidarity*, are vital in achieving the goals of eradicating poverty amongst people. This proactive pursuit of freedom for

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[46] http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev/learnmore/title,10152,en.html

all must be accompanied by the engendering of continuous local and international solidarity if humanity is to survive. The Report explains what the goals of human freedom are, and why these are so critical to secure in today's globalized world:

- Freedom from discrimination—by gender, race, ethnicity, national origin or religion. • Freedom from want—to enjoy a decent standard of living.
- Freedom to develop and realize one's human potential.
- Freedom from fear—of threats to personal security, from torture, arbitrary arrest and other violent acts.
- Freedom from injustice and violations of the rule of law.
- Freedom of thought and speech and to participate in decision-making and form associations.
- Freedom for decent work—without exploitation.

This perspective is complemented well with that of Sen (UNDP information video, 2005) that the "human development approach is an approach where we concentrate on human life, its richness, and the well-being, the freedom, and how they are developing, and how they are changing and how they can be further enhanced". In his work, *Development as Freedom*, Sen (1999:14) reinforces this point and shows how that, through the liberation and expansion of human capabilities, poor people are (and have been) enabled to "…having more freedom to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value". The *development* of a full human life through the expansion of human freedom, for Sen (1999:14-5; 36), is emphasized in his words:

> Expanding the freedoms that we have reason to value not only makes our lives richer and more unfettered, but also allows us to be fuller social persons, exercising our own volitions and interacting with – and influencing – the world in which we live

Sen's idea of the expansion of one's freedom (through democratic and just practices and also reconciliation) in order that it may lead to a better life for the person, is symbolized in the Preamble to the South African Constitution:

- To heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
- Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;
- Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person…

This "freeing of potential of each person" is what is the underlying theme in Sen's philosophy as well as in the doctrine of the UNDP, as can be evidenced in their invaluable annual HDR's.

3.2.9 Human Development Reports: critical contributions in advocating the expanding of human *freedoms*

In order to strengthen their work across the globe and to be relevant within the context of development, the UNDP compiles their research into annual Human Development Reports, the first of which was published in 1990 under the directorship of Mahbub ul Haq, founder of the HDR. The introduction of these annual HDRs has become a landmark feature of contemporary development discourse and helps people to understand the important linkages between economics, poverty, development, the freedoms of people and their human rights. Some key development issues that the HDR have brought onto the agenda since 1990 are:

- political freedom as a critical dimension of development
- social justice
- inequality
- ethical and moral considerations that highlight the inequalities in the world and the consequences such as inequality being: 1) a source of conflict, 2) a source of social dislocation, and 3) a barrier to economic growth
- the physical, political and economic conditions in which billions of the world's people live (2010 Report, pp.72-76)

3.2.10 The Human Development Index (HDI)

According to the UNDP website[47], the Human Development Index (HDI) is one part of the HDR that should "…tell the story of development in terms of how people are faring, not just how production is doing". It ranks most countries in the world in terms of three basic human needs: health, education and income. The HDI therefore attempts to provide a summary picture based on three main factors:

1. Longevity
2. Education and literacy
3. Poverty and the level of income

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[47] http://hdr.undp.org

This three-fold formula for calculating and producing this HDI, however, does not reflect the entire human development scope because it leaves out many other considerations for instance, the number of children or dependants in a household. However, these three items are nevertheless the most important factors in terms of *how* countries are taking care of the needs of their most vulnerable people in society and, the organization argues, it is a better measures than the gross national products (GNP) of governments. In these reports the quality of human life is examined, as explained in the statement that, "even though poverty is often the lack of freedom to buy enough food, to have enough medicine, to have the opportunity of going to school, it also can take the form of not having the culture of freedom to pursue your lifestyle".

Each year, the report has a theme contemplating a different development issue. The themes are linked to contemporary world challenges, but the choices of the themes for HDR tend to be reactive in the sense that there is a whole human development set of dialogues across the world. It is not just a shared choice within the organization, but it is mostly a reaction to clamour across the world (perhaps a negative trait of the UNDP that could aim to be more proactive instead). Every year the reports analyse the prospects for human development in light of current global trends and they are a commentary on matters of concern to both poor and rich.

It is with this concern for current global trends, that Sir Richard Jolly (the special advisor to the HDR from 1995-2000) says that the most *positive* aspects of globalization is that it is adding to efficiency and dynamism in the world economy today. The *negative* aspect is that it is cutting some people out as rapidly as it is cutting some people in. Herein lies the argument for the *anti-globalization* (meaning *economic globalization*) supporters.

3.3 DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUES

3.3.1 Martha Nussbaum: Women And Development

3.3.1.1 A brief introduction to women's struggles

Women's struggles in all facets of life across all parts of the world are being highlighted and advocated at many levels in society today, such as by experts like

Martha Nussbaum. What is not extensively highlighted and seemingly not recognized, are the contributions that women have made across the world to bringing about transformation in society. The history and major contribution of South African women in the "liberation struggle" during apartheid is a case in point[48]. Having played a leading role in South Africa's liberation, women are now under-represented as a group in the South African Parliament and in many local and provincial governments[49]

The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation 1990, convened in Arusha, Tanzania from 12 to 16 February, was held, significantly, shortly after the 23rd anniversary of the people-centred Arusha Declaration for Development proposed by then-Tanzanian President, Julius Nyerere on 5 February 1967. This African Charter, amongst other important declarations, asserts the critical role of women's participation in development on the African continent in Section 14 (Davids, 2005:211):

> In view of the vital and central role played by women in family well-being and maintenance, their special commitment to the survival, protection and development of children, as well as survival of society and their important role in the process of African recovery and reconstruction, special emphasis should be put by all the people in terms of eliminating biases particularly with respect to the reduction of the burden on women and taking positive actions to ensure their full equality and effective participation in the development process.

At the heart of the African Charter's goal to assist women is the objective to take positive actions that will ensure that gender justice exists and that women be afforded full equality and just participation in development. The 1979 Convention on the Elimination on all forms of Discrimination Against Women advocates this view[50]. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) supervises the implementation of the Convention[51] Among the international human rights treaties, the CEDAW takes an important position in bringing the female half of

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[48] See Gertrude Fester's *Women Working for Dignity and Freedom in South Africa (1980–2008)* in The Humanization of Globalization: South African and German Perspectives, by Clint Le Bruyns & Gotlind Ulshöfer (eds) 2008.

[49] http://www.gov.za

[50] http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#intro

[51] On 18 December 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It entered into force as an international treaty on 3 September 1981 after the twentieth country had ratified it. By the tenth anniversary of the Convention in 1989, almost one hundred nations have agreed to be bound by its provisions.

humanity into the heart of human rights affairs. The essence of the Convention is rooted in the goals of the United Nations: to reaffirm faith in basic human rights, in the dignity, and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women. The existing document conceptualizes the meaning of equality and how it can be attained. In so doing, the Convention establishes not only an international bill of rights for women, but also an agenda for action by countries to guarantee the enjoyment of those rights.

Another organization, UN Women known as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, is probably the newest macro-organization engaged with rights issues pertaining to women in development. Created in July 2010 by the UN, UN Women believe that gender equality is not only a basic human right, but its achievement has enormous socio-economic implications. Empowering women energizes flourishing economies, stimulating output and development[52].

The UN Women's Economic and Social Council also has a key, wide-ranging document[53] focusing on the critical need for empowering women in all spheres of life across the globe and which contributes to shaping a gender perspective in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

Yet gender inequalities remain deeply rooted in every society. Women lack access to decent work and face occupational exclusion and gender wage gaps. They are too often denied access to basic education and health care. Women in all parts of the world suffer violence and discrimination. They are under-represented in political and economic decision-making processes. A MDG Report (2008) about parliamentary representation of women in governments across the globe corroborates this point. When analyzing this key indicator of the MDGs (indicator 12) that points to national governments' commitment to genuine advocacy of women's roles in parliaments, the MDG Report shows that progress is very slow. This "progress" can be summarized in the following selected categories:

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[52] http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/daw/index.html
[53] http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/637/20/PDF/N0963720.pdf?OpenElement

Indicator 12

Seats held by women in national parliament

Percentage of parliamentary seats occupied by women

Table 5 Women in Government Leadership

Region	1990	1997	2002	2007
Sub-Saharan Africa	7.2	9.0	12.0	16.6
Developing nations	10.4	10.1	12.1	15.7
Developed nations	16.3	15.6	19.1	21.8
Global	12.8	11.4	13.8	17.1

It is apparent from this perspective alone, that women's development is grindingly slow. Even in the South African context, women who take their cases to the highest levels experience long delays in getting the results that they hope for, as Gertrude Fester in Le Bruyns & Ulshöfer (2008:111) explains: "…access to the constitutional courts is a protracted, expensive and complicated process, hence not accessible to the average woman unless an NGO undertakes it on her behalf…" For women in South Africa (and elsewhere), the apartheid-era slogan, "the Struggle continues…" is still very appropriate. The question therefore remains: What type of political will is needed from governments to ensuring the rights of women to development?

3.3.1.2 SANPAD: Articulating women's struggles

The 2008 SANPAD Conference served as a platform for speakers and delegates to vocalize the contemporary women's struggle and discuss the crucial topic, *The Feminization of Poverty*. Speakers from Brazil, Zimbabwe, South Africa and the Netherlands, highlighted the abuses that many women have to face in their own countries, and also in countries where they often seek refuge.

The problems that urban and rural women face today appear to be mounting while many governments' policies appear to be inadequate to provide meaningful recourse for women who have become ensnared by poverty. At the SANPAD conference, Brazilian researcher and activist, Moiema Miranda[54], showed the "faltering steps" in

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[54] Moeima Maria Marques de Miranda, was a Lead Paper presenter at SANPAD 2008 in South Africa, and is an anthropologist with an MA from the Graduate Programme in Social Anthropology at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, where she studied rural labor and politics. Since 1992 she works

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"the struggle against poverty". Besides the massive scales of inequality along racial lines in Brazil, she also pointed out how that poverty was "relocating" from rural to urban areas while at the same time "…gaining a more feminine cast…" With the increasing poverty rate in Brazil, Miranda is concerned as to whether the faltering social policies there "…are – or are not – capable of altering substantially this situation of structural inequality".

Another presenter at the conference, Prishani Naidoo, put a "human face" to her presentation, The Feminization of Poverty In South Africa, by inviting a group of unemployed women from Orange Farm in Johannesburg, to interact with delegates during her presentation. Needless to say, this was one of the highlights of the conference because their presence "connected" academic theory about poverty with the dark reality or experiential nature of poverty.

A third presenter, Noluntu Dyubhele, alerted delegates to the fact that in rural South Africa, there was a distinct increase in the number of female-headed households. By implication, this meant that there is also now an increase in "the responsibilities of women to become the sole or primary economic providers for their children". Dyubhele also argued that while these poor rural women were unable to obtain access to credit (from certain municipalities) due to their "low-productivity forms of self-employment", it was therefore hoped that development officials would be able to recognize "the need to formulate rural development policies which are gender and economically oriented given the fact that rural women bear the largest burden of poverty in South Africa".

A fourth presenter, L. Ndabeni, concurred with Miranda and Dyubhele, and suggested that, in order for women to reach their true potential,

> policies and programmes must address the various constraints acting on their abilities to
> succeed. For example, the greater availability of paid employment provides opportunities for
> younger and more educated women to improve their lives and those of their families.

Although these were not the only women's focus issues discussed at the conference, it is very apparent that the idea of the "feminization of poverty" or "women and

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at the Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Research (IBASE) on different projects and initiatives (http://www.buildingglobaldemocracy.org/content/moema-de-miranda)

development", (strongly proposed by Martha Nussbaum), is a critical part of contemporary development discourse. Therefore, it would be appropriate to evaluate Nussbaum's perspectives on the potential and capabilities of women, as demonstrated in her book, *Women and Development: the Capabilities Approach*. This evaluation will also draw from the thoughts of Wilson & Ramphele, as reflected in their book, *Uprooting Poverty: the South African Challenge* that illustrates the history of the poverty of African women in South African society.

3.3.1.3 Nussbaum and Wilson & Ramphele: Why women?

In the discourse on women and human development, Nussbaum (2000:24) begins by "…orienting the reader in a general way to the situation of women (especially poor women)…" As demonstrated at the SANPAD Conference, Nussbaum similarly takes up this position because she believes that "women in much of the world lose out by being women" (Nussbaum, 2000:298). Amartya Sen (1999:15) agrees and asserts that "…inequality between men and women afflicts – and sometimes prematurely ends – the lives of millions of women, and, in different ways, severely restricts the substantive freedoms that women enjoy". Amartya Sen (1999:115) reinforces the plight of women, this time in traditional societies where culture plays a dominating role. Sen argues here that the freedom of women to seek employment outside the family is a major concern in many third world countries. This systematic denial of women's freedom based on culture is in itself a violation of women's liberty and gender equity. Therefore, the absence of this freedom negatively influences the economic empowerment of women, and also has many other consequences. At the same time, it must also be remembered that most women in traditional societies also experience the daily rigours of hard, unpaid work – right in their own homes – receiving little or no recognition for it, and at the same time being denied the right to work outside the home. Based on her experience while researching women's development projects in India during the 1990s, Nussbaum (2000:1) emphasizes the point that,

> Women in much of the world lack support for fundamental functions of a human life. They are less well nourished than men, less healthy, more vulnerable to physical violence and sexual abuse. They are much less likely than men to be literate, and still less likely to have pre-professional or technical education. Should they attempt to enter the workplace, they face greater obstacles, including intimidation from family or spouse, sex discrimination in hiring, and sexual harassment in the workplace – all, frequently, without effective legal recourse.

In addition, women often have the burden of a 'double day' of a very demanding job while having to fulfill the role of housekeeper and caregiver (Nussbaum, 2000:1). It is therefore not surprising that these factors take their toll on the emotional well-being of such women resulting in the fact that they experience fewer prospects than men to live free from fear and to experience rewarding types of love. For Nussbaum (2000), this is especially true in societies where arranged marriages cause children to miss out on the all important experience of play that is required in order for them to cultivate "…their imaginative and cognitive faculties". Therefore, as these unequal social arrangements and political circumstances evolve, it creates immense disparity resulting in women being given unequal human capabilities. Shockingly, Nussbaum (2000:2-3) reveals that, according to the UNDP's 1997 Human Development Report, "there is no country that treats its women as well as its men, according to a complex measure that includes life expectancy, wealth, and education". In developing countries, this disregard for women is evident in the fact that gender inequality is strongly connected with poverty, meaning that, when poverty is combined with gender inequality, it results in the acute failure of central human capabilities such as literacy, school enrolment and income.

In their book, *Uprooting Poverty: the South African Challenge*, Wilson & Ramphele (1989:180) assert that "poverty under any circumstances is bad enough but the special twist given to it by the sexist laws and practices of the state in South Africa makes the position of black women grindingly hard to endure". They were, of course, writing during a socially engineered apartheid era, when racial discrimination was rife and when apartheid contributed to the impoverishment of millions of people, and ultimately produced unfathomable economic consequences, especially for the rural black African woman.

Reflecting on the South African situation of the late 1980s, Wilson & Ramphele (1989:177) assert that black African women, especially those living in rural areas, were (and still are) the most vulnerable people in the "poverty landscape:

> After children it is surely women, especially but not only those in the rural areas, whose
> position in South African society makes them particularly vulnerable. Amongst black women
> there are four groups that are most likely to find themselves in difficulties: widows; divorcees;

wives of migrants; and all women, including those already mentioned, who head their own households.

A brief overview of these four categories of women as they related to the South African economic landscape of the late 1980s and early 1990s, reveal the reasons why black African women were (are) the most vulnerable people in this context:

a. *Widows*: The plight of black African widows, especially those from rural Eastern Cape villages often came about because of two factors (Wilson & Ramphele, 1989:178):

1. The high death-rate of their husbands who had contracted pneumoconiosis on the mines and

2. The fact that women widowed in town often moved back to the country to live with their father's families. In other contexts, such as in India and many parts of the world, a widow's situation will become worse given the stigma attached to widowhood (Nussbaum, 2000:2). For Nussbaum (2000), such women are like "a tool whose purpose is gone: that is what a widow is, and that's rather like being dead".

b. *Divorce and Tradition*: in an era of legalized racial discrimination, black African women's economic problems were further compounded by the pervasive paternalistic dominance of society. Here especially, divorcees and deserted wives found themselves destitute because "society had been structured in such a way that women were compelled to be unusually dependent financially on their husbands" (Wilson & Ramphele, 1989). During this era, the rights of black African women to own houses (or even to live) in urban areas were withdrawn once they were divorced from their husbands. Thus the state's unjust practice of evicting a black African divorced woman or widow from her home, on the grounds that her right to own a home had fallen away due to her husband's death or divorce from her, brought untold hardship and misery to her and also, most often, her children. In the rural areas of the former homelands (such as Transkei) many African women were trapped by laws which made it difficult for them to move to cities in search of employment. These laws therefore prevented them from replacing the loss of income that they enjoyed during their time of marriage. Moreover, when her husband died on the mines, the black African woman was told by a magistrate

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how much money she could receive each month, while at the same time, a male family member had to appointed as the custodian of her late husband's estate. Concurrently, the black African widow was also expected to become the second wife of her late husband's brother. If she refused to do so, the consequences were, most often, that the brother refused to pass on any assets due to her.

c. *The wives of migrant workers*: another major problem that resulted in the deep poverty of the black African woman was that her husband's remittances did not always come every month. Even when her husband's income *did* eventually arrive, these were smaller amounts because of the cost involved to transfer the money to her. Secondly, many mine-worker husbands who were polygamous, also found themselves in a position where they had to share their relatively low incomes between two or more families. Often, married women were deserted by their husbands who were also the main source of household income. Thus, the combination of the old migrant system, traditional law, and the sexism of both black and white society, crippled the African widow to such an extent that the system forced her right to the bottom of the "economic ladder". With these sub-human economic conditions, it would be fair to argue that the black African woman was never even on the economic ladder at all.

d. *The general status of "working" South African women* during the 1980s and early 1990s: for Wilson & Ramphele (1989:179) the status of women meant that,

> like many other societies, the South African economy is biased in such a way as to place most of the paid jobs in the hands of men. For this reason in South Africa…the degree of poverty is far higher amongst female-headed households than in those homes where a man is at the head. This is to be expected, given the structure of society, which is both sexist and economically-exploitative. In South Africa the barriers against women moving freely into the market-place to work where they choose, combined with the educational disadvantages that weigh more heavily on women than on men, place upon them additional burdens which men do not have to carry. For example, women are often considered by male employers to be more 'unreliable' than men in that they may need to be away from work when their children are ill

In the light of the recent past economic and human injustices, contemporary development discourse in South Africa should, with the greatest commitment,

continue to advocate and secure the rights of *all* women, especially the black African woman, in employment terms and in all areas of life. New, productive ways must continually be sought to allow women every kind of opportunity to increase their skills capacity and also their ability to earn a decent income by today's standards, while at the same time addressing any form of exploitation of women in the labour market.

Highlighting significant inequality and economic injustices of the 1980s, Wilson & Ramphele (1989:179) points out:

> The exploitation of women in the labour market (during the apartheid years) is all-pervasive, even amongst the relatively well-educated, in the form of differential salary scales, and discriminatory promotional policies. The most exploited categories of workers are, however, domestics and agricultural labourers who work the hardest, for the longest working days and are paid the lowest wages.

Even today, and in spite of the present South African Constitution that protects workers' rights, this trend of many employers ignoring the rights of employed women, continues. The organizations, Women on Farms Project (WFP) and PLAAS[55] (Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies), play critical roles in advocating farmworkers' rights in South Africa today. At the Stellenbosch University's Beyers Naude Centre (BNC) *Religion and the Eradication of Poverty* Conference on 19 May 2008, Wendy Pekeur, from the WFP and the general secretary of the farmworkers' trade union Sikhula Sonke, discussed the plight of women farmworkers in the Western Cape province.

According to Pekeur and Sikhula Sonke (which means "we grow together" in isiXhosa), some of the harsh realities facing women on farms today are:

1. "generational slavery", where it is implied that many generations of farmworkers have remained in poverty as a result of exploitative labour

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[55] The Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) is a leading research and teaching centre with an international reputation for high quality applied research and critical scholarship. The institute was founded in 1995 as a specialist unit in the School of Government, in the Economic and Management Sciences Faculty, at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), Cape Town. Since then, PLAAS has developed a proven track record of undertaking high-quality research on land and agrarian reform, poverty, and natural resource management in South Africa and the southern African region. PLAAS is based at the University of the Western Cape in Bellville, South Africa (http://www.plaas.org.za/about-plaas).

practices by farm owners. It is an unwanted inherited curse that creates dependency and perpetuates a slave-master relationship

2. farm evictions (according to Pekeur, between 1994 and 2004 there were over one million farm evictions of which 1% were legal): in this case, some farmers evicted their workers from houses which were occupied for generations by these vulnerable people in order to make their farms "more profitable", thus rendering many families homeless. Some farmers' "profit before people" approach "would rather move people off the land (in order) to upgrade farm housing for tourist accommodation"

3. the impact of economic globalization on women farmworkers: Multi-national Corporations or Trans-national Corporations (MNCs or TNCs respectively) such as the British company Tesco buy from many farms in South Africa. However, these companies may or may not be aware of unethical labour practices on the South African farms whom they buy fruit and vegetables from. This has created an opening for the WFP and Sikhula Sonke to create awareness of the plight of farmworkers, especially women, on South African farms, and the *human cost* associated with the export market. These TNCs are also challenged by WFP to become advocates of farmworkers' rights or face the risk of being complicit in human rights abuses on farms

4. victimization: farmworkers who are engaged with trade unions and Sikhula Sonke in order to see the realization of their rights are often victimized by farmers, where victimization can take the form of evictions or no increase in their annual wages

5. there is very little or no "buy-in" from farmers to the basic needs of farmworkers

6. substance abuse: with the long history of farmworkers being paid in kind with wine produced on the farms where they work, the abuse of substances, especially cheap alcohol, became a prominent feature on farms. As a result, many families became dependent on alcohol, remaining trapped in poverty, while a significant number of their children were also born with the medical condition, *alcohol fetal syndrome*. This condition also has a negative impact on the way children are able to learn at school, leading to increased, generational poverty, and overall stunted human development

While there are still many areas of concern for women on farms, the reality is that, in a very paternalistic world, the problems of women in the workplace and in society in general will still be a very challenging area to address. Coupled with what has been shown earlier, Wilson & Ramphele (1989:179) conclude:

> Women are discriminated against in all aspects of life – in the home as girls being brought up and educated; in the allocation of resources at school and institutions of higher learning; at work; and in society in general. African rural women are at the bottom of the economic pyramid in this country because of the added problem of paucity of resources and more rigid sexist practices in these areas.

 In the new South African dispensation, there has been a welcoming implementation of equal human rights for all people, especially black South African women, as attested to within the South African legal framework and the Bill of Rights, to which the government is to be held accountable for. Davids et al (2005:45) reiterate that the South African Constitution and international human rights law has made it the primary duty of governments to create an environment in which people can gain access to social and economic rights through their own efforts and initiatives. Any barriers that prevent people, especially the vulnerable such rural women, the disabled, the elderly and poor children from gaining access to these socio-economics should therefore be removed. The political environment for the holistic development of all South Africans is one in which discrimination in any form is disallowed, and this has paved the way for a new process of development that also includes a distinct economic programme of corrective action, especially for the benefit of historically (and currently) disadvantaged and marginalized black South African women.

The background of South Africa's past unjust treatment of women serves as an unfortunate example of a disregard for the attainment of Nussbaum's "basic social minimum" that is a prerequisite for "respect for human dignity" (Nussbaum, 2000:5). Without this focus on the "doing" and "being" functions of the human being – a focus on people's "human capabilities" – there can be no "dignity of the human being". Nussbaum (2000:5-7) proposes three reasons why her capabilities approach is important:

- Firstly, the capabilities approach places the individual at the apex of any development "talk". Nussbaum insists that "…the capabilities in question should be pursued for each and every person, treating each as an end and

none as a mere tool of the ends of others…" Alluding to the basic social minimum, Nussbaum states that when citizens have reached a place above the capability threshold, *then* only could it be said that people are experiencing "truly human functioning", and, by implication, human dignity.

- Secondly, although on a weaker level, the capabilities approach can help to gauge how *well* people are doing as opposed to how *much* people are earning. The emphasis is thus on *quality* of life as opposed to *quantity* in economic terms. The UNDP's HDI index (that measures education, health (longevity) and levels of income (poverty)), can therefore be brought into comparative tension with, for instance, the GNP of a country in order to obtain a more comprehensive perspective of people's holistic development in a specific context.

- Thirdly, the capabilities approach is fully *universal*. This means that human capabilities are important for each inhabitant of the globe, in which each citizen should be treated as an end. This implies that, universally, each individual person has a significant role to play in the development process, and nations should be measured by how well they allow people to utilize and maximize their human capabilities

The core notion at the heart of Nussbaum's capabilities approach is the idea of *human dignity*, which has a broad universal appeal, cross-cultural resonance and intuitive power (2000:72). Thus the idea of human dignity should speak about the human being as a "dignified free being who shapes his or her own life in cooperation and reciprocity with others, rather than being passively shaped or pushed around by the world…A life that is truly human is one that is shaped throughout by these human powers of practical reason and sociability".

Nussbaum (2000:78-80) provides a list of what she believes to be critical elements in the goal to see women and people in general live lives that are "fully human". Here is a summary of what Nussbaum suggests are the central human functional capabilities:

1. **Life**. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.

2. **Bodily Health**. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.

3. **Bodily Integrity**. Being able to move freely from place to place; having one's bodily boundaries treated as sovereign, i.e. being able to be secure against assault, including sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.

4. **Senses, Imagination, and Thought**. Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including…literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training…Being able to search for the ultimate meaning of life in one's own way….

5. **Emotions**. Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by overwhelming fear and anxiety, or by traumatic events of abuse or neglect…

6. **Practical Reason**. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life…

7. **Affiliation**. **A**. Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation; to have the capability for both justice and friendship...

   B. Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of the others. This entails, at a minimum, protections against discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, caste, ethnicity, or national origin. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.

8. **Other Species**. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

9. **Play**. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

10. **Control over one's environment. A. Political**. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.

B. Material. Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), not just formally but in terms of real opportunity; and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freeom from unwarranted search and seizure".

Among these capabilities, *affiliation* and concern for *other species* stands out as the most important. The idea of having the interests of other[56] human beings at heart, as well as respect for animals, plant life, and our natural environment, speaks of an understanding that self-preservation depends on one's relationship with other people and also the natural order that is all around humanity.

Therefore, the way that human beings treat one another, the way that governments design policies for people and the created order, and the way that human beings interact with nature, are critical actions that could very well determine to which extent human capabilities could be actualized. While the other human capabilities are equally important in her estimation, it would appear as if, in a general sense, the ideas of *affiliation* and *concern for other species*, could be considered to be the pivotal ideas in ensuring that people reach, what she calls, the "basic social minimum".

Marks (2003) in his paper, *The Human Rights Framework for Development: Seven Approaches*, reproduces Nussbaum's capabilities approach in tabular form, with each listed capability corresponding with a particular human right as proposed by the UNDR, thereby showing the synergies and interconnectedness in contemporary human rights discourse:

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[56] The idea of "the other" will be dealt with in a later chapter.

Table 6 Nussbaum's Capabilities and Human Rights

1. Life	Article 3, on right to life.
2. Bodily Health	Article 25, on the right to an adequate standard of living for oneself and one's family.
3. Bodily Integrity	Articles 3, 4, 5 and 13, although domestic violence, sexual satisfaction, and reproductive choice were not sufficiently well established in 1948 for the overwhelming number of male drafters to include them.
4. Senses, Imagination and Thought	Article 18 on freedom of thought, conscience and religion; Article 19 on freedom of opinion and expression; article 26 on the right to education, which "shall be directed to the full development of the human personality;" Article 27 on participation in cultural life.
5. Emotions	Articles 12 and 16
6. Thought	Article 18 on freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

7. Affiliation
      A.   Friendship
 	
      B.   Respect
	Article 1, 18, 19, 20, 29.
	Article 1 on equality in dignity and rights; Article 2 on non-discrimination.

8. Other Species	Only found by implication in Article 28.
9. Play	Article 24 relative to rest and leisure.

10. Control Over One's Environment
   A.   Political
 	
   B.   B. Material
	Article 21 on political participation; Article 19 on free speech; Article 20 on association.
	Article 17 on property; Article 23 on right to work and free choice of employment; Article 12 on non-interference in privacy, family, home or correspondence.

At the same time then, one could also view Nussbaum's assertions here from a *holistic development* perspective, where human development is "compartmentalized", not in a reductionist way, but in a way of showing how important, and inseparable, each of the areas of a human being's development really is. Her grand exposition of the *central human functional capabilities* as a prerequisite for "being truly human", could be summed up in the following way, pointing to human development in all spheres of human life – human life that is lived in human dignity:

1. Physical development: Functions 1, 2, 3, & 9
2. Intellectual development: Function 4 & 6
3. Emotional development: Function 5
4. Spiritual development: Function 7

5. Social development: Functions 7, 8 & 10

6. Economic development: Function 10
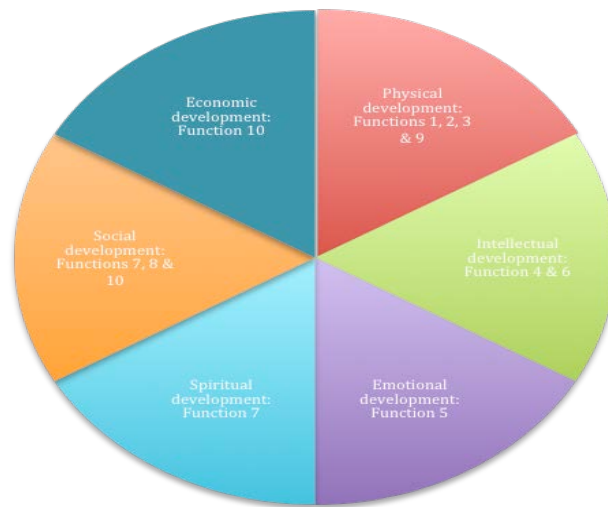
Figure 5 Nussbaum's 10 Functions super-imposed into a holistic development model proposal

These synergies and overlapping of "development concepts" again illustrate, as in Marks's table, the mutually reinforcing nature of human rights and human development that helps to secure the well-being and human dignity of all people, where building self-respect and the respect of others is the ultimate goal. All of this has as its primary goal the objective of human freedom (Marks, 2003:12).

To conclude, and if there were to be any critique concerning Nussbaum's presentation of the above ten-point proposal, one could argue that:

1. Even in the most wealthiest (and democratic) nations, such as in Norway, Sweden[57][58], the USA[59], and elsewhere, where Nussbaum's list of ten central

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[57] As part of the writer's observations, research and lecturing opportunities in Sweden during 2008, provided through the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University, helped him to formulate an opinion about what "human dignity" meant for African and Middle Eastern refugees in the suburb of Tensta, near Stockholm city, where a large immigrant community has sprung up. At the time, our lead lecturer indicated that the unemployment rate, a key indicator for determining people's well being, was extremely high amongst refugees from these regions. During this Human Rights course at Hogskolan Dalarna in Falun, Sweden the writer also engaged with students from many European and African countries (such as Armenia and Eritrea). Time after time these students would speak of how their people had to experience antagonism and human rights abuses perpetrated against them by hostile neighbouring countries. During the course, students and lecturers had the opportunities to visit the Ombudsman for Gender Equality and also the Ombudsman for Human Rights in Stockholm. The group also visited the Riksdagen (Swedish Parliament) where all the participants were given an educational experience about the human rights laws that make Sweden a state which provides access for all people to attain what Nussbaum calls the "basic social minimum" that ultimately ensures the "human dignity" of every individual.

[58] Appendix 3

human functional capabilities could potentially flourish, there are still strong indications of people living lives that are not yet "fully human".

2. This idealistic (yet very humanistic) perspecitive appears to be, at first glance, very utopian and sometimes naïve, given the number of despotic leaders and states around the world, and not to mention the antagonism between people groups such as the ethnic conflict between the Bosnians and Serbs in Europe

3. Her proposals will probably never be realized in every country at the same time (which one presumes is the ideal)

4. Thus while there may be policies in place (like in South Africa) that protect people from human rights abuses and which also allow people to pursue these goals in order to become "fully human", the element of human nature – and in this case, the "dark" side of human nature – is not considered. Nussbaum unquestionably writes from a position of much optimism, which is perhaps why she hardly gives any consideration to the idea of humankind's fallenness, to speak in theological terms.

However, one cannot negate Nussbaum's ten-point proposition based merely on the absence of any mention about the fallibility of human beings. In contrast though, her proposition takes a very positive stance, a commendable one, because it is taken from a position that humankind is also inherently good and not "all bad". Therefore, one could conclude, Nussbaum's faith in the "goodness" of humanity, is the reason why she feels that it is possible for people all around the globe to reach a point of being "fully human".

When one analyzes the idea of the feminization of poverty as presented above, then it can be clearly seen that the sin of mistreating women is something that ought to be addressed at all levels of society. Drawing from Nussbaum, Ramphele, *Women on Farms*, and other cited sources in this chapter, it becomes evident that some of the root causes of poverty could appear to people as acts of sin against humanity. As

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[59] During two visits to the USA in 2003 and 2004, the writer was exposed to so much opulence (Philadelphia) and also abject poverty (inner-city Cleveland, Ohio). Nussbaum's ten principles for people's attainment of "a fully human" position in this life, therefore indirectly tests the "best" democratic models (such as in Sweden and the USA) but also reveals the weakness in her list that, even if the best laws are in place to create opportunities for people in which to flourish, the implementation of these laws and the actions needed to entrench a culture of "human dignity", remain a stark omission.

presented in this chapter (and elsewhere), examples of sins that lead to the poverty of women are actually given a name and manifested and conceptualized as follows:

- Gender discrimination

- Gender inequality in terms of employment

- Unequal socio-cultural arrangements such as the denial of women to own land and property; patriarchalism; political arrangements

- Modern day slavery of some people who work on certain farms, specific factories, and other types of workplaces where labour practices are unethical and dehumanizing

- Dehumanization

Needless to say, these types of sins are very often the driving forces, the root causes of poverty. For Amartya Sen, these types of sins that also violate human dignity are called *unfreedoms*. As will be discussed later, these unfreedoms (very often manifested in deliberate, wrongful acts against people) could also be regarded as *capability deprivation*, when people are intentionally inhibited or deprived by other people or structures from reaching their full potential.

3.3.2 Development from the Perspective of Amartya Sen

3.3.2.1 Development as Freedom: Implications for human wellbeing

Human development in this thesis is a key concept that helps to unlock the importance and immense value of any human life. In the light of poverty, social exclusion, marginalization and other negative realities associated with the poor, Sen's work, *Development as Freedom*, as well as the on-going humanitarian work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for whom he serves as an advisor, paves the way for a better understanding of the immeasurable worth of human life. This immeasurable worth becomes more evident when people are given opportunities to utilize and maximize the potential within them, thus, according to Louw (1991:92), helping them to attain an *optimal development* level when given a fair chance to fully participate in their own development.

This optimal development level can be equated to the level at which people develop their potential fully, and where these people are self-actualizers and have the ability to

resist enculturation (Louw, 1991:93). In other words, these self-actualizers are able to conquer their environmental influences and succeed against the odds. Herein lies the reality: poor people (like all people) have the potential to attain or self-actualize a humane, dignified lifestyle provided that they have equal access to the same opportunities (such as education, health services and financial institutions) as everyone else. Therefore it implies that people *can* overcome a culture of poverty but several factors would need to be in place first. *How* the poor respond to an environment of poverty is therefore an important task in their quest not to become victims during the enculturation process but to make positive life-enhancing decisions in spite of enculturation.

Nevertheless, in order to attain this level, optimal development must certainly have immense challenges along the way for people, especially for those who are poor. Louw (1991) proposes certain features of optimally developed people. However, before examining these features, it is quite plausible that, given the example and situation of poor people living in an informal settlement[60], these characteristics will certainly be tested and could, for example, come into conflict with an informal settlement dweller's perspective of his/her reality. Louw's characteristics of optimally developed persons are:

- They perceive reality, and particularly the social environment, in a realistic way
- They can accept their own shortcomings
- They are able to concentrate on a task because they are not obsessed with personal problems
- They have a good relationship with at least a few other people
- They live a full life, in the sense that they are interested in what is happening around them and can experience things intensely
- They have a reasonably systematic and well-considered view of life…which provides them with a value system which directs their life.

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[60] The example of an informal settlement is chosen here because it is based on the researcher's interaction with people from a local informal settlement (in Kensington) situated about 10km from Cape Town's city centre over the past twenty years as a community development worker in the Kensington and Factreton suburb. The researcher's experience and observations during these times are subjective but, nevertheless, underpinned by an ethical arrangement with the people from the informal settlement community.

Given the above definition and characteristics of people who have "developed" optimally, and notwithstanding the fact that many poor people have reached the point of self-actualization, it would then be fair to ask, "what are the characteristics of people who have not *developed* optimally, such as impoverished informal settlement dwellers?" A preliminary proposal for such characteristics could look as follows:

- They perceive reality, and particularly the social environment, in a realistic way

- They struggle to accept their shortcomings and often ask the question, "why am I poor?"

- They often have a sense of despair and hopelessness but can concentrate on a task if they are incentivised and if there is a possibility that the task can significantly contribute towards their own situation

- They have a good relationship with at least a few other people, especially their neighbours who share their experience of being poor

- They often have a low life expectancy, with many women and men dying before they are 60 years-old, and youth and children become trapped in activities of crime, substance abuse and violence. Thus losing spouses and children prematurely leads to a life void of family members

- While their view of life may generally question why they are poor, some will have a value system (especially those who subscribe to religious principles) that helps them to help others and themselves. This value system is often the reason why most poor people "survive" from day to day. Through interaction by means of qualitative interviews and unobtrusive measures[61] with people living in informal settlements, the researcher has also found that the survival of many people could be connected to the "metaphysical influences"[62] as proposed by Louw (1991).

Although this is not an exhaustive list of the characteristics of poor people in an informal settlement (and which by no means implies that these qualities are exclusive to this group of people), they nevertheless *do* represent realistically how poor people often view themselves and the world around them, as observed in such contexts by the

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[61] See *Methodologies in Poverty Research* by M. Shauli in SANPAD **Book of Abstracts**, 2008.
[62] This topic will be integrated into discussions in the next chapter of this dissertation that will focus on Theology and Development.

researcher. These challenges that poor people (all people) face, as well as the many dynamics that they encounter on the path in their overall human development journey, are illustrated in figure 6, the *developmental determinants* model, adapted here from Louw (1991:17):

Figure 6 Development Determinants

While it is important to point to the usefulness of these determinants to the development discourse, and also recognizing that each of these areas work interdependently in helping a person to develop optimally, it is nevertheless equally important to state that this will not be discussed in great detail in this chapter. Instead, these determinants would serve as background detail to the discourse on human freedoms and *unfreedoms*, as conceptualized by Amartya Sen (1999). Lastly, given the key problem of unemployment (that relates strongly to a person's *personal* and *social determinants*) in South Africa today, and the social consequences that comes along with it, one has to understand Louw's model in the context of people's socio-economic rights and the obstacles that impede access to these rights. Davids (2005:46) provides insight into what poor people believe these obstacles to be in a South African context:

1. **Legal obstacles**. The complex administration and implementation of legislation aimed at protecting the poor together with accessability to legal services.

2. **Administrative obstacles**. Complex time-consuming bureaucratic procedures for gaining access to socio-economic assistance, including the processes when people have to apply for social grants, housing subsidies and land acquisition grants.

3. **Financial obstacles**. The high cost of food, transportation, and social services such as health care, education, sanitation, water supply and basic housing undermine poor people's rights to a respectable, dignified standard of living.

4. **Physical obstacles**. Rural people, especially, suffer the most because of a lack of infrastructure such as decent roads, rail links or dependable public transport systems. The physically and mentally disabled suffer even more in this instance.

5. **Gender obstacles**. As mentioned earlier, South Africa, is still a country with strong cultural and patriarchal patterns, gender discrimination and violence against women. These important factors are critical to break the gender-based cycle of poverty that still affects millions of women across the nation.

With this deterministic background in mind, Louw's idea of *optimal development* of human beings can therefore help in analyzing and clarifying the idea of *development as freedom* as proposed by Amartya Sen (1999).

3.3.2.2 Amartya Sen: Towards Development as Freedom

A revisit to Sen's position of the paradoxical world within which humanity finds itself is a worthwhile exercise, and it helps to sketch the context into which his thesis of *development as freedom* ought to be placed:

> We live in a world of unprecedented opulence, of a kind that would have been hard even to imagine a century or two ago…And yet we also live in a world with remarkable deprivation, destitution and oppression. There are many new problems as well as old ones, including persistence of poverty and unfulfilled elementary needs, occurrence of famines and hunger, violation of elementary political freedoms as well as of basic liberties, extensive neglect of the interests and agency of women, and worsening threats to our environment and to the sustainability of our economic and social lives" (Sen, 1999: xi).
> .

Against the back-drop of this paradox, and with an informative commentary on the discourse of development, Amartya Sen introduces the idea of *Development as Freedom* and provides pertinent insight into some of the root causes of poverty (some root causes will inevitably be detected in some of Louw's development determinants). Understanding the threats to the development of people, especially to the poor, Sen (1999: 3) declares that

> Development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty…tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities…intolerance or over-activity of repressive states

Far from merely focusing on the obvious, more visible forms of the causes and effects of poverty, Sen (1999: 20) provides a plausible argument for viewing poverty as a "deprivation of basic capabilities, rather than merely as low income". For Sen (1999), poverty is an unfreedom that deprives human beings of their human dignity and identity. To this end, Sen (1999: 63) stresses:

> deprived people tend to come to terms with their deprivation because of the sheer necessity of survival, and they may, as a result, lack the courage to demand any radical change, and may even adjust their desires and expectations to what they unambitiously see as feasible. The mental metric of pleasure or desire is just too malleable to be a firm guide to deprivation and disadvantage.

Thus, as poor people "come to terms with their deprivation" and "adjust their desires and expectations to what they unambitiously see as feasible", they are in fact already in a process of losing their human dignity. It is also plausible that, when Louw's development determinants are not met, or when these are compromised, it becomes unfreedoms – sources that rob people from their freedom to become "fully human".

3.3.2.3 How does Sen view development as freedom?

It is important to note that Sen (1999: xii) perceives individual freedom as a social obligation. This social obligation should focus on the well being of the individual and, by implication, the broader community or society in general, through ensuring individual freedom. The imperative that "we have to see individual freedom as a social commitment" can therefore imply five notions:

1. That freedom of an individual to have the ability to make choices is the main goal to be attained

2. This freedom starts at a personal (individual) level and finds expression in a broader context in community (social)

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3. It is, however, possible that freedom can come from without (as in South Africa's liberation from apartheid) and then filter through to an indiviual level

4. That, as a social commitment, it is necessary for people to make freedom possible for others, and also for themselves, in a symbiotic, mutually beneficial way

5. Thus, when real freedom happens, development happens

For Sen (1999: 4), therefore, the centrality of freedom to development is two-fold:

1) *The evaluative reason*: assessing the progress of development has to be done primarily in terms of whether the freedoms that people have are enhanced;

2) *The effectiveness reason*: achievement of development is essentially dependent on the free agency of people.

Sen (1999: 5) accentuates the fact that "economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education…" can help poor people to achieve their goal of development if they are allowed to exercise their freedom of choice without any impediments. In essence, Sen (1999) insists, "…the institutional arrangements for these opportunities are also influenced by the exercise of people's freedoms, through the liberty to participate in social choice and in the making of public decisions that impel the progress of these opportunities". For Sen (1999: 53) therefore, the "enhancement of human freedom is both the main object and the primary means of development". In a lucid, concluding statement, he remarks:

> The ends and means of development call for placing the perspective of freedom at the centre of the stage. The people have to be seen, in this perspective, as being actively involved – given the opportunity – in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programs. The state and the society have extensive roles in strengthening and safeguarding human capabilities.

This enhancement of human freedoms and that of *human choice* can therefore, and *should*, have a positive effect on the outcomes of development – for all people. In this respect, a key pillar of development, namely *participation*, comes to mind. When people are free to *participate* in decision-making processes and structures (such as in democratic local and national elections) then they are already well on their way to

exercising a basic human freedom. Here, the work of August (1999), Lundstrom & Smith (1990), Myers (2005), Davids (et al) (2005), that focus on the significance of the principle of *participation*, and also that of Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) who highlight the need for engaging development with an *assets-based approach*, are valuable resources.

The role that human freedom can potentially play will inevitably lead to people's participation in their own development an also in the development of other people in their own communities. For example, a poverty-stricken mother who was previously restricted by cultural taboos and who then finds employment outside of the family can add tremendous economic value and an enhanced quality of life in her home. In her case, her own nutrition will improve as well as that of her children and husband/partner. Over an extended period of time, her income could even help her family to obtain " luxury" items or non-basic needs. The point here is that, given the opportunity to expand, access and exercise one's freedoms for the things that one has reason to value, and in this case a good quality of life through meaningful employment, the human capability to achieve any goal will be accomplished and will potentially (inevitably) have positive implications for many others.

Therefore, in Sen's perspective of development as freedom, there are two important roles which freedom play – constitutive and instrumental roles (1999:36-7):

1. The *constitutive* role (primary end) of development relates to the importance of *substantive freedom* in enriching human life and has an intrinsic characteristic about it. The substantive freedoms include fundamental capabilities like being able to avoid such deprivations as starvation, under-nourishment, escapable morbidity and premature mortality, as well as the freedoms that are associated with being literate, numerate, enjoying political participation and free speech (including dissent)…Development, in this view, is the process of expanding human freedoms, and an evaluation of development has to be informed by this consideration. These are rudimentary constituent components of development. Therefore Sen (1999:37) believes that the process of development, when judged by the enhancement of human freedom, has to include the removal of…deprivation".

Essentially, the elimination of these substantive *unfreedoms* is *constitutive* of development. In other words, without the removal of unfreedoms, there can be no development. This appears to be Sen's central argument and it shows how fundamental the idea is to any discourse about development.

For Sen (1999:36), development is about the expansion of freedom – a development that consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms "that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency".

So when one examines the concept of human freedom in development, Sen (1999: 16-7) allows one to appreciate that political and civil freedoms, in turn, are constitutive elements of human freedom. These appear to be non-negotiable components, something which is integral to a holistic understanding of human freedom. Agreeably, Sen (1999:16-7) pronounces that if political and civil freedoms are denied to people, then this would constitute a handicap in itself. Thus, the intrinsic importance of human freedom, in general, as the preeminent objective of development, is shown here, and it is strongly enhanced by the instrumental effectiveness of freedoms of particular kinds to promote freedoms of other kinds.

2. The significance of the *instrumental* (principal means of development) role of freedom is that it can also be very effective in contributing to economic progress (Sen, 1999:36). The instrumental role of freedom concerns the way different kinds of rights, opportunities, and entitlements contribute to the expansion of human freedom in general, and thus to promoting development…The effectiveness of freedom as an instrument lies in the fact that different kinds of freedom interrelate with one another, and freedom of one type may greatly help in advancing freedom of other types. The two roles are thus linked by empirical connections, relating freedom of one kind to freedom of other kinds.

From the perspective of the instrumental role of freedom, one can then observe the extrinsic nature of human freedom. Whereas the constitutive role of freedom is intrinsic in nature, the extrinsic nature of freedom's instrumental role indicates the

positive, practical outcomes when people are able to express themselves after unfreedoms have been eliminated. Furthermore, there are five types of instrumental freedoms according to Sen (1999: 38): 1) political freedoms, 2) economic facilities, 3) social opportunities, 4) transparency guarantees and 5) protective security. These instrumental freedoms serve to complement one another and contribute to the general capability of a person to live more freely. While each of these is essential for people in the development process, the idea of *social opportunities* is vital. The reason for this is that, even if people are politically free and even if there were economic facilities in place, it would be futile if those for whom these systems were created did not *participate* meaningfully through it. Therefore, people should always be conscious of the social arrangements (such as economic and political activities) that are in place so that they are able to maximize their human capabilities for their and also their community's good.

However, the fifth instrumental freedom, *protective security*, resonates strongest with a people-centred, human development approach. As is the case in poor communities across the world, there are always people who are the most vulnerable and "who can actually succumb to great deprivation as a result of material changes that adversely affect their lives" (Sen, 1999:40). As a consequence, protective security is required as a social security net to prevent the affected community from horrible misery, and in some cases hunger, starvation and death. Sen (1999) indicates the importance here that such social security nets include "fixed institutional arrangements" where unemployment benefits, disability grants, emergency famine relief measures, and emergency public employment for destitute people, are made available. Thus, to return to Louw's development determinants, these arrangements will help people to overcome anxiety (although perhaps not in totality) but it would in all likelihood contribute positively to their emotional, psychological, and physical development.

3.3.2.4 Freedoms and Unfreedoms

Given the poor economic position of billions of people around the globe, it is a legitimate claim that "the discipline of economics has tended to move away from focusing on the values of freedoms to that of utilities, incomes and wealth" (see Sen,

1999:27). The current and past economic statistics on, for example, inequality[63], certainly reinforce this point. Thus, it can be stated that, if economics has swung to one end of the development pendulum, then human freedoms have been catapulted to the other end, bringing with it poverty, deprivation and misery for most people. Therefore one could argue that bringing individual freedom back into the development debate – but more importantly into the lives of people – is imperative. By implication, this would mean the removal of unfreedoms that by its very nature deprive people from reaching their full potential while stripping them from their human dignity.

In this regard, individual freedom as perceived by Sen (1999:31) is essentially a social product that has a two-way relation between

1) Social arrangements aimed at expanding individual freedoms and

2) the use of individual freedoms not only to better the respective lives but also to make the social arrangements more relevant and effectual

This shows that, when people are given their freedom, and they freely utilize it in their contexts of specific social arrangements, they will contribute to positive social change where they are. This change will affect their own socio-economic position and also the environment or social arrangements in their own contexts, as experienced by millions of people when South Africa was transformed from a "capability depriving" state to a "capability empowering" state after the historic 1994 national elections.

3.3.2.5 Capability deprivation

According to Sen (1999:3) development is a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. While "narrower" views of development focus on the growth of gross national product (GNP), rise of personal incomes, industrialization or technological advancement, freedoms depend on other determinants, such as social and economic arrangements as well as political and civil rights. Therefore, in a discussion concerning development as freedom, it would be vital to view poverty as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of incomes (Sen, 1999:87). In such a view, it is similarly important to keep in mind that in a perspective of capability-poverty, there is no denial that low or no income is unquestionably one of the major causes of poverty, and also a primary reason for a

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[63] See World Development Report in World Bank website http://econ.worldbank.org

person's capability depravation. Subsequently, Sen (1999:87-8) highlights three key elements of the capability approach:

1. Poverty can be sensibly identified in terms of capability deprivation
2. There are influences (or determinants) on capability deprivation other than low income
3. The instrumental relation between low income and low capability is variable between people and communities

Sen (1999: 18), in his examination of development, views the freedoms of individuals as the basic building blocks to overcoming poverty. In this proposition, particular attention is paid to the growth or *"expansion" of the "capabilities" of persons to lead the kind of lives they value and have reason to value*. Sen (1999) proposes, therefore, that "these capabilities can be enhanced by public policy" but that public policy can also be "influenced by the effective use of participatory capabilities by the public. This two-way relationship is central to Sen's analytical perspective of "capabilities" and the researcher has chosen to illustrate[64] the concept as follows:
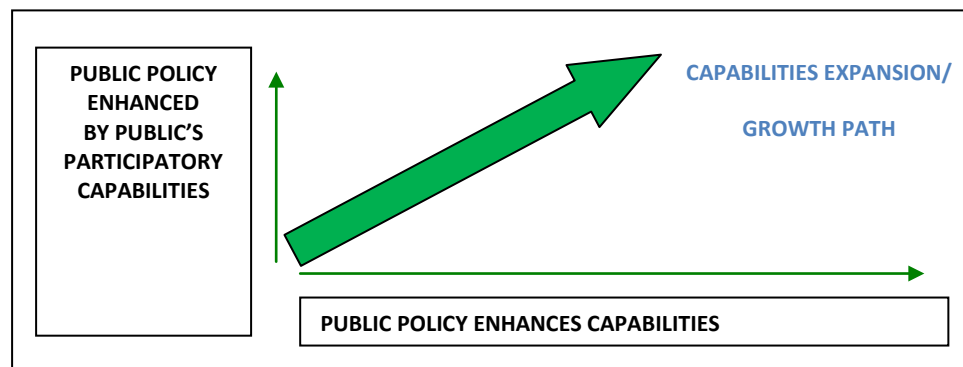
Figure 7 A Diagrammatic Representation of Sen's "Capabilities Expansion" Approach

According to Sen (1999: 36) "Development…is the process of expanding human freedoms, and the assessment of development has to be informed by this consideration" – quite the opposite, therefore, of what he calls capability deprivation. Thus, development should be seen as a process of continual growth of the real freedoms that people enjoy, in which the real issue points to "…the capability…to have a good life while alive (rather than a life of misery and unfreedom)" (1999: 13-14). Therefore, Sen (1999: 14-15) affirms that development has to be more concerned

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[64] This diagram illustrates Sen's "capabilities expansion" theory; referring specifically to the potential positive role that good public policy can have on ensuring the freedom and development of people.

with enhancing the lives that people lead and the freedoms they enjoy. Here he implies that expanding the freedoms that we have reason to value not only makes our lives richer and more unfettered, but also allows us to be fuller social beings, exercising our own options and interacting with – and influencing – the world in which we live.

The main problem at the root of poverty and hindering development, according to Sen (1999), are considered to be *unfreedoms*. These unfreedoms, in a very real sense, oppose the "capabilities" inherent in every human being. The varieties of unfreedoms that people across the world suffer from come in many forms. Famine is one such unfreedom that continues to deny millions of people the basic freedom to survive, while malnutrition also affects masses of vulnerable people.

As is the case in many communities in South Africa (especially in rural communities and informal settlements), many people do not have access to good health care, sanitation[65] and clean, potable water, resulting in unnecessary or premature mortality. Another key observation by Sen (1999: 15) illustrates the many forms of inequality that exists between women and men. This gender-based "unfreedom" afflicts the lives of millions of women on a global scale and often prematurely ends their lives. As Sen (1999) asserts, this "severely restricts the substantive freedoms that women enjoy".

Further deprivations of freedoms stem from the denial of political liberty and basic civil rights to people. Needless to say, the denial of such rights only serves to deprive people from exercising and maximizing their inherent capabilities. Across the globe, these depravations result in poverty. In essence, this is what Sen (1999: 87) calls "capabilities depravation" and he, not surprisingly, considers the unfreedom of

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[65] The so-called "Bucket-system" in many parts of South Africa is a point in case. Literally thousands of people in especially rural communities and informal settlements are still suffering the indignation of using communal toilets that have no running water and which are placed somewhere outside their living quarters. In an informal interview during June 2009 with inhabitants from the "Texas" informal settlement in Kensington, Cape Town, people expressed how inconvenient, dangerous and humiliating it was to use such "facilities". While the "bucket system" is now a thing of the past in Kensington's informal settlements, many "backyard-dwellers" (people who live in wood and iron shacks in the backyards of families or friends) have to make use of unhygienic makeshift toilets in their homes at night. Due to the inconvenience during rainy, winter nights, dangerous social conditions (especially for women and children) and the unpleasant hygienic conditions of these "bucket-system" toilets, people would instead use buckets and makeshift toilet pans inside their shack dwellings. This of course would create more unsavoury conditions for everyone living in the particular home where people need to relieve themselves. This could be construed as an unfreedom that impacts very negatively on human dignity.

poverty as "capability depravation".   Thus, whereas Sen sees development as freedom, he antithetically sees poverty as unfreedom – as capability deprivation.

Finally, Sen (1999: 17) concludes that freedom

> involves both the *processes* that allow freedom of actions and decisions, and   the   actual *opportunities* that people have, given their personal and social circumstances.

Hence, unfreedom can arise through inadequate processes (such as the encroachment of voting freedoms or other political or civil rights) or through insufficient *opportunities* that some people have for accomplishing what they minimally would like to achieve (including the absence of such fundamental opportunities as the capability to escape untimely mortality or involuntary starvation). While the *process* aspect and the opportunity aspect are both very distinct, each also has an importance of its own. Each of these aspects relate to "seeing development as freedom" and it is important to see freedom in a sufficiently broad way whereby "it is necessary to avoid restricting attention only to appropriate procedures… or, alternatively, only to adequate opportunities…" (Sen 1999). Therefore, both the procedures (processes) as well as adequate opportunities need to be present in a type of dynamism that will cause the elimination of unfreedom.

In order to understand Amartya Sen's perspective on development as freedom, it is also important to understand the correlation between *income poverty* and *capability poverty* (Sen, 1999: 92). In response to the reason for having an understanding of income poverty and capability poverty, Sen (1999: 90) affirms that the two sides "cannot but be related". He stresses that the enhancement of a person's capabilities "would tend, typically, to expand a person's ability to be more productive and earn a higher income…" Thus a lack of opportunity to expand one's capability, is therefore a measure of capability poverty. Logically then, it can be assumed that capability poverty can in turn lead to income poverty. At the same time, one could "also expect a connection going from capability improvement to greater earning power…" This connection is therefore critical for the removal of income poverty. Seen in this light, it becomes evident that capability improvement and enhancement in the realm of education and good health care, can, and should, increase a person's chances and ability significantly to earn an income and be free from income-poverty as well. As education and basic health care becomes more inclusive, the more likely it would

become that the poor "and even the potentially poor" would improve their own chances of escaping a life of brutal exposure to the poverty trap. Such social changes will undoubtedly minimize the vulnerability that poor people always face and, as Sen (1999: 260) asserts, "these capabilities are also associated with improving the productivity and employability of the people involved (expanding what is called their 'human capital'".

3.3.2.6 *Human capital and human capability (an asset-based development perspective)*

Keeping in mind that Amartya Sen considers capability deprivation as an unfreedom that curtails human development, the author cites an example that expresses his preference for the idea of "human capabilities" over the concept of "human capital" (1999: 293-4):

> If education makes a person more efficient in commodity production, then this is clearly an enhancement of human capital. This can add to the value of production in the economy and also to the income of the person who has been educated. But even with the same level of income, a person may benefit from education – in reading, communicating, arguing, in being able to choose in a more informed way…and so on. The benefits of education, thus, exceed its role as human capital in commodity production. The broader human-capability perspective would note – and value – these additional roles as well. The two perspectives are, thus, closely related but distinct.

At the 2007 Annual Conference of the Theological Society of South Africa, Professor Steve De Gruchy[66] asked the following question to a presenter[67]: "What is it that people *have* that can promote their and their communities development?" Alluding to the assets that are inherent people and communities, De Gruchy suggested that all people are abundantly "rich" with gifts, talents and human ability. Seen from a different angle, these gifts represent the human capital (even in the absence of economic capital) that is innate in all human beings. This human capital is enabling

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[66] Professor Steve De Gruchy was a well-known and influential South African theologian and was the head of the Department of Development and Religious Studies at the University of Kwazulu-Natal before his sudden passing away in 2009.

[67] The researcher was the presenter. The paper was: "Community Development as Prophetic Witness" and it was read at the Annual Meeting of the Theological Society of South Africa on '*Saints, martyrs and ancestors: Theological reflections on prophetic witness'*, John Wesley College, Pretoria, 20-22 June 2007

and can contribute to the overall goals of human freedoms, human development and, by implication, community development.

By enhancing the human freedoms that people ought to enjoy, one could argue that this enhancement could be an enhancement of human capital. For Sen (1999: 293), *human capital*, as well as *human capabilities*[68], are two inter-related concepts that are important matters in his understanding of *development as freedom*. But how are these themes connected? Sen (1999) believes that both ideas position humanity at the centre of the discussion in the same way that Bello (2002:117) emphasizes that "…the agenda of people-oriented sustainable development can succeed only if it is evolved democratically…" This position synergizes very strongly with the "people-centred" concepts of Burkey (1990) in his work, *People First* and Chambers (1992) in *Whose Reality Counts*. The essence of these concepts obviously point to the enhancement of human dignity. On the one hand, human capital is prone to focus on "the agency of human beings in augmenting production possibilities" while, on the other, human capability "focuses… on the ability …of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have" (Sen, 1999). Thus, both perspectives are involved with the *role* of humankind, especially with a focus on the actual abilities that people *are* able to achieve and acquire (Sen, 1999: 293). Another way of seeing the inherent worth and "capabilities" of people can be found in the asset-based approach [69] to development as proposed by Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) in *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*.

When compared to the assertion by Jeffrey Sachs in *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities For Our Time*, that *human capital* is a major type of capital that the poor need, Sen (1999: 292-293) enlarges on this idea of *human capital* by implying that his preferred perspective on this matter leads him to hold a *human capabilities* view. For

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[68] As part of this writer's practical research and community development initiatives in his local community of Factreton-Kensington (Cape Town), the ideas of *human capital* and *human capabilities* have taken on real, practical meaning. This community-based work was done through the NGO, Life Zone Ministries International.

[69] During the researcher's lecturing and mentoring responsibilities at Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Theology in 2009, the Asset-Based Approach to development helped undergraduate and post graduate students to understand that rather than just focusing on the "causes" of poverty, one should be more inclined to look for the assets that are innate in human beings and communities, and that can contribute positively and meaningfully to development.

Sen (1999), "human capability" is an expression of freedom. For this reason, human capabilities need to be enlarged, since it will also enhance the chances of people to lead the kind of lives that they aspire to live. Drawing from contemporary economic analysis to elaborate further on the topic of human capital visa vie human capabilities, Sen (1999) indicates that:

> the emphasis has…shifted from seeing capital accumulation in primarily physical terms to viewing it as a process in which the productive quality of human beings is integrally involved. For example, through education, learning, and skill formation, people can become much more productive over time, and this contributes greatly to the process of economic expansion.

3.3.2.7 Concluding remarks on development as freedom

Thus, in the light of the import of *development as freedom*, the question needs to be asked: What is the correlation between "human capital" and "human capability"? Sen (1999: 293) provides an insightful response:

> "Both seem to place humanity at the centre of attention, but do they have differences as well as some congruence? At the risk of some oversimplification, it can be said that the literature on human capital tends to concentrate on the agency of human beings in augmenting production possibilities. The perspective of human capability focuses…on the ability – the substantive freedom – of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have. The two perspectives cannot but be related, since both are concerned with the role of human beings, and in particular with the actual abilities that they achieve and acquire. But the yardstick of assessment concentrates on different achievements".

In addition, Sen (1999:293), in a similar way to Nussbaum, reasons that:

> a person has the ability to do (or be) certain things that she has reason to value. The reason for valuation can be *direct* (the functioning involved may directly enrich her life, such as being well-nourished or being healthy), or *indirect* (the functioning involved may contribute to further production, or command a price in the market). The human capital perspective can…be defined…to cover both types of valuation, but it is typically defined – by convention – primarily in terms of indirect value: human capital that can be employed as "capital" in *production* (in the way physical capital is). In this sense, the narrower view of the human capital approach fits into the more inclusive perspective of human capability, which can cover both direct and indirect consequences of human abilities.

Thus Sen shows here that human capability is worthless without the corresponding freedom that it needs to be associated to for its development. Where unfreedoms

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interfere with human capability there is a lack of human development, and by implication, human dignity. From this researcher's perspective therefore, unfreedoms can be regarded as sinful acts and even perhaps as sin in itself, because these unfreedoms are often acts that violate another person's humanity. In *Development as Freedom* Amartya Sen explains how in a world of unprecedented increase in global affluence millions of people living in most parts of the world are still *unfree*. Even if they are not exactly slaves, they are denied elementary freedoms and remain captive in one way or another by economic poverty, social deprivation, political tyranny or cultural oppression. The main purpose of development is to extend freedom to the unfree citizens all across the globe. Sen credibly argues that freedom is both the ultimate goal of social and economic arrangements as well as the most efficient means of realizing general welfare. Conversely then, it could be argued that unfreedoms is both the goal of human slavery and human exploitation, as well as the most efficient means to dehumanize the poor. From this perspective, therefore, it could be argued that unfreedoms could be perceived as sin. Social institutions like markets, political parties, legislatures, the judiciary, and the media should play critical roles in contributing to development by promoting individual freedom thus opposing any form of unfreedoms that would deprive people from exercising their full set of capability skills. Social institutions are in turn sustained by social values. Values, institutions, development, and freedom are all closely connected but centralizes the place of the individual by incorporating individual freedom as a social obligation into his analysis to address the social basis of individual well-being and freedom. This work outlines the need for an integrated analysis of economic, social and political activities, involving a variety of institutions and many interactive agencies. It concentrates particularly on the *roles* and interconnections between certain crucial instrumental freedoms, including economic opportunities, political freedoms, social facilities, transparency guarantees, and protective security.

Reflecting on the modern views of development where the focus is primary on economic development, Sen (1999: 294) states that the capability perspective involves a more integrated approach to economic and social development. Undoubtedly, such a perspective can only but benefit the most vulnerable people in the world, and it would indeed be a very welcome return to the origin of economics when "…economics was significantly motivated by the need to study the assessment of, and causal influences

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on, the opportunities that people have for good living" (Sen, 1999: 24). It would be a return to the ways of looking after the best interests of people and the environment rather than at profits exclusively.

3.4   THE INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE: FOR OR AGAINST GLOBALIZATION?

There is no doubt that communities across South Africa and also in many villages across the world are in need of holistic development. Muller in Bosch (1991: 399) asserts, "…never before in history has people's social distress been as extensive as it is in the twentieth century." People all over the world are desperate for a better life in which they too, could contribute to the well being of their neighbour (Sen, 1999: 15). Important questions therefore arise:

- How can economic globalization genuinely help the world's poor people to obtain a better life?
- What effect does economic globalization have on people and countries?
- How can we implement a more "holistic development" development approach for the sake of all of humanity but more especially for the socially excluded, the marginalized and impoverished members of our society?

In the later debate on current development discourse, it will become evident that these discussions will underscore the potential feasibility and relevance for a "development of holism", as Sen (whom we have noticed, has promoted a type of welfare economic development plan) has already alluded to above. This part of the researcher's conceptual thesis will therefore focus on some of the thoughts of a select few authorities that were key sources for presenters and keynote speakers at the 2007 South Africa-Netherlands Partnership for Alternative Development (SANPAD) Conference held in Durban.

3.4.1 The International (Global) Debate: Many Sides of Development

In the very divergent, complex world of *development*, *poverty* and *economic globalization*, there are some major thinkers who are addressing critical issues in this debate, from two different perspectives. Based on significant research findings at the 2007 (SANPAD) conference on poverty in Durban, South Africa, it became evident that there were two distinct sides of *development thinkers* in this line-up of

internationally renowned speakers. Development specialists such as Jeffrey Sachs, Patrick Bond[70], Thandika Mkandiweri Francis Wilson, Walden Bello[71] and a whole host of prominent speakers from India, Brazil and Africa were representing, for the most part, one of the following perspectives: 1) those academics who promoted the *primacy of economic development* and *economic globalization*, or 2) those who preferred the *prioritizing of human development* and positioning themselves in what is known the *anti-globalization forum*. In addition to these above-mentioned thinkers (development practitioners), there are also other authoritative academics and economists who provide immense amounts of vital, human-uplifting information in the development discourse. People such as Joseph Stiglitz (Nobel Prize-winning economist) are making major contributions to help us to understand the importance, effects and challenges associated with economic globalization. Likewise, Jeffrey Sachs, author of the book, *The end of poverty: economic possibilities for our time*, proposes valuable, insightful information in the ongoing development-globalization debate.

3.4.2 Jeffrey Sachs on Economic Development and Poverty

As alluded to earlier, the 2007 SANPAD *poverty eradication* conference became effectively "divided" between a pro-economic globalization bloc that strongly supported the economic development theory, and an anti-economic globalization bloc that vehemently stood against everything that economic globalization had to offer. However, a small percentage of speakers, including Jeffrey Sachs, took the middle ground (or the *third way*) and promoted the idea that *both* economic development (fuelled by economic globalization) *and* human development (fuelled by the basic human rights demand) were necessary for uprooting poverty. This latter stance of true reverence and respect for human life is substantiated by Sachs (2005: 2) and confirms his conviction that both economic and human development are essential to facilitate the "end of poverty". In spite of the great challenges (such as extreme poverty and pandemic disease) facing global society, Sachs (2005: 211) believes that "…the world, complicated and divided as it is, can come together to take on great challenges". Correctly understood then, it would appear as if Sachs strongly believes in unity of purpose and opposes divisions that will result in the perpetuation of the

poverty problem. As one of the most preeminent economists of the twenty-first century, Sachs here alludes to non-economic values (such as promoting trust and human dignity) that will help to steer the global poor out of the wicked poverty trap. Two of Sachs's most important contributions to create a future free from extreme poverty and corporate corruption are his roles in overseeing the United Nations' (UN) Millennium Declaration that incorporates the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and also the United Nation's Global Compact (Sachs: 2005: 210). The following table[72] gives a brief synopsis of the eight MDGs[73]:

Table 7 United Nations' Millennium Development Goals

	MDG	STATISTICS: 2006
1	ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER	An estimated 824 million people suffer from chronic hunger in the developing world – a state when they lack the required food to meet their daily needs.
2	ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION	682 million children worldwide are enrolled in primary school. But there are still around 77 million children who are missing out on a primary education
3	GENDER EQUALITY & EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN	In 2006, 13 women were heads of state or government compared to 9 in 2000 and 12 in 1995. A record number of women took up top positions in 2006 – in Chile, Jamaica, Liberia, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland.
4	REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY	Under-five mortality rates dropped from 185 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 166 per 1,000 in 2006.
5	IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH	Since 1990, every region has made progress in ensuring that women receive antenatal care at least once during their pregnancy. Even in sub-Saharan Africa, where the least progress has occurred, more than two thirds of women receive antenatal care at least one time during pregnancy.
6	COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA & OTHER DISEASES	As of December 2006, an estimated 2 million people were receiving antiretroviral therapy in developing regions. This represents 28 percent of the estimated 7.1 million people in need.
7	ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL STABILITY	The proportion of protected areas globally has steadily increased, and a total of about 20 million square kilometres of land and sea were under protection by 2006.
8	DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT	The world's poorest countries pay over $100 million every day to the rich world.

One reason for understanding the MDG's (that were initiated in 2000 and finally adopted by all 191 UN member states in 2002) as a key systematic intervention is that

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[72] This table and graphics are adapted from the MDG website.
[73] Appendix 1

these eight goals can begin a much-needed process of restoring the human dignity of the world's poor. The main focus of this summit was pledge that that poverty will be halved by 2015, whilst also accepting the multi-layered dimensions of poverty such as inadequate health, little or no access to clean water, and inadequate income (Stiglitz, 2006: 14).

To this end, Sachs (2005: 24-5) strongly believes that "the end of extreme poverty is at hand - within our generation - but only if we grasp the historic opportunity in front of us". In order to eradicate extreme poverty then, Sachs (2005) focuses on two main objectives:

1) To end the plight of one sixth of the world's population living in extreme poverty and who endure a daily struggle to survive. These are the part of humanity that do not, but should, "…enjoy basic standards of nutrition, health, water and sanitation, shelter, and other minimum needs for survival, well-being, and participation in society" (Sachs, 2005: 24)

2) To make certain "…that all of the world's poor, including those in moderate poverty, have a chance to climb the ladder of development".

With special reference to Africa, Sachs (2005: 208) believes that Africa's adverse geography (such as its landlockedness) and its extreme poverty, "…creates the worst poverty trap in the world". However, these problems are not altogether hopeless but are "…solvable with practical and proven technologies" and with "…interventions that "…need to be applied systematically, diligently, and jointly, since they strongly reinforce one another". As a chief contributor to the development discourse, Sachs is regarded as the chief architect of the MDG's, and played an integral part in the birth of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria. While one could question Sachs's biases towards Africans (since he fails to mention that Africans need to find solutions for African problems), it is nevertheless important to consider the importance of the MDG's as one of the key systematic interventions in the fight against poverty and so-called "under-development".

Thus, the MDG's as a mechanism for these objectives to be reached, will also serve as a guiding principle for the "…global community…to ensure that the international rules of the game in economic management do not advertently or inadvertently set

snares along the lower rungs of the ladder in the form of inadequate development assistance, protectionist trade barriers, destabilizing global financial practices…that prevent the low-income world from climbing up the rungs of development" (Sachs, 2005: 24-5). Understanding Amartya Sen (1999) correctly, these *snares* could also be referred to as *unfreedoms* – a perspective that will be dealt with in greater detail later in this dissertation.

If the universal commitment to these MDG's is adhered to, then there is certain to be a better, more humane future for all of humanity. In an attempt to answer the critical question: "What does it take to end poverty?" Sachs (2005: 244-245) highlights six major kinds of capital that the poor lack but actually need:

1. Human capital: health, nutrition, and skills needed for each person to be economically productive

2. Business capital: the machinery, facilities, motorized transport used in agriculture, industry, and services

3. Infrastructure: roads, power, water and sanitation, airports and seaports, and telecommunications systems, that are critical inputs into business productivity

4. Natural capital: arable land, healthy soils, biodiversity, and well-functioning ecosystems that provide the environmental services needed by human society

5. Public institutional capital: the commercial law, judicial systems, government services and policing that underpin the peaceful and prosperous division of labour

6. Knowledge capital: the scientific and technological know-how that raises productivity in business output and the promotion of physical and natural capital

In an interesting twist to Sachs' traditional interpretation of *infrastructure*, Castells in Muller (et.al) (2001:155) includes *people* as part of his own definition of infrastructure, particularly in underdeveloped, impoverished countries. For Castells, "human resources are the essential infrastructure, without which technology means nothing. The new economy is a people-based economy". This interpretation fits in

well with that of Sen's approach to expanding human capabilities and human freedoms.

Importantly though, Sachs (2005: 255-7) stresses that these *capital* strategies ideally ought to work in synchronization with one another. He states that "each one of the six identified types of capital is needed for an effective, well-functioning economy" so that the world's poor can "…escape the poverty trap", and he also insists that the same approach is needed in addressing the MDG's, such as fighting hunger, disease, lack of education and environmental degradation. Sachs (2005: 256) illustrates this synchronization of capital by applying the following example to *child survival*:

1. **Business capital**. Higher household incomes on the farm and in the cities allow households to invest in safer shelter…piped water, modern cooking fuels, access to doctors, improved diets, etc.

2. **Human capital**. Key human capital investments include nutrition…health care, family planning…literacy, and public health awareness.

3. **Infrastructure**. This includes safe drinking water and sanitation, power supply for safer cooking, emergency transport to clinics, and information and communications technology to underpin routine and emergency health services.

4. **Natural capital**. Investment in natural capital includes protection against natural hazards such as El Nino-induced droughts…conservation of ecosystems…

5. **Knowledge capital**. Investments here are for improved organizational procedures for fighting epidemic diseases, development of new drugs and immunizations…

6. **Public institutional capital**. These investments provide the operation and extension of public health services, nutrition programs, and community participation schemes involving public health.

In theory, all of Sachs' assertions sound very plausible and noble. In practice though, there could be serious limitations with this view, especially in the area of implementation of capital. For example, Stiglitz (2006: 54) believes that the challenges of implementation are critical. For him "successful development requires not just a vision and strategy; ideas have to be converted into projects and policies".

When one analyses Sachs' view in the light of the challenge of implementation, then it is therefore not hard to understand that a lack of implementation of projects (such as the MDGs) and policies (especially women's rights) underline the harsh reality of some of the root causes of poverty.

With reference to *natural capital*, the major transnational corporations (TNCs) such as oil giant British Petroleum (BP), continue to indiscriminately destroy vast areas of natural habitat in so-called "developing countries" such as Nigeria. The globally televised largest ever oil leak that happened in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 is further proof of the negligence of people in managing natural capital efficiently. The world's "largest economy" and also its "largest polluter" (emitting 25 percent of all greenhouse gases), the United States of America (USA), has since 1997, still not signed the Kyoto Protocol which was aimed at "…coming up with a treaty to cut greenhouse gas emissions worldwide" (Stiglitz, 2006: 169-174). To emphasize the scope of the problem, Stiglitz (2006: 171) points out:

> "With the United States out of the picture…progress in reducing greenhouse gases will be severely limited…Wyoming, the least populous state, with only 495 700 people, emits more carbon dioxide than seventy-four developing countries with a combined population of nearly 396 million. The carbon dioxide emissions of Texas, with a population of 22 million, exceed the combined emissions of 120 developing countries with an aggregate population of over 1.1 billion people".

3.4.3 Joseph Stiglitz on Globalization and Development

In a crucial statement in his important book, *Making Globalization Work: The Next Steps to Global Justice*, Stiglitz (2006: 118) declares that "one of the most important issues facing the entire world today is the issue of poverty in the Third World. Developing countries need more resources…more assistance…and more opportunity". Simultaneously, recognizing the harsh reality of globalization, and the reality of the poor in Bangalore (India), Stiglitz (2006: 25-26) demonstrates the increasing divide between rich and poor. He states as follows:

> Any visitor to Bangalore can feel the rising prosperity. But the enthusiasm for this new world is not universally shared. In the 2004 national election, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ran on a platform of "India shining" – and on the lives of some 250 million people India was shining, as their standard of living had improved immensely over the previous two decades. But just ten miles outside Bangalore, and even in parts of the city, poverty can be seen

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everywhere; for the other 800 million people of India, the economy has not shone brightly at all. About 80 percent of the world's population lives in developing countries, marked by low incomes and high poverty, high unemployment and low education. For those countries, globalization presents both unprecedented risks and opportunities. Making globalization work in ways that enrich the whole world requires making it work for the people in those countries.

Thus, according to Stiglitz (2006: 26), *development is a process that involves every aspect of society, engaging the efforts of everyone: markets, governments, NGOs, cooperatives, not for profit institutions* (italics mine). He implies here that development *can* work if there is a genuine commitment by all sectors of society to work together in the process of poverty eradication and bridging the rich-poor divide meaningfully – where economic globalization plays a crucial role. For Stiglitz (2006: 26-27), the idea of economic globalization is "mixed with debates about economic theory and values".

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, two major schools of economic thoughts are competing with each other:

1. Those who push free market ideology and
2. Those who see an important role for both government and the private sector.

While there may be some areas where these positions overlap, there is still a huge gap between the different perspectives. For instance, Stiglitz (2006) suggests that the prevailing policies of the Washington Consensus[74] strategy for development focus on "…minimizing the role of government, emphasizing privatization (selling of government enterprises to the private sector), trade and capital market liberalization (eliminating trade barriers and impediments to the free flow of capital), and deregulation (eliminating regulations on the conduct of business)". On the contrary, Stiglitz (2006: 27) holds the alternative view that governments *should* have a more active role in both promoting development *and* protecting the poor – a case of "both-and" as opposed to "either-or". He believes that "while markets are at the centre of any successful economy, government has to create a climate that allows business to

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[74] The Washington Consensus represented a list of ten specific economic policy prescriptions imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which was backed by the USA. According to Hoogvelt (1997:229) this was the "neoliberal agenda that was imposed by the joint IMF stabilization programmes and the World Bank structural adjustment programmes, and which was backed by the US (dubbed 'the Washington Consensus')…

thrive and create jobs". Stiglitz (2006) emphasizes that it is imperative for governments to build "physical and institutional infrastructure" (for e.g. a sound banking system and securities markets in which investors can have assurance that they are not being cheated). Governments should also ensure that they have strong competition policies in place in order to combat high prices for vital areas such as telecommunications that will adversely affect development (Stiglitz, 2006: 28).

In Stiglitz's alternative development view, which is surprising given his background as a leading economic advisor, he proposes that more emphasis be put on employment, social justice, and non-materialistic values (such as human self-worth, democracy, etc.). Stiglitz (2006: 161-186) also places special emphasis on the critical need for the preservation of the environment. This is in stark contrast to the views held by those who promote a minimalist role of government (2006). In addition, Stiglitz (2006) points out that there are certain areas where "markets, by themselves, do not work well". In this instance, pollution and environmental degradation highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to development – thus challenging the assertion that markets need to be self-regulatory and unaccountable. Furthermore, Stiglitz (2006:28) claims that "what separates developed from less developed countries is not just a gap in resources but a gap in knowledge, which is why investments in education and technology – largely from government – are so important".

Stiglitz's investigation has not only cast doubt on the validity of general claims about market efficiency but also on some of the fundamental beliefs underlying globalization, such as the notion that free trade is necessarily welfare enhancing ((2006: x). According to Stiglitz (2006: 99-100) trade liberalization has not lived up to its promise but it has the potential to benefit the all. For Stiglitz "…trade is not a zero-sum game, in which those who win do so at the cost of others; it is, or least can be, a positive-sum game, in which everyone can be a winner".

However, for this to be realized, two long-standing premises of trade liberalization need to be rejected: first, "…that trade liberalization automatically leads to more trade and growth, and second, that growth will automatically 'trickle down' to benefit all". Therefore Stiglitz (2006: 100) suggests that neither is consistent with economic theory

or historical experience. As an important condition, Stiglitz (2006) proposes that if there is to be support for trade globalization in the developed world, then the decision-makers must ensure "…that the benefits and costs are more evenly shared".

Of critical importance for Stiglitz (2006) though is the welfare of people "…whose livelihood is being threatened" by unemployment or at risk of losing their jobs. In this regard he calls for "better adjustment assistance, stronger safety nets, and better macro-economic management" where policies will stimulate wage increases especially for those at the bottom rung of the income ladder. In his perspective of unemployment, Stiglitz (2006: 280) views the matter as "…not just as waste of resources; it also undermines the individuals sense of self-worth, and it has a host of undesirable social consequences – including violence". This idea of self-worth and human dignity will be given more attention in Chapter Six of this dissertation.

In calling for a "fairer globalization" Stiglitz (2006: 100-101) points out that motivation for participating in development by those in the developed world is two-fold: 1) because of it being a moral issue and 2) because it is a matter of self-interest, since, what happens in one part of the world (developing countries) could and will affect what happens in another part of the globe (developed countries). In this regard Stiglitz shows that "…the threats of disorder from the disillusioned facing despair will increase; without growth, the flood of immigration will be difficult to stem; with prosperity, the developing countries will provide a robust market for the goods and services of the advanced industrial countries". With this, Stiglitz (2006: 101) is hopeful that the world will "…turn to the task of creating a fairer, pro-development trade regime".

In contrast to this hope of a better globalization, Stiglitz (2006: xi) highlights the reality of hopelessness that the current process of globalization brings with it. In spite of the promise of a better life and the presence of globalization, there are still countries where poverty is increasing rather than decreasing. The contradiction of globalization lies in the fact that, in a world of richness and plenty, so many human beings continue to live in abject poverty. This therefore begs the question: *why does poverty still exist in an era of unprecedented wealth?*

For Stiglitz (2006) the answer to this complex situation is not simple either. For him, there are a multitude of changes to be made in order to make globalization work for all: in policies, in economic institutions, in the rules of the game (viz. fairer trade) and also in the mindsets of decision-makers. For instance, whereas the corporation would usually think about the shareholders above all else, Stiglitz (2006: 190) makes a moral declaration that the corporation should *only* think about the shareholders.

By proposing a more humane approach to markets and globalization, Stiglitz (2006: 190) asserts:

> Modern economics has shown…that social welfare is not maximized if corporations single-mindedly maximize profits. For the economy to achieve efficiency, corporations must take into account the impact of their actions on their employees, on the environment, and on the communities in which they operate.

Given some of the root causes of poverty (highlighted above) that have accompanied economic globalization, Stiglitz (2006: 285-287) proposes that, to make globalization work for all, some of the following important central ingredients need to be implemented by rich, developed countries:

- A commitment by developed countries to a fairer trade regime, one that would actually promote real, meaningful development
- Recognizing the importance of developing countries' access to knowledge, the necessity of the availability of lifesaving medicines at affordable prices, and the rights of developing countries to have their traditional rights protected
- An agreement by the developed countries to pay compensation to developing countries for their environmental services, both in conservation of biodiversity and contribution to global warming through carbon sequestration
- A recognition that global warming poses a genuine threat to our planet
- A commitment by developed countries to pay developing countries fairly for their natural resources and to extract them in ways that do not leave behind a legacy of environmental degradation
- An agreement by the major financial institutions such as the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and developed nations to forgive the debt owed by developing nations. Stiglitz points out that "...too many countries' aspirations of development are being thwarted by the huge amounts they spend on servicing their debt – so large, in fact that…net flows of money

in some recent years have been going from developing countries to the developed

- Reforms of the global financial architecture that would reduce its instability… and shift more of the burden of the risk to the developed countries, which are much better positioned to bear these risks

- A host of institutional (legal) reforms to ensure accountability by the multinational corporations (especially with regard to bankruptcy and environmental degradation

Due consideration for the above reforms will no doubt add to the value of life for the entire created order on our planet. A unified, comprehensive approach to overcoming global poverty and affirming human self-worth is what is essentially needed. Stilgitz (2006: 26) indicates this by asserting that "…development is a process that involves every aspect of society, engaging the efforts of everyone: markets, governments, NGOs, cooperatives, not for profit institutions (italics mine)". While not being one-sided, Stiglitz (2006: 287) reinforces the importance of a *mutual development* approach:

> For globalization to work…developing countries must do their part. The international community can help create an environment in which development is possible; it can help create resources and opportunity. But in the end, responsibility for successful, sustainable development-with the fruits of that development widely shared-will have to rest on the shoulders of the developing countries themselves. Not all will succeed; but I believe strongly that with the global social contract…far more will succeed than in the past.

Further important characteristics of a mutual development approach, are alluded to by Stiglitz (2006: 48-51) when he discusses his understanding of a *comprehensive approach* to development:

1. Recognizing the dangers of past, flawed development policy results such as 1) schools without jobs would not lead to development and 2) trade liberalization without roads and ports will not lead to more trade

2. Providing more resources and strengthening markets are still important elements in successful development because markets can help allocate resources to where the needs are. This accentuates the fact that countries cannot grow without capital

3. Strengthening markets and strengthening governments, while at the same time discerning what the right mix of market and government might be at a particular point in time

4. What matters is not the size of government but what government does – it is their responsibility to maintain full employment and actively promote growth while remaining concerned about inequality and social stability so that all can share in the fruits of development

5. People are at the core of development. Essentially, development is about transforming people's lives and not just about transforming economies. Stiglitz (2006: 50) indicates that "policies for education or employment need to be looked at through this double-lens: how they promote growth and how they affect individuals directly". People provide human capita and also intellectual capital, two necessary components for generating economic capital. Here education at all levels play an important role in enhancing the chances of people to overcome the poverty trap, as illustrated by Amartya Sen

6. The importance of markets, government, and individuals are three pillars of successful development strategy (Stiglitz, 2006: 51). A fourth important pillar is communities, people working together and who are often supported by government and NGOs(figure 8)[75]

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[75] As with other diagrams in this thesis, the researcher has designed an illustration of Stiglitz's four pillars of successful development strategy. This can assist during lectures and can be even further adapted during the learning process of students.

Pillars of Successful Development Strategy

Given the discussion on the root causes of poverty, it is interesting to note that Stiglitz's idea includes the key sectors of society who are able to make development work. The fact that Stiglitz understands the value of the individual and the importance of community in development, demonstrates that it is economic development that is dependent on people and not just the other way around. Each of these pillars in Stiglitz's development model is mutually reinforcing, interdependent and has the goal of placing people at the core of development, thus affirming their human dignity. Therefore, the fragmentation or removal of any one of these strategic development pillars would result in detrimental consequences in humanity's fight against poverty. Given all that has been said, the urgency to make globalization work for the poor cannot be summed up more profoundly, as Stiglitz (2006: 292) claims,

> For much of the world, globalization as it has been managed seems like a pact with the devil. A few people in the country become wealthier; GDP statistics, for what they are worth, look better, but ways of life and basic values are threatened. For some parts of the world, the gains are even more tenuous, the costs more palpable. Closer integration into the global economy has brought greater volatility and insecurity, and more inequality. It has even threatened fundamental values.
>
> This is not how it has to be. We can make globalization work, not just for the rich and powerful but also for all people, including those in the poorest countries. The task will be long and arduous. We have already waited far too long. The time to begin is now.

3.4.4 Thandika Mkandaweri, Walden Bello and Gilbert Rist: The Anti-Globalization Debate, Maladjusted Economies and Alternatives to Economic Globalization

In *Development as Freedom* Sen (1999) concedes to the notion that the anti-globalists have good reason for rejecting the contemporary capitalist economic model. One such opponent, Gilbert Rist (2008:261) expresses his disapproval of the current economic system:

> Beyond 'development' and the associated commodification of nature and social relations, it now seems to me that the whole of economic 'science' must be called into question. The obsession with economic growth that today shapes all policies, in both North and South, is closely bound up with a totally unrealistic vision of the world and should be not only denounced but fought against.

Economic 'science' for Rist (2008) is "no more than a battle of opinions, which fluctuates according to the conjuncture in ways that enable the strongest to impose their will". With reference to the policies and powers of the USA, WB, WTO and IMF in today's economic landscape, Rist's assumptions hold true in that these same institutions still wield massive authority over many nations. Besides wielding immense economic and financial power, these controlling financial giants lack "the means to factor in our dependence on finite resources" such as oil.

In the current global development discourse, Rist (2008:262) suggests that "ultimately, the belief in 'development' rests upon the credence given to economics. Neither can be shaken off unless the other is shaken off too". Here, Rist's argument points to the notion that the current development debate is inextricably linked to the current growth-focused economic globalization era as opposed to Sen's preference of a capabilities approach. Understandably therefore, Rist (2008) proposes that this 'urgent matter' needs to be seriously altered because "the obsession with growth to which economic discourse is reduced…can lead only to collective disaster, by increasing inequalities and destroying ecosystems" although currently, "…disaster does not seem credible – that is the major obstacle". Thus, according to Rist (2008:262-3), the dilemma for humanity is embedded in the knowledge that people have and the unbelieving attitude (perhaps a denial) of what is known:

> we know, but we don't believe in what we know…Despite all our knowledge about the parlous state of much of humanity and the irreversible damage to the environment, despite the

ever more precise evidence that the mode of 'development' is to blame, people continue to believe in the collective salvation promised by the economists.

It is at this point that Rist (2008:263) directs the reader to the fact that *reality* is more important than hoping for *what could be*. At the same time, one can also appreciate the truth that the earth's resources belong to everyone and that it should not be controlled and manipulated by a few people, especially when it is at the expense of many other people and the well being of the environment. The notion that current social, economic and environmental problems are often the result of a failing global economic system is a distinct message in Rist's observation, in which he also calls for a conversion into people's thoughts about the real merits of the current global growth-based economic model:

> Conversion…does not consist in exchanging one belief for another; it consists in preferring knowledge to belief, in looking reality in the face rather than clinging to illusions, in understanding the world as it is instead of imagining it as we would like it to be. That was the approach we proposed for the deconstruction of development. Now the same has to be done with economic 'science'. Change is possible, even if infinite growth is not. Social justice and a general improvement in living conditions do not require even higher levels of resource consumption. Rather, those in possession of the resources should be enabled to draw on them with moderation, even to share them with others[76] - since they belong to everyone and therefore no one – while taking into account their programmed disappearance. This requires getting away from the economic obscurantism for which more is necessarily *better*.

This failing global economic system (as evidenced by the 2008 global financial crisis) has shown that economic growth…has indeed occurred – but, far from bringing the 'good life', it has only increased inequalities and marginalization (Rist, 2008:219). Bello (1994:2) supports Rist's assertion on a declining world economic system when he points out that, instead of an improvement in the economic wealth of nations,

> by the beginning of the 1990's, per capita income in Africa had plunged to the level it had held at the time of political independence in the 1960's. In Latin America, per capita income was down to where it had been in the late 1970's. Indeed, for the peoples of the South, the defining features of the last two decades of the twentieth century have been the rollback of their living standards, the virtual loss of their economic sovereignty, and the increased hollowness of their political independence – all of which add up to…'recolonization.

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[76] The writer will discuss "the other" in a later chapter where he will engage the idea from a mainly ethical and theological perspective.

These impoverishing experiences of the South were compounded by what was known as the structural adjustment programme [77] (SAP) rigidly implemented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), and where poor countries were forced to align or "structurally adjust" their economic policies to that of the powerful financial institutions from 1980-1991. This "detestable practice" (Rist, 2008:194) was the form of *recolonization* or *neocolonialism* alluded to by Bello, and helps to show why development per se has not yet delivered the promise of a better life for all of the global citizens. When the WB declared the SAP a success in 24 of 70 countries engaged in the practice in 1993, Bello (1994:32-3), on the contrary, points out data that, in fact, shows that countries that were forced to adopt these adjustment programmes had:

1. a slower capital accumulation process (20 countries)
2. a stagnated or declining share of manufacturing in GDP (18 countries)
3. a decline in export volume (13 countries) and negligible balance of payments for 11 countries that had increases in export volumes

Borrowing from Frances Stewart, Bello (1994) highlights the negative results of the SAPs that Mkandaweri also opposes:

> The stabilization and adjustment policies advocated by the IMF and the World Bank and widely adopted in Africa have not succeeded in restoring growth in most countries; indeed they have often been accompanied by continued economic deterioration. Moreover…the policies are pushing African economies away from a desirable long-term structure especially because they are dampening comparative advantage in non-traditional agriculture and industry.

When considering the core measures applied by the IMF and World Bank in its SAPs across the so-called Third World nations, it is not difficult to understand why most of these countries have spiraled downward economically. The unethical nature of these measures (tightening the money supply, raising interest rates, reduction of government spending and applying austerity measures such as the cutting of people's wages) as referenced by Bello (1994:36), are sure signs of how poverty could actually have increased during that period – thus defeating any idea of what "real" development should be about. Reinforced by Bello (1994:109), these measures resulted in "…the miseries imposed by IMF-World Bank structural adjustment

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[77] Bello and Mkandaweri give special attention to these failed "development" attempts (albeit very damaging to nations of the South who were especially heavily indebted to the IMF and World Bank)

programs". Bello (2002:5) reiterates that "…these programmes…had exacerbated stagnation, widened inequalities and deepened poverty" – a sure indictment to the IMF and World Bank.

Furthermore, these measures were unethical because, as was the case with Mexico in the 1980's, unemployment rose significantly, bankruptcies across the industrial sector intensified, driving half the population below the poverty line of people who earned less than $1 per day, and worsened an already very unequal distribution of income, trapping the country in "a vicious cycle of low consumption, low investment, and low output" (Bello, 1994:40). Further exacerbating the plight of a structurally-adjusted Mexican economy was the fact that 47 per cent of the country's Gross National Product (GNP) was controlled by just 25 holding companies – so much power in so few hands.

For Mkandaweri (2005:1), this type of situation speaks of a *maladjusted economy*, thus emphasizing the damaging nature offered by these SAPs, "a blight on the Third World", during which time "[t]he number of people globally living in poverty – that is, on less than a dollar a day – increased from 1.1 billion in 1985 to 1.2 billion in 1998, and was expected to reach 1.3 billion by 2000 (Bello (2002:68-9). Citing a World Bank report, Bello (2002:69) again points out the failure of SAPs when he shows that "…the absolute number of people living in poverty rose in the 1990's in Eastern Europe, South Asia, Latin America…the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa – all areas that came under the sway of structural adjustment programmes".

Therefore it is evident that the assessment by Mkandaweri (2005) that "[t]he policies of adjustment pursued in the 1980s and 1990s that promised African countries not only 'accelerated development' but also a means to end Africa's marginalization from the process of globalization…", shows that these countries are still "economic victims" because of the legacy of the SAP's. For Mkandaweri (2005:2) the key question is, therefore, not *whether* Africa (and also other Third World countries) is being globalized but rather, under *what conditions is the process of globalization taking place?*

In attempting to answer Mkandawire's question about the conditions that exist in Africa's globalization process, and without venturing very far, one only needs to look at the undemocratic selection of heads of the IMF and WB. Bello (2002:84) explains:

> When it comes to the issue of democratizing the IMF and the World Bank, there is no longer any talk about doing away with the feudal practices of always having an American head the Bank and a European to lead the Fund. In terms of giving more voting power to developing countries, many proposals have been made…Perhaps the most prominent of these has been associated with Joseph Stiglitz, the former chief economist. Stiglitz's not unreasonable proposal is that 'pending a re-examination of the allocation of voting, the direct voice of the borrowing countries in the executive boards of the IFI's be increased, e.g. by establishing two additional seats with half votes, or repackaging constituencies'.

Needless to say, such a "…drive for reform at the Bank had been stymied (and) was revealed dramatically by the easing out of two highly regarded economists: Joseph Stiglitz…and Ravi Kanbur, head of the World Development Task Force…" (Bello, 2002:83)

In response to Mkandawire's strategic question as to *what* the conditions are in which globalization is taking place, one can therefore make a few assumptions based on maladjusted economies that have been "victims" of the SAPs:

1. The undemocratic nature of the IMF and WB indicate that economic considerations are more important than, say, human rights considerations in the fight against poverty

2. The know-it-all, have-all-the-answers signal given by these institutions reflect an arrogance that dehumanizes the majority of the world's population

3. Nearly all of the Third World countries that were forced into the SAPs in the 1980's are no better off today than when they were compelled to make IMF-induced economic policy changes to their economies – in fact, some such as Zambia, are economically worse-off today than in 1980

4. economic globalization, in its current form and also based on the one-sided policy-making history by the IMF and WB, is inappropriate for a lasting, long-term global development process

5. With regard to these unreasonable, "restrictive IMF conditionalities" (Bello, 2002:81) it would appear that Third World countries would always remain marginalized in the global economy because of this

6. Unemployment, as well as under-employment and poverty have and will continue to rise unless governments find alternatives to SAPs or respond to the damage caused by it

7. Based upon this, it is not impossible that more and more people across the globe, in wanting to express their views about their unsatisfactory economic situation, will resort to violence as they become increasingly affected by current global economic trends

8. All of these assumptions therefore beg the important question: *How has economic globalization (by implication the IMF, WB, WTO and the TNCs) served the interests of humanity?*

For Bello (2002:113) "deglobalization is not about withdrawing from the international econom**y**. Rather, it is about reorienting economies from the emphasis on production for export to production for the local market" and his position implies that it should have the following important focal points:

- Drawing most of a country's financial resources for development from within rather than becoming dependent on foreign investment and foreign financial markets;

- Carrying out…measures of income redistribution and land redistribution to create a vibrant internal market that would be the anchor of the economy and create the financial resources for investment;

- De-emphasizing growth and maximizing equity in order radically to reduce environmental disequilibrium;

- Not leaving strategic economic decisions to the market but making them subject to democratic choice; subjecting the private sector and the state to constant monitoring by civil society;

- Creating a new production and exchange complex that includes community co-operatives, private enterprises and state enterprises, and excluding TNC's;

- Enshrining the principle of subsidiarity in economic life by encouraging production of goods to take place at the community and national level if it can be done at reasonable cost in order to preserve community.

According to Bello (2002:115), a system of an alternative, "deglobalized" economic way of life would require "…the deconcentration and decentralization of institutional power and the creation of a pluralistic system of institutions and organizations interacting with one another, guided by broad and flexible agreements and understandings". Bello's view here, of the need for the "creation of a pluralistic system", corresponds quite favourably with that of Amartya Sen's. Given the contemporary global economic environment, and if one could use the words of Sen (1999:126) as a concluding remark to propose how *development* should be taken forward, then Sen's idea of a "need for a many-sided approach" appears to be the best way ahead. For example, taken together, economic reforms within a country, coupled with the broadening of social opportunities would increase exponentially the development prospects of an entire population.

For Sen (1999), this many-sided approach is based on the fact that different countries have had economic successes while others have had failures over the last few decades. He suggests that a 'comprehensive development framework' is needed – a framework that involves rejecting a compartmentalized view of the process of development (such as "*just* liberalization" or "*just* nationalization") that would exclude any other possible meaningful development contributions. Sen (1999:126-7) cautions that the World Bank itself was guilty of such an approach in the past, perhaps alluding to the doomed "single all-purpose remedy" named the Structural Adjustment Programmes of the 1980s. Sen (1999) recommends:

> Combining extensive use of markets with the development of social opportunities must be seen as a part of a still broader comprehensive approach that also emphasizes freedoms of other kinds (democratic rights, security guarantees, opportunities of cooperation, and so on).

Thus in an increasingly globalizing economy, an "integrated and multifaceted approach is needed, with the object of making simultaneous progress on different fronts, including different institutions, which reinforce each other" (Sen, 1999:127). In other words, Sen here proposes the idea of, not the "either/or" paradigm, but instead a paradigm of "both/and", in which there is more than one path to promote human development. Given the nature of this study, it would be quite reasonable to reflect next, on the connection (if any) between the thoughts of these development specialists and the thoughts from a biblical-theological perspective on poverty.

Finally, the time for considering an alternative, life-giving, global economic model is long overdue and needs to be advocated at all levels of society. Bello (1994:110) alludes to the scope of a proposed new alternative economic vision:

> It will mean appealing to and promoting the common interests of the peoples of the North and the peoples of the South in repelling corporate-driven structural adjustment. It will entail forging, across borders, another, alternative economic vision, one that brings the economy back under the control of the community, instead of having the economy drive and rend the community, one that fosters solidarity instead of the atomized existence idealized by market ideology.

Under no illusions as to the magnitude of such a task, Bello (2002:107-118) proposes a thought-provoking, yet simplistic idea of how mobilization towards an alternative global economic system can take place, through a strategy of parallel deconstruction of the old, and reconstruction of the new – "a double movement of 'deglobalization' of the national economy and the construction of a 'pluralist system of global economic governance' (112). Besides the many reasons already presented by Bello (2002:112), the motive for his proposition for an alternative "deglobalized" economic system is founded in his following statement:

> The context for the discussion of deglobalization is the increasing evidence not only of the poverty, inequality and stagnation that have accompanied the spread of globalized systems of production but also of their unsustainability and fragility.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The goals of this chapter to understand what is going on in the world of development have been achieved through examining the contributions of various experts (such as Amartya Sen) in the field. It has also been established that there are valuable, life-affirming development models (such as the MDG's and the UNDHR) that promote the well being of all people. Research done in this chapter has also shed more light on *what* development experts have to say about poverty and *why* poverty exists. Thus the tension between life-affirming models of development and the actual application of these models are evident to some extent in Chapter 3. For example, while the UN require nations of the world to subscribe to its Declaration of Human Rights Charter, the non-application of this Charter by individual countries works contrary to the objectives of the Charter to promote human dignity.

To summarize, the key findings of Chapter 3, relating to *what* is going on in the development environment and as to *why* poverty exists, could be stated as follows:

- Development is holistic and it has a comprehensive approach in uprooting the causes of poverty

- Development is about the affirmation of human life and about the protection of the natural environment and non-human creatures

- While development is seen as freedom by some (e.g. Amartya Sen), development is also about using that freedom responsibly, in order for people to break through poverty and to live the kind of lives that they value

- Development is also about the equality of all people, especially women, who, for many reasons, are often the most vulnerable to all kinds of poverty and hardship

- Development also promotes human dignity, is inclusive, participatory, people-centred, reciprocal and democratic

- Development is therefore also rights-based in order to ensure that people are able to utilize their assets and human potential to the maximum, and in doing so, escape the poverty trap that dehumanizes millions of people

- Development is also threatened and undermined by root causes of poverty such as unfreedoms (Sen), capability depravation (Nussbaum), human rights abuses (UN), dehumanization (Wilson and Ramphele) and injustices of all kinds (Bello)

- Development is always possible when people, governments, corporates and institutions choose to act justly economically, politically, socially and ethically (Wilson and Ramphele, Sen, Nussbaum, Mkandaweri, Bello, Sachs and Stiglitz)

Thus, with due consideration given to the topic of this literature study in which the search of root causes of poverty are investigated, and also to this chapter's key findings noted above, the writer agrees with Wilson and Ramphele (1989:5) that strategies against poverty involve not only pulling up the roots of practices that impoverish people but also planting and nurturing those seeds that will produce good fruit. From this vantage point, it is therefore imperative that people across the world

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embrace those seeds that will produce good fruit. Macro-development projects such as the UN's MDGs are a clear example of how individuals, communities, development agencies, and nations can plant and nurture the good seeds that would replace the seeds of poverty, unfreedoms, depravation, fear, doubt and hopelessness.

The results of Chapter 3 which have determined what is being said in contemporary development dialogues about poverty, are therefore useful in the light of the pending discussion in Chapter 4 which will ask the question, *what does the Bible say about poverty?*

CHAPTER 4

A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF POVERTY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Linking with Chapter 3, Chapter 4 will continue along a similar path to enquire why poverty exists and, in addition, investigate what the Bible says about it. In Chapter 4 of the thesis I aim to revisit important guidelines that the Bible gives to the moral and ethical problems associated with poverty, as we perceive it today. In order to establish these guidelines, the questioning technique that Osmer (2008:4) employs needs to be sustained. Here, the pivotal question is, *what is going on in the Bible and what do theological authorities and commentators say about the biblical-theological view of poverty?* This question leads to the second main question in order to establish the normative task, *what does the Bible say ought to be going on?*

In this chapter, I firstly analyse and integrate texts from the Old Testament (OT), primarily from the Pentateuch and the book of Amos, that have a direct bearing on the discourse around poverty and wealth. Secondly, I investigate the notion of justice as it pertains to poverty in the OT. Thirdly, I analyse texts from the New Testament (NT) that have relevance in the realm of moral issues of poverty and riches. Here I draw mainly from Luke's Gospel relating to the NT discourse of both poverty and riches. Another important point to make around the limitation of biblical sources treatment, is that the researcher will limit his usage of biblical sources and focus primarily on the Book of Amos (in the OT) because of its all-encompassing address to the key sectors of society (political, social and economic), and also on Luke in the NT because of the Book's clear bias towards to the poor. Lastly, the I will show why and how the prophet Amos had to speak out about injustices meted out to the poor, and look at what implications both Amos and Luke's Gospel in the Bible hold for twenty-first century Christians.

The locus of the previous chapters have been to investigate some of the root causes of poverty by, 1) analysing contemporary local, regional, African as well as global contexts and 2) analysing the current development discourses and a possible way

forward for developing countries – where most of the global poor live. In this chapter, the writer will analyze specific texts and important biblical themes to examine what the Bible has to say about poverty and the general treatment of poor people by non-poor people. This chapter will therefore have a strong focus on the *relational* aspect of poverty as perceived through the lenses of the OT and NT.

With respect to the OT and NTs treatment of the twin subject of poverty and wealth, one has to concur that there are infinite resources to glean from. The Pentateuch, the Prophets, the Psalms, historical writings and wisdom literature all provide significant insights pertaining to *how* poverty and wealth is spoken about in the Bible and *what* type of response God expects from society. These occurrences of poverty are often connected with the theme of justice and always point in the direction of God.

Also significant in the OT is the integral association of justice to the realities of poverty and wealth. Many prophets of the OT were champions of social justice. During those days, justice was often perverted through bribery and favouritism or partiality (Deut. 1:17; Prov. 17:23). But God's rewards come to those who practice justice in all their dealings with others. In the words of the prophet Amos, God desired to "let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream" (Amos 5:24). Just as Jesus and Paul in the NT, the writers and prophets of the OT pointed out *how* the poor should be treated. The disclosure of the value of a human life soon comes to the fore as one examines the many texts that promote the dignity with which God views and values every person whom he has created.

4.2 POVERTY AND WEALTH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

4.2.1 Loving others

An important connection between poverty and justice in the Bible is undoubtedly the virtue of *love*. Speaking on "charity and love", Sanders (1992:231) asserts, "where the reader of the Bible first meets these laws of charity, Lev. 19, there are numerous other laws dealing with 'relations between human and human'". Furthermore, Sanders (1992) argues that these laws were commands which stipulated that people were to consider the well being of others by not being the oppressors of others nor to withhold wages from labourers. The on-going inter-personal relational ethic perceived by Sanders (1992) reinforces the command that people should not "be unjust in

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judgment, nor favour the prosperous to the disadvantage of the poor, nor to slander, nor to hate one's brother, nor to bear a grudge (Lev. 19.13-18a)."

The relational aspect of a human response to, first, God, and second, the *other*, unfolds in the OT as well as the NT, and are affirmed by the human writers of the Bible and also by Jesus himself. In this respect, Sanders (1992) asserts:

> Just as Jesus' citation of the Shema' ('love God', Deut. 6.4f.) as the greatest commandment would have caused no surprise, neither would this quotation of Lev. 19.18 as the second greatest commandment (Mark 12.28-34). Both these passages are presented in the Bible itself as summarizing the two aspects of the law: the commandments that govern relations with God and those which govern relations with others.

4.2.2 Loving God

The point of reference for this chapter is therefore centred in the commandments that govern relations between people and God and that which governs relations with other humans. A sincere love for God, manifested very often by acts of kindness by a person towards the *other*, is the basic building block when one speaks about love for the *other*. In fact, Jacobs (1973:153) goes further and suggests a particular qualitative, *demanding*, type of love for God that would draw other people to God our Creator. Jacobs (1973) explains:

> The Sifre (Deut. 32) continues with another explanation of 'You shall love the Lord your God'. This is taken to mean that a man should cause others to love God, as did Abraham who converted people to monotheism and 'brought them under the wings of the Shekinah'. Loving God, according to this explanation, means causing others to acknowledge him.

From this position, one could argue that love for God, is no ordinary, one-directional action. From the above position, it could be strongly asserted that a human being cannot only love God but not his or her neighbour. If through living a life that truly loves God, and through which people draw others toward God, it would then be feasible to contend that one of the goals for really loving God would be so that others would also come to love God and come into right relationship with God (especially if they are not yet in that position). In addition, on the matter of God becoming known, Gutierrez (1973) indicates that *justice* is integral in this process. This would imply that love for God would also mean a love for justice through ensuring that one's neighbour receives just and fair attention in everyday life. He asserts, "When such justice does not exist, God is not known; he is absent".

Reinforcing this qualitative nature that speaks about the human love of God, Jacobs (1973:152) expands on *how* human beings ought to love God:

> But Jewish teaching places great emphasis on man in his relation to God. In this relationship Judaism speaks of the love of God…the concept takes us to the vital heart of religion…Judaism is profoundly concerned with the inner life of man. It is this which provides the driving power to do God's will as reflected in the deeds Judaism expects of its adherents…the love of God belongs to the 'duties of the heart' while the practical precepts belong to the 'duties of the limbs'…

Based on the above Deuteronomic understanding of the idea of love for God, one could contend that the love of God demands also an unconditional love for other human beings. However, this unconditional love of other human beings is also dependent on the relationship that a person has with God which Jacobs (1973:152), borrowing from Tillich, calls the 'ultimate concern':

> The great biblical text for the love of God is: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might' (Deut. 6:5). 'All your heart' in this context refers less to the emotions than to the mind; in the biblical idiom the intellect is located in the heart. 'With all your soul' means 'with the whole of your being'…the meaning of the verse is attached to God without reservation. It speaks of what Tillich calls the 'ultimate concern'…Tillich…quotes this verse as the most powerful expression in the Bible of 'ultimate concern'.

Lastly, with a focus on the notion of love of God and love of neighbour (other), the biblical laws which point to the love of God and neighbour consists of two basic distinctions that are helpful for comprehending the law as a whole (Sanders 1992:192):

> Two distinctions will help us comprehend the law as a whole:
>
> 1. Laws govern either (a) relations between humans and God or (b) relations among humans (with implications for the human-divine relationship).
> 2. Transgressions of the law are either (a) involuntary or (b) intentional

Sanders (1992) shows further that these divisions are quite clear in Lev. 5-6. There a distinction is made between the person who commits a breach of faith and sins unknowingly in any of the holy things of the Lord (5.15) and the one who 'sins and commits a breach of faith against the Lord by deceiving his neighbour' (6.1). In these lines we see the differences between innocent and intentional wrongdoings, and between sins against God (the holy things of Lord) and those against both God and neighbour (against the Lord by deceiving the neighbour).

For House (1998:144-5) the real significance of these laws that are portrayed in Leviticus, focus on divine-human relationships that refer to specific commands about how people must treat others. One swift instruction stands out above all others: "Do not seek revenge or hold a grudge against any of your people, but instead love your neighbour as yourself. I am the LORD" (19:18). Keeping this admonition enables the people to avoid stealing, bearing false witness, oppressing the poor or perverting justice (19:9-16). It covers sin that begin in the heart, where motives that cause such unholy activity originate (19:17). It also covers sin against foreigners, family and business associates (19:20-36). No person lies outside the individual Israelite's definition of "neighbour." All human beings must be respected and loved for the holy nation to give a clear witness of their holy God. Again it is inferred here that to love other people is an important vehicle how the beneficiaries of that love get to encounter God.

Pointing towards the ethical import of the Decalogue, House (1998:144-5) elaborates on Lev. 17-26:

> Between the basis (19:2) and expectation of holiness (19:2, 37) lie challenges that characterize the behaviour of the holy people. Virtually every one of the Ten Commandments is repeated and/or explained, which makes this chapter one of the great ethical statements in Scripture along with such texts as Amos 5, Micah 6, Ezekiel 18 and Job 31.

In essence, House (1998:142-4) argues that their holiness will originate from their relationship with God and will thereby encompass their activities and relationship with other human beings. In addition, as in the Ten Commandments, respect for God and neighbour serves as the framework of these laws (19:2, 18), as does the fact that Israel as a whole belongs to God (19:3-4, 10, 12). One can therefore see that God, through the Decalogue and other laws, established a normative framework for interaction between people and God and between people and other people.

4.2.3. Poverty and Relationships

To contextualize the people who were addressed here, the book of Leviticus, as part of the Torah or Pentateuch, was written as a *text book* not only for the priestly tribe of Levi but also for the laity, the people of Israel who were not priests (Chingota in Adeyemo, 2006: 129). Located at the centre of the Pentateuch, Leviticus' immediate

literary context is Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The entire book of Leviticus is but one ingredient of the story of God (Yahweh) initiating a covenant with the Israelites. Geographically, the whole nation was camped at the foot of Mount Sinai (or Mount Horeb) where God spelled out the basis of his relationship with them (Chingota, 2006). As will be shown later in this chapter, this *basis of relationship* also included how the Israelites were to treat each other – especially the treatment of those who were poor. It was in this environment that the whole Leviticus narrative was documented. Therefore, it can be asserted that the Leviticus story, especially chapter 25, served as the "acid test" for determining how seriously the people took their relationship with God.

Thus, together with the other books of the Torah, it can be seen that Leviticus portrays God's love for humankind. Further knowledge of God is revealed through the way God communicates with the nation of Israel at the time and shows that modern-day humanity can draw from the principles that God spoke to the nation. Such principles like restoration, consideration of others' well-being and justice (to be discussed later in this chapter) were important for the people but also for God. As a result God instituted the restorative and mutually beneficial decrees of the Sabbatical Year and the Jubilee Year so that, when practiced by the people, it would result in sustainable development of the nation and the environment. At the same time it would confirm the people's submission to God and, in this way, reciprocate the love that he had shown toward them. Chingota in Adeyemo (2006:165) further reinforce this idea seen in Leviticus:

> Two statements by Yahweh regarding land and people form the basis for instructions given here. In 25:23 it is stated that the land belongs to Yahweh and that the Israelites are simply tenants on God's land. In 25:38 it is stated that the Israelites belong to Yahweh because he redeemed them from their Egyptian bondage. Consequently, their relationship to the land and to each other must be characterized by the fear of God (25:17, 36). This attitude would find practical expression in both land and people being released and restored to their original state in the Sabbath Year and in the Jubilee Year.

Based on Chingota's assertion here, it is fair to assume three fundamental principles (see figure 8):

1. God is the ultimate owner of the earth and everything in it (Psalm 24:1)

2. The human race is a tenant in the earth with the implication that people are to take care of the land (and other people) according to God's standards. In this respect, human beings are essentially seen as manager's of God's resources

3. The relationship to land and other people should be seen in the light of a person's individual relationship with God the Creator of all things
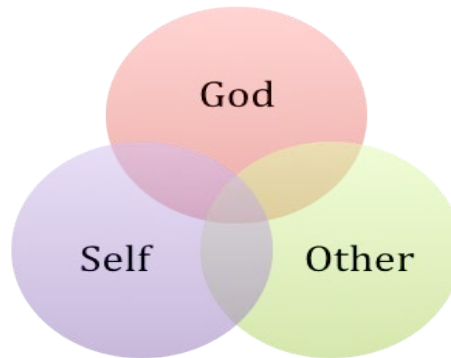
Figure 8. The *other* in relation to *God* and the *self*

Consequently, God's caring nature becomes evident as he stresses the importance of ownership of the earth and also the relational aspect of human beings regarding himself, other people, and the natural environment. Through reinforcing this divine-ownership principle, God is also saying that people have a responsibility to take good care of the land while at the same time ensuring that all people benefit appropriately from the land. If the land belongs to God, and if humankind is to take care of the land with fear and reverence for God, then people would then be treating other people in a way that God would "personally" have taken care of them.

In order therefore for all people to experience the "goodness" of the land, God's laws of love, justice and community are clearly embedded in the ideals of the Sabbath and Jubilee Years. These laws were aimed at enhancing the well-being of not just the Israelites but also that of the non-Israelites and especially to the widows, orphans and marginalized sectors of society. At this juncture it would be imperative to turn to the institutional Sabbath and Jubilee Years in order to examine why these events were considered to be so important in the life of a nation.

4.2.4 The roles of the Sabbath Year and the Jubilee Year in the lives of the poor

4.2.4.1 The Sabbath Year (Leviticus 25: 1-7)

According to Van Til (2007:75) critical feature of the OT regarding the well being of the poor is that "the most thoroughgoing legislation that attempted to restore the poor

to their place in Israel…was the Sabbatical and Jubilee laws." The **Sabbath Year** took place every seventh year. In that year the land were to have a Sabbath of rest and were to lay fallow. This meant that no planting or harvesting was permitted. Chingota (2006) proposes two reasons for this: 1) the land belongs to God (25:2) and must be restored to him (25:4) and 2) "anything that the land produces without human aid in the fallow year belongs to everyone, including the poor, livestock and wild animals (25:6-7)." Here, as a first principle, God demonstrates that he is the supreme provider (Jehovah Jireh) from whom all things come. This sovereign principle is expressed in Psalm 24:1: "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it". As a second important principle, the seventh year in which the land is to lay fallow is a check against the over-exploitation of natural resources. This principle of good agricultural and ecological practice was aimed at benefiting not just a select few but the entire population. It is also a critical point of departure for discussing an environmental/ecological aspect of development in the 21st century context, when holistic human development, especially of the world's poor, is becoming such a debated topic across the globe.

For Payne (1962:335), the observance of the Sabbath Year was an opportunity to demonstrate people's love for God and also people's love for their neighbours. As Payne (1962:334) asserts, the "neighbours" included "the weakest members of society…the widow…the orphan, and…the foreign resident". Thus, "one of the purposes of the sabbatical year was that these underprivileged classes might receive the produce of that particular season (Ex. 23:11)" (Payne, 1962:335). In loving the foreign resident as himself, the Israelite was therefore demonstrating that all people were equal before the law. Through this heart-felt demonstration of love for the neighbour, their love for God was reflected. This practical love was shown when the non-poor left the corners of a reaped field un-reaped and also left gleanings of the harvest so that the poor could gather the remaining bounty (Lev. 19:9, 10; Deut. 24:19-21). The Sabbath year also meant debt-cancellation (Deut. 15:1) while loans, even in anticipation of the "immediately impending seventh season" or Jubilee Year were also not to be withheld (v. 9) (Payne, 1962).

It becomes evident that the Sabbath Year represented the year of freedom – freedom from debt, freedom from slavery, and freedom from poverty! The effectual practice of

the Sabbath year, as designed by God and obeyed by the people of Israel, meant that, firstly, the land could rest and be regenerated and, secondly, and most importantly, that it aided the poor (and even wild animals) (Payne, 1962:400). Immediately after the passage of seven Sabbath years had come to an end, the Year of Jubilee would arrive – when "its purpose was to proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Payne, 1962:401).

4.2.4.2 The Jubilee Year: Mutual Development for Mutual Benefits (Leviticus 25: 8-55)

Payne (1962) showed earlier that the **Jubilee Year** event in Leviticus was to take place every fiftieth year. The Jubilee followed immediately on the forty-ninth year, which was a Sabbath Year, thus resulting in two Sabbath Years in succession. In Leviticus 25:18-22 God's supreme providential character is again witnessed when he promises that he would ensure that the crops would yield enough food for the next three years, that is, until their next harvest. Furthermore, Schultz (1990: 70) asserts that this is how the Israelites were reminded that the land they possessed and also the crops that were provided for them were a gift from God.

As is the case in Proverbs 30:7-9 the duties towards fellow human beings is emphasized in the period of the Year of Jubilee. The concept of the care of the poor is strongly mooted here because God's ideal is that "there ought to be no poor amongst you." According to Heinisch (1955: 187-188) "…the Jubilee Year ordinance was designated to eliminate permanent poverty" as idealized in Leviticus 25. This Jubilee ordinance was designed, therefore, to restore land-ownership to the owner (or the heirs) who had to sell off the land due to financial need. The restoration of this land was to be executed at no cost to the original owner in this liberating and also empowering fiftieth year. Through the repossession of land allotted to poor families, "the insubordinate differences between poor and rich would not develop" (Heinisch, 1955). As a method of restoring justice to people across the world today, this approach would not appear to be out of place. Ethnic people who through the

centuries have been dispossessed of their land should have good, fruitful and productive land restored[78] to them.

Heinisch (1955: 189) reasons that "the sages taught, 'Poor and rich are bound together in one unit: Yahweh has made them all…Whoever oppresses the poor, insults his creator; on the other hand whoever shows mercy to the needy, honours him…Whoever has pity on the poor, loans to Yahweh, and he will compensate him for his kindness…" Based on this dogmatic approach, it is evident that there is a strong correlation between people's obedience to the Creator and the well being of the poor. It would appear as if God rewards those who respond genuinely to the plight of poor people. So passionate is God about the situation of the poor, that he *personalizes* the compensation that he will grant to all those who respond to this call to provide for the poor.

Furthermore, it can be deduced that Heinisch's opinion that the poor and the rich are bound together in one unit (through being created by the same Maker) lends itself to the notion that every human being is equal therefore there should be "no poor amongst you." This implies that it is imperative that wealthy human beings do not consider themselves as superior to those who are impoverished. There should

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[78] South Africa's Land Restitution Act has largely been ineffective due to legal, political, administrative and socio-economic reasons (such as Cape Town's District Six suburb). A case in point is seen in the following extract: "Land reform in South Africa is another important tool for redressing historic economic inequality. The government has a target of 30% redistribution to black ownership by 2014 but has achieved less than 5% so far. Wary of the failure of agriculture that has followed expropriation of land in Zimbabwe, South Africa has been more cautious in respecting legal rights of white farmers but the process is not moving at a satisfactory pace." *http://uk.oneworld.net/guides/southafrica/development*
An important point is the South African situation where, after nearly twenty years after the demise of apartheid, there are still many previous (indigenous) landowners who have still not received land or compensation from the government after their original properties had been confiscated from them during the periods of colonization and apartheid. While the issue of landlessness is an important issue, it will not be discussed in great detail in this dissertation. However, an important question remains to be asked: *How can a modern-day Jubilee become a reality for the landless poor in South Africa and, indeed, across the globe?*

In a more specific sense then, the challenge to the South African government would be the admonition given by the prophet Isaiah (1:17; 10:1-3) to learn to do good, strive for justice, help the oppressed, see that the orphans get their rights and champion the cause of the widow. To a large extent the new government in South Africa has already facilitated phenomenal change in this regard. There are now more poor people drawn into the government's social security net than at any time in the country's new democracy[78]. More of the nation's elderly are being cared for as well as more youth up to the age of twenty-one. Former President Thabo Mbeki's February 2008 State of the Nation Address highlighted the fact that the country's leadership is determined to root out poverty and to allow more people to have a better sense of self-worth and human dignity.

therefore be an attitude of egalitarianism whereby the rich would instead recognize their wealth as a gift from God (or actually God's wealth that they need to become good custodians or stewards of). This decidedly critical perspective is necessary if humanity is to *make poverty history*[79]. If wealthy people hold such a view that every person is equal in God's sight and created in his image, then it is highly probable that this would lead to a greater commitment towards a *Jubilee* stance that, in turn, will produce a *mutual development*[80] scenario.

With further reference to Leviticus 25: 1-55, Hartley (1992: 424) indicates that "the fallow laws for the Jubilee Year and a sabbatical year…is a law against sowing and harvesting" (11b). Attached to this is legislation on returning to one's family property at Jubilee" (13-16). The exhortation to "fear God" is underscored in this section and is also an apt reminder of *who* is really the Owner of the land (17). This point stresses the *Divine* ownership role and is reinforced by Bellinger (2001: 148):

> The theological perspective operates out of a creation context, with ancient Israelites functioning as stewards of property and wealth, rather than as owners. God the creator holds that role…Viewing possessions as divine gifts to a community provide a better starting point than promoting the individual right to succeed.

The text instructs the reader on the Sabbath and Jubilee Years, supplements that instruction, and concludes with attention to the poor and those in service to the community. The purpose of Sabbath and Jubilee practices thus ensured proper care for the land. Although some modern scholars suggest that the instruction of Jubilee was never practiced, Bellinger (2001: 149) indicates that there are "some hints" (Jer. 34:8-22; 2 Chron. 36:21) about Jubilee and the Sabbatical practice of land use in the OT. As a reminder of how God sees the people, Bellinger (2001) asserts that these critical events are "an articulation of a divine agenda that supports families and the community…and resists grand accumulation of wealth by individuals and is not a kind of casuistic legislation." It is at this point where theology and ethics intersect, where this instruction appeals to divine authority rather than to an earthly, governmental one. Therefore, the Sabbath and Jubilee Years pointed to a divine instruction and also emphasized the divine importance of these laws. It can be said

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[79] The *Make Poverty History* concept is a popular Western-initiated campaign against the eradication of poverty and is led by high profile international musicians such as Bob Geldof and Bono.
[80] *Mutual development* refers to a situation that would result in guaranteed *mutual benefits* for the rich as well as for the poor, and everyone else in between.

that, through adhering to these divine principles, it was a case of obedience to God that could potentially produce the reward of a poverty-free society.

In addition, four key principles by House (1998:147) that point to the significance of the Jubilee Year for humanity, illustrate that one's perspective of the God is of crucial importance because it influences how one perceives the poor. Besides the Sabbath Year, this test also came every fiftieth year when Israel were to celebrate a jubilee year in which debts were forgiven, "permanent" servants were emancipated and ancestral lands were returned to their original owners (25:8-28). This observance rests on four specific principles:

1. The people must fear God and refuse to take advantage of one another (25:17).
2. The people must trust Yahweh to provide for them. They must have faith (25:18-22).
3. The people must realize that the land belongs to God, who divides it by grace, not by merit or social standing (25:23-24). God is the ultimate Owner of the land.
4. The people must appreciate that they themselves, regardless of economic standing, belong to God. Therefore human beings are not human property in any permanent sense (25:35-55).

The practical effects of these principles of Sabbath and Jubilee meant that there was a proclamation of liberty across the land in which there was liberation from slavery and debt, and property returned to its original owners (Bellinger, 2001:148). In addition, Bellinger (2001) shows that the motivation for this Sabbath principle was, firstly, *ecological* (giving the land a year's rest in order for it to be replenished) and, secondly, *humanitarian* (food that grew naturally were to be shared by the residents). There is thus a positive shift in attitude from a self-centred position to a theocentric stance, in which the needs of one's neighbour and the natural environment come inevitably into focus.

The idea of praxis (obedience to applying God's Word) as well as the idea of theory (understanding God's written law pertaining to the Sabbath and Jubilee Years) comes into strong, healthy tension. Hartley (1992: 424) explains: "the promise of God's special blessing on the produce of the fields in the sixth year (21) is germane given the people's apprehension about the potential financial hardship such observance

might produce." At this point God reminds the people that these relevant laws, if obeyed, will bring about a special blessing for everyone – both poor and rich. Here one is reminded of the scripture "obedience is better than sacrifice". By this it is meant that obedience to the laws of God, which is aimed at benefiting all people, is a far better option than to become apprehensive and fearful about the potential loss of income. In any event, if God is the ultimate Owner, then surely he will compensate in some way (and if needed) for the supposed "potential financial loss" that the community would incur. This shows that the Sabbath and Jubilee laws were not just about economics but it was more to do with the idea of "community."

House (1998:148) continues to expand on the egalitarian and communal nature of God's laws that are centred in him and also in people and argues for a return to a caring community ethos:

> These standards indicate that the poor and helpless must be helped in a holy nation (25:35-38); cf. 23:22). Other countries offered release laws during this era. So surely Yahweh's people can as well. If all persons are made in God's image (Gen. 1:26) and if all Israelites are participants in the Sinai covenant, then surely each person is inherently equal before God's law and must be so in human events.
>
> Truly, then, time belongs to God. Humans who accept this principle grasp that their own personal history matters as much to God as magnificent historical events like the exodus. As Israel adopts this notion the people gain rest, freedom from enslavement to success, release from greed and an appreciation for community.

In the final analysis, Bellinger (2001:154) and House (1998) believe that both the Sabbath and Jubilee were focused on human relationships and presupposes that people have a relationship with God. In one sense it could be said that these rules were inspired to alleviate circumstances of economic difficulties and, in another, to break the spiral of poverty. In the final pericope of Leviticus 25 (47-55), Bellinger (2001) reinforces the notion that this chapter "upholds community, family, and the promise of a future while resisting the amassing of property and wealth." Here it is important to note that the poor are cared for while the rich are not in a position of complete domination.

These crucial events (humanitarian by nature yet centred in God) were mechanisms to ensure that poor people were able to escape poverty. In any event, "the ideal of Israel

was that of no poverty whatsoever" as illustrated in Deut. 15:4 (Payne, 1962:335). In the same way, Van Til (2007:77) summarizes poignantly what the essence of the Jubilee meant:

> The Jubilee intends to restore, seeking to bring people back into the fullness of life within Israel; it diminishes inequality; and it provides opportunity for renewed life. Enacting Jubilee was practicing true religion.

Therefore it would appear that only if humans treat *other* humans with the necessary respect and dignity, would it be possible for this biblical theme of *hope* (as can be attested to in Isa. 61:1-4; Luke 4:18-19; 1 John 3:17 and 4:11) to be realized in contemporary society.

Like the Sabbath and the Jubilee Years, so too are the Prophets' important messages that promote the well-being of the poor. Numerous books of the Bible, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Amos, Hosea and many others highlight God's perspective of the poor and his feelings about justice pertaining to them. The book of Amos, especially, is relevant book that speaks directly into the situation of the poor and illustrates how that God is not indifferent or silent on the plight of the poor. Building on the strong humanitarian ethic of the Sabbath and Jubilee laws, the book of Amos provides further insight into God's view of the poor. Thus, in the following section, the writer will focus mainly on Amos as an important biblical literature source in the discussion of the importance of God's view on the condition of poor people and the causes of their situation.

4.2.5 Amos the pro-poor prophet: A specific case for understanding God's position on righteousness and justice

4.2.5.1 Which themes are evident in Amos?

According to Shelley in Mills and Wilson (1996:269) Amos, in the Hebrew Bible, as the third member of the Book of the Twelve, is a collection sometimes bearing the misleading title 'the minor prophets.' Shelley asserts that, except for its relative conciseness, there is nothing 'minor' about Amos. For Shelley, this modest book has generated a major body of secondary literature and has exerted extraordinary influence in shaping modern notions of human rights and social justice. These beliefs of human rights and social justice are certainly of significant relevance for today's society.

Furthermore, the book of Amos in the Bible serves as an appropriate guide for a discussion about poverty, wealth and justice in contemporary times. As the introduction by the prophet shows, there is a distinct sense that God is displeased and angry towards the nations, including Israel, because of their contempt and rejection of God (Bitrus in Adeyemo 2006: 1033). This is symbolized by the presentation of the Lord as a lion that "roars from Zion" (1:2). The roaring, according to Bitrus, is a sign of God's anger and serves as a call to repentance for all those who have turned away from God's ways.

Besides the roaring, God's anger is also portrayed as he "thunders from Jerusalem" and causes the pastures of the shepherds to "dry up" (1:2). Even the top of Carmel is said to "wither". The symbolism of the shepherd motif alludes to the fact that God is more specifically judging the leaders of the nations and Israel for abusing their gift of leadership and for leading their people astray.

Many biblical commentators confirm the strong themes of human rights, social justice and economic justice that are so prevalent in the book of Amos. For example, Vawter (1991:58) believes that many will recollect the stirring public speaking of Martin Luther King, Jr., challenging the forces of segregation in the USA during the 1960s with Amos's powerful rhetoric: *But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream* (5:24). Vawter (1991:58-59) interprets this text to mean that Israel is being exhorted to replace meaningless and formalistic rites of sacrifice with justice and righteousness. In comparison, Hailey (1993:112) goes further and claims here that God "wants *justice*, which has to do with the rights of others, and *righteousness*, the will to do right in oneself". Brueggemann (2003:223) quotes Parker and attributes God's pending judgment to the evident injustices meted out to the poor and also to the nonchalant attitude of the wealthy:

> Amos castigates those who enjoy a life of carefree luxury and remain at the same time oblivious to the violence and oppression on which it is based. Indeed, having lost sight of the right direction for the society (3:9-10), the elite are said to "hoard violence and oppression for themselves" (3:10-11). The core of Amos' message, then, is that because of these misdeeds, God will destroy this society. The finality and thoroughness of this coming disaster, as well as its inescapability are a persistent theme." (Parker 1989, 368)

This envisioning of life-giving waters to a thirsty, parched land allude to the joy, restoration and abundant life that people could experience, if only justice and righteousness were practiced by the powerful. However, the rich and the powerful turned justice into poison (Schultz 1990:384). There was gross injustice in the land as the rich exploited the poor and the religious leaders did nothing about it. This situation points to coercion and a gross abuse for power as illustrated by Wiersbe (1997:7):

> Amos prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II (786-746 B.C.E.). Given scant attention by the Deutoronomist (2 Kings 14:23-290, Jeroboam's reign of forty-one years was marked by economic and territorial expansion, military resurgence, and religious revival. The leading economic indicators pointed to stability, growth, and prosperity, traditional "signs" of God's favour. For Amos, however, things were not what they seemed. The booming economy was fuelled by exploitation of the poor, and its actual beneficiaries were few – the king, the royal court, government beaurocrats, wealthy land-owners. Israel was becoming two distinct societies, an ever-widening gap separating rich and poor

Paralleling Hailey's thoughts, Wiersbe (1997:7) interprets this key passage by indicating that God wants justice to be *like a mighty river that cleanses society of evil and refreshes everything it touches*. In the context of this periscope, the views of both Hailey and Wiersbe reinforce Vawter's perspective and they provide further insight into the central message in the book of Amos by describing the setting and context of this prophecy. This contributes to the practicality of linking the prophecy to its significance or implications for today.

4.2.5.2 What was the setting and context of Amos's "justice" prophecy?

Hailey (1993:83) shows that the pre-monarchical traditions such as the Sabbath and Jubilee Years that protected the poor, the widows, and the orphans, and that governed the use and transfer of land, were being eroded. The lavish lifestyles of the few depended on wine and olives for export, inciting the wealthy to acquire more and more land. But that demanded a disregard for the tradition of the *nahala*, the affirmation that tribal lands belonged to YHWH and therefore could not be sold in perpetuity (Lev 25:23). Jezebel's ploy to gain control of Naboth's vineyard a century earlier (1 Kgs 21:1-29) had become a common action in Amos's time.

Hailey (1993) continues and points out that the situation addressed by Amos is similar to that found today in many countries across the globe: the richest arable land is owned by a few wealthy families and used to grow export crops (coffee, tea, bananas, etc.), while the poor are left to subsist on remaining scraps. As landholdings accumulated in the hands of a few, the poor became more and more vulnerable to exploitation, often finding their children sold into slavery to pay family debts (2Kgs 4:1-7). Israel had finally discovered the 'ways of the king' (1 Sam 8:10-18)."

The value of the prophetic words of the prophet Amos cannot be more emphasized today save to say that it is probably the most significant discourse in the Old Testament concerning God's preferential option for the poor. Amos' message therefore reflects in no uncertain terms the theme of "justice" and he is regarded as the stern prophet of justice and righteousness (Hailey 1993: 83). His derisive attack and sharp criticism of the wealthy Israelites reinforce the point that God is always angry when the poor are being humiliated, oppressed and dehumanized by other people. In other words, when justice and righteousness are absent, God is angry. In Israel's case this was especially even more abhorrent because, as God's "chosen people", they were in a sense showing scant respect for God and his laws that were meant to benefit all of the people. They knew what God's requirements were but nevertheless intentionally flouted those very life-giving, community-building precepts. Referring to the observance (or lack thereof) of the Sabbath year, Payne (1962:400-401) asserts that the Israelites, "For almost five hundred years previous to the exile of Judah", widely disregarded this "humanitarian" regulation thus, no doubt, resulting in unnecessary poverty amongst its ranks. Thus, as a historical account in Israel's history, the perpetual disregard of the *other*, or of the poor, meant that God was angry and had to respond to this on-going dehumanizing behaviour by the people.

The Israelites' depraving selfish behaviour of dehumanizing their own brothers and sisters stirred up God's anger hence Amos' calling for the leaders of Israel, Judah and the other nations such as Gaza to repent from this exploitation of the poor and to ensure that social as well as economic justice prevails (Payne, 1962). It would appear to even a casual reader of the book of Amos that the prophet was very direct in addressing the nations and that he did so in a very cold and forthright manner. The desperate situation and the plight of the poor demanded this type of response. At the

same time, Amos's forthright response also revealed the heart of God for the poor and needy and showed just how much the Creator valued every human being, irrespective of race or class. It is very evident that the poor were at a desperate place because not even their leaders were willing to ease their plight. Instead, they were even further exploited and degraded by those who were in powerful positions and also those who were fully acquainted with God's laws surrounding the welfare of the poor.

It is fascinating to notice the parallels between the times of Israel's prosperity and economic growth in contemporary society (Hailey 1993: 84). As a result of Israel's subsequent increase in material prosperity and the relative peace that they experienced, the nation probably thought that there was no longer a necessity to worship God as they did during times when they were in desperate need of him, especially during the Exile period. It appears that their false sense of security in their wealth caused them to misplace their allegiance – they seemingly pledged their allegiance to an economic system from which they derived pleasurable benefits such as monetary wealth. These "benefits" were almost always at the expense of the marginalized hence the prophet's cold warning that they need to consider the error of their ways and rethink their treatment of the poor. In essence, Amos was calling them to return to the observance of, amongst other things, the critical "neighbourly" laws of the Sabbath year and the Jubilee Year.

Since Amos was called to prophesy at a time of great wealth and prosperity in Israel's history, it is critical to ask the question: *Why did Amos speak in the way that he did?* It is therefore necessary to examine this question by means of a social analysis of the context of Amos' time in the hope that it would provide useful answers for the motivation behind his prophecy:

a) *Opulence and luxury*

It is quite evident in Amos that Israel, like many other societies today, had a significant wealthy class. These rich people were indulging in material things such as "their couches", "winter-houses", "summer-houses", "houses adorned with ivory" as well as "mansions" (NIV) or "great houses" (NKJV) (3:12-15). It would appear as though these luxuries were pursued by the women who insisted that their husbands

provide them with these excesses for their feasts "even if the poor had to be crushed in order to provide these" (4:1-3), (Hailey 1993: 84).

In this afore-mentioned pericope, these wealthy women are referred to as those who are the oppressors of the poor and those who crush the needy. While they choose to indulge in having parties and drinking wine, they are apparently doing so at the expense of the poor. Hayford (1991: 1292) reinforces this point by saying that the charge of ruthless exploitation and oppression of the poor is brought against the women. Their unquenchable desire to enjoy more wealth, luxury and unrestrained materialism served a spur for their husbands to do more wicked deeds. While this opulence was enjoyed by the rich, these same people's "eyes were closed to the afflictions and needs of the poor" (Hailey 1993). Thus God sent Amos from Judah to Israel to warn them to put an end to their selfish behaviour.

b) *Moral and political corruption*

Israel's moral condition is clearly revealed by the prophet. Amos is shocked by cruel treatment meted out to the poor by the wealthy and the injustices that prevailed in their society. Hailey (1993: 84-85) points out that covetousness, immorality of the people in power and general contempt for holy things (2: 6-8) were strong features of this "prosperous" society.

Trampling on the poor and robbing them of their wheat was another indictment against a nation who knew to do better (5:11). Furthermore, the poor are deprived justice in the courts (through bribery) while the righteous are oppressed (5:12). In fact, the total dehumanizing attitude of the rich towards the poor is encapsulated in Amos 8:4: "…you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land". This passage highlights just to what degree the non-poor, elitist holders of power in Israel viewed the poor in eighth century B.C. Hailey (1993) shows that the resultant effect of this is the "great tumults" and the "violence and robbery" used by the powerful to sustain the oppression on the poor within the borders of the nation (3:9-10). With this custom of oppression, violence and robbery, there is a suggestion that, a nation who once knew how to obey God's basic requirements, was now a people who "…do not know to do right " (3:10). Undoubtedly, this reflects the character of

those people who occupied important political offices at the time. Can people in contemporary society learn from this today?

c) Religious corruption

Further examination of the context in which Amos had to prophesy, show the degree to which the religious values had declined (2:8). Amos sees something here that shows that the rich are engaged in worship at the altar or in the house of their god and see no incongruity between their social action and their worship (Hayford 1991: 1290). There appears to be a "disconnect" between the perilous position of so many Israelites in the midst of en economic boom. For Hailey (1993: 85) religious decay and apostasy is at the root of the moral, social and political corruption. This can be construed as one of the basic causes of poverty.

The false calf worship (1 Kings 12:25-33) introduced by Jeroboam I that the people had become so accustomed to, resulted in the people adopting an exceedingly low spiritual position (Hailey 1993:85). Yet, extravagant religious ceremonies and rites were manifested frequently. Although they were religious by their own standards, the people were generally lacking in true spiritual devotion towards God. Their impatience and anxiety to make more money especially through dishonest means overshadowed their supposed commitment to participate in religious observances such as the Sabbath and New Moon observances (8:5-6). Their extravagance in other religious duties were also seen in their daily sacrifices, their frequent tithing and boasting about their freewill offerings (4:4-5) all this while the merchants amongst them "were practicing dishonesty in trading" (Hailey 1993).

d) The gap between rich and poor: a "moral disconnect"

The huge contrast in Israel's history at this point was that in spite of its tremendous economic growth and national strength, it was also in a terrible state of moral and religious decay. Against this background of moral, political and religious corruption, it is sad to observe that this was actually the case especially since Israel was in a position of strength, trade and commerce flourished, and people were generally prosperous. Brueggemann (2003:223) illustrates that from a prophetic standpoint, it was evident that this opulence enjoyed in both kingdoms was based on a catastrophic practice of the rich against the poor that was sure to be untenable. It is the burden of

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the prophet to proclaim the illegitimacy of such social custom and to anticipate a coming judgment from YAHWEH, as it turned out in the form of Assyrian destruction. Brueggemann (2003) emphasizes:

> The breakdown in traditional values was particularly striking among the wealthiest in society, who cultivated and enjoyed considerable luxury. While some were losing their land and homes and family, others had both winter and summer houses (3:15), lived in homes of ashlar masonry (5:11), or enjoyed furnishings decorated with fine ivory work (3:15; 6:4). In 6:1-6 there is a graphic description of the sybaritic banquets enjoyed by the elite of the society, with choice meats, wine (*cf* 4:1b), unguents and music.

Beeley, 1969: 14), however, depicts the context of injustice more vividly than most commentators who describe the Amos prophecy. Beeley (1969) declares that the issue of human trafficking also became a real threat in the community because of "the oppression of the poorer classes by their richer neighbours which eventually brought many of the freemen to slavery". At the heart of his prophecy was the belief that "Amos saw both the hazardous nature and the corrupting influence of this prosperity and it was his task to challenge it in a period of complacency, materialism and hardness of heart" (Beeley, 1969: 14). Given these causes of poverty and also the resultant effects of social and economic injustice, it is conceivable to understand why Amos *had* to speak out against this corruption.

In Amos 5: 21-27 there is a clear analysis of the nature of the people's failings. Against this background, Amos warns against:

1. Materialism, and trust in human wisdom and strength (compare with Jer. 9: 23-24; 17: 5-6)
2. Complacency in sin (compare with Eccl. 8: 11) and,
3. Irresponsible resting on privilege (compare with Luke 3: 8) (Beeley 1969: 14).

Of further particular significance to the poverty discourse in Amos, is the idea of the poor being trodden on. In 5:11-12, God warns against "treading upon the poor". Beeley (1969: 71) contends that to tread on the poor "is not to be confined to violence but includes the grasping attitude which is careless of the other man's needs". At the same time, this oppression of the poor is particularly offensive to God. Thus, in the light of God's judgment, the New Testament illustrates that the only man who is spoken of as being in hell is the rich man who neglected to observe and assist the poor

man in his need (Luke 16:19-31). The Lord takes note of such sin and also the sin of social unrighteousness.

Although Amos highlights the fact that God will judge people for their sin because God is the God of righteousness, he nonetheless reminds us that God is also the God of grace and hope – if people would be willing to repent from their selfish deeds. Drawing from Amos 9: 11-15, Beeley (1969: 15) asserts that "there is anticipation of a day of joyful restoration" but only if repentance is embraced by the people (5:4, 14-15). As argued earlier, it again appears that if people were to obey God's laws with regard to how the poor ought to be treated, then there would be positive outcomes, in this case, great joy.

Using the book of Amos as leverage for their expositions, Brueggemann, Hayford, Hailey, Beeley and Payne suggest that the correlation between the growing gap between rich and poor and the moral decline is a crucial consideration in understanding the reason for the Amos prophecy. When one returns to the key text in Amos, then the call of the Amos prophecy is in fact a call for the rich to consider their greedy ways, the plight of the poor, and to also consider how that they may participate in justice (and righteousness) amongst all of the people. In addition, the Amos prophecy also poses the important question, *what does it mean to love God and to do justice?*

4.2.6 Loving God: loving the *other* is a matter of justice

Why is justice an important issue in both the Old and New Testament writings? What does justice mean in an age of injustice? The key text, Amos 5:24, is just one of many biblical injunctions for people to consider the well being of the *other*, especially the poor, by applying justice. Like Amos, the prophet Jeremiah also addresses the injustices of his time (Jer. 22:13-16). Guitierrez (1973:194-5) quotes this pericope from the prophet Jeremiah:

> Shame on the man that builds his house by unjust means, and completes its roof-chambers by fraud, making his countrymen work without payment, giving them no wage for their labour! Shame on the man who says, 'I will build a spacious house with airy roof-chambers, set windows in it, panel it with cedar, and paint it with vermilion'! If your cedar is more splendid, does that prove you are a king? Think of your father: he ate and drank, dealt justly and fairly;

all went well with him. He dispensed justice to the cause of the lowly and poor; did this not show he knew me? Says the Lord"

The significance of this biblical passage illustrates that "to know God is to do justice" and "to love Yahweh is to do justice to the poor and oppressed" (Gutierrez, 1973:194). For Gutierrez (1973:195), justice and righteousness are central in affirming the best interests of one's neighbour. In fact, argues Gutierrez (1973), "conversion to the neighbour" means "to establish just relationships among men (and) to recognize the rights of the poor. The God of Biblical revelation is known through such *interhuman justice* (italics mine). When such justice does not exist, God is not known; he is absent". This interhuman justice is brought about "in concrete actions towards others, especially the poor" and comes about through an "encounter with God" (Gutierrez, 1973). For Brueggemann (2003:227) too, Amos 5:24 also has significant meaning:

> Three times Amos utilizes the defining phrase "justice and righteousness" as the core prophetic concern (Amos 5:7, 24; 6:12; see Gen 18:19). In the second of these usages, the prophet utters what has become the decisive summons of all prophetic faith:
>
>> But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (Amos 5:24) [this is a phrase cited on Martin Luther King's memorial in Montgomery. This phrasing of Amos has become the impetus for prophetic faith and ground for prophetic critique of social systems that disregard and violate this most elemental command of YHWH.

Such an understanding of justice shows an inextricable link between love for God and love for one's neighbour – the *other*. The two are, seemingly, connected, bound together into one. In other words, one cannot confess to loving God when one does not love the other. This love for the other, especially in the case of the "doing justice to the poor", is therefore a demonstration of one's love for God. It is as if God says: "You cannot say that you love me if you allow injustice to continue upon the poor and oppressed." God expects nothing less.

According to Youngblood (1995:7) *justice* is the practice of what is right and just. Justice (or "judgment," KJV) specifies what is right, not only as measured by a code of law, but also by what makes for right relationships as well as harmony and peace. For Youngblood (1995) the English term "justice" has a strong legal flavour. But the

concept of justice in the Bible goes beyond the courts of law to everyday living. The Bible speaks of "doing justice" (Ps. 82:3; Prov. 21:3), whereas we speak of "getting justice." Doing justice is to uphold what is right or to put things right.

Youngblood (1995) continues and asserts that justice is *done* when honourable relations are maintained between husbands and wives, parents and children, employers and employees, government and citizens, and human beings and God. Justice refers to neighbourliness in spirit and action. Surely this also implies that justice refers to right motives and right action toward the poor. Kings, rulers, and those in power are to be instruments of justice (Ps. 72:1), as exemplified by David (2 Sam. 8:15) and Josiah (Jer. 22:15–16). The prophet Micah declared, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Mic. 6:8). The Book of Isaiah describes God's suffering servant, a description best fulfilled in Jesus, as one whose task as ruler will be to bring justice to the nations (Is. 42:1–4).

In addition, Ballentine in Mills & Wilson (1997: xiii) propose three vital perspectives of *justice*:

1. justice/judgment as defined essentially by law
2. justice/judgment as more than legal definition
3. the quest for divine justice, particularly as framed in the issue of theodicy.

(1) Justice and Law

Firstly, the judicial framework of justice/judgment is most apparent in the *association with law or commandment* (Ballentine 1997). Thus God's laws are those laws given through Moses (Exodus 24:3) which the people are to hear (Deut 5:1; 7:12), keep (Lev 18:5, 26; Deut 7:11; 11:1; 12:1) and *do* (Lev 18:4; Deut 11:32; 26:16). At the same time these laws are true (Ps 19:10), good (Ps 119:39), right (Ps 119:137), and righteous (Ps 199:75). These laws therefore require careful observance by people because, by living according to God's laws, "people bring themselves into conformity with God's will". As a result such obedience brings about the blessing of God (Deut 28:1-14); the consequence for disobedience then, is God's punishment (Deut 28: 15-68).

Secondly, Balentine (1997) refers to a judicial nuance in some cases where the *law takes it cause*. It means that a "decision has been taken in the sense of a legal ruling by a judge". In this case one may come before a king (2 Sam 15:2, 6) or a judge (Judg 4:5) for such a decision. Thirdly, justice also refers to *a decision made by God*. As in the previous two cases, justice refers to both the process involved in the decision-making (Ps 1:5) and also the content of the decision rendered. For the innocent, the content is described as positive. However, for those who are guilty, the decision has the character of legal punishment. In this sense therefore, when God executes justice it is his opponents who are punished (Exo 12:12; Num 33:4). Interestingly, Ballentine (1997:xiii-xiv) comments that "the righteous wait expectantly for such judgments on their enemies" (Ps 119:84; 149:9) and indeed count it as their right (1 Kgs 8:45, 49, 59; Mic 7:9; Ps 9:4; 140:12; 146:7) for maintaining obedience before the God who is proclaimed in faith as the judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:25; Judg 11:27; Isa 33:22; Ps 82:8; 96:13; 98:9). *Divine justice*, it would appear, is something that keeps the oppressed hopeful that God will answer them by executing justice to the oppressor (s).

(2) Justice and Righteousness

While the afore-going justice/judgment concept is to be understood in a judicial sense, it is clear that in the case of Amos, neither idea can be limited simply to a question of legal definition. In the Old Testament this is especially clear in the regular appearance of the themes of *justice* and *righteousness*. God's persona is revealed in Ps 33:5 where the writer shows that the Creator is a lover of justice and righteousness. The implication of such an assertion is therefore that God is a God of love, compassion, grace and care. Ballentine in Mills & Wilson (1997:xvii) reinforces this notion that, when coupled with God's love for justice and righteousness, his unending love and compassion serve as the cornerstones of God's rule (Ps 89:14; Jer 9:23; Hosea 2:19; 12:6 and Matthew 12:7). In his assignment to the people of Israel, they are required to bear his image in this regard and to follow in his ways of justice and righteousness by *doing* justice and righteousness and not just to have a mental assent to it (Gen 18:19). The leaders of the Israelites, especially the kings, were expected to implement policies and systems that would nurture and

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secure an acceptable standard of living for all the subjects under their rule (2 Samuel 8:15; 1 Kgs 3:7-9; Ps 72:1-2; Jer 22:3). Therefore, and already in the days of antiquity, the love of God for people's holistic well-being is very evident. God's concern for the welfare of especially the poor and needy (Ps 72:2, 4) and also the refugee, the orphan and the widow (Jer 22:3) demonstrates that he expects the same attitude from those whom he places in positions of power. These social concern policies were critical for God because "faithful attention to these concerns determines God's evaluation of one's true loyalties" (Ballentine in Mills & Wilson: 1997: xviii). Even in contemporary society, God still expects leaders and governments to take good care of its entire population especially those who have become marginalized.

(3) God's Justice

With regard to God's justice, Ballentine (1997) asserts that there is a certain standard of justice which God expects – that God would faithfully differentiate between the righteous and the wicked (Ps 1) and that he always acts consistently in accordance with this standard (Gen 18:22-25; Ezek 18:1-32). God's standards of justice are above human standards of justice. Imperatively, it is the human standard that needs to be aligned to the divine standard. God therefore is in no way bound to the fragile standards of human justice. Instead God wants to empower humanity with the divine capacity to implement just policies so that his blessings of well-being, and not his wrath, could be experienced within every sphere of society. In the final analysis, therefore, God's blessings of compassion and undeserved forgiveness of humanity overrides the notion of the requirement of human justice (Exo 33:19; Hosea 11:8-9; Jonah 4:1-5; 9-11). This reveals God's ultimate sovereignty and character and in a sense prepares the way to think about the necessity of human justice to have its foundation within the idea of this compassionate, forgiving, and caring nature of divine justice.

A significant and vital component of the book of Amos is that its message is directed not only at one specific sector of the society but to all areas. On closer examination, those who contributed to the decadence and to the unjust treatment of the poor could be found in economic, political and religious sectors – all of which are crucial to the

stability of communities and the nation at large. This shows just how interconnected life is and that, as far as possible, these should not be polarized from one another especially if it is going to be detrimental to the marginalized people of society. These sectors should instead serve as vehicles in a cooperative, networked approach to assist those people living on the fringes of society, and should not be abused to bring about more hardship on already-poor people.

God, through Amos, makes his feelings known towards the economic, political and religious leaders of the day. God was angry that the very people, who were supposed to take care of the marginalized and vulnerable, were in fact abusing their God-given power to oppress and dehumanize their "brothers and sisters" (alluded to in 1:11) for their own, selfish gain. Such a message should not be lost in contemporary society and today, Christians especially, should begin to talk more about justice and righteousness (an act) in an age where more people are entering into a material state of poverty that has a dehumanizing effect on them and their families.

4.2.7 OT Summary

By utilizing a limited option (the book of Amos) and having analysed certain key features of what the OT says about poverty, it is evident that justice plays a specific, restorative task in the lives of poor people. The many laws centred in the Sabbath and Jubilee Years, for example, emphasized the importance of the poor to God and also demonstrated how God expected the non-poor to take care of the marginalized persons in society. While the book of Amos sheds light on the need for justice locally, it simultaneously warns that justice is also a global matter. Referring to Amos 1: 13, Van Til (2007:72) summarizes:

> In light of this global applicability of covenant law, various passages in Scripture condemn not only Israel but also the surrounding nations for their greed, violence, and practices of economic injustice. For example Amos 1: 13 reads: 'For crime after crime of the Ammonites I shall grant them no reprieve, because in their greed for land they ripped open the pregnant women in Gilead.' This and other passages show that these covenant laws were not merely local customs but precepts that were applicable worldwide, as they reflected the nature of God's own justice.

This justice according to Van Til (2007) embraces God's demand that the poor, the widow, and the stranger receive essential sustenance. Laws such as these continue to

be valid and now function to create a 'biblical jurisprudential tradition,' which continues to direct Christians.

Strongly linked to the idea of pursuing justice on behalf of the poor is the notion of *advocacy* for the poor. While Gutierrez (1973) aligns the pursuit of justice for the poor as *solidarity* with the poor, Van Til (2007:73) draws strongly from the OT to postulate an advocacy view on behalf of poor people. Using a rudimentary understanding that "the poor are people who suffer physical want, Van Til (2007:74-5) emphasizes that justice in Israel necessitated advocacy for such persons. As seen in Jer. 22:16 Van Til (2007) shows that Josiah was commended by the prophet Jeremiah for being a good king who defended the poor. Such an understanding therefore supports the notion that God, while not at all being absent from what happens in the world, justly expects the non-poor, especially those who are in authority in governments, to act justly in meeting the most basic needs of all who would be called poor. Van Til (2007) stresses that advocacy for the poor is founded in God's own special concern for them. Drawing from Mott and Sider, Van Til (2007:75) provides four ways how God views this "special concern" for the poor:

1. The Sovereign God works throughout history to uplift the poor and oppressed

2. Sometimes the Lord of history tears down the rich and powerful people because the rich sometimes get rich by oppressing the poor

3. God identifies with the poor so strongly that caring for them is almost like helping God (Prov. 19:17)

4. God commands that his people share his special concern for the poor (Exod. 22:21-24; Deut. 15:13-15)

Throughout the earlier discussions about the import of the Sabbath and Jubilee Years, as well as that of Amos and other OT references, it can be concluded that God turns to people to participate in, and come to the rescue of other less fortunate people. Drawing from Van Til (2007) one is able to see again the relationship in a proposed *God-Poor-Non-poor* nexus (figure 6) that can also be interpreted as the relational dimension of the God-other-self nexus illustrated earlier (figure 1, above) in the discourse on poverty.
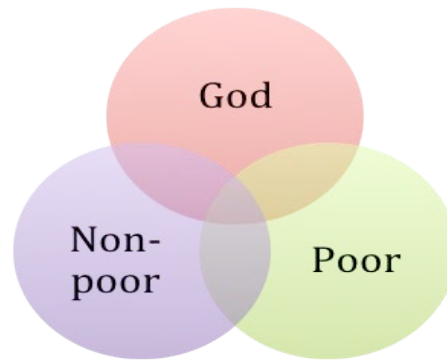
Figure 9. The *Poor* in relation to *God* and the *Non-poor*

This relationship, when broken, will inevitably lead to, and perpetuate poverty because it implies a lack of solidarity, advocacy and action on behalf of the marginalized. Van Til (2007) implies that advocacy is both Divine and human (although the human source is Divine too). He explains as follows

> the claims made by the poor work in both directions. That is, on the one hand, God hears the cries of the poor and considers them to be legitimate claims. On the other hand, God turns to the people of Israel and mandates that they be the means by which provision is made. There is a cycle of care and responsibility: God cares for the poor and hears their cries, and God establishes laws that require Israel to help the poorest and weakest

Thus, when the non-poor fails to side with the poor, or relent from advocating their cause, it becomes a direct violation against God and also again the well being of a fellow human being. The implications of turning the proverbial blind eye to the dehumanizing state of the poor means a deepening of the poverty of the poor. As viewed from the perspective of the non-compliance to Sabbath Year and Jubilee principles by the non-poor, it could be claimed that this lack of action on behalf of the poor was a sustaining force that fuelled poverty. Besides the indifference and inaction by the non-poor, there were also those who were not only silent when it came to justice for the poor, but who actually exacerbated the poor's plight by stealing from them, oppressing them and enslaving people, in order to accumulate possessions and wealth. So while it is important to have an attitude of advocacy and solidarity with the poor, it goes without saying that oppression of the poor by the non-poor is the one area of global concern that needs to be addressed in order to bring about liberation for them. This relational aspect of poverty, as attested to in the OT, is continued in the NT.

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4.3 POVERTY AND WEALTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

4.3.1. Introduction

Having considered the subject of poverty from an OT perspective, it is self-evident that a study of the NT ought to follow. In the same way as the OT is explicit in its treatment of poverty, so too does the NT also address the important issue. In his work *Less than two Dollars a day: A Christian view of world poverty and the free market,* Van Til (2007:73) declares that the responsibility to care for the weak in society is maintained in the NT. The NT (as in the Gospel of Luke and James) continues the pursuit of justice and righteousness for the poor, which was previously advocated in the OT (as witnessed in Amos). While the central theme of the Bible revolves around the promised salvation of humankind, one of the most important life-issues that is integrally connected with salvation, is that of poverty. In this respect the Bible is consistent throughout and raises critical awareness of the plight of the poor. This situation, where the plight of the poor is of paramount importance in everyday life raises further vital questions: Why does the Bible, and Jesus in the NT, place so much emphasis on the basic human needs of the poor? What ought people to do for poor neighbours? Furthermore, how important are the issues of riches and poverty in the OT and New Testament? What relevance do these texts hold for today?

As seen in the previous OT discussion, the reality of poor people is given serious attention. In revisiting what the OT says about poverty and riches, it is evident that God places a high value on the just treatment of the poor. The Decalogue, Sabbath Year, and Jubilee Year, as well as substantial passages in the book of Amos, are glowing examples that reveal the thoughts of God on the matter. As understood in Amos, this high value (of well-being) placed on human life is to be attained through the continual practice of justice and righteousness by the non-poor. Failure to do justice and righteousness would therefore imply complicity in injustice and unrighteous behaviour. This attitude of doing what is just and righteous is personified in the NT through the life and work of the Servant, Jesus Christ. The NT, throughout the synoptic Gospels as well as the writings of the Apostle Paul such as in the epistle to James, is saturated with what it means to serve the poor.

However, the Gospel of Luke, more than any other book in the NT, addresses poverty and wealth very pertinently. While there are other NT vantage points that one could

assume concerning a discussion on the poor (such as James' scathing attack on the rich), the writer would draw from the Gospel of Luke's substantial resources on the topic of poverty. The apostle, Luke, wrote from a particular perspective that highlighted economic matters in particular. Thus the thrust of much of Luke's recordings of Jesus' words and deeds has a particular message that appears to address the idea of well-being of the poor while not excluding the social and spiritual well-being of the rich. Therefore, the writer will limit this part of the dissertation mainly to Lukan views of the poor, and the rich, because this Gospel provides valuable – but not exclusive – insight into how people ought to think about wealth and poverty, but more importantly, about the *other*.

While it is generally agreed that the NT undoubtedly emphasizes that the poor are important to God, it is also "common knowledge that Luke has a particular interest in the poor and other marginalized groups" (Bosch, 1991:98). In this respect, the writer will focus specifically on the significance of Jesus's ministry as witnessed in the Gospel of Luke, especially with how this ministry was particularly (but not exclusively) aimed at the poor, who always found themselves marginalized on the fringes of society. In addition, Bosman (et al) (1990:101) believe that "the Gospel according to Luke is indisputably the NT book which devotes most attention to wealth and poverty." Similarly, Prior (1995:163) contends, "The Gospel of Luke is commonly regarded as 'the Gospel of the poor'". Also gleaning from the Gospel of Luke (4:18; 7:22), Nolan (1988:9) guides the conversation closer to an important point of this chapter by showing that Jesus "says that he has come 'to bring good news to the poor'". Nolan (1988:13) reinforces the point of the message of good news as he highlights the "quality" of what this good news ought to reflect and how it should be concretized today:

> However, what we preach will not be the gospel of Jesus Christ, in fact it will be a false gospel, if it does not have this characteristic of being good news for everyone by being in the first place good news for the poor. That is part of the shape that any message must take if it is to be in truth the gospel.

Lötter (2008) also draws extensively from the Gospel of Luke (more than from any other NT book) in his work, *When I needed a neighbour: Christians and the challenge of poverty*, in his examination of what the NT has to say about poverty.

According to Prior (1995:167) "in the New Testament alone the word *ptõchos* occurs 34 times: ten times in the Gospel of Luke, five in Matthew, five in Mark, and four in John." This Greek word, *ptõchos* (to be discussed later in this chapter), that speaks about the *poor* is so prevalent in the NT, especially in Luke's Gospel, and therefore it conveys a significant message to the reader of the Bible by virtue of its prominence there. Furthermore, based on the content of biblical texts in Gutierrez's *A Theology of Liberation* in which he powerfully addresses the plight of the poor, it is clearly visible that the Gospel of Luke has a significant contribution to make within the NT about the topic of poverty.

4.3.2 What does the NT say about the poor – and the rich?

In examining what the gospel of Luke has to say about poverty, it would be suitable to reflect, more generally, on what the NT has to say about the poor, and also the rich. **Gutierrez** (1973:291) claims persuasively that poverty is a central theme in both the Old and the New Testaments. For Gutierrez, the theme of poverty is treated both briefly and profoundly and describes social situations while also defining "personal attitudes, a whole people's attitudes before God, and the relationships of people with each other" – a critical point of departure in a NT understanding of poverty. At the same time, the Bible seems to portray poverty as a "scandalous condition inimical to human dignity and therefore contrary to the will of God" (Gutierrez, 1973). In this light, Rieger (1998:130; 224) agrees that "theology begins to understand that actual poverty refers to a subhuman condition" and that "it is becoming more obvious every day that the other will not go away. It is not just that people suffering from poverty and oppression are still with us, their numbers are growing". The *other* that Rieger speaks about remain poor because there are other (rich) people who do not construe just relationships (especially economic relations) as a critical component of the eradication of this "scandalous condition" that Gutierrez alludes to. The contrast between the poor and the rich is a clear, strong theme in Luke's view of humanity. Rieger (1998:224) resumes and expresses the urgency of the plight of the poor:

> At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a time when we have all gotten used to the victory of capitalism, poverty levels and other indicators of imbalance and injustice are increasing not only in certain parts of the 'third world' but in the 'first world' as well. There is still much left to be done (and undone).

In dealing with the concept of poverty, a Christian response ought to ask the following questions: *What does the Bible say about poverty? What principles can one learn from the Bible's narratives about poor people's reality of poverty? How can Christians (and non-Christians) meaningfully address poverty today? What does the Bible say about wealth and rich people?*

In his well-known work, "The Theology of Liberation" Gutierrez (1973:291) presents a biblical, yet radical meaning of poverty. Instead of adopting a "romanticized or misrecognized" understanding of the poor, as indicated by Rieger (1998:130), Gutierrez (1973:291) offers a radical three-fold interpretation of poverty:

1. Poverty as a scandalous condition (material poverty)
2. Poverty as spiritual childhood (spiritual poverty)
3. Evangelical poverty (synthesis of solidarity and protest)

For the purposes of this discussion, the writer will focus mainly on the first of Gutierrez's interpretations of poverty, *poverty as a scandalous condition*, since the effects of material poverty holds the most relevance here, and is also profoundly spoken against in both the OT and NT. Thus, by necessity, the *ptõchos* of the NT, becomes the central topic in many of Jesus' teachings as he intentionally links the two concepts of love for God and love for neighbour.

4.3.3 *Ptõchos*: Poverty as a scandalous condition?

In describing his three aspects of poverty, Gutierrez (1973:291) asserts that in the New Testament the Greek word *ptõchos* is applied to speak of a person who is poor. This word *ptõchos* "means one who does not have what is necessary to subsist, the wretched one driven into begging" (Gutierrez, 291). For Bosch (1991:98-9), *ptõchos*, a word that appears ten times in Luke as opposed to five times each in Mark and Matthew, also refers to "want and need" but he expands on its meaning by saying that ptõchos "is moreover often a collective term for all the disadvantaged. All who experience misery are, in some very real sense, the poor". This material poverty is almost synonymous with begging, misery, and near-death experience because of hunger – a telling blow to human dignity one could argue.

In a further explanation of the poor, Gutierrez (1993:28) cites scholars who agree that the basic meaning of ptõchos refer to those who are 'stooped' and dismayed,

connoting the "social and economic inferiority" of those who were deemed to be poor. Moltmann (1993:98) speaks about a "subjected, oppressed and humiliated people" who have become 'non-persons', 'sub-human', dehumanized', 'human fodder'" as a result of poverty. Brown (1990:53) is equally lucid in his understanding of ptõchos:

> The poor are not only economically powerless, without adequate income to support their families, but are politically powerless as well, victims of rigged elections, military intimidation, and social structures that function as though the poor did not exist except for purposes of exploitation by the rich. Attempts by the poor to organize are routinely destroyed with whatever degree of brutality a given situation demands. Threats, 'disappearances' assassinations, massacres and torture are run-of-the-mill responses"

For Prior (1995:167), the significance of the ten[81] occurrences of ptõchos in Luke (as well as the occurrences in the three other Gospels) helps to provide a certain perspective of the poor in the rest of the NT. Bosman et al (1991:102-103) reinforces the importance of the Lukan theme of poverty in the New Testament. When comparing the OT text Isaiah 61:1-4 with Luke 4:16-21, Bosman et al (1991) makes reference to the point of the literal conception of the word "poor". For Bosman (1991), the text of Isaiah 61:1, which is centred on the Hebrew version, speaks of "the afflicted", whereas Luke 4:18 merely refers to "the poor". By applying the Greek version (which also has "poor"), Luke is placing great importance on material poverty. Bosman (1991) continues and asserts that the Greek word for "poor", ptõchos, literally means destitute or "begging poor" and is never generalized or spiritualized in the NT. From the rest of the passage it is apparent that Jesus also had in mind other forms of suffering (notwithstanding ones closely connected with economic poverty). The heavy Lukan emphasis on physical poverty (see also Lk 7:22) not only accords with the trend in the rest of Luke's Gospel…but accentuates the fact that God considers the human being (body and soul) as a unified entity and that Christ came for the sake of the entire person, not just to meet people's pure religious desires (Bosman et al, 1991).

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[81] Prior's ten occurrences of the poor in Luke is helpful for a New Testament perspective on poverty: 1) Luke 4:18: he sent me to evangelize poor people; 2) Luke 6:20: blessed are you poor 3) Luke 7:22: poor people are evangelized; 4) Luke 14:13: …invite poor people; 5) Luke 14:21: bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame; 6) Luke 6:20: And at his gates lay a poor man named Lazarus; 7) Luke 14:22: The poor man died; 8) Luke 18:22: and distribute it to the poor people; 9) Luke 19:8: Half of my goods I give to the poor; 10) Luke 21:3: …this poor widow has put in more than all of them

Drawing from Gutierrez, Bosch, Prior, Moltmann, Brown and Bosman, one could summarize the importance of ptõchos in the Gospel of Luke by sharing Bosman's thoughts that Luke uses selective portions of Isaiah 61 to expound "in a way that communicates his own train of thought to his readers. Its substance concerns Jesus the Messiah who shows compassion for the poor and oppressed." This Lukan perspective is therefore a helpful tool to consider in a New Testament examination of God's view on poor people.

4.3.4 The poor and rich from the Lukan perspective: an illustration
Luke 6:20-26[82]

> 20 Then he lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said:
>
> Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God
>
> 21 Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
>
> 22 Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake.
>
> 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.
>
> 24 But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.
>
> 25 Woe to you who are full, for you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.
>
> 26 Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

As alluded to previously, the Gospel of Luke is filled with significant accounts that describe the poor and the rich (such as in 6:20-26 and 18:18-30). In fact, Bosch (1991:98) asserts that the book of Luke is a "gospel for the poor – and the rich". There are also many texts in Luke, some with problematic statements, which appear to portray the poor as "saints" and condemn the rich as "sinners". Such examples, where the rich are supposedly cast in a negative light, should not lead one to stereotyping all rich people as *bad*, as indicated in 6:24. In fact, Luke (19:1-10) portrays the rich Zacchaeus in an anti-stereotypical way and shows that rich people are equally as important to God as poor people. If anything, Zacchaeus's story shows the positive side of a wealthy person as he responds affirmatively to the view which Jesus holds on money, material possessions and eternal life. Therefore, upon deeper

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[82] This quoted text is taken directly from the New King James Version NKJV) Bible.

inspection, the Gospel of Luke would actually show how that both the poor and the rich are social groups who are in need of God. For one, the Lukan text about Jesus's encounters with the rich, young Zacchaeus demonstrates the compassion that Jesus

has for wealthy people. Zacchaeus, the rich tax collector who was willing to repay four times to the people whom he had stolen from, as well as giving away half of his material possessions (19:8) is, according to the Lukan perspective, equally in need of salvation as those people who were "poor" (6:20). But who are the "poor" that Luke writes about in 6:20-24? How should Luke's reader understand who the poor are in this pericope?

The "poor" that Luke refers to here are the same "poor in spirit" in Matthew's parallel writing (Matt. 5:3-12) which also describes the Beatitudes of Jesus's sermon on the mountain: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". For Hayford (1991:1521) there are spiritual implications in the terms *poor*, *hunger*, *weep* and *hate* in the Luke 6:20-26 text. Hayford (1991) asserts that "Jesus does not commend poverty, hunger, sorrow, and reproach in themselves". These unfortunate sufferings bring blessings only when they are endured through discipleship for "for the Son of Man's sake" (v. 22). Instead, "poverty of spirit, hungering after righteousness, weeping over one's sins, and social ostracism for the sake of Christ are sources of blessings", insists Hayford (1991). For him, the term "poor" signifies "the humble poor whose trust is in God's help in the midst of their poverty. Isaak in Adeyemo (2006:1216), on the other hand, believes that Jesus's words in Luke 6:20b-26 "must have been addressed to the hungry, powerless and socially dispossessed people around Jesus". Here, Luke's showing of Jesus' focus on the poor reveals something of what it means to be a Christian community in a world plagued by poverty. Pertaining to this Lukan text, Isaak in Adeyemo (2006) states profoundly:

> When Jesus says that the poor are blessed, he is stating a principle. We are responsible for formulating concrete ethics and principles and policies that will ensure blessedness for the poor today. Theologically speaking, with God's blessings and under the command of the God who co-exists with us, we are invited to take up the task of eradicating poverty while addressing and finding solutions to the challenges facing Africa and the world at large.

Based on the Luke 6:20-26 text, Lötter (2008:136) too, provides an insightful presentation of the Lukan beatitudes that illustrates the significance of poverty and wealth. Lötter's presentation can be summed up as follows:

BLESSINGS		WOES
Happy are you *poor*	<--->	How terrible for you who are *rich* now
The Kingdom of God is yours	<--->	You have had your easy life
Happy are you who are *hungry* now	<--->	How terrible for you who are *full* now
You will be *filled*	<--->	You will go *hungry*
Happy are you who *weep* now	<--->	How terrible for you who *laugh* now
You will *laugh*	<--->	You will *mourn and weep*
Happy are you when people *hate you, reject you, insult you*…all because of the Son of Man	<--->	How terrible for you when all people *speak well* of you
Their ancestors did the very same thing to the *prophets*	<--->	Their ancestors did the very same things about the *false prophets*

Table 8 Lukan Contrasts: Poverty and Wealth

Lötter's presentation here, at first glance, appears somewhat problematic though. Drawing from the original Lukan text, Lötter seemingly categorizes the poor and the rich in such a way that it appears as if all poor people are blessed and that all rich people are condemned. Gutierrez (1973:297) also confirms that "this has naturally led to the thinking that the poor whom he blesses are the opposite of the rich whom he condemns". This difficulty further implies that the poor would become glorified as a social class and "the privileged of the Kingdom, even having their access to it assured, not by any choice on their part but by a socio-economic situation which had been imposed on them" (Gutierrez, 1973). Clearly, this cannot be true because it would contradict Luke's intentions regarding evangelism of all people, as can be evidenced in the important case of the rich tax collector, Zacchaeus (see Lk. 19:1-10).

While not in any way referring to *all* rich or poor people in all situations, Lötter (2008:136) here believes that Luke assumes a relationship between the rich and the poor in Luke 6:20-26. For Lötter (2008), a poignant reality is that "at the heart of this relationship is the fact that these poor people are poor because these specific rich people are rich". This idea resonates with that of Gutierrez (1973:292-3) who claims

that "poverty is not caused by fate; it is caused by the actions of those whom…grind the heads of the poor into the earth. There are poor because some people are victims of others". Borrowing from James H. Cone, Rieger (1998:4) describes this poor-rich relationship as "the asymmetry between oppressors and oppressed". Bosch (1991:99) asserts further that, "what Luke says about the rich can only be understood against the background of this portrait of the poor". In essence, what all these commentators allude to is nothing short of the poverty-inducing relationship that exists between the rich and the poor.

In addition, Buckwalter (1996:250) illustrates the importance of the Luke 4:16-30 text. The author argues that this text, with its early introduction in the Gospel, sets the tone for Jesus' mission and public ministry. Furthermore, its early placement in Luke also highlights the importance of the theme of poverty in the discourse. Prior (1995:141) also gives significance to the Luke 4:16-30 pericope. For Prior (1996), in what is virtually the first scene of the Galilean Ministry, Lk. 4.16-30 locates Jesus in the context of his own town, in active dialogue with his own people, in their synagogue. In line with Luke's general resolve to place Jesus' ministry within his own religious custom, the heart of the encounter is on their Scriptures, specifically that section from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah which Jesus translated. The brief Lukan story then suggests that the core of Jesus' message is the good news of Isaiah 61, formerly focused on the comforting of the returned refugees from Babylon, is transferred into good news for *all* who are oppressed. These oppressed would by implication also mean all those people who are also poor. The Isaiah text as recorded by Luke is free of any suggestion to that elitism or exclusiveness which is a hallmark of many religious customs. Ethnicity and 'separatism' are also being challenged. The introduction of Isa. 58.6 into the Isa. 61 text deepens the social implications of Jesus' announcement of freedom.

These social (and spiritual) implications of Jesus's announcement of freedom are strongly mooted by Schrage (1988:159). The author affirms that Luke is deeply troubled with the problem of possessions and their repudiation, the proper place and use of worldly goods, all of which could have a negative socio-economic effect. This unease is illustrated by the exemplary narratives, which describe clearly how riches and earthly belongings can stand in the way of salvation. Luke clearly embraced

everything recorded by custom concerning these questions. No one can serve both God and mammon ((Luke 16:13): it is challenging for the rich to enter into the kingdom, more difficult than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (18:24-25). Although Luke himself set the fulfilment of the promises of redemption for the poor in a context that surpasses economics (4:18), he does not thereby limit poverty to the metaphorical significance of a 'religious category.' Both social and religious alienation are overcome. Luke clearly repelled the temptation to lessen the severity of Jesus' sayings about riches.

Buckwalter (1996) shows further that, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus meticulously portrays himself and his mission in terms of some distinguished OT images of godly agents. The more significant ones include the Davidic messiah, Daniel's Son of Man, the Deuteronomic prophet-like Moses and Isaiah's suffering servant. What, however, was unknown to pre-Christian Judaism but distinctive to Jesus is the way he identified himself as the suffering messiah and the suffering son of man. According to Luke, at least, in all probability, Jesus' understanding of his mission in terms of Isaiah's suffering servant had largely influenced this merging of images.

As mentioned earlier, Buckwalter (1996:251) claims that the key passage in this regard is Luke 4:16-30. Whether Luke is gleaning from another source here – perhaps modifying Mark 6:1-6 or Matt. 13:53-58), the argument remains the same: in contrast to Mark, he assigns the episode thematic prominence for both the Gospels and Acts. Its placement in the Gospel indicates its significance for Luke. Whereas Mark and Matthew mention the occurrence well into Jesus' ministry, Luke shifts it to the opening. After Jesus' enticement (Luke 4:1-13) and a brief summary of his Galilean ministry (4:14-15), Luke quickly introduces the "suffering servant". In Luke's Gospel, the narrative announces Jesus' public ministry. It is only after the story that we see Jesus restoring the sick, raising the dead, driving out demons, proclaiming the good news, and calling disciples. Here Buckwalter (1996) emphasizes importantly that Luke straightforwardly connects these incidences to the Nazareth story. The Nazareth story portrays *what* Luke will say in the Gospel and Acts about Jesus' earthly works; and as crucially, it unveils *how* he intends to depict Jesus to his readers in the entirety of his writing. The story symbolizes Luke's reason for writing: to provide his readers with a standard of servanthood taken from Jesus' life, demonstrating to them 'how they can and should live as Jesus lived.' To this end the

Nazareth story appears, as some have defined it, as 'an inaugural address,' 'a frontis-piece,' or 'an introduction to the whole of Luke-Acts.

Buckwalter (1996:254) sums up the attitude of Jesus' earthly ministry:

> Jesus says: 'For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves' (22:27).

To see the Lord Jesus aright is to see him as a servant.

Thus, in terms of Isa. 61:1-4 (Luke 4:16-30), Luke demonstrates why this periscope is so important in Jesus' earthly ministry. Given the acts of compassion towards the poor and the message of good news for all, Prior, Schrage and Buckwalter propose a plausible thesis that Jesus's ministry particularly to the poor, is explicit and holds thematic significance in the Gospel of Luke.

4.3.5 The Year of Jubilee in Luke?

Another important (and contested) contribution that Prior makes pertaining to the significance of Luke 4:16-30, pertains to the pericope's connection with the OT feature of the Year of Jubilee. For Prior (1995:139-141), much contemporary literature situates the Lukan text (Luke 4:16-30) in the context of the Jewish Year of Jubilee. Despite the popularity of the idea, Prior (1996) claims that it remains to be proven that the 'acceptable year' of Isaiah 61 must be understood to mean the Jubilee Year, and that the Nazareth text must be understood against the background of the features of that year. Prior (1996:141) asks: What is the justification for deducing that the acceptable year of Isaiah 61 is the Jubilee Year of Leviticus 25.13, 28?

The Holy Years advised in the book of Leviticus (ch. 25) are aimed at prolonging to the land itself a rest corresponding to that provided for humans and beasts by the weekly Sabbath (Exodus. 20.8-11; Deut. 5.12-15). Orientals left the land uncultivated at specified intervals to assure its impending fertility. The Israelites added to that practice a spiritual motivation: as Yahweh's property, the land should enjoy a Sabbath of solemn rest, a Sabbath to the Lord, a full Sabbatical Year (Lev. 25.2-7). During the Sabbatical Year, planting, pruning and harvesting were prohibited. The year after the seventh sabbatical, that is, every fiftieth year, was a Jubilee Year (Lev. 25.8-55). The year commenced on the Day of Atonement, and was a festivity of *freedom* (translated as liberty or freedom i.e. *aphesis*, v. 10) for *all* the inhabitants of the land.

As Prior (1996) emphasizes, *aphesis* (liberation) appears in several contexts in the OT, for example, Jer. 41.8, in which the king declares freedom, and Deut. 15.12 in which slaves are freed. But Luke does not use the language unique to Jubilee (no sowing, no pruning, no rest for the land, no day of atonement, and so on). Neither does he develop exclusively Jubilee notions in the passage of his literature. However, Luke's own understanding of *aphesis* must be a key component in the debate. He uses the word five times in the Gospel (1.77; 3.3; 4.18 twice; and 24.47), and five in Acts (2.38; 5.31; 10.43; 13.38; 26.18). In every case, with the one exception of the quotation from Isaiah 61, the *freedom* under discussion is that of *liberation from sin*. The forgiveness of sins is an important element in the ministry of John the Baptist (Lk. 1.77 and 3.3), and of Jesus (Lk. 5.17-26; 7.36-50; 24.46-47). It is reasonable to conclude that in his use of the word from Isa. 61. Luke comprehended the forgiveness of sins to be a major element of the liberation he had in mind. Forgiveness of sins, for Luke, requires repentance, the good news of liberation from sin is no cheap grace – it involves stripping oneself of possessions, and giving to the poor – as seen in some of his narratives. However, whether the Lukan text (4:16-30) was set against the backdrop of the Jubilee Year or not is almost irrelevant. What is more relevant, is the fact that both the Jubilee Year and the Lukan periscope proclaimed freedom or liberation for all people. Both further implied 1) love for God and and 2) love for one's neighbour. In other words, in both instances, the improved quality of life of people was (and still is) at the very centre of God's plan for humankind.

The idea of liberation from sin as the ultimate form of freedom is taken further by Moltmann (1993) in *The Way of Jesus Christ*. With reference to the gospel of the kingdom of God to the poor, Moltmann (1993:94) espouses a gospel of freedom. In this regard, Moltmann (1993) asserts that Jesus's mission embraced his proclamation and his acts, his acts and his suffering, as well as life and his death. As part of his all-embracing mission, Jesus arrived in the lives of the poor as "God's messianic messenger of joy", following the promise of Isa. 61.1 (Moltmann 1993:95).

As far as this gospel of freedom is concerned, the author states that the OT meaning of proclaiming a gospel meant bringing a "message of joy, heralding a victory, announcing salvation". For Moltmann (1993), this gospel is the light which salvation throws ahead of itself and is nothing less than the arrival of the coming God in the word. In other words, says Moltmann, "salvation runs ahead of itself and appears in

the gospel; and the gospel is the beginning in word of the epiphany of the coming God. It therefore concurs that the gospel is not some utopian description of some far-off future but it is literally "the daybreak of this future in the pardoning, promising word that sets people free" (Moltmann 1993:95-96). Thus, when one reflects on Bosch, Bosman and others' perspective of the usage of Isa. 61 in Luke's gospel, then Jesus's words as portrayed by Luke hold crucial significance for Moltmann (1993:96) and reflect three important truths:

1. In relation to God, he declares the unswerving lordship of the Creator without restrictions and without end
2. In relation to human beings, he announces justice, community and liberty – good news
3. His message is addressed to the poor, the wretched, the sick and the hopeless because they are the people who suffer most from God's remoteness and human hostility

Considering these three claims of truth, it is therefore important to ask the question, like Moltmann (1993:101) does, *What does the gospel bring the poor?* In a brief answer, Moltmann poignantly asserts that the gospel brings poor people "a new dignity". This dignity speaks about poor and marginalized people finding their true worth and also defining themselves accordingly, and could be summarized as follows:

1. The poor, the slaves and the prostitutes are no longer the inert objects of repression and humiliation; they are now their own conscious subjects, with all the dignity of God's first children
2. The gospel brings them…the assurance of their indestructible dignity in God's sight. With this awareness, the poor, slaves and prostitutes can get up out of the dust and help themselves
3. The gospel of the kingdom of God…vanquishes the self-hate that the poor often have of themselves and gives them courage to walk with their heads held high because they know that God is on their side
4. Although the man of violence has excluded them from the pleasures and also the opportunities of the present, God has thrown open the future of the poor and has made them heirs of his coming kingdom

5. Thus, if this hope spreads, then this future becomes the authority for their liberation and the source of their strength. The poor become God's children in this world of violence and injustice

6. Lastly, Moltmann (1993) stresses that Jesus' promise does not put the poor on the path to becoming richer, which is a way that is always troubled with violence; it puts them on the track to community instead, which, as the feeding of the five thousand shows, is determined by the culture of sharing

Based on the above assertion, one could claim that the poor were especially the people whom Jesus sought after during his short period of ministry on earth. Almost reciprocally, poor people also sought after Jesus because he was a tangible symbol of hope and brought radical transformation to their lives in spiritual, physical, psychological, emotional and social ways. Through his compassionate deeds and also his empathetic ways with them, he showed that he was an advocate for them, which gave them real hope. The mere fact that people sought after Jesus, walked many miles to be liberated, and also taking their neighbours along on these journeys, is clear evidence of a crucial principle in development: *participation*. Whether people were inspired or motivated by Jesus or not, many of them were the main actors in their own liberation. Gutierrez (1973:113) endorses this point by asserting, "…the process of liberation requires the active participation of the oppressed… it is the poor who must be the protagonists in their own liberation…the participation of the oppressed presupposes an awareness on their part of their unjust situation". In this respect, Walter Bragg In Samuel & Sugden (1987:40-47) cites participation as one of eleven key principles[83] of Christian transformation.

Finally, Moltmann (1993:102) discusses the idea of liberation through conversion. In this discussion, it becomes clear that liberation is meant for both the rich and the poor. Here Moltmann (1993) points out that the gospel of Jesus "has two faces, according to the group to which it turns". In some ways, Moltmann's understanding that conversion is needed only by the rich and not by the poor appears problematic. Whereas when Jesus proclaims to the poor the kingdom of God without conditions and calls them blessed, the gospel (of Mark) calls the rich to conversion. This gives

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[83] See the end of this section for a description of Bragg's principles.

the appearance that only the rich need to repent or ought to be converted. On the other hand, the understanding pertaining to the poor could mean that they have nothing (like wealth or material possessions) that could serve as obstacles to inheriting the kingdom of God.

Presumably then, the path of the poor to inherit eternal life and the kingdom of God would be "easier" than for a rich person caught in the trappings of wealth. Scobie (2003:844-5) helps to shed more light on the problem that implies that the poor supposedly have less need of conversion than the rich in a special reference to Luke 6:20 and qualifies why the rich are need of liberation:

> …Jesus shows a special concern for the 'poor'…Jesus pronounces a blessing on the 'poor'…Jesus recognized the special needs of those who were literally poor, those who were ill, those who were possessed, those who were the outcasts of society – in short those who because they lacked wealth, power and privilege were in a better position to recognize their own weakness and vulnerability and hence their need of God's help. On the other hand it involves a condemnation of the rich. The rich are condemned where their riches are amassed at the expense of the poor.

As Jesus qualifies *why* he feels that the rich are condemned, he also qualifies *how* the rich can be saved. The example of the wealthy tax collector, Zacchaeus, in Luke 19:1-10, demonstrates that the rich can also share in the kingdom of God and receive salvation. Here Scobie (2003:844) stresses the principle that when a rich person is able to "let go" of even a portion of his/her wealth in obedience to Jesus, then it opens the door for salvation for that person if that person does not have a relationship with God yet. As in the case of Zacchaeus, the tax collector "made restitution to all he had defrauded and gave half his possessions to the poor…thereby finding salvation – freedom from sin and from selfishness" (Scobie 2003). Zacchaeus' action here represents the positive side of the rich-poor relationship that highlights an acknowledgement of wrong-doing but which also pays restitution to those who have been wrongfully and unjustly harmed. More importantly, it shows that his newly-found love for Jesus has now been concretized through his action of loving restitution to the people whom he had previously robbed. Schrage (1988), in his *Ethics of the New Testament*, shows that Zaccheus' choice of action here reflected that Christian life is rooted in love and obedience to God. If one could use the words of Schrage (1988:245-6) then Zacchaeus' action could be seen in the light that "it is the saving

act of Christ that provides the basis for the corresponding actions of Christians." Although Zaccheus had just been transformed and saw the error of his ways, his actions showed that, as in 1 Pet. 4:2 and 5:2, Christians are called upon to love. Schrage (1988) stresses further that in other examples, the motivating relationship implies also a relationship of conformity: 'Walk in love, as Christ loved us' (Eph. 5:2; cf. 5:25).' For Schrage, the 'new creation' of the human race through Christ (which Zacchaeus had just become) is immediately interpreted as 'creation for good works' (Eph. 2:10). With reference to this specific text, Schrage (1988:246) claims correctly that Eph. 2:10 points to a "common Christian life style that would distinguish the Christian community from the surrounding world". Surely Zacchaeus' decision to part with half of his wealth must have been a "revelation" to all who had witnessed it. But the revelation served to inform the observers that Christian love is more than mere words but is rooted in concrete deeds of good works.

For Schrage (1988), all this shows that ethics has the same foundation as in Paul: God's present and future act of salvation in Jesus Christ is the basis and impetus of Christian conduct. Here, too, ethics is not autonomous but linked indissolubly with God's action. "Without new birth, there is no new obedience. Without hope, there is no basis for Christian life." The new birth of Zacchaeus thus shows that the starting point for treating others in a godly, loving manner is centred in Christ when a personal transformation, conversion if you like, takes place within a person. From there on, this transformation creates hope because it is in that very transformation that the "newly-born" person acts in obedience to God and starts to think of the "other" in a way that engenders hope. What is at issue, for Schrage, is Christian humanity toward the persecuted in a hostile environment. The conduct of Christians informed by love can make a difference to people who are economically persecuted, and who more often than not find themselves in a unforgiving, hostile and violent economic environment.

4.3.6 Lovelessness and Poverty

As alluded to in Moltmann's "man of violence", Gutierrez (1973:295) asserts the rich-poor relationship that induces poverty is often a relationship in which the most important virtue, love, is absent. For this reason, Gutierrez (1973) explains that "poverty is an expression of a sin, that is, of a negation of love" and this "is therefore

incompatible with the coming of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of love and justice". Bosch (1991:98) affirms Luke's particular interest in the poor and marginalized groups but he also indicates that the important juxtaposition of the rich-poor relationship is sustained throughout the gospel. Alluding to a relationship that is not centred in God, Bosch (1991:99) further suggests the rich are "lovers of money" (Luke 16:14) rather than lovers of God. For Bosch (1991),

> The rich are primarily those who are greedy, who exploit the poor, who are so bent on making money that they do not even allow themselves the time to accept an invitation to a banquet (Luke 14:18f), who do not notice the Lazarus at their gate (16:20), who conduct a hedonistic lifestyle but are nonetheless…choked by cares about those very riches (8:14). They are, at the same time, slaves and worshippers of Mammon.

One can therefore determine that poverty is really about lovelessness. It is as a result of oppressors oppressing other people. It is, in a sense, rich people (again it must be reiterated that not all rich people are oppressors) who oppress poor people. Poverty therefore exists because the idea of love, as promoted by Jesus, is absent. If one could again reflect on the earlier example that relates to the tax collector, Zacchaeus, then it could be asserted that he represented, at his conversion, what it means to be a man of love as opposed to a man of violence. In understanding that what Jesus had to offer him was immeasurably more valuable than his amassed wealth, Zacchaeus must have seen the error of his cheating lifestyle and decided to make amends by giving up half of his wealth to the poor, in a practical demonstration of love.

The absence of love is therefore dangerous and can lead to oppression, which in turn leads to poverty. It is here that Moltmann (1993:99) provides the enemy of the poor: *the man of violence*. According to Moltmann (1993) then, this man of violence is someone "who makes someone else poor and enriches himself at the other's expense". One could therefore argue that the man of violence is therefore someone who is essentially a loveless person who is only interested in selfishly and indiscriminately stealing from and oppressing others. As depicted in the example of the tax collector in Luke 19:1-10, the NT shows that the rich cheat on others and exploit their power at the cost of the powerless who can seldom defend themselves. Moltmann (1993) therefore argues that the God of the rich is the unjust god, Mammon. The man of violence epitomises those who are lovers of money rather than

lovers of God and other people. For this reason the rich have to be exposed as unjust men of violence.

By contrasting the Matthew 5:3-10 version with that of the Lukan version of the beatitudes, Lötter (2008:135) claims that the Matthean focus "is on the spiritual qualities of truly happy and blessed people" as opposed to how "Luke emphasizes real life circumstances in which people are living". For Bosch (1991:117) though, with regard to the general focus of Lukan theology, it is clear that "we may thus detect a major element in Luke's missionary paradigm in what he writes about the new relationship between rich and poor". While acknowledging the parallels between Matthew and Luke pertaining to the beatitudes, Bosch (1991) nevertheless points out that a significant difference between the two gospels is Matthew's emphasis on general justice as opposed to Luke's "peculiar interest in economic justice" (as exemplified in Lk. 3:10-14). Given the import of Jesus' perspective as seen in the Lukan perspective of wealth and poverty it is, therefore, already quite evident that this inseparable, life-defining topic of poverty-wealth is an extremely important element, if not the most important, in the church's on-going missional task.

4.4 JESUS THE INCARNATE SERVANT

If the church is to understand the importance of siding with the poor as witnessed in Jesus' ministry, then it would be doing so because of its acknowledgement that Jesus served people in a relevant way. For Buckwalter (1996:75), Luke chapters 4-7 provide the foundations that "give the proper Lukan Christological perspectives undergirding his portrayal of Jesus as the standard for Christian living". As the standard-bearer of relevant Christian ministry then, Jesus was engaged in the lives of the poor throughout his three and a half years of ministry. The Gospel accounts, especially in Luke, emphasize Jesus's compassion and active participation in helping the poor to address their poverty. This participation and siding with the poor is what Gutierrez (1973:299) defines as *solidarity*. Greene (2003:21) believes that the church can only really know Jesus if it is fully engaged in his mission to the world. In other words, Greene here implies that any claim to identity with Jesus is conditional to the claimant's sincere commitment to participating in this mission to the world, in an attitude of solidarity with marginalized and poor people. Greene explains:

> We know Jesus primarily not through our own religious experience or through membership of the Church, important as both these may well be, but through a life which is conformed to his search for righteousness and infused with his love and compassion for his fellow human beings ('christopraxis'). We only really know the Messiah when we are committed to, and immersed in, his Messianic mission to the world…No Christological confession can finally grasp the full significance of Jesus because his own history of engagement with the world is not yet finished…He is…still 'on the way' toward the full realization of his reign in the affairs of the world. Not surprisingly, this also implies that every Christology is contextualized. We join him on the way in the context of one particular episode of history and we seek to interpret him to our contemporaries as the one who still heals our infirmities and diseases

Greene's contribution here introduces three vital points. In the first place, the Christian is challenged to orientate her entire life (and by implication, one's lifestyle) in service to others, seeking justice and righteousness with sincere love and compassion. This service to others takes place in history, in time and space, with other human beings, and in specific contexts. The second argument that emanates from Greene's view is that knowing Jesus appears to be inextricably linked to how the Church relates to the physiological, emotional, spiritual, and social needs of people in distress. Identification with Christ implies identifying with the needy fellow human beings. Therefore, it appears, being attentive to the needs of others, whilst also acting "christologically" to meet those needs, is the Church or Christians' litmus test for "really knowing" Christ. Similarly, Lötter (2008:128) argues that "Good deeds and right actions are an integral part of faith and thus legitimate tests as to whether a person's faith is a living and active faith". The emphasis on the value of faith and action is prominent in the New Testament book of James (2:14-26) and highlights the importance of both values as opposed to an either-or scenario. In the third and final place, Greene advocates a position of partnership between Christ and the Church in the mission to other human beings. The mission passed on by Christ to the Church to lovingly and compassionately effect change amongst humankind, is also a mission of hope, where justice, righteousness, healing and other Kingdom of God values is still being realized in history. At the same time, while the Church engages in a spirit of relevance in the world with Christ, it also patiently awaits the consummation of Christ's reign in history.

The fact of Jesus' relevance to a poor society can be seen in his nature as the incarnate servant. For Sobrino (2008:113), Jesus' presence amongst people, especially the poor, was his 'historical incarnation in the people's struggles for justice and liberation.' Subsequently, Sobrino (2008) links Jesus' actions with that of today's Church in this regard:

> There is food for thought in these words today, when we in the Church and society almost don't know what to do with the people in the struggle for justice and liberation.

But what relevance does Jesus' incarnation hold for the church today? To talk about Jesus' ministry to the poor (and to all humankind) is to talk in essence about the Incarnate God who loves humankind so much that he was even willing to live amongst people in the form of a human person. Through Jesus' loving act of incarnation, "Christ became man, died, and rose from the dead to set us free so that we might enjoy freedom" (Gutierrez, 1973:300). The author suggests further that this *kenosis* (Phil. 2: 6-11), in which Christ became human and poured out his life for humankind, and although "He was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9), epitomizes the ultimate servant attitude of Jesus. However, in Christ's kenosis, he does not take on the human sinful condition. Gutierrez asserts here that Jesus, instead, becomes human "because of love for and solidarity with men who suffer…"

Alluding to Jesus' incarnation, and concurring with Gutierrez, Ellacuria, a Roman Catholic priest speaking on the life and quoting the martyred Archbishop Romero in Sobrino (2008:122), emphasizes that 'Jesus had the justice to go to the depths, and at the same time, he had the eyes and the bowels of mercy to understand human beings…' From this vantage point, Gutierrez (1973) plausibly perceives poverty as "an act of love and liberation" that has "redemptive value". For Gutierrez, the conclusion of this perspective is that, if the ultimate cause of poverty is selfishness, then "the deepest reason for voluntary poverty is love of neighbour" – a willing action exercised by Jesus in solidarity with the poor. This for Gutierrez (1973:300-1) is what Christian poverty means and he explains it as follows:

> Christian poverty, an expression of love, is solidarity with the poor and is a protest against poverty. This is the concrete, contemporary meaning of the witness of poverty. It is a poverty lived not for its own sake, but rather as an authentic imitation of Christ; it is a poverty which means taking on the sinful condition of man to liberate him from sin and all its consequences.

With Jesus's *voluntary poverty* mind, one can discern as to why Sobrino (2008:111) lucidly describes the character of the people whom the incarnate Jesus had compassion upon:

> the human beings, immense majorities, organized or not, who live and suffer, saintly and sinful, poor people who do not take life for granted, whose deepest desire is to live…it was said in addition that their most likely future would be either the slow death of poverty and hunger, of indignity and cultural death, or the violent death of repression.

For Sobrino (2008:115) Christians are called to seriously reflect on the plight of the poor. Viewing the incarnate Jesus as the standard bearer of Christian life, Sobrino (2008) believes that we can still say something important about Jesus' relationship with the people that can motivate the Church and the people to come together in our time, giving and receiving from one another. The people of 'the struggle and liberation' are, according to Sobrino (2008:113), the same people who are the victims of a world system that "not only distorts the realities of the peoples, especially in the affluent West, but also ignores and silences them as much as possible".

But the church today needs to be reminded, as Sobrino (2008:115) does, that the incarnational Jesus that dwelt amongst people, engaged with massive crowds of poor people, but he had compassion for them" (Mark 6:34). Jesus was deeply moved by the peoples' suffering. In the Gospels, the people are the main reference point of Jesus' life. He feels deep compassion for the people; he helps and embraces them, and he dies on the cross for defending them against their oppressors. Beyond all doubt Jesus wanted the people to be what we now call the 'people of God': that is the reason for his ethical demands, his insistence on fulfilling the commandments, especially the commandment of love, even love of the enemy, and on praying to the Father. And we recall what he proclaimed to everyone: it is in showing love to the suffering 'people' that human life (Luke 10:29-37) and the life of salvation (Matt. 25:34-40) are judged. Undoubtedly, Sobrino (2008) emphasizes that it is essential for the Church to uphold Jesus' relationship with the people. One can assume here that the reason for Sobrino's call for the church to uphold Jesus' relationship with the people is for people and the broader society to be transformed, not just socially, but also spiritually and holistically.

Claiming that the "incarnational Jesus" who felt the pain of ostracized and marginalized human beings, and the same Jesus who also empathized with every person whom he met, Nolan (1988:52) contributes profoundly:

> Jesus was keenly sensitive to such humiliation. He went out of his way to make contact with those who were humiliated and rejected by the system of purity and holiness – the outcasts of all kinds. He not only treated them as persons and challenged them to treat one another as persons; he also preached a gospel in which they were persons of very special value in the eyes of God.

In effect therefore, what Nolan is proposing here is nothing short of the incarnational Jesus being the prime-mover in helping humiliated individuals to recover their pride and self-worth: good news indeed. This speaks of transformation. This recovery of pride and self worth also implies a recovery of human dignity through which a person's entire being is transformed – heart, soul and spirit. This recovery of human dignity resonates well with Moltmann and Gutierrez's thoughts earlier in this chapter on the topic. It is clear therefore, that Jesus' real interest in the plight of poor people through his "good news mandate", helped the poor to recover lost pride, human worth, self respect and dignity, and also drew many towards him while giving hope to thousands, as witnessed in Luke and the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John. Sobrino (2008:119) provides further significant insight to Jesus' modus operandi and heart-felt communication whenever he spoke with the humiliated, suffering people. Jesus was constantly

> comforting the victims, repudiating the crime, supporting the just demands of the people, giving hope to the people, and announcing the transcendence of God. These were all the most important things, but the first among them was comfort, which came out of compassion and mercy. Behind these words one could hear the God of the exodus, of the prophets and Jesus, who 'hears the cry of the suffering people,' and who offers comfort and liberation…they were words of humanity in the midst of inhumanity, always conveying flashes of God's humanity

As a result, the people were opened up to, firstly, the transcendence of a God who cared about their most basic needs. As Sobrino (2008:120) asserts, "they had never felt God so near" because, "Jesus of Nazareth…went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). People understood God's presence in Jesus, as explained in Titus 2:11; 3:4: "For the grace of God has appeared…the goodness of God appeared" (Sobrino, 2008). Here again, Sobrino (2008:120-121) suggests emphatically that this transcendence is an important feature of the Church today:

> Obviously it is important to believers, but perhaps also for nonbelievers, however they express it, because it clearly means that reality is not absurd; in its depth there is goodness, salvation. What the Christian faith can contribute with simplicity and humility is that in Jesus, the transcendence of God becomes trans-decendence and con-descendence.

By trans-descendence and con-descendence, Sobrino (2008:121) implies that it is not a matter of doctrinal or liturgical issues but rather that "it means making real the self-lowering (trans-descendence) and the embrace (con-descendence). For Sobrino, this incarnational act was how God came in Jesus to humankind. Thus, the task and responsibility of the Church today is to emulate Jesus through this self-lowering and embracing act that made God present in his world. Isaak in Adeyemo (2006:1216) complements the idea of the church's task amongst the poor, specifically in solidarity as advocate:

> The church has a critical role to play in ensuring that the voices of the poor reverberate in the halls of public policy. Perhaps we should even go further and say that the preaching of the Gospel will be truly liberating when the poor themselves are the preachers. The location of many churches in the midst of poverty creates strategic opportunity for the faith community to work to eradicate poverty.

Secondly, the transcendence of God resulted in the people developing a faith that "not only confesses the fact of transcendence in a world that ignores or trivializes it" but it also "affirms the goodness of transcendence" (Sobrino, 2008:121). By this it is meant that God creates within the people a hunger for more goodness, truth, hope and the values that one could associate with the Kingdom of God – a hunger for more of his transcendental presence in their lives. This is what the presence of Jesus did. It encouraged people to hunger after righteousness. As Sobrino puts it, "We feel the need for something transcendental, something that comes from outside." As such, Sobrino (2008) concludes and reiterates that the Church today would do well not just to mention "transcendence" in its daily engagement with poor people but that it is essential for it to make itself "present in real actions; to show that it is self-lowering, not pomp and triumphalism, and embrace, not authoritarianism and imposition." The transcendence of God, and the condescendence of Jesus (now through the Church) are the key avenues through which God brings about transformation. Thus one can agree with Greene (2003:205) that the transcendence of God as experienced when the incarnate Jesus ministered to the poor, demonstrated how God felt about the plight of the poor.

4.5 CONCLUSION

So far, this study has been based on the body of literature that pertains to development, poverty and theology. Chapter 4 relates specifically to the biblical-theological stance on poverty.

Having thus revisited what the Bible has to say about poverty, there is little doubt that one is able to observe specific answers to the key questions, *what does the Bible and authorities say about poverty?* and, *what ought to be going on* with regards to the treatment of poor people? Through this line of questioning, and in keeping with Osmer's four tasks of practical theology, the research produced specific themes that showed the nature and extent of poverty as depicted in specific sections of the Bible, and it also served as a normative guide as to how God expects society to view and treat the poor. These themes are listed as proposals below:

- In both the OT and NT there are commandments that have a direct bearing on how the poor ought to be treated. These commandments have two aspects: that which governs relations with God and those that govern relations with others.
- Scripture emphasizes a focus on human relationships and presupposes that people have a relationship with God
- Biblical commandments centred on the well being of the poor were meant to alleviate circumstances of economic difficulties and to break the spiral of poverty
- God cares for the poor and turns to people to be the means by which provision is made for the poorest and weakest
- God is opposed to economic, social and political injustice and sees loving the *other* as a matter of justice
- The dehumanizing effect of poverty is primarily as a result of the sinful, unjust acts of others against the poor
- The gospel brings poor people a "new dignity"
- The gospel challenges the non-poor to advocacy and action on behalf of the poor
- There is a correlation between lovelessness and poverty

The main finding of this biblical-theological investigation is that God is very concerned about the situation of the poor and cares for them through other people. Pivotal to how society ought to respond to poverty is the *God-Poor-Non-poor* nexus (as visualized in Figure 6). Therefore, as introduced and alluded to in the earlier part of this chapter, the importance of the *other* takes prime position in God's view of the eradication of poverty. Given the importance of the *other* from a biblical-theological perspective, it would be important then to take up this theme in the next chapter. Thus, in Chapter 5, the *other* will become the focal point of the resulting discussion.

CHAPTER 5:
POVERTY, RELATIONAL SIN AND HUMAN DIGNITY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research to date has resulted in a better understanding of *what* is going on and *why* poverty exists. When focused on the findings of chapters two to four, then it is evident that both the social sciences as well as the biblical tradition reinforce the value of human life. The earlier chapters have shown that the development world is both a dynamic place that creates hope for the poor as well as a place where there are counter-forces that seemingly contrive to work together against the well being of human beings. The same could be said about the moral question of poverty as seen in the Bible. The biblical norms that Christians are expected to apply when they encounter people who experience daily poverty are norms that create hope.

Based on the afore-going chapters, the proposition for this chapter is that poverty exists mainly because human beings do not act justly upon the situation of other human beings. Given the magnitude of such a hypothesis, it would be necessary to ask all four of the questions relating to Osmer's descriptive, interpretive, normative and pragmatic tasks:

1. What is going on? (Descriptive-empirical)
2. Why is it going on? (Interpretive)
3. What ought to be going on? (Normative)
4. How might we respond? (Pragmatic)

Therefore the line of enquiry here will follow this type of questioning in order to achieve the results of this research.

The view describing the perpetuation of poverty, as explained by Gutierrez, (1973:194-196) and evidenced in the research in Chapter 4, demonstrates that poor people are often poor because they are exploited, robbed of their wages by employers, and, most importantly, have their human rights violated. Furthermore, the powerful (people who occupy positions of influence in politics and economics) are often the one's who influence these same systems to their own advantage and to the disadvantage of the poor, as suggested by Niebuhr (1960:8). Christian (1999:121)

contends even stronger that both poverty and power are relational and that there is a strong connection between the two:

> Poverty is relational. Similarly, power is relational. Social power is an interactive process that resides within social interactions and relationships…Poverty is not about numbers. It is about inequality, and specifically about inequality in power relationships. It is about a minority, 'less numerous, who performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings'…In rural India, this minority includes a triangular power bloc consisting of rich farmers, powerful industrial houses and professionals supported by the political system…They systematically exclude the poor from access to education, wealth and benefits from the system. They seek to play god in the lives of the poor. They combine to form 'god complexes.'

Bryant Myers too (in *Walking with the Poor*), is also convinced that the nature of poverty is fundamentally relational. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the understanding of poverty as *capability deprivation* (Sen, 1999:87) implies that poverty is not just a matter of economics, but also of social and political arrangements that intentionally and systematically deprive people from "the substantive freedoms" that he or she should enjoy "to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value". Here, pertaining to the social justice aspect of poverty, Christian (1999:141) asserts further that "oppressive social norms of the community stunt the mind, retard reflective ability of the poor and reduce the poor to being mere objects, thus marring the identity of the poor". Thus, understanding the relational aspect of poverty is a vital link in poverty-development discourse today. It is therefore important, as this chapter aims to show, to examine the causes of poverty that seemingly appears to continue in an "eternal" vicious cycle, as well as investigate the connection between poverty and relationships.

5.2 CAUSES OF POVERTY

What causes poverty? How is poverty sustained? In what way can poverty be eradicated? These are questions that require serious attention, not just in this thesis but also in society in general.

How else is poverty described? Poverty is often described in terms of a "vicious circle" that has no end. This *vicious cycle of poverty* is described by Harambolos (1985: 152) as follows:

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> The vicious cycle, in which poverty breeds poverty, occurs through time, and transmits its effects from one generation to another. There is no beginning to the cycle, no end…Poverty…is a system in which each part reinforces the others and so maintains the systems as a whole. This theory…argues that the various circumstances of the poor combine to maintain them in poverty. They are trapped in the situation with little chance of escaping.

Strongly connected to this vicious cycle of poverty is the so-called concept of a *culture of poverty*. However, the explanation by Harambolos (1985: 154) that the poor largely "choose" to remain in poverty is questionable. By stating that the poor have attitudes of "fatalism and resignation" that "lead to acceptance of the situation" and perpetual generational poverty, Harambolos generalizes that all poor people behave this way. However, Davids (2005: 42) rejects this "self-inflicted", "culture of poverty" notion and instead "takes a normative stance on empowering the poor". In doing so, Davids rejects these preceding views (especially those of the colonial era) that positioned the causes of poverty in 'the nature of developing societies' and when poverty was generally depicted as self-inflicted. Here Davids (2005) asserts that "it was believed that individuals, households and communities were poor because of drunkenness, incompetence, ignorance and even lack of intelligence".

From the writer's academic and cultural experiences in Sweden[84] from 2008 to 2012, there have been occasions when it was observed that there were many poor, homeless people living on the streets in many cities and suburbs there. When asked why there were so many Swedish people living on the streets of such a wealthy country, some respondents replied that such poor people were people with psychological problems, implying that all poor Swedish people fit into that category. This view essentially seems to reinforce the notion that all poor people are generally responsible for their own poverty.

Thus, according to Davids, the flaw of this type of rationalization is that it implies that poverty would disappear if the poor were willing to change their values and culture – an explanation that is convenient for the non-poor and those who are in authority because it shifts the blame for poverty on the poor themselves.

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[84] The writer was afforded the opportunity to lecture in Human Rights & Democracy at a university in Sweden, Högskolan Dalarna by his Promoter, Professor August. As part of the course, the lecturers and students engaged with communities in Tensta, Stockholm, a predominantly immigrant suburb. The group also observed that there were several "poor people" of various nationalities to be found in Tensta as well as in the city of Stockholm.

Another perspective portrays poverty as a *structural* feature of capitalist societies (Vander Zanden, 1988: 239). Borrowing from Kerbo, Vander Zanden (1988) shows that the "boom and bust" cyclical features of an economy contribute to sharp vacillations in employment. In this view, the capitalist economy of a country possesses a vital industrial reserve workforce. This workforce consists of individuals at the bottom of the class structure who are laid off during times of economic stagnation, then rehired during times of economic success. It is composed mostly of people with a comparatively lower level of education, and who have been "last hired and first fired". These people are therefore considered as "objects" rather than human beings, emphasizing global capitalism's core feature of "profit before people". This fact is highlighted in the *Document for Justice* at the 1968 Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops (Hennelly 1990: 101). It confirms the notion that liberal capitalism is a system that militates against the dignity of the human person and "takes for granted the primacy of capital, its power and its discriminatory utilization in the function of profit-making".

5.3 THE REALITY OF POVERTY

Christian (1999:119) asserts: *Poverty is about real people, living in real life space.* Myers (1999:12) expands and describes poverty as "a system of disempowerment that creates oppressive relationships and whose fundamental causes are spiritual". In the quest to establish what the root causes of poverty are, it would be appropriate to begin with asking the question, *How do poor people experience poverty?* Most poor people are caught up in a situation where they experience poverty-sustaining behaviour (Myers, 1991: 103). This type of behaviour does not necessarily refer to a type of anti-social behaviour exercised by the poor themselves, but may also refer to the behaviour of people in power, the non-poor, who are able to make life-changing decisions on behalf of the poor but who, often, refuse to make such decisions. Myers (1991) asserts that it is often true "that social systems tend to become self-serving and that the non-poor are not troubled enough by the current state of affairs to seek remedies". In fact, Myers (1991) contends that political power brokers do not admit the deceit and violence to which the non-poor will resort in order to maintain the status quo.

This maintaining of the status quo, means that the poor are almost always trapped in a perpetual *cycle of poverty*[85] (Harambolos, 1985: 152) and find themselves socially excluded. To this effect Ismail Davids (2005: 39-40) states that this *social exclusion* of deprived, vulnerable, poor people in society mean that they are systematically "excluded from the mainstream benefits of the society and is prevented in some way from fully enjoying from the general prosperity". For Davids (2005) therefore, social exclusion refers to the *relational* elements of poverty instead of the distribution of income, which in turn, "is interested in inequality, which very often is the cause of poverty". This relational aspect of poverty brings us nearer to understanding poverty as *dehumanizing* to people.

For *human development*[86] proponents, the most important way how poor people experience poverty is by the emotional and psychological impact that this phenomenon has on them as individuals (Davids 2005: 40). To this extent then, the philosopher Hennie Lötter (2008: 17-32) concurs about "the dehumanizing effect of poverty" and provides an invaluable framework for understanding how poverty dehumanizes individuals:

   i.   Poverty violates individual human dignity
  ii.   Poverty harms individual lives
 iii.   Poverty harms people's bodies
  iv.   Poverty harms people's mental well-being
   v.   Poverty harms people's family and interpersonal relationships
  vi.   Poverty impacts negatively on child rearing
 vii.   Poverty leads to stunted development
viii.   Poverty increases vulnerability
  ix.   Poverty and unemployment
   x.   Poverty and moral values

While all of these aspects are important in a discourse on poverty, it would be important to briefly discuss two key aspects here, viz. 1) human dignity and dehumanization and 2) the relational aspect of poverty.

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[85] Harambolos states that this is also known as the "vicious circle" theory of poverty. This concept is discussed further in 4.2 below.
[86] See Davids on human development theory…

5.3.1 Poverty violates individual human dignity

Undoubtedly, the importance of human dignity in the poverty discourse is extremely critical, as Lötter (2008: 17) states:

> Poverty has been called the world's most ruthless killer and the greatest cause of suffering on earth. The effects poverty has on human beings are so drastic that the phenomenon of poverty merits the undivided attention of governments, human and social scientists, aid agencies, relief organizations, and ordinary citizens everywhere

Similarly, the Oikos Journey document (Diakonia Council of Churches 2006) stresses that the current global economy has created a situation where some people are deemed "less worthy than others – less deserving of dignity, happiness, ease and fulfillment". It highlights the fact that the current economic system is one in which profit and not people is the central concern – it therefore serves as "fertile ground" for the ongoing dehumanization of the poor.

However, Sobrino (2008: 40-8) takes the meaning of dehumanization even further. Sobrino (2008: 40) describes dehumanization as "evils affecting the spirit of human beings". The current economic system is one in which those who believe in the system's "benefits" such as good living, success and security, "accepts as normal the arrogance and dominance of some human beings with respect to others. Alluding then to the current impact of economic globalization on humankind, Sobrino (2008: 41) pronounces:

> The civilization of wealth does not produce life; it produces death in diverse forms, to greater or lesser degrees. Furthermore, it does not humanize… It is already inhuman to deprive others of life, but all the more inhuman when this is done unjustly, cruelly, and contemptuously… Furthermore, it is inhuman when the despoilment of some people's lives is closely connected with other people's unrestrained pursuit of success and the good life. The civilization of wealth produces primordial ways of thinking and feeling that in turn mold cultural and ideological structures that contaminate the very air that we breathe. Therefore, not only is the oikos, the basic symbol of life's reality, gravely ill and in need of salvation, but so is the very air that the spirit breathes. We are dehumanized by going beyond the pale of truth – by concealment of the truth and proliferation of the lie, by silence in the face of scandalous inequality between rich and poor, by the dormant state of the rich – and also of the poor – that is precisely intended and shaped by the mass media

Furthermore, Sobrino (2008: 40) asserts strongly that it is also dehumanizing and beyond basic decency when people are denied their basic human rights or when important resolutions passed by the United Nations (UN) are withheld from them due

to "widespread corruption in almost all spheres of power". In an emphatic summative comment, Sobrino (2008: 41) claims:

> In sum, we are dehumanized by our selfishness and by our insensitivity before the drama of AIDS, exclusion, discrimination, and poverty's endless misery and cruelty. We are dehumanized by our contempt for the poor, for Native peoples, and even for Mother Earth. Such dehumanization is assumed with an attitude of impotence and naturalness, and it is hardly noticeable since, in contrast to the evils that produce physical death or move people toward it, the evils of the spirit are not so obviously calculable. But they are harmful.

For a "non-white" person in the apartheid era in South Africa "the system in South Africa told him every day that he was not worthy" (Nolan 1988: 101). Similarly in the same country today, it is a plausible thesis to believe that poor people today could feel just as "unworthy" on a daily basis because of their perceived "lower" economic status. Thankfully, Nolan (1988) reaffirms the inspiring truth that all human beings (poor and rich alike) are "created in the image and likeness of God". The *Imago Dei* present in humankind therefore means that people (including the poor) can face life with a positive "sense of dignity and worth". Notwithstanding some theological implications, it therefore reasons that to be robbed of one's human dignity (or be dehumanized), also implies that the Creator of humankind is in a certain sense *detheonized* [87] and insulted by the person or system who intentionally humiliates another person to the point of dehumanization.

The prevailing global development topic is undoubtedly about the issue of *poverty*. Closely associated with poverty is the reality of hunger. Television commercials and international, as well as local, television news networks are constantly highlighting the problem of poverty and almost always introduce the serious problem of hunger in their discussions. In spite of all this "marketing" of the need to alleviate poverty, Sobrino (2008: 41) concludes "that there is insistence that poverty must be eliminated… But the attempts to eliminate it – even without assessing the results – are

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[87] The writer's idea of the concept "detheonized " runs parallel to the idea that when humans are dehumanized, God is, in a certain sense, detheonized, simply because he is not human and therefore cannot be dehumanized but rather "detheonized" when humans dehumanize other humans. The writer realizes that this concept may not be of sound theological grounding but it is merely a concept that wishes to point out 1) that God shares the hurt and pain of the suffering that humans experience and is 2) therefore detheonized when humans dehumanize each other. Not withstanding the fact that God is omnipotent, the point remains that God's very nature is attacked and insulted when her own creation is intentionally violated, attacked or dehumanized.

dehumanizing". Sobrino (2008) provides seven reasons why attempts to eliminate poverty are often dehumanizing:

- First, there is the belief that any means is good as long as it alleviates poverty. For Sobrino, this way of thinking is unethical as well as dehumanizing, "for we are not talking about feeding a species of wild animal, but about nourishing human beings"

- Second, the slow pace of overcoming poverty and the extended time lapses that countries accept for UN-sponsored initiatives (such as the MDGs) is also dehumanizing. While non-poor autocrats are chiefly responsible for setting these time-frames, the aspirations and reality of poor people are completely ignored. Seen from the perspective of abundance, the pace may appear therefore appear to be humane and rapid. However, seen from the perspective of the poor, and decency, the process is inhumanely slow. In fact, says Sobrino (2008), for some sub-Saharan countries, "there has actually been regression in the dates that were set for certain goals". The UN declares that the MDGs are already becoming obsolete and that extremely little has been done to reduce poverty. Thus the "poverty goal" aimed at halving global poverty by 2015 is already in jeopardy

- Third, in referring to rich countries giving financial aid to poor countries, Sobrino (2008: 42) illustrates that the so-called "generosity gap" is increasing rather than decreasing. This gap is growing because richer countries are providing less aid to help poorer countries. Since 2003, this so called development aid has diminished by 25% while the per capita income of the rich nations rose substantially. At the same time the per capita aid for sub-Saharan Africa is less than it was in 1990. It is therefore dehumanizing that this so-called generosity gap is expanding rather than contracting

- Fourth, it is also dehumanizing in the blatant way that, in the search for solutions, ethics is bracketed. While the need to eliminate hunger requires efficient strategies, technology and political pragmatism, the blatant ignoring of ethics is a serious matter. Quoting an official in the FAO (a global organization focusing on food security for the human race) Sobrino (2008) points out that solving the problem of hunger is not merely and economic or political problem but is actually an ethical concern. Essentially, if ethics were

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removed from the practice of poverty alleviation, then there would be a strong potential for brutishness, and *effectiveness* would be seen as more important than an ethical approach to solve the hunger problem

- Fifth, the so-called *mantra* that "resolving such problems requires political will" also poses the risk of further dehumanization of the poor. Sobrino (2008) argues that, in the first place, no such will exists because hunger still exists. In the second place, "since political will is no more than "human will", it seems that an effort is being made in the political realm to hide something behind language". Thus it stands to reason that, if political will is absent, then "there is simply no effective human will to eliminate hunger". In "a world that is gravely ill" (Sobrino 2008: 37) and where "the spending on arms is estimated at $2.68 billion a day" (Sobrino 2008: 42), hunger still exists. In this scandalous scenario of a hungry yet militarized world, the language of "political" appears to be a more respectable communicative tool. Thus the language of the "political" allows powerful people to engage in many debates and evade accountability rather than answer the critical question that would be asked from a "human will" perspective: do we human beings really have the will to eliminate hunger? Therefore, there can be no evasions with regard to the human aspect of the will.

> **A child who dies of hunger dies a murder victim.**
> *Jean Ziegler in Sobrino (2008: 42)*

- Sixth, Sobrino (2008:43) claims "that the ambiguous and obscure language of 'globalization' is dehumanizing". Used as a means of manipulation, concealment, and deceit, language has the ability to dehumanize people. For that reason, the use of a particular language in preference to another is not totally innocent. The purpose then for using a particular form of language is "to signify that which favours determined interests, independently of whether reality is well reflected in it or not". For Sobrino (2008) the term "globalization" has not been a random choice. The term globalization and its more specific concept of "economic globalization", as endorsed by economists such as Sachs and Stiglitz, implies that globalization is good, while it also sounds better and more humane than "capitalism". When one considers poor

communities in the South African context (and elsewhere in Africa), it is clear that looking at globalization through this lens helps one to appreciate Sobrino's views. While globalization is an attempt to communicate a judgment value that what is happening is good and that we live in an inclusive world, it also produces evils, losers and victims (Sobrino 2008: 44-5)

> **In a world of poverty, conspicuous abundance and silence in the face of misery are both dehumanizing. And more dehumanizing still is the simultaneity of the two phenomena.**
>
> *Sobrino 2008: 45*

- Seventh, Sobrino (2008:46) emphasizes that "the extraordinary and growing inequality between the poor and the rich is dehumanizing". For Sobrino (2008: 47), as should be the case for all Christians, the question needs to be raised whether any causal relationship exists between the wealth of the rich and the misery of the poor. Within contemporary world-view, such profound inequality of wealth and opportunity has become the norm, while people are led to believe that this imbalance belongs to the order of nature and is therefore unstoppable. Thus this "civilization of wealth" gives rise to the growing inequality and many of the evils (such as contaminated air, rivers and oceans), then these are covered up, and in the process dehumanizes the majority of people on Planet Earth.

With regard to the current situation where inequality is a dominant theme in the poverty discourse, Lotter (2008: 19) confirms the view that "poverty results from the choices humans make about the structures of their society and from the social forces they allow to operate that produce an unequal distribution of resources".

> **It is not simply unjust, but disgraceful, that in a world of abundance… that a Salvadoran woman in a sweat-shop earns twenty nine cents for each shirt that the multinational Nike sells to the NBA for forty-five dollars…**
>
> *Sobrino 2008: 47*

This inequality and total dehumanization of the poor surely strengthens the notion that the nature of poverty is essentially relational.

5.3.2 The relational aspect of poverty

In the foregoing discussion on poverty, it has been argued that poverty is intrinsically a dehumanizing phenomenon. Furthermore, it has been alluded to earlier that the nature of poverty is also intrinsically relational. On the one hand, this relational aspect of poverty refers to what Gutierrez (1973:24) calls the "*system of relationships*" as root causes of poverty and bondage; and on the other hand Myers (1999:86) considers the nature of poverty to be *fundamentally relational*. Both of these views that describe some facets of poverty, are extremely important. For Lötter (2008:25) poverty also harms people's family and interpersonal relationships.

With regard to the systemic nature of poverty Rieger (1998:141) asserts that, whereas poverty should be understood in terms of a 'symptom' that directs people to the truth that the people in authority have repressed and volitionally keep the unjust situation in place, it is instead – and unfortunately – seen as a problem that could be solved sooner or later. For Myers (1999), poverty as fundamentally relational implies that "poverty is a result of relationships that do not work". Such relationships, as will be seen next in August (2010:37), are considered to be unjust, anti-life and are not harmonious or enjoyable. Myers (1999: 87) expresses these areas of broken relationships as follows:

1. Within ourselves

2. With community

3. With those we call "other"

4. With our environment, and

5. With God

Each of these broken relationships finds expression in the poverty system (figure 12). In another sense, one could say that there is a *relationship deficit* that takes place in this system that allows poverty to continue unchecked. This relationship deficit is therefore the distinct lack of healthy relationships needed by people to overcome the phenomenon of personal poverty or any other problem that they may experience in life.
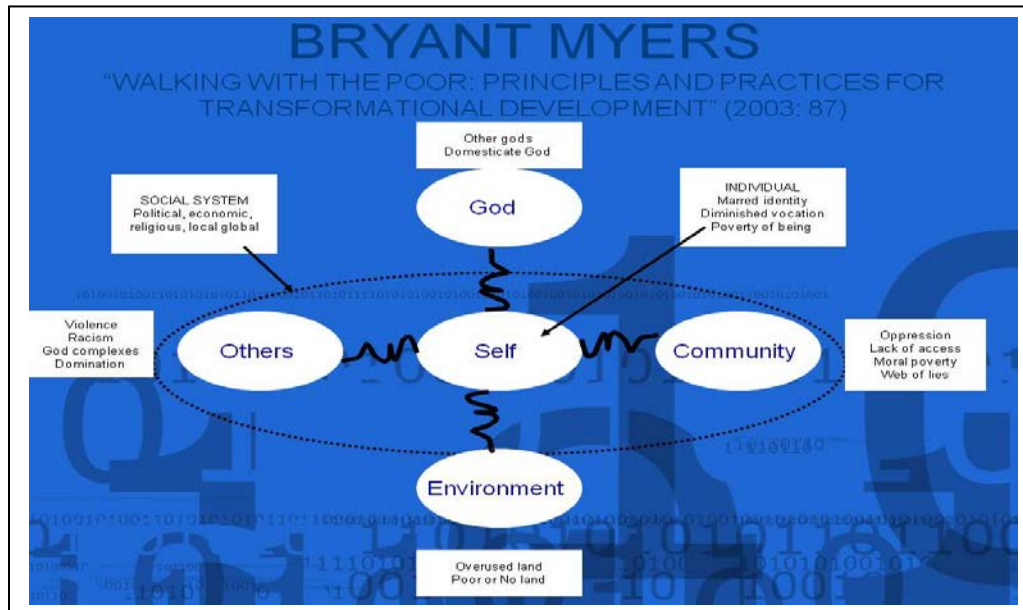
Figure 12 Myers' understanding of relational poverty

Introducing a critical concept at this point, Myers (1999) asserts that poverty is also "the absence of Shalom that works against well being, against life and life abundant". Here again Myers (1999:87) argues that the underlying causes that drive poverty are 1) *selfishness* and 2) *systemic injustice*, both of which are relational categories. For August (2010:37), *Shalom* is the essence of human existence because it is a manifestation that human beings co-exist in right relationships with each other and also with God and nature. Drawing from Brueggemann, (August (2010) explains:

> Living in peaceful and right relationships is both the message of the gospel and God's created reality before the Fall. We were created to live in Shalom, the absence of which leads to the above-mentioned lack of harmony as expressed in the social disorder of economic inequality, political oppression and exclusivism. Shalom not only means peace in the sense of the absence of strife, but also health wholeness, prosperity, justice, harmony and general well-being. In essence it is peace within all our relationships: with God, with self, with others and nature.

  Also alluding to the "relational deficit" evident in poverty relationships, Lötter (2008:25) describes that "poverty creates conditions that makes it extremely difficult for people to engage in deep, meaningful relationships with their loved ones". As seen in the community (Kensington/Factreton) in which a part of this research is situated, Lötter (2008) confirms that the fractured or unstable nature of families could also be a result of poverty. In such families, fathers and husbands are very often absent while in many cases, mothers and wives are also absent, leaving the children to be cared for by

extended-family members or neighbours. This brings about great suffering for each member of the family and creates a high-risk environment for the onset of poverty.

When rural men and women migrate to cities to look for work, they leave their children and spouses behind, resulting in feelings of insecurity and the dislocation of the family unit. Furthermore, the scarcity of resources in poor households can lead to competition for these resources and conflict but sometimes with destructive effects. Households can become disrupted when the distribution of these resources are deemed to have been unfairly executed (Lötter 2008:26). Thus it can be seen that human relationships are vital to the proper development of all people as human beings, including those who unfortunately find themselves living in a condition of poverty.

5.4 SIN AND POVERTY

5.4.1 The Human Situation And Poverty

At the beginning of this new millennium, humanity finds itself, undoubtedly, in a time of unprecedented technological achievement and unheard of massive movements of capital flow between people, nations and economies across the globe. At the same time, there are many signs of increasing global poverty, ongoing environmental degradation, and escalating violence between different people groups (or nations) in, for example, Central America, South America, Asia and Africa.

This seemingly contradictory picture illustrates that human nature is something of tremendous complexity – yet filled with so much simplistic, positive potential. In the light of *development* therefore, there are many challenges that face people who are serious about being agents of transformation in communities where poverty has a severe foothold. These challenges ought to be considered with a holistic approach in mind – an approach that recognizes the dire frailty of human nature but also the incredibly powerful, transformative potential inherent in people. Thus, this approach calls for an understanding of Christian anthropology.

5.4.2 The Broken Image Of God

5.4.2.1 Towards a Christian anthropology: Relationships for self and others

In his discussion on the topic of "the broken human image of God" König in De Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio (1994:102) proposes that "Christian anthropology is part of the doctrine of creation" and asks the important question: "what specific contribution can theology make to our self-understanding"? König (1994), drawing from Hendrikus Berkhof's *Man In Transit*, further emphasizes that theology cannot make the same type of contribution such as that of disciplines such as "biology, sociology or psychology, all of which are focused on some particular aspect of the human being. Theology can attempt an overall view that integrates all other perspectives".

It is precisely at this point then, that König in De Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio (1994:102-103) develops his main thesis "that we are relational beings who only come into our own in relationships of love". He correctly argues that, since God is love, love must be seen as the heart of human nature because "our relationships will not be enriching or fulfilling unless they are lived in love". It is precisely at this point that one can easily see how the lack of genuine love in society can lead to poverty. To highlight this claim, and borrowing from Karl Barth, König (1994) reinforces the point that "all forms of love contain the elements of commitment and sharing" which is also a "self-giving" love. This self-giving love suggested by Barth in König is "a movement away from self towards another, not for the sake of self but for the sake of the other." With special reference to the required attributes of a Christian development advocate, Myers (1999: 151) quotes Miroslav Volf (who had been struggling to create a Christian understanding of reconciliation in the context of war-torn Croatia and Bosnia of the early 1990s):

> "we must have the will to give ourselves to others and 'welcome' them by readjusting our identities to make space for them".

Undeniably these words remind us of the very attitude of Jesus who gave himself vicariously because he had the best interests of humanity at heart (Philippians…).

5.4.2.2 Two theological perspectives of humanity's relationship with God

In König's view of humanity, two concepts are of significance: 1) *covenant partner* and 2) *image of God*. From this perspective, it is evident that both of these notions

refer to our relationship with God: we are to live in a covenant relationship with God and, at the same time, we are also created in the image of God. By implication, it is therefore crucial that we construct our view of human beings on our knowledge of God. The plausibility of König's argument is very helpful for study in the discipline of *development* from a Christian perspective, also known as *transformational development*[88].

However, at this juncture, the focus will not remain on the idea of transformational development, but on the two above-mentioned concepts pertaining to humanity. In his introduction of the two concepts of *covenant partner* and *image*, König (1994) concludes that "the fact that we are God's covenant partners implies that we are *different* (italics mine) from God". At the same time, "the idea that we are God's image implies that we are somehow *similar* (italics mine) to God". Undoubtedly, these two "building-blocks" assist us "to construct a relational view of human beings, hence König's key point "we are created to live with God, with other people and with nature".

König's thoughts about the critical emphasis on the imperative of humanity's relational nature with God and with people are consistent with that of Myers (1999: 86-88) who illustrates that the nature of poverty is fundamentally relational.

However, in order to understand the assets and potential that people have, one also has to understand what Suggit, in De Gruchy & Villa-Vicencio (1994:113), calls the "human situation" that humanity finds itself in. In the discussion set forth in this chapter, it is therefore essential to examine some of the reasons as to why poverty is still so pervasive in the South African (and other) contexts. König in De Gruchy & Villa Vicencio (1994:102-111) provides a constructive framework within which to examine the potential of human beings as well as the frailties of people that apparently promote the ongoing cycle of poverty in contemporary society. Entitled "The Broken Human Image of God", an article by König (in De Gruchy & Villa-Vicencio, 1994:111) discusses a Christian anthropology that is helpful to show how *love* for the "other" is the essential part of "an integrated concept of true humanity as

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[88] *Transformational Development* is an idea promoted by "development theologians" such as Bryant L. Myers, Wayne Bragg, Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden. I will discuss this concept in the last chapter on *Hope*.

constituted by relationships: relationships with God, humanity and nature". The antithesis of this love, however, is *sin*, where "Sin is the destruction of these relationships, which result in meaninglessness, alienation an judgment.

Thus, in considering the potential that human beings have to love one another, König proposes three key ideas that are helpful for people to embrace their humanity as they seek to consider addressing the basic human needs of the "other": 1) God as Covenant partner, 2) the Image of God, and, 3) Sin: The Broken Image.

5.4.3 Covenant Partner: Loving God, Loving People

For König in De Gruchy & Villa Vicencio (1994:103) a covenant relationship is a special relationship. Moreover, when people live in covenant with God, they live in a special relationship with God. The covenants mentioned in the Biblical accounts, such as that with Noah, Abraham, Joshua, David, and the old and new covenants, are characterized by two common things:

1. Covenants are between both God and human beings, and
2. Covenants are initiated by God who also determines the responsibilities of both parties.

As König (1994) asserts, God's covenant "is a matter of mercy on the part of God and responsibility on the human side". Dudley-Smith (1995:131) advances König's point by adding that this "covenant of grace" is salvivic by nature, is biblical, and aimed at the salvation or complete liberation of people. Dudley-Smith (1995) claims:

> The whole Bible unfolds the divine scheme of salvation – man's creation in God's image, his fall through disobedience into sin and under judgment, God's continuing love for him in spite of his rebellion, God's eternal plan to save him through his covenant of grace with a chosen people, culminating in Christ; the coming of Christ as the Saviour, who died to bear man's sin…and man's rescue first from guilt and alienation, then from bondage…"

Therefore, within the understanding of the covenant that God offers to all human beings, those who respond in the affirmative to it will undoubtedly recognize, through the gift of the Spirit of God, that a "new" set of responsibilities come into the equation of a new life in Christ. Through this covenant initiated by God, these responsibilities are to do with conformation to God's will where love for God, self and neighbour become paramount. It is through the distinctive gift of the Spirit to every human who

is in covenant with God that they are enabled to fulfill each responsibility that is assigned to them by God. Dudley-Smith (1995:72) supports this view:

> The Lord Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant and the bestower of its blessings, gives both the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit to all who enter his covenant.

Hence, it implies that the covenant people are empowered to do covenant work, as outlined by the responsibilities that God gives them. This covenant work, of necessity, would imply love for others with an attitude of servitude and concern for their well being, out of acknowledgement and appreciation for God's grace to all of humanity. Dudley-Smith (1995:17) summarizes what the covenant between God and humans really mean: "There is room only for worship, for expectant faith, and for practical obedience in witness and service" – this is also the beginning of a drawing together, the convergence of the two greatest commandments to love God and to love one's neighbour as one's self. Dudley-Smith (1995:17) reinforces this notion of what the "heart" of the covenantal God is like and what God expects from those who have agreed to covenant with him:

> The vision we need is the vision of God himself, the God of the whole biblical revelation, the God of creation who made all things fair and good, and made man male and female to bear his image and subdue his world, the God of the covenant of grace who in spite of human rebellion has been calling out a people for himself, the God of compassion and justice who hates oppression and loves the oppressed, the God of the incarnation who made himself weak, small, limited and vulnerable, and entered our pain and alienation…the God of the church or the kingdom community to whom he has committed himself forever, and whom he sends into the world to live, serve, suffer and die, the God of history who is working according to a plan and towards a conclusion, the God of the eschaton, who one day will make all things new.

With reflection on God's grace towards humanity and also his reaching out to humanity through Jesus, it is therefore evident that God's covenantal "offer" to people is an offer of extreme love. When people therefore respond to this love and receive this offer of grace, they become part of the covenant family or the church of Jesus Christ. Fundamentally, the church of Jesus Christ is a people who see themselves as standing in relationship to the God who saves them and to each other as those who share in this salvation (Grenz, 1994:605). From a theological perspective, this means that "the church is a people in covenant", an "eschatological covenant community" (Grenz, 1994:604-5). For the purposes of this study, the idea of *relationships* (in this instance, a person's relationship with God and, secondly, a person's relationship with others) is central in a search for determining the root causes of poverty. More

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attention to the relational nature of poverty will be given later in the chapter. However, as a last note to the importance of *covenant*, it must be added that by utilizing the concepts of *covenant partner* and *image* as the main building blocks , one is able to construct a *relational* view of human beings because human beings are created to live *with* God, *with* people and *with* nature (König in De Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio, 1994:102). Any departure from this reality, meaning that people choose to live *without* God, *without* others, and unconcerned about nature, would be to defy God's purpose for each person.

Thus the holistic perspective that König aims to develop here "is that we are relational beings who only come into our own in relationships of love" and that "We cannot be truly human without such relationships". Love that flows freely from God to humankind is the essence of human nature. If practiced, this love, characterized by commitment and caring, will lead to enriched relationships. König (1994), with insight from the perspective of the theologian Karl Barth, aptly illustrates love as

> 'self-giving', a movement away from self towards another, not for the sake of self but for the sake of the other.

As covenant partners therefore, should not all our relationships be covenant relationships? Should not all of our relationships (for God, others, and nature) be conducted in love? Should not human beings be alert to the negative impact of sin in relationships? Thus, König in De Gruchy & Villa-Vicencio (1994:104) cautions:

> The anthropology developed here deliberately bases our humanity on our relationship with God. To be human means to be in the presence of God…and responsible to God. We live our entire lives in the divine presence, so that all other relationships must be measured by the will of God. It is all a matter of God's authority and our obedience. This introduces a critical element into our life in history. When it comes to evaluating a course of action, the final question should be… 'Is it right in the eyes of God?'

Therefore, especially in the light of discerning whether human actions are consistent with God's requirements, sin must be seen as the antithesis of love *and* our humanity, a falsification of what God meant us to be. Dudley-Smith (1995:137) highlights this tension between the true identity of human beings and the presence of sin in human beings:

> Who am I? What is my 'self'? …I am a Jekyll and Hyde, a mixed-up kid, having both dignity, because I was created and have been re-created in the image of God, and depravity, because I still have a fallen and rebellious nature…My true self is what I am by creation, which Christ came to redeem, and by calling. My false self is what I am by the fall, which Christ came to destroy.

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The relationship between sin and poverty thus becomes an important topic in understanding, even further, what lies at the root of so much avoidable poverty in the world. Also, for the purposes of this study, the correlation between the Imago Dei (image of God) and our humanity becomes a crucial part in examining how people experience poverty. From this perspective it becomes necessary to discuss König's second part of his idea of human beings as *relational beings*, *the image of God*.

5.4.4 Image of God: Imago Dei

König's second building block in constructing a relational view of human beings, *the image of God*, shows how, through God covenanting with persons, he gives his love to others, in a movement away from himself and towards humanity – supreme grace, if one could use that expression. God does this so that humankind can be reconciled with him, with others, and with nature.

König in De Gruchy & Villa-Vicencio (1994:105) attests that every human being is intended to be the image or representative of God. This crucial Christian anthropological concept is seen throughout the Bible (as in the many anthropomorphic ways that the Bible speaks about God, as well as God becoming human through Jesus). The fact that the biblical account identifies humans as the only creatures created in the image of God, sets humanity apart for God's special purpose. The climactic account of the creation of human beings in Genesis 1:26-28 comes, significantly, at the end of a lengthy list of things created by God and highlights the prime place of human beings in God's redemptive plan. A further statement that emphasizes humanity's importance in God's vision is that "only of human beings is it said that they were created in the image of God" (König in De Gruchy & Villa-Vicencio, 1994).

The fact that human beings have been created in the image of God should imply that every person has human worth and dignity, this being so, in spite of sin and human revolt against God. The Christian faith acknowledges "the intrinsic worth of human beings, because of the doctrines of creation and redemption" (Dudley-Smith, 1995:140), and offers the following perspective:

1. The affirmation of human dignity – Because human beings are created in God's image to know him, serve one another and be stewards of the earth, therefore they must be respected.

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2. The affirmation of human equality – because human beings have all been made in the same image byb the same Creator, therefore we must not be obsequious to some and scornful to others, but behave without partiality to all.

3. The affirmation of human responsibility – because God has laid it upon us to love and serve our neighbour, therefore we must fight for his rights, while being ready to renounce our own in order to do so.

Dudley-Smith's insight here, corresponds favorably with that of König's covenantal theology presented earlier in this chapter, in which the relational nature of human beings with respect to God, self, others and the environment (nature) is of prime importance. The importance of affirming the dignity of all people and valuing human beings is crucial in the fight against poverty, and in society in general. Again, Dudley-Smith (1995:140) contributes by comparing the *devaluing* and *valuing* of people from a Christian perspective:

> Christian teaching on the dignity, nobility, and worth of human beings is of the utmost importance today, partly for the sake of their own self-image and partly for the welfare of society. When human beings are devalued, everything in society goes sour. Women and children are despised; the sick are regarded as a nuisance, and the elderly as a burden; ethnic minorities are discriminated against; capitalism displays its ugliest face; labour is exploited in the mines and factories; criminals are brutalized in prisons…there is no freedom, dignity, or carefree joy; human life seems not worth living, because it is scarcely human any longer.But when human beings are valued…everything changes: women and children   are honoured; the sick are cared for and the elderly allowed to live and die with dignity…prisoners (are) rehabilitated and minorities protected; workers are given a fair wage, decent working conditions, and a measure of participation in the enterprise…Why? Because people matter, because every man, woman, and child has significance as a human person made in the image of God.

The fact that people matter, means that God places an incalculable value on even just one person. The many texts in the Bible (such as in Jeremiah 1:5 and Ephesians 2:10), illustrate this truth. Far from implying a dualistic meaning (where the soul is supposedly more important than the body), the holistic image of God in people represents certain Godly qualities vested in human beings by God. The immense value of these Godly qualities created in humankind, reflect the self-giving love of a God who *is* love.

König in De Gruchy & Villa-Vicencio (1994:107-8), in response to answering the question: *What constitutes this similarity or likeness?* states "We must be like God in forgiving, being merciful, being holy, living in the light, even…to act like Christ. We must love one another as Christ loves us; we must, like Christ, live in love". With these qualities, in mind Dudley-Smith (1995:143) provides a tentative summary of what constitutes the divine image in humans:

- A human being has an intelligence, a capacity to reason and evaluate and criticize herself.
- A human being has a conscience, a capacity to recognize moral values and make moral choices.
- A human has a society, a capacity to love and to be loved in personal, social relationships.
- A human has a dominion, a capacity to exercise lordship over creation, to subdue the earth and to be creative.
- A human has a soul, a capacity to worship, to pray and live in communion with God.

These capacities reflect mental, moral, social, creative and spiritual dimensions, all of which are interconnected and help us to think holistically (as opposed to a dual nature) about the image of God resident in humans. These capacities imply that human beings are capable beings, as affirmed by Nussbaum.

For König, many of these appeals "readily fit into the framework of the Ten Commandments…which expresses God's will for the covenant people" and has three important implications:

1. God created humankind to represent God on earth. People are to make God visible and to live like God, living out the Godly qualities innate in each human being.

2. This means that there will be a number of human attributes analogous to God's divine attributes. For instance, because God is love, we must love; because God is merciful, we must be merciful; because God is holy, Christians, too, should honour this covenantal relationship by being holy and also take up all responsibilities in the world (including helping the poor) delegated by God

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3. Lastly, these qualities unite people. The new life given us by God through Christ is a mutual life in which we cannot just experience good emotions and intents at a distance (as the apartheid ideology supposed) but must live with God and with one another as God's household. It is informative to compare the fruit of the Spirit with the practices of sinful human character from this point of view…The fruit of the Spirit binds us together, while the practices of sinful human nature alienate us from others, making us a threat to one another. From a different perspective, God is love; and thus, as those created in the image of God, we must love God and love one another.

Finally, the covenantal character reflected in the concept of the Image of God points to the theological significance of God's design for humanity. In this respect, and consistent with the thoughts of König and Dudley-Smith, Grenz (1994:229-233) proposes four valuable theological constructs that shows God's intent for human beings to mirror the nature of the Creator to the world:

1. The divine image as a special standing.

As alluded to earlier in this chapter, our divinely-given destiny begins with a special standing before God. As humans created in the divine image, we are the beneficiaries of God's love. This means that each of us has special value in God's sight. We are also the receivers of God's directives, which necessitates a special accountability. Our responsibility is associated to the biblical notion of "dominion". Rather than reading this term against the milieu of the ideology of modern industrial society, however, we must place the idea within the context of the royal theology of the Old Testament. God has assigned to human beings a special assignment with reference to creation, namely, that we serve as his envoys. We are to mirror to creation the nature of God.

The notion of dominion suggests as well that we are living in a "secular world", that is, a universe stripped of lesser deities. There is but one God, and the all-inclusive world is the creation of one God. The Creator has given this creation to humankind to manage. But our management has as its goal that we show to creation what God is like. Consequently, we do not "manage" creation for our own purposes, but for the sake of that higher goal, namely, in order that we might serve as the mirror of the divine character.

Stewardship. In the light of humanity's "management" responsibility of the created order, it is important to note at this point that the theological motif of *stewardship* is applicable here. In this respect, Wyngaard and August in the *South African Baptist Journal of Theology, Stewardship: Volume 16* (2007:224) conclude that, to be a steward of God's creation, means to be a participant in God's overall plan for creation. Therefore, as a point of departure, it is important for Christians to consider the meaning of stewardship in the light of two core functions that describe the nature of the church: 1) the church's *being* function that relates to its identity as steward, and 2) the church's *doing* function that relates to the task of mission to which God has called it. Inherent in this mission is the call to serve others – both those of the household of faith, and those who are not. Gleaning from Vallet, Wyngaard & August (2007) provide three theological understandings that are essential as the church takes up its responsibility as steward in the world:

i. *God is the Creator and Owner* and created human beings in the image of God, giving them particular responsibility in relationship to the earth (Ps 24:1)

ii. *Jesus Christ is the Chief/Servant Steward* who, though he was in the form of God…emptied himself, taking the form of a servant (Phlp 2:6-7). We are called to participate with Christ as "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1)

iii. *The Church is God's steward and Christians are called to be stewards*. The church is a trustee/agent of God's gospel for the world

Therefore, it is important to note that Christ's stewardship to humanity and creation was, qualitatively, a self-emptying lifestyle. Having taken on the form of a servant that also epitomized his incarnation, Christ's life for others serves as an example for Christians to imitate. Thus, in community development or Christian social action, this should be precisely the case where Christians empty themselves as servants on behalf of others who may be poor, needy, sick, marginalized and alienated. Wyngaard & August (2007), borrowing from Vallet, assert therefore that this self-emptying process thereby opens a person to the full recognition of God as Owner and Creator and thereby becomes a significant part of the journey of the Christian steward.

2. *The divine image as a special fellowship.*

Although our divinely given destiny begins with a special standing before God, it focuses on fellowship with God. God's intent is that we respond to his love by reciprocating love and to his commands with the obedience born from love. Only in this mannercan we experience the true life for which God has called us into existence. This conclusion is present in embryonic form in the concept of "openness to the world", with its assertion that humans can find no permanent home in the world but are dependent on God for ultimate fulfillment. Consequently, "openness to the world" points to that enjoyment of fellowship with God which is the potential and the destiny our Creator has given us.

3. *The divine image as an eschatological reality.*

To speak of humankind in the sense of being in the image of God speaks of the universal human potential to actualize or live out the goal God intends for our existence. Each human is potentially a participant in the one destiny God has for us. According to Grenz (1994:231) each person has a "common destiny" that means that "God's desire is that each person respond to him in love and obedience and thereby live out the purpose of our existence…all persons are potentially participants in that reality to which the concept of the divine image points. However, this divine image, much like the stewardship/servant image highlighted earlier, is fully revealed in Christ. Christ is the image of God in the ultimate sense. It is Christ who reveals to human beings what God has created humankind to be. And it is Christ who brings us to participate in that destiny, in the sphere of truly human living. By extension, the image of God is related to Christians in a special way through that those who are united to Christ share thereby in the image of God. This dynamic transformation into the image of God "is a process which we experience beginning with conversion and lasting until the great eschatological renewal which will bring us into full conformity with the image of God" (Grenz, 1994).

4. *The divine image as a special community.*

The common destiny mentioned above, "is a shared, corporate reality" and "fully present only in community" (Grenz, 1994). At the heart of the creation narrative in Genesis 1:26-28 is the theme that God creates the first human pair in order that humans may enjoy community with each other. Grenz (1994:232) points out that this

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first community of male and female became expansive, produced offspring from the sexual union of husband and wife, that eventually developed into societies. What began at the beginning of humankind's history finds its completion at the consummation of history. God's will for his creationis the establishment of a human society in which his children enjoy perfect fellowship with each other, the created world, and the Creator. It is not surprising that the image of God should focus on "community". As the doctrine of the Trinity asserts, throughout all eternity, God is "community", namely, the fellowship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who comprise the triune God. The creation of humankind in the divine image, therefore, can mean nothing less than that humans express the relational dynamic of the God whose representation we are called to be. Consequently, each person can be related to the image of God only within the context of life in community with others. Only in fellowship with others can we show forth what God is like, for God is the community of love – the eternal relationship enjoyed by the Father and the Son, which is the Holy Spirit.

Although the fullest expression of our participation in the image of God must await the eschatological transformation of human life in the kingdom of God, the New Testament envisions a present foretaste of the eschatological human community. The focus of this preset experience, according to the New Testament writers, is the community of Christ. As the eschatological community, the fellowship of those who seek to reflect in the present the future reality of the reign of God, the church of Jesus Christ is the prolepsis, the historical foretaste and sign, of the image of God.

In the final analysis, then, the "image of God" is a community concept. It refers to humans as beings-in-fellowship. Although present in other dimensions of social life, the focal point of community can only be the community of Christ expressed in his church, which ought to be the highest form of human fellowship in this age. As we live in love – that is, as we give expression to true community – we reflect the love which characterizes the divine essence. And as we reflect the divine essence which is love, we live in accordance with our own essential nature, with that which God created us. In this manner, we find our true identity – that form of the "world" toward which our "openness to the world" is intended to point us.

Jesus himself articulated this principle in his call for radical discipleship: "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find

it" (Matt. 16:25). The way to life comes through the giving of one's own life in relationship to Christ. Hence, we come to find our true identity – we come to exemplify our true essence – only as we live out the design and destiny God has for us. This design is that we participate together with others in the community of the followers of Christ. Thereby we together reflect the divine life itself, which life is present among us through the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of the dynamic of the triune God.

5.4.5 Sin: The Broken Image

Having reflected on König's notion of the relational nature of human beings through *covenantal love* and the *image of God*, it would be appropriate at this stage to introduce his third idea that speaks about the *broken image of God*. When one sees the essence of what it means to be created in God's image and to experience a covenantal relationship with God, and when one also reflects on the rampant global poverty in a rich world, it becomes apparent that there is a "disconnect" somewhere. As described in earlier chapters, there is overwhelming evidence of all forms of inequality in our world. The question therefore begs: "What is responsible for poverty and inequality today? Further still, what is this "disconnect" that creates poverty and injustice?

König in De Gruchy & Villa-Vicencio (1994:109) proposes that this "disconnect" is, not surprisingly, relationship-based. Here he asserts that, "as relational beings, humans experience fulfillment in so far as they have good relationships. Sin is the exact opposite: it is to live either in wrong or in broken relationships". Grenz (1994:234) goes further and states that sin is responsible for the "destruction of community" and affects the core of our being and it is responsible for "disruption of community". König (1994) comments further by stating that in wrong relationships, people can still somehow be bound together to one another because of shared hatred against others, while, on the other hand, they might simply alos break off their relationships and live in isolation. In both cases, the result is failure, meaninglessness and emptiness. In a shared view with Grenz, König (1994:109) reinforces the point that "sin is meaningless, inexplicable, chaotic, destructive".

The contrast between the Genesis 2 and Genesis 3 narratives, could possibly allude to the "disconnect" mentioned earlier, because, how could a beautiful idyllic environment in which a covenant unravels (Genesis 2) be so suddenly transformed by failure through disobedience? It is almost impossible to explain why two human

beings chose to turn away from God's instructions by, rather, turning towards their own selfishness. This "disconnect" is therefore called "sin".

The purpose of the following pericope is not to attempt to establish the origin of sin but rather to examine the contemporary reality of sin in relation to the core topic, poverty. In the context of this qualitative study it is the researcher's view that a practical approach (as opposed to a more dogmatic approach) is more beneficial for an examination of the relationship between sin and poverty because, as Grenz (1994:256) agrees, "We always start in the present and with the conditions of existence in our world as they now are. In this sense, the original sin is in a class by itself, and the effects of the original sin are always with us". At the same time, this study presupposes the universality of sin and accepts the truth that sin, as affirmed biblically, originated with Adam and Eve in the Genesis account. However, it would be necessary to provide a brief theological perspective of the nature of "sin" before discussing how "sin" affects the image of God.

As a further description of human brokenness, "the understanding of human nature found throughout the OT, and indeed Scripture as a whole, is characterized by a frank and honest recognition of the nature and pervasiveness of human sinfulness" (Scobie, 2003:660). Grenz (1994:236) describes sin as the "human malaise" and shows that both the Old and New Testaments generally view sin as failure (1994:238). It entails humankind's inability to be what God desires us to be, our failure to fulfill God's intentions for us. While Rieger (1998:150) talks about sin as "the breaking of friendship with God and others", Gutierrez (1973:152) takes a more radical approach:

> sin is not an impediment to salvation in the after-life. Insofar as it constitutes a break with God, sin is a historical reality, it is a breach of the communion of men with each other, it is a turning in of man on himself that manifests itself in a multi-faceted withdrawal from others. And because sin is a personal and social intrahistorical reality, a part of the daily events of human life, it is also, and above all, an obstacle to life's reaching the fullness we call salvation.

In addition, Gutierrez (1973:151) asserts that people "reject union with God insofar as they turn away from the building up of this world, do not open themselves to others, and culpably withdraw into themselves". In the above statements made by Gutierrez, it is clear that sin's destructive effects have specific implications for relationships. While sin is destructive *outwardly* (regarding relationships with others), it is also destructive *inwardly* (regarding personal identity). These outward and inward effects

of sin lead to alienation – contrary to the qualities relating to the image of God. Here qualities such as acceptance, embrace, grace and, of course, love are important, especially when viewed from the perspective of the poor.

When one considers the daily struggles that poor people experience in South Africa and elsewhere in the world, as well as the role of human responsibility in relation to the causes of poverty and economic injustice, the words of Gutierrez (1973:175) concerning the "real" nature of sin are very compelling:

> An unjust situation does not happen by chance; it is not something branded by a fatal destiny: there is human responsibility behind it…Sin is regarded as a social, historical fact, the absence of brotherhood and love in relationships among men, the breach of friendship with God and with other men, and, therefore, an interior, personal fracture. When it is considered in this way, the collective dimensions of sin are rediscovered…Sin is evident in oppressive structures, in the exploitation of man by man, in the domination and slavery of peoples, races, and social classes. Sin appears, therefore, as the fundamental alienation, the root of a situation of injustice and exploitation. It cannot be encountered in itself, but only in concrete instances, in particular alienations

Again, as indicated earlier in this chapter, the notion of sinful human action perpetrated towards other human beings, is a distinctive feature when searching for the root causes of poverty. Because sin is all-pervasive, it manifests personally and socially, and is very often structural in nature, as Gutierrez points out here. Brown (1990:33) agrees:

> Faith becomes a 'liberating praxis', and it does battle with sin. Which is now understood to refer not only to individual shortcomings but to 'oppressive structures created for the benefit of the few and for the exploitation of peoples, races, and social classes'.

Unjust structures or systems (such as the apartheid system) were a reality in South Africa into which many people have been socially conditioned (Nolan, 1988:91). In such unjust systems, "our humanity is certainly twisted and distorted and is the result of a socially inherited system". Our humanity is twisted in different ways, depending of course on which side of the system one finds one's self in. When people uphold the sinfulness of systems, thereby denying other human beings basic God-given rights then it could be deemed that their relationship with those people whom they ill-treat, are not right. Hence, "our relationship with God cannot be right if our relationships with our fellow human beings are wrong" König in De Gruchy & Villa-Vicencio (1994:110). Therefore König (1994) correctly asserts, 'By the same token, our personal relationship with God and with others cannot be right if we live in sinful

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structures. Sin is not merely a personal matter: people create structures; and because people are sinners, structures and systems can be sinful as well".

Based on the considerations above concerning the relational nature of sin, König (1994) provides an apt statement that illustrates, in a practical way, how the idea of sin could be understood:

> The question about the nature of sin must be answered in terms of the nature of being human. If people are meant to live their relationships in love, and if love is a movement away from oneself towards others for the sake of those others (Barth), then sin, in essence, is lovelessness and self-love.

This self-love, as König states, is a contradiction in terms because love is directed to others and the ultimate form of love, as exemplified in Jesus's kenosis, is lay one's life down for another. Laying one's life down for oneself, is not possible, hence the point that self-love is sin because then it represents selfishness. Dudley-Smith (1995:155-6) calls this particular description of sin *self-centeredness*. He shows that, while God's order is that we love him first, our neighbour next and ourselves last, sin is precisely the reversal of this order, in which people put themselves first, their neighours next and God last. What is important for Dudley-Smith here is that people should consider *self-giving love* as more important than self-love because, with self-giving love, people become free from self-love and the suffocating tyranny of one's own self-centeredness, and openness to live in love for God and others. Niebuhr (1960:8), in discussing the particularistic reality of self-love or self-centeredness that exist amongst the powerful, explains that people of power, such as "economic overlords", who are also the "real centres of power in an industrial society", usually hide their greed for more wealth while, at the same time they also view inequality as an after-thought – a brutal refusal to recognize the true worth of the "other". This idea is subtly introduced by Niebuhr (1960:3) who shows that sin limits what human beings are able to do on behalf of others:

> there are definite limits in the capacity of ordinary mortals which makes it impossible for them to grant to others what they claim for themselves.

In the foregoing discussion, the signs of poverty can be seen. When the rightful cries of people are ignored, especially in an economic sense, poverty is almost certain to follow. In concluding the discourse about the theological concepts of covenantal relationships and the Imago Dei, it is clear that König shows how that these concepts provide an integrated understanding of what it means to be truly human: relationships *with* God, others and nature. The understanding of how sin impacts these relationships

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point to the fact that human beings, existing essentially with a "broken image of God", have to make conscious decisions in working towards the "true humanity" of all people, and should keep in mind that each person's humanity is inextricably connected to God and others. Furthermore, this would imply that, when people place God at the centre of their existence, the love for the "other" would (or should) follow – therefore "consigning" sin to a minimalist role. For this reason, a discussion pertaining to the central place of "the other" becomes imperative.

5.5 IGNORING THE "OTHER": "RELATIONAL SIN" AS THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF POVERTY?

5.5.1 Conceptualizing the "self", "other" and "Other"

Borrowing from French philosopher, Jacques Lacan, **Joerg Rieger** (2008:8) describes the "other" as those who are "different". Writing from the so-called "First World" perspective, Rieger understands the difficulty that this terminology presents. For Rieger (2008:21-2) this difference connotes a relational element within power structures. He uses terms such as "oppressed other" and "suffering other" thereby presenting a particular understanding of this particular imaginary social group. For indeed, as he suggests, the "other" as understood by those in the First World, may well be seen by the poor of the Third World as "the other", simply by virtue of differentiation along, especially, economic lines. This view of the "other" is brought into tension with the notions of "the self" (especially with reference to "the modern self) and "the Other" (with specific reference to the Triune God).

For the purpose of this study, the idea of the "other" will be considered and understood to mean "the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized…the infirm, the orphan, the widow, the outcasts of society …" (Rieger 2008:1). These are the people whom he understands to be on the "underside of history" (ibid).

5.5.2 The Self and the prospect of Relational Prosperity

The Synoptic Gospels, primarily the Lukan gospel, show that the life and teachings of Jesus Christ advocate that all people should be sincerely concerned about the predicament of poor people. As Lötter (2008:11) indicates, Jesus, during his life on earth, "showed deep compassion for all people marginalized by society – for the poor, for widows, children, and the sick. Many of his stories and actions illustrate the extent to which he prioritized the relief of human suffering in his own ministry".

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Herzog in Rieger (1998:37) proposes that 'Jesus is not the Christ without the poor, the needy, the outcast, the oppressed. In facing him, we also face them, not just a lonely God'. While at the same time recognizing the authority of the Scriptures, Christians ought also to be transformed by the application thereof to their own lives. This transformation starts taking place when "scripture… invokes in us *discipleship*". Thus "the power of the biblical texts is not confined to purely linguistic phenomena but is related to 'discipleship', the Christian life as a whole (Rieger 1998). This discipleship ethic, as exemplified in Jesus' lifestyle, was an ethic that was made visible through Jesus' concern for the well-being of the "other". It is precisely at this point that Rieger (1998) implores for the reconstruction of the relationship of *self* and *other*.

When viewed from the perspective of *relational deficit*, where people lack God's idea of healthy relationships, the work of Rieger (1998), Myers (1999), Lötter (2008), Nolan (1988) and Ballard & Couture (1999) provide significant insight into helping one to understand the role of *relationships* (or lack thereof) in the poverty discourse. Similarly, from a biblical-theological perspective, the idea of *good relationships* between people, and also between people and God, is seen as *the* key in poverty alleviation. The biblical pericope that best summarizes the need for good human relationships, Matt 25:31-46, also illustrates the fact of impending judgment upon those people who help others who are in need, and also upon those people who refuse to help others who have been trapped by poverty and who are in desperate human need. While on the one hand alluding to the eschatological nature of a human response to human need, here Jesus significantly equates love for the "other" as love for Him:

> And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me'[89]

Thus an important point for this chapter is based on two principles found in Jesus' parable about the Good Samaritan in the Lukan gospel. The first is to *love God* wholeheartedly and the second is to *love one's neighbour* as one would love oneself – the basis of what produces *relational prosperity*.

The Decalogue given to Moses on Mount Sinai could be described as an event in which God demonstrated his desire to advance relational prosperity in the lives of

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[89] Matthew 25:40 is taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible.

humanity. Firstly, given the content of the first four commandments and its foci, it would be accurate to conclude that these four instructions point to the prime injunction for humankind to have a right, healthy relationship with God, our Creator and Source. Secondly, the next six commandments and its foci, point in the direction of right relationships amongst people – relationships that are just, honest, egalitarian, compassionate, caring and loving. Thus, it can fairly be argued that the focus is not so much on the self (lest human beings see their own shortcomings and inabilities to measure up to God's moral injunctions) but rather on God and the other. Through this outward-looking approach to God-focused relationship building with God and with others, the self will then be directed into a prosperous relationship with God and the community. In summary then, this proposed relational prosperity is dependent on the quality of the self's alignment to the two key elements of the Decalogue, viz. 1) love for God and 2) love for the other.

In Luke 10:25-37 one observes the convergence of the two texts found, firstly, in Deut 6:5, that emphasize *love for God* and, secondly, in Lev 19:18(b), that accentuates *love for one's neighbour* – without which love for God is impossible. Furthermore, the entire chapter of Leviticus 19 provides significant coverage emphasizing the vital *relational attitudes* that people ought to have in daily living and that can provide the relational prosperity needed to address the problem of poverty:

1. Right relationships with God (verse 2) - (since humankind is created in God's image, it is required of human beings to live holy lives)
2. Right relationships with parents (verse 3)
3. Right relationships with the poor (verses 9-10, 15)
4. Right relationships with one's neighbours (verses 11, 13-17)
5. Right relationships with the disabled (verse 14)
6. Right relationships with children (verse 29)
7. Right relationships with the elderly (verse 32)
8. Right relationships with strangers (verse 34)

In the light of this chapter's thesis, that *the nature of poverty is essentially relational*, the focus will therefore be on how sin affects relationships and influences the wicked cycle of poverty. Therefore, the more specific question that needs to be asked at this point is: *how ought we to regard the "other"* – viz. the stranger, the poor, the neighbour?

In the search to answer this question, Lacan in Rieger (1998:33-4) asserts:

> The life-and-death struggle of the self and its other can indeed be transformed in relation to a third element… 'the symbolic order'. This third dimension introduces a new sense of otherness that goes beyond the dualism of the self and the imaginary other. Part of the symbolic order is… the symbolic Other, or the Other of language. He finds that the encounter with the Other in language can lead to the production of a new self that goes beyond the fixation and self-centeredness of the self locked into the imaginary struggle with its other.

Rieger's reflections on Lacan, remind us that this encounter with the symbolic Other is actually an encounter with God. This encounter with the "Other" will bring us into encounters with the "other", that is, an encounter with the "underside". More importantly, though, this encounter with the "Other" will also lead to an encounter with "the self" or "the modern self" – a case of introspection. Pertaining to the latter, Rieger (2008:21-4) asserts that "from the perspective of the modern self, authority is related to the ability to control" and that "the modern self asserts its own value by conquering the other". This shows the conflict, a cause, as to why many people are still living in poverty – the narcissistic modern self asserting aggression towards the "other". For Rieger (2008: 25) the modern self comes into being in a power struggle in which the other is subdued and turned into an object. Rieger (2008:26) reinforces this point:

> In the ego's era the interrelation of authority and power is rooted in the modern self's conquest of the other. The usurpation of the other is not only the process by which the self acquires its own identity and authority. Here is also the basis for the self's power, which grows more and more absolute as time goes on and guarantees even the powers of those who, while perhaps not completely in the position of the modern self, benefit from it.

While an encounter with "the Other" will almost certainly cause the "modern self" to rethink how it relates to, for instance, "the oppressed other", Rieger (2008) is also convinced that "from the perspective of those on the underside… control has never been a way of life". This implies that those on "the underside" have a vital contribution to make in terms of determining how they desire to be treated – and they will contribute, provided that the modern self relinquishes control and devolves selfish authority. But for Rieger (2008:24-5) the most critical point is this: the *other* constitutes the self and therefore might call the self to account. In other words, Rieger draws us to a point where he wants us to understand the inseparability of the self and the other. He wants us to understand that the identity of the self is actually dependent

on the identity of the other. In a certain sense, the self must be held accountable for the existence (or more specifically, the quality of existence) of the other.

The other is therefore understood to be the "conscience" of the self. If the modern self fails to "understand the pain of the other" (Rieger 2008:27) then it is also consistent with the fact that the self "is controlled by dreams of fixation and objectification as well as control and power". But it is essential that the modern self must discover its basic connectedness to the other. Clearly therefore, a picture unfolds that shows why "poverty will always be amongst us".[90] It is also clear that the critique of the modern self must be perpetuated as long as it denies the existence and well-being of the other. Finally, as a proposed alternative to the modern self, and also as the undergirding persuasion of this thesis, Rieger (2008:28) proposes:

> The new focus that the encounter with people on the underside of history brings to theological reflection is, therefore, in the most literal sense, a "self-"critical one. Herzog envisions the theological direction for the future: 'The commandment to love the other as oneself is…an invitation…to discover the other as co-constitutive of one's self'

Consequently then, Rieger (2008:31) suggests that the modern self needs to be engaged in the struggle 1) on a *vertical* level, with God (or the wholly Other) and 2) at a *horizontal* level, with the oppressed. Furthermore Rieger (2008:41) correctly claims that "the abortive relation of self and other raises questions about the relation of the self and God." To this extent, Myers (1999:118) proposes that the central relationship in need of restoration is one's relationship with the triune God. Only then will it lead to a point where, through this "co-constitutive discovery" to love the other as one's self, will it be possible to meaningfully address the problem of poverty more effectively. For Anderson in Ballard & Couture (1999:8) this biblical injunction to love the other means that there is the risk of the self being changed. It is the risk of taking on a potentially painful 'new identity". Thus Ballard & Couture (ibid) assert that "the risk of every dialogue with another who is 'not me' is that I might be changed. To understand the other, therefore, we need to be prepared to be changed ourselves…It is this risk of being changed that evokes fear and despair in people and cultures". This is an important perspective especially with the biblical text in mind, that "there is no fear in love". Through this love for the other and also listening to the

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[90] Jesus' words: "the poor will always be among you…"

other, the imaginary walls of separation will be broken down. As Rieger (2008:31-2) affirms, "listening to the other introduces radical transformation" (figure 10) – a transformation that will finally bring together all three elements: selves, others, and sacred texts (in which the Other is to be experienced). The importance of the point of listening to the poor, or the other, is further emphasized by West in De Gruchy & Villa-Vicenzo (1994:20) when he contends that "the poor and marginalized are not really silent, but they are often not heard…and what they say are often the product of centuries of colonization". Does this ignoring of the poor perpetuate poverty? Are Christians also amongst those who ignore the poor?
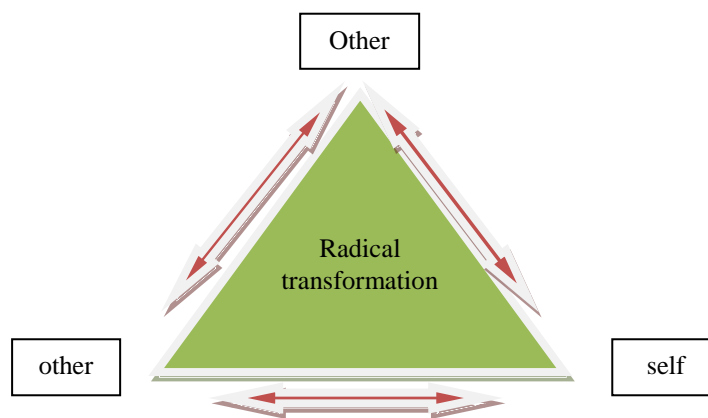
Figure 13 The possibility of transformation

5.6 CAUSES OF RELATIONAL DEFICIT

5.6.1 Individualism and the other

For the self, the idea of individualism is not strange. West in De Gruchy & Villa-Vicenzo (1994:19) confirms that the Western world's emphasis on the individual shapes us all, resulting in the loss of a sense of community. In fact the self is so individualistic that it is consumed with self-preservation. And for Jacobsen (2001:15) self-preservation stands in direct opposition to the cross of Jesus Christ. Here, it must be remembered, this does not mean that one should be fatalistic in abandoning individualism. Rather, individualism should be replaced by a type of community-focused approach in which individual skills, human ability and human resources could be harnessed for the greater good of the community.

Peters (1988:202), writing during a time of extreme "selfishness" in South Africa's history, discussed the concept of individualism from the perspective of powerlessness. Speaking about the powerful exclusivist South African political system that came to

its end just after the 1980s, Peters (1988) implored wealthy middle-class whites in the country to move "beyond individualism". Understanding how powerless the individual felt "in the face of such an almighty system" Peters (ibid) used the analogy of the vine and the branches seen in Jn 15:4-5 to accentuate the need for individuals to transcend their individualism. This transcendence of individualism implies therefore that individuals need a larger group, a community within which to live at an optimal level. At the same time, this challenge to turn to God is also a challenge to turn to community. It is a great challenge to turn to love. Peters (1988) certainly does not romanticize the idea of love for the other and acknowledges the immense challenge for *self* to turn to love for God (*Other*) and love for the *other*. Peters (ibid) explains:

> Those of us who suffer from this disease of individualism can do nothing until we begin to transcend it. The challenge to turn to God is a challenge to turn to the community, to learn to work with people instead of working for them. It takes time to overcome our individualism and…For those of us who were not brought up to think things out with others, trying to work with others in a team is a heavy discipline. Even those who have not been brought up with the cult of individualism…need to resist the temptation of relying upon their own wisdom, doing their own thing, ignoring the decisions of the group and dominating others. We all need to be challenged again and again to overcome our individualism. That is the true meaning of love in social relationships. And God is love. A person can have no greater love and reach no greater heights in transcending individualism, than to lay down his or her life for other (Jn 15: 13)

5.6.2 Reconciliation and the other

In his comparison about the uniqueness of the individual, as opposed to the concept of individualism as proposed by West above, De Gruchy (2002:91) comments:

> The Christian doctrine of reconciliation presupposes a particular understanding of what it means to be a human person, and this in turn is fundamental to what is meant by the Church as the community of reconciliation. The sociality of humanity means that we only exist in relation to others, something also expressed in the word ubuntu…to describe the process of reconciliation. This means that we come into being as persons through encountering and embracing the 'other', whether neighbour or enemy. In this encounter, God confronts us with an ethical choice that determines whether or not we become truly responsible human beings. This, in turn, becomes a precondition of genuinely human relationships and the building of a sustainable community. For only within such a relationship is there a genuine reciprocity of wills. The alternatives are the alienation that comes with atomistic individualism or absorption into an undifferentiated mass. In both instances there is no true recognition of the 'other' as person, or respect for the differences that distinguish the 'other' from ourselves.

For De Gruchy (2002:92), therefore, God's primary concern is the establishment of human community in which the uniqueness of the individual person is not lost in the mass but discovered in relationship to the 'other'. Understanding the reality of human fallenness and the "impossible" ideal of a genuine community, De Gruchy (2002) asserts that the 'I-You' relation in society is "actualized in a sinful way through domination". This "I-You" relationship is therefore not genuine community, but instead, is individualistic and fragmented. The importance of the "individual self" is also important insofar as it operates within the context of community. This "fully-human" Ubuntu" or the self's inseparable "relation to the other" is emphasized by Myers (1999:43):

> our individual self can never be itself apart from being-in-communion with God and with other human beings. The Trinitarian nature of God means that we are self-in-community when we are fully human. Our human selves are embedded in relationships, finding their fullest meaning in just and harmonious relationships or losing meaning and worth when these relationships do not work. This view of the human being is radically contrary to that of modern times, at least in the West

5.6.3 Selfishness and the other

For Gutierrez (1973:36) the concept of "the other" is tied up in the concept of liberation. In order for people to be liberated from oppression, marginalization, exclusion and poverty, there needs to be *openness to others.* Gutierrez (1973) suggests that people need to break away from their selfishness in order to attain "the fullness of liberation". Gutierrez explains:

> The freedom to which we are called presupposes the going out of oneself, the breaking down of our selfishness and of all the structures that support our selfishness; the foundation of this freedom is openness to others. The fullness of liberation – a free gift from Christ – is communion with God and with other men

This process of liberation is similarly conceptualized by Rieger (figure 4.2, above). In Rieger's view, the goal for restored relationships by the self with Other (God), and also by the self with the other (fellow human beings), is what he calls *radical transformation* – a transformation that would certainly have a positive effect in addressing the reality of poverty. This transformation, believes Kung (1974:256), will cause the self to be a "Good Samaritan" to "the person who needs me here and now". At this juncture Kung (1974:256-7) addresses what he calls "the common denominator of love of God and neighbour". For Kung, Jesus is not interested in

"universal, theoretical, or poetical love" nor should love consist primarily of words, sentiments or feelings. Jesus is interested only in practical, concrete forms of love where it is not merely about "love of man" but "love of neighbour". Demonstrating love to one's immediate neighbour, demonstrates love of God and this love of neighbour "is the yardstick of love of God. I love God only as much as I love my neighbour". But the quality of this love, drawn from the question, *how much should one love your neighbour* leads us to Jesus' command to love our neighbour with the same concern, care, attention, and protection that you would afford yourself.

This attitudinal shift is by nature a radical shift for the human ego – and it means a "radical conversion: …to give the other exactly what we think is due to ourselves; to treat our fellow man as we wish to be treated by him" (Kung 1974:257). Far from implying feebleness or softness, Kung (1974) indicates that this certainly means

> the orientation of ourselves toward others: an alertness, an openness, a receptivity for our fellow man, a readiness to help without reserve. It means living not for ourselves, but for others: in this – from the standpoint of the person who loves – is rooted the indissoluble unity of undivided love of God and unlimited love of neighbour

It is at this point where Kung (1974) instructs that this common denominator of human love of God and a person's love of one's neighbour is the *abandonment of selfishness and the will to self-sacrifice*. For Kung, it is through the neighbour or "my fellow man" that one encounters God, and through whom God calls you daily in the midst of your ordinary routine. This abandonment of selfishness is coupled with a self-surrender to God and also with a renewed openness "for my fellow man whom God accepts just as he accepts me".

Borrowing from Jayakumar Christian, Myers (1999:87) also illustrates that poverty is brought about by "broken, unjust relationships" and that most often selfishness is at the core. Myers (1999:86) therefore asserts that "poverty is a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable". Thus, when declaring that "relationships must be restored in all their dimensions", Myers (1999:50) signifies the following:

1. The self must come into an intimate and serving relationship with God, through Jesus Christ
2. The self must be restored in healthy, righteous and just relationships with ourselves and the communities where we live

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3. Restoration of loving, respectful, neighbouring relationships with all who are 'other' to us

4. Restoration of our relationships with respect to earth-keeping

This restoration must include what Anderson in Ballard & Couture (1999:9) calls the *enlargement of the self*. This implies that the self is continually being transformed as it enlarges to include the community with others. By further implication, it also presupposes that the aspect of *fear* (more specifically the fear to change), alluded to above, would by then have been overcome. This restoration of relationships through overcoming fear – especially of the other - and embracing the other could very well be a process of experiential learning. Anderson (ibid) reinforces this point:

> Learning to honour difference without fear occurs when we have a personal experience with someone who is different that enlarges our vision of the human and transforms our attitude toward the stranger

To make a positive shift towards a "constructive, enlarging engagement with the other" would be to move from a position of selfishness or self-centeredness. By this it is meant that the self now embraces "otherness" by abandoning fear in order to come into a constructive, engaging encounter with the other. From an experiential Christian perspective, this volitional act to encounter the other, as well as the reality as experienced by the other, would most likely have been prompted by the "Other" i.e. the triune God. Since the idea of experiential learning, mentioned above, is integral to the process of restoration of relationships, it is congruent that the self will inevitably be transformed through one or more event or experiences of "otherness". Through this experiential learning, the new self then comes into its own and discovers its reason for its own existence. Anderson in Ballard & Couture (1999:10) summarizes:

> some event or experience of 'otherness'…jolted their idea of who they were and where they stood in the world, challenging previous assumptions of 'who was one of us' and 'who was not'….This (is the) idea of being transformed by a stranger. Being able 'to see the other whole' requires all our imagination and resources in order to attend to the transformative power of empathic connections with otherness

Embedded in this summary, is the idea of "being" and "doing". This *being* function relates to the identity that the new self possesses and the *doing* functions gives rise to the task that the new self ought to be engaged with in society. Given the claims by Anderson here, one could therefore conclude that the self will suddenly realize its real

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identity and also its true purpose in life once transformation has taken place. This self-discovery, of *who* self really is, coupled with the discovery of self's position and purpose in the world, is a double-action that epitomizes the biblical reason for human existence. From the standpoint of a theology of liberation, albeit portrayed in typical paternalistic language of the day, Guiterrez (1973: 300) reinforces the point that "the ultimate cause of man's exploitation and alienation is *selfishness*". Gutierrez (1973:91) described the resultant condition emanating from such selfish personal attitudes as the "scandalous condition of poverty". Thus poverty not only defines personal attitudes, it also defines "whole people's attitude before God, and the relationships of people with each other". This is what is scandalous.

Furthermore, Jacobsen (2001:51) conceptualizes selfishness as "egocentric, self-obsessed, small-minded, neglectful of others, and greedy". Furthermore, the selfish person has emotional limitations, is prone to anti-social behaviour, and unwilling or incapable of developing meaningful relationships. Similarly, in the light of community organizing, Jacobsen (2001) suggests that the idea of *selflessness* is also to be perceived in a negative light when it comes to engaging in community-focused initiatives. While this may be true, it is not completely true. While Jacobsen suggests in general terms that selfless people "tend to be perpetual victims and/or do-gooders who operate on the basis of manipulation and do not know how to create mutuality in their relationships", he underestimates the fact that selfless people are very often in control of their emotions and serve their community with a great deal of rationality. While there may be those who act with "irrational selflessness", experience in the field has shown that there is also a substantial presence of "rational" selfless people who are in service of the other.

5.6.4 Lack of Positive self-interest and the other

Nevertheless, Jacobsen (2001:51) proposes an interesting perspective that speaks about the role of *self-interest* – as opposed to selfishness and selflessness – in addressing key issues such as poverty. Whereas the idea of self-interest is generally associated with the idea negative concept of selfishness, Jacobsen here tends to view it in a positive light. He believes that self-interest tends to honour both the "self" and the "other" in the relationship. It appears therefore that self-interest, according to

Jacobsen, is a "balanced approach" that cares strongly for both the self and also for the other – perhaps a concretized form of "loving your neighbour as yourself"[91].

With this self-interest comes *self-denial* but not a self-denial that would disrupt relationships, especially with one's spouse and family. Citing an example, Jacobsen (2001:52) illustrates that a pastor had divorced as a result of him spending too much time with 'others' instead of with his own neglected family because of a skewed view of self-denial. Hence, Jacobsen (2001) believes that "Christian self-denial is to be understood as participation in the cross of Christ, the vehicle of our salvation and liberation…To deny the self is to deny the individualistic and privatistic impulses within us that block us from engaging in community" with others.

Furthermore, in loving our neighbour as we love ourselves, that is, loving the other, Jacobsen (2001:53) proposes three viable elements of self-love, self-fulfillment and self-discovery:

> Self-love is implied, assumed, and affirmed. Any expression of self-denial that reflects self-hate is thus unbiblical. In fact the self-denial to which Jesus calls us is the highest expression of self-love because the self-denial of the cross leads to the deepest experience of life and to the fullest imaginable self-fulfillment. The self-denial to which Jesus calls us invites us to live as fully and as freely as he lived. Such self-denial leads to self-discovery rooted in relationship with others and with God. It is the highest form of self-interest

Thus authentic self-interest for Jacobsen (2001:53-4) has to do with the self that is to be with others, in the community and in the public arena. The long-term self-interest that is essential for Jacobsen's "community with others" is about "weaving together a liberative community in which people can live out their values, be connected to a network of significant relationships, and be agitated to summon forth their God-given power and potential". This quality of self-interest portrays a healthy image of the self and emits a real sense of hope even in visibly self-destructive communities. If this is so, then it is quite plausible to assume that this type of self-interest will inevitably lead to an encounter with God. This encounter with God would then lead to the discovery of the "authentic self", affirmed by the Other "who creates us to be the image of God in the world' (Jacobsen 2001:57). This process of "becoming" says Jacobsen (2001) is like the public unfolding of the self in full view of other people:

> This process of self-becoming is biblically not a solitary matter between a person and God. Moses will become Moses only through his leadership in the liberation struggles of his people. Moses needs the Hebrew tribal community to make possible his own self-becoming.

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[91] Lev. 19:18 and also Matt. 19:19

> We cannot discover ourselves, we cannot find ourselves, in isolation. The discovery of true self and of true self-interest can only be done in the context of community. Indeed, biblically speaking, no 'self' is possible apart from the tribe, the community, the nation, the church, or the kingdom. Congregation-based community organizing encourages the process of self-becoming. And it does so honouring the imago Dei present in each person and respecting the precious diversity of self-interests. Each of us is different

In the final analysis therefore, positive self-interest counters the threat that selfishness poses to the poor and also to the non-poor. Because not only does self-interest from this perspective contribute to the *rehumanization* of the alienated in society, it also provides a path to self-discovery of the imago Dei-based self, answering the totally human question: Who am I and why am I here? This positive self-interest, with mutuality as an under-pinning value, therefore draws both the poor and the non-poor into a dialogue that ushers in real hope for both parties.

Therefore, in the fight to eradicate poverty, humankind is confronted daily with how it ought to relate to God as the *Other*, one's *self*, and one's neighbour as the *other*. This challenge to view poverty in the light of one's relationship with God and others, is further under-girded by the reality that each human being constitutes a "divided self" that Dudley-Smith (1995:148) describes as follows:

> What we are (our self or personal identity) is partly the result of the Creation (the image of God), and partly the result of the fall (the image defaced). The self we are to deny, disown, and crucify is our fallen self, everything within us that is incompatible with Jesus Christ…The self we are to affirm and value is our created self, everything within us that is compatible with Jesus Christ…True self-denial (the denial of our false, fallen self) is not the road to self-destruction, but the road to self-discovery.

When viewed from Dudley-Smith's perspective, it becomes evident that poverty, human fallenness, and relationships between people, and between people and God, are all inter-connected. As proposed by Myers, Rieger, Gutierrez and others, it is evident that the nature of poverty is fundamentally relational. This relational-breakdown that fuels poverty is as a result of that part of human nature that human beings have to resist through salvation - sin. Dudley-Smith (1995:156) describes sin as self-deification. Self-deification refers to "the attempt to dethrone God and enthrone ourselves" through a "stubborn refusal to let God be God" while at the same time taking his place. Human nature, therefore, in order to overcome the causes and effects of poverty, needs to be correctively re-aligned with God, others, and self. With

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this re-alignment will come a natural outflow of love for one's neighbour, a first, important step in combatting poverty, from a Christian perspective.

5.7 Sin, Liberation and Transformation

The preceding discussion, entailing key theological issues such as human fallenness, relational sin, and the image of God, inevitably has to lead to another important discourse pertaining to the Christian view of development and how this notion impacts on poverty. There have been many esteemed academics promoting arguments for certain type of Christian approaches to development. For instance, Gustavo Gutierrez (1973) speaks about development from a "liberation theology" perspective. Similarly, James Cone (1997) and Mosala & Tlhagale (1986) call for a "Black Theology" that is contextually relevant to the immediate needs of black people. Allan Boesak (2009:60) alludes to doing development and theology from the perspective of "solidarity and creating communities of life" at a time of global economic domination by wealthy nations. The notion of *transformation* has also become a key concept in the understanding of development, especially within the discipline of theology . The idea of "development as transformation" is strongly promoted by Bryant Myers (1999) while David Bosch (1991) supports the idea that *mission as transformation* should be "pluriverse" in nature meaning that mission is so diverse that it needs to be done in such a way that the missional agent is contextually relevant in any given context. Bosch (1991:432) reinforces this point by also showing the multi-faceted characteristic of liberation theology.

In addition, the notions of transformation and liberation have taken on significant meaning – a meaning that implies *hope* for those people who grapple with their day-to-day experience with poverty, and also *hope* for the non-poor who want to participate in poverty eradication actions. In this respect, and given the preceding discourse of what the OT and NT (4.2 and 4.3) have to say about poverty and riches, it is noted that there are certain elements that characterize a Christian understanding of transformation. For some, these characteristics may appear to be too idealistic or too utopian to realize, especially in a world where opulence and poverty coexist. However, from a Christian perspective, and especially with the Kingdom of God in full focus, these features are critical in understanding God's perspective on poverty and for talking about hope in a world of poverty. In this respect, Bragg in Samuel &

Sugden (1987:40-47) summarizes the following helpful perspectives on transformation:

1. Transformation is a part of God's continuing action in history to restore all creation to himself and to its rightful purposes and relationships

2. Transformation is a corrective to both individual and institutional sin. It does not extract people from their earthly contexts for other-worldly peity, but rather changes the contexts as well as the people

3. Transformation is to take what *is* and turn it into what it could and should be

4. Transformation seeks to repel the evil social structures that exist in the present cosmos and to institute through the mission of the church the values of the kingdom of God over against the values of the « principalities and powers » of this world

5. Transformation is a joint enterprise between God and humanity in history, not just a mechanistic or naturalistic process. It involves a transformation of the human condition, human relationships, and whole societies

Keeping in mind these prominent themes, Bragg in Samuel & Sugden (1987:40-47) presents eleven[92] characteristics of transformation that inspire hope. Bragg's features

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1. [92] Life Sustenance:

   Any plan for transforming human existence must provide adequate life-sustaining goods and services to the members of society. When a society only has minimal food, water, shelter and clothing, survival becomes sub-human, distorting God's provisions for humanity's well-being. The Old and New Testaments institute God's desire to meet those basic needs (Isa. 58:6-7 and Matt. 25: 31-46 and James 2: 15-16). Yet, even so, meeting these basic needs, while necessary, is not a sufficient condition for social transformation. The provision of life-sustaining provisions and an overall increase in society's wealth provides a quantitative change. But this can form only the foundation of what is really needed – a qualitative change.

2. Equity

   A second characteristic of transformation is an equitable spreading of material goods and opportunities among the peoples of the world. Whatever the causes, the fact remains that two-thirds of humanity is suffering deprivation while a minority lives extremely well. Land tenure, for example, is probably the biggest problem in Latin America, the dominant upper class often holding (and profiting from) as much as 80% of the arable land and available water, as in El Salvador. Equity is essential to transformation because all people are God's children, with the same needs and potentials. As shown with the jubilee laws and prophetic teaching, God has a special concern for the have-nots (see Amos) – the poor, the defenseless, the weak, the marginalized, the sick, and the hungry. The ideal for Bragg (1987) is seen in 2 Corinthians 8:14-15: 'The man who got much had no more than enough, and the man who got little did not go short."

3. Justice

   Unjust relationships and power structures need to be transformed into just ones. The class and caste system, institutionalized racism, the subordinate status of women, the domination of the elite, and international trade rules all need transformation. Deut. 10: 17-18: '…for the Lord

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your God…secures justice for widows and orphans, and loves the alien who lives among you, giving him food and clothing…You too must love the alien'

But for Bragg, the biggest problem has been Modernization – an economic system that is "blind to justice" and through which the profit motive and the capitalist free market system tend to create injustices.

4. Dignity & Self-Worth

   True transformation also depends on the establishment and the validation of all people's dignity and self-worth while people also need self-esteem to be fully human. It is a very difficult thing either to give or to receive with dignity. Therefore demeaning and condescending attitudes by the rich nations and agencies need to be transformed into attitudes of partnership and equality. As President Nyerere of Tanzania once said: "It is more important to us to be human than to be merely rich."

5. Freedom

   freedom (as seen in Chapter 3 of this thesis) is a vital element of transformation. Throughout history, as people have struggled to change their societies, they have seen their goal in terms of freedom from subservience and slavery. Christian transformation must work to liberate people from these bondages. John the Apostle writes that people can be free to achieve all dimensions of the human potential God has gifted us with (John 8:36).

   Concretely, social transformation for most Africans is freedom from the vestiges of colonialism, racism, and neocolonial modernization. As part of recent development dialogues, *Another Development Theory* aims at liberating people from unjust international and national powers by stressing local control and participation in the structures and decisions that affect the people.

6. Participation

   Related to freedom is a need for people to particpate in their own transformation. If people participate in their own transformational process it becomes meaningful, effective and lasting. God has always given high value to human participation in his plans for the world. Even in salvation, the individual response of the human will is indispensable. God has always allowed human beings to participate in the shaping of history, both personal and collective. Christians are called 'fellow-workers' with God and stewards of the earth's resources. True human transformation comes about only when people are able to act upon their own needs as they perceive them and progress toward a state of wholeness in harmony with their own context.

7. Reciprocity

   Reciprocal learning is critical to creating a more sustainable future for all of the inhabitants of planet earth. For example, rich countries can learn from smaller countries, especially in the area of cultural identity. There is a vast area for cultural cooperation which would help the industrial societies to recognize finally that the human experience is rich, and to redefine their styles of life. Poorer countries could also help the affluent nations, for their own well-being, to find a way of life less exploitative of nature, of others, and of themselves.

8. Cultural Fit

   Transformation must always be appropriate to the culture that is to be transformed. All culture are a part of God's good creation

   Christ honoured all cultures and entered fully into Jewish social and religious life with all its traditions. No culture is pure and holy, but we know from Christ's attitude towards it that all have intrinsic values that can be redeemed and used as a basis for social transformation. *Another Development theory* promotes the vital importance of the cultural heritage and creativity of all people and is respected as a biblical idea

9. Ecological Soundness

   Transformation should also be environmentally sensitive. We should care for the world around us, be its stewards, and preserve it. We need to seek development through "gentle" technology that works with nature instead of abusing it. Technology must be appropriate in its cultural and environmental context, both now and on into the future.

10. Hope. Ultimately, transformation is hope, an attitude of *expectation*. Christians must help to replace pessimism with hope. No longer are the problems of society only human problems because God is working on them with us. In the incarnation God demonstrated that he was active in relieving people's ills. The continuing lordship of Christ now gives us the basis and the responsibility to continue his work. Because of what Christ has done, we know that God hears the cries of a burdened humanity and that there is a way out of the human predicament.

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of transformation also provide an important perspective on how Christians should perceive development but it is the following characteristics of transformation, as illustrated in Figure 14 below, that bring about relevant meaning to this researcher's discourse on poverty.

For Bragg in Samuel & Sugden (1987:47) however, the core of human and social transformation is spiritual. Without the change in attitudes and behaviour implicit in *metanoia* or conversion (3.4.4; 4.3.5; 4.3.6; 5.6.3; 5.8), human beings remain self-centred (5.6) creatures. The power in society of sin, both individual and institutional, is a basic deterrent to positive change. Spiritual transformation must begin in the individual but must spread to encompass the transformation of all society, indeed, of all creation. When people turn to God (4.2.2; 4.2.3; 4.2.6; 4.2.7; 5.6.3; 5.8) and are transformed by the Spirit, their individual lives as well as the structures in which they live, are affected. As spiritual, social, economic, and inter-personal relationships are redeemed, structures and institutions are transformed. When these relationships are redeemed, it will allow people to become more fully human and holistically transformed.
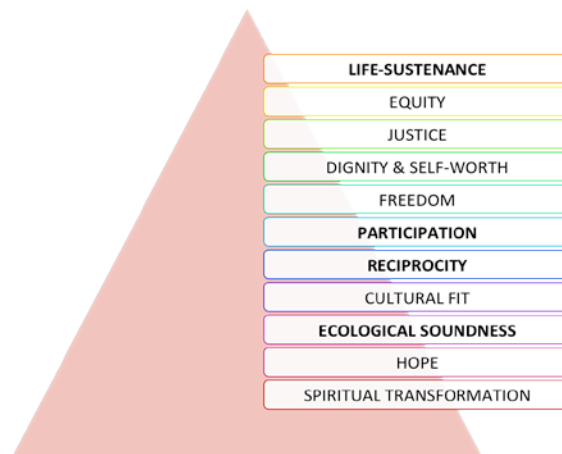
Figure 14 Characteristics of Transformation

These *transformative* characteristics are also evident in liberation theologies and are manifested in Black, Hispanic, Amerindian, Latin American, feminist, South African black theology, etc. By answering the question, *'What is liberation?'* Gill (1996:6) conceptualizes: "…liberation is an historical and not a mental act, and it is brought

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Through Christ, we are enabled to realize *here and now* something of the kingdom's presence (Matt. 10: 7).
11. 11. Spiritual Transformation.

about by historical conditions, the development of industry, commerce, (and) agriculture…" (*parenthesis mine*). Gill (1996) states that this proposition has "proved particularly formative in Liberation theology, providing it with both a critique of much Western theology and a *modus operandi* for future theology". Underscoring the perceived deficiencies in Western theology leading up to the 1960's alluded to by Gill, Bosch (1991:432-3) indicates that the various forms of theologies of liberation, especially of the Latin American variety, developed in protest against the failure, generally speaking, in Western church (Catholic and Protestant) and missionary circles, to "grapple with the problems of systemic injustice". During this era "churches tended to claim…a position above the flux and conflicts of history, merely spelling out gospel principles" when "social ills had to be remedied, but without challenging societal and political macrostructures". Gutierrez (1973:25) reinforces the prevailing skepticism of the poor during that time:

> Development…has become the object of severe criticism due both to the deficiencies of the development policies proposed to the poor countries to lead them out of their underdevelopment and also to the lack of concrete achievements of the interested governments.

Gutierrez (1973:26) indicates that development (which was supposed to bring about a new, prosperous way of life for humanity) failed in the sense that the root causes of economic, social, political and cultural dependence of some countries upon others were ignored and resulted in the perpetuation of the dominance of the rich countries. It was against this backdrop that poor nations (especially in Latin America) began to realize "that their own development will come about only with a struggle to break the domination of the rich countries" – thereby breaking the status quo, breaking dependence on others, and ushering in a transformation that would give the exploited class access to power in order for human beings to "master their own destiny".

In relating this type of liberation action to theology, Bosch (1991:439) says that liberation theology is a theology that is "counter-hegemonic" because "the enemy of humanity is not nature…but one structure of human power which exploits and destroys the powerless". From this position, Gutierrez (1973:27) introduces the idea of liberation, which, for him, has a more appropriate and humane quality. For Gutierrez (1973), "Liberation in fact expresses the inescapable moment of radical change which is foreign to the ordinary use of the term *development*" and is the only

context in which development could have any meaning or could be effectively implemented.

From this perspective therefore, it is the writer's position that liberation from Gutierrez's perspective points the way towards the prospect for a better life for all people but especially for the poor. If liberation has this "appropriateness" and "humaneness" as central features of its core, then liberation is critical for the Church's mission in society. More importantly though, liberation that has a Christocentric position, is the type of liberation that has the potential to usher in hope in the midst of poverty. Therefore, based on the "humaneness" that liberation offers, and also the experiences of the writer in the field of mission and development during the preparation of this thesis, this section will primarily consider two notions of development: 1) development as liberation and 2) development as transformation.

In order to discuss the validity of claims in favour of a theology of liberation, it is important then to ask: What are the central characteristics of liberation and how is liberation relevant for the poor? Having briefly discussed the background to the emergence of a theology of liberation, it is equally vital to discuss the import of liberation in a context of poverty. The act of liberation is not just an idea but is a real event that creates joy for the person(s) who experience it because it means that, having been oppressed before, the oppressed is now liberated from a dehumanizing life-controlling force. Based on this study so far, it can be correctly postulated that poverty is indeed such an oppressive force that curtails the lives of human beings. It has also been shown that poverty is a dehumanizing evil that needs to be uprooted.

In the light of the severity and punishing nature of poverty, Küng (1974:562-3) suggests that in "being Christian as being radically human", the Christian ought to have a sincere "commitment to liberation". The reason why Küng asserts this claim is because of the seriousness of the 'hunger and poverty, massive disease and infant mortality, illiteracy and marginalization, profound inequalities of income and tensions between the classes, outbreaks of violence and a scanty participation of the people in the management of the common good'. Gutierrez (1973:35) concurs with Küng and goes further by stating that there is growing acceptance by the Christian community to accept this aspiration to liberation as a call to commitment. Küng (1974) continues and suggests, radically, that in the face of such structural inhumanity and 'violence',

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which he describes as a state of 'collective' sin and as a "scandal crying out to heaven, Christians and the Churches cannot and may not be silent, and cannot and may not ignore their share of responsibility and remain inactive or indifferent to the this brutal situation". One might think that Küng's comments here refer to the twenty-first century context. The fact that these words were penned nearly forty years ago, indicate that the socio-economic situation for billions of poor people world-wide have not improved at all but has become noticeably worse.

These commitments to liberation by the Christian, challenges Küng (1974:563), are for all those "who are legally destroyed as human beings and who have no real opportunity to be Christians". These "legally destroyed human beings are the forsaken of their continent whose poverty is not a natural necessity but the side-effect of a cruel social system…" Therefore, this commitment to liberation implies that the so-called "underdeveloped" people are able to obtain basic things such as food, shelter, education, and are treated with equality before the law. This illustrates that this commitment to liberation should not just take place at a local level but it should take place, especially, at an international level because there are "constantly new sources of dependence of the underdeveloped peoples on the industrial nations" that come about through unjust global and local economic conditions.

Küng's final statement about the Christian's commitment to liberation invites people to action so that,

> in all this a new way of being human and being Christian becomes possible: not only an inactive sympathy or magnanimous acts of mercy, nor only superficial reforms, but really a 'new man' in a changed, truly just, fraternal and free social order.

Therefore, this type of theology that speaks about the cry for liberation, necessarily starts "not from what theologians have said about theology, but from what reality itself says today directly of man and society". It is a theology that constantly reflects on the living experiences of the day and engages in "liberation praxis in confrontation with the very concretely understood Christian message" (Küng, 1974). This type of theology, speaks about people living in dignity, in freedom, as human beings who become the agents of their own destiny, as Gutierrez suggested earlier, and as Maimela in Mosal & Tlhagale (1986:102) assert:

> Black Theology, like every other theology of liberation, arises when, in protest against the inhumanity to which they have been subjected by the dominant whites, the oppressed blacks not only decide to liberate themselves historically by taking away the power to shape history

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> from their oppressors, but also commit themselves to reflecting theologically on their
> historical suffering which they regard as a theological problem so as to find new ways out of
> that suffering.

Yet, the true character of liberation is Christological in nature. It is no wonder that Gutierrez (1973:35) asserts that the Biblical message, which presents the work of Christ in liberation, provides the structure for this explanation. In this framework, the essence of Christian *being* and human life is portrayed as the transformation "from the old man to the new, from sin to grace, from slavery to freedom". This freedom or liberation is further qualified in Paul's epistle to the Galatians (5:1), "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free…" Gutierrez (1973) illustrates that sin in this context is a "selfish turning in upon oneself" with the resultant effect that one refuses to love one's neighbour and, consequently, refusing to love God. As seen in the earlier chapter that reflects on the biblical perspective of poverty (in Amos for example), sin can be regarded as the ultimate cause of poverty, injustice, oppression, and systemic violence. This ultimate cause contaminates both the *personal* as well as the *collective* with regard to the structural and systemic injustices. After all, "things do not happen by chance and that behind an unjust structure there is a personal or collective will responsible – a willingness to reject God and neighbour. It suggests…that a social transformation, no matter how radical it may be, does not automatically achieve the suppression of all evils" (Gutierrez, 1973).

In linking the gift of liberation with the idea of the "other" as articulated in this chapter, one is reminded that Christ liberated human beings for a reason. Christians have been liberated not just to be free, but to be free to love, according to Gutierrez (1973:36). People are therefore liberated to be in healthy relationships with God, the "other", creation and oneself. This love for "other" after the liberation experience can only add tremendous value to a social fabric that needs more people to live in harmonious relationships. For Gutierrez (1973), this ultimate effect of freedom is what people have been liberated for:

> The freedom to which we are called presupposes the going out of oneself, the breaking down
> of our selfishness and of all the structures that support our selfishness; the foundation of this
> freedom is openness to others. The fullness of liberation – a free gift from Christ – is
> communion with God and with other men.

Emphasizing the fact that human beings were created for one another, Gutierrez (1973) quotes Bonhoeffer: "Being free, means 'being free for the other', because the other has bound me to him. Only in relationship with the other am I free".

Therefore, it can be concluded that, based on the preceding discussion about the merits of seeing development as liberation, the "humaneness" or the "human face" at the heart of liberation, as well as its Christocentric emphasis, is consistent with the nature of conversion. For Moltmann (1993:102) liberation comes through conversion. In this instance, Moltmann sees conversion as a turning around from violence to justice, from isolation to community, from death to life. Scobie (2003:721) affirms this position and concludes that "Jesus summoned people to make a radical break with their past lives, characterized by sin and self-centeredness, and to make a fresh start that constitutes a whole new life". Moltmann (1993:103) expands on this reality and believes that conversion cannot merely be limited to either private or religious life but that it is an all-embracing and holistic salvation. Very importantly, conversion takes place totally and holistically in the human being, affecting the mind soul, body and heart. This happens to such an extent that this "call to conversion leads men and women into the discipleship of Jesus" (Moltmann, 1993). The community of those who were being converted, also followed Jesus, and in so doing, they became "a single people, one with the poor, and welded into the new messianic community". It therefore reasons that conversion can be seen as a form of liberation, and also the means to freedom. This conversion is personal in nature but has positive, transformative, and communal effects. For, if people who were previously unable to accept others could turn around and form a new community of love, then it could be claimed that conversion has a liberating effect not just on the individual, but also on whole communities. Through conversion toward God, the non-poor will also be converted to the poor – their neighbor, who is also in need of conversion. Therefore, in a community that experiences poverty and where people are trapped by all forms of injustices, it can be maintained that personal conversion, with its holistic nature, could be the beginning, or the catalyst, for the removal of forces that perpetuate poverty in individuals as well as in the broader community, thereby ushering in God's goal of transformation in society.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The presentation and dialogue of the literature study in Chapter 5 was premised on 1) the research question, 2) conceptualization of specific ideas relating to poverty, and 3) guided by Osmer's four practical theology tasks. The chapter has disclosed what is necessary for a more meaningful approach on the part of Christians and the Church in the fight against poverty. It has surfaced from the study that a meaningful approach to the eradication of poverty on the part of Christians would consider the following imperatives and apply these within the normative and pragmatic tasks as proposed by Osmer:

- Living in a covenant partnership with God would imply living in right relationship with the poor

- The poor too, are created in the image of God, thus they too, need to have their human dignity affirmed and their human equality affirmed. Christians can participate in this type of action by assuming human responsibility which implies that, because God has laid it upon us to love and serve our neighbour

- Solidarity with the poor in their suffering

- Advocacy of the poor in their struggle for survival

- People are relational beings who only come into their own in relationships of love. This love ought also to be practiced with commitment and caring towards the poor

- To love the poor means to be "self-giving", a movement away from self towards another, not for the sake of self but for the sake of the other (Barth in König, 1994)

- Thus, to love *only* one's self means to be self-centred and individualistic, a movement away from the "other" towards one's self, not for the sake of the "other" but for the sake of "self"

- Ignoring the "other" or not loving the "other" can therefore be regarded as relational sin which, for Myers (1997), is at the root of poverty

Of equal importance, Chapter 5 has argued that relational sin is at the core of the poverty malaise. This chapter has also shown that an understanding of the root cause

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of poverty can indeed help rich and poor communities to find solutions to eradicate poverty.

CHAPTER 6: IN SEARCH OF ROOT CAUSES OF POVERTY: RESULTS, PERSPECTIVES AND CONTRIBUTION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

How can the understanding of sin as the root cause of poverty assist rich and poor communities in South Africa to eradicate poverty? This is the research question (1.2.1) that has directed the dissertation thus far. The best possible answer to this question will result in a theological perspective of poverty and riches applicable to the perspective of poverty and wealth of contemporary societies. How does one articulate such a perspective? To whom is this perspective to be addressed?

6.2 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The path of this study is accentuated by the hypothesis (1.2.2) in Chapter 1 that when people understand and act upon the root causes of poverty, a better quality of life will be possible for the poor. Stemming from this hypothesis, five suppositional assertions were proposed as a way to a poverty-free life. The *first* hypothetical assertion proposed that poverty would be eradicated when its causal relationships are examined and acted upon. The *second* hypothetical assertion proposed that dealing with the root causes of poverty will produce transformation in people and, subsequently, also in any poor community. The *third* hypothetical assertion proposed that there is hope for people trapped in poverty especially when non-poor (and also poor) people participate justly in the process of caring for the marginalized. The *fourth* hypothetical assertion proposed that in order for poverty to be eradicated in the lives of poor people, there is a need for non-poor people to demonstrate concern for the poor in a loving, just, and practical way. The *fifth* and last hypothetical assertion proposed that non-poor people could make a powerful contribution to transformation, especially non-poor Christians, when they embrace their critical role in the poverty eradication process.

In Chapters 2 there was an investigation into social context with special emphasis on globalization, the African and South African socio-economic climate, as well as the social context of Factreton, the local community where the researcher has done most of his voluntary community development work. Chapter 2 presented a global, African, South African and local socio-economic contextual analysis, in line with Osmer's (2008:1-29) practical theological methodology (1.7.2). In this way the

chapter fulfilled the descriptive-empirical and interpretive tasks by answering the question: *What is happening in the world, Africa, South Africa and in local communities?* The chapter succeeded in uncovering the specific root causes of contemporary global socio-economic problems and suggested specific concepts that may be incorporated into a possible development agenda that may benefit South African society.

Chapter 3 built on the "glocalization" (meaning the merging of the terms *global* and *local*) theme of Chapter 2 and concentrated on leading global voices in current development discourse. Here again (3.1.1), the practical theological methodology of Osmer's (2006:6-15) descriptive-imperative and interpretive tasks (1.7.2) are continued and lead to important questions: *What is happening in the development world? What is being said in the development world about the root causes of poverty?* This chapter succeeded in uncovering further root causes of poverty while again proposing specific concepts that may be beneficial in the quest to eradicate poverty. Chapter 3 also intersected with Chapter 1 because of its intensely conceptual nature but more specifically for examining the root causes of poverty, as proposed in the study's third hypothetical assertion (1.2.2).

Chapter 4 focused on a biblical-theological literature analysis of poverty limited mainly to biblical scholars and specific biblical examples and references. The main question, what does the Bible say about poverty, resulted in an understanding of what God's perspective on poverty entails. Chapter 4 draws primarily from Osmer's normative task and asks the strategic question: *What ought to be going on?* However, in order to answer this question, Chapter 4 draws from biblical and theological sources and begins (as in Chapter 2 and 3) to ask, *What is going on*, and *Why is it going on?* (1.7.2). In this regard, Chapter 4 is concerned with Osmer's first three tasks – descriptive-empirical, interpretive, and normative (1.7.2).

Chapter 5 links with chapter 4 along biblical-theological lines and focuses on the questions pertaining to Osmer's interpretive, normative and pragmatic tasks. In this mainly conceptual-theological exploration of poverty, Chapter 5 successfully answered the pragmatic question, *how might we respond?* Here a more pragmatic question could read: *How might the non-poor respond to people who live in poverty?*

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There are of course supporting questions such as, *what causes poverty...* and, *how is poverty sustained?* These supporting questions served to reinforce the problem statement (1.2.1) and hypothesis (1.2.2). Together with Chapter 4, this chapter served as the hermeneutical key of this study and sought to epistemologically answer the key question: *How can the understanding of sin as the root cause of poverty assist rich and poor communities in South Africa to eradicate poverty?* This chapter focused on how poverty could be understood theologically (5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 5.6 and 5.7) and how Christians could harness this perspective as a resource for helping the poor to maximize their God-given potential.

Chapter 6 highlights some perspectives and key themes (6.2) of the study, which also reflect the achieved goals of the research, and also presents recommendations (6.4) that could assist poor and non-poor people to participate meaningfully in contemporary socio-economic transformational activities in society. The perspectives to be presented emphasize the connectedness of people, the natural environment, systems, ideas and realities in a glocal world. These perspectives also propose that humankind have reason to be hopeful of a better future because people have the innate ability to be catalysts in development. The recommendations to be presented will be drawn from the findings of this research's in-depth literature study and are intended for the attention of glocal Christians and glocal citizens. In alignment with the aim of the chapter, this chapter will engage Osmer's (1.7.2) pragmatic approach in practical theological methodology (How might we respond?), and Hendriks' (1.7.2) correlational-hermeneutic perspective on the need and value for dialogical interaction.

6.3 IN SEARCH OF ROOT CAUSES OF POVERTY: PERSPECTIVES

6.3.1 In section 1.3 this study suggested that one of the desired results or goals is to investigate the critical need for understanding the importance of the root cause of poverty as opposed to simply understanding the consequences of poverty. A second goal was also to understand how the actions of individuals and systems contribute to poverty. Through using investigative questions based on Osmer's four tasks of practical theology (1.7.2), the research found that poverty and sin is almost inextricably linked (Chapters 2-5) but that there is also a possible way out of poverty through a normative, pragmatic approach. Through utilizing Osmer's descriptive-empirical and interpretive tasks (1.7.2), it was found that sin is ingrained in every

facet of society and that the poor are in need of the unwavering support and unselfish action of the non-poor (1.8; 5.2; 5.3).

6.3.2 The problem of sin: Through using Osmer's four-fold enquiry technique (1.7.2) it became clear that a different way of understanding sin and poverty resulted. This is of course not a new way, but it is a different way for poverty to be spoken about and addressed. The naming of specific ways how sin is manifested in society can be seen in how sociologists and even economists (including Castells, Bello & Mkandaweri) have alluded, but not specifically saying so, to the sin problem studied in this research. The problem of sin is first introduced in the research problem (1.2.1) and the hypothesis (1.2.2) in this study. In section 1.7 and 1.8 this study pointed to the notion that sin and evil is the ultimate cause and sustaining force of poverty. The topic was further taken up in Chapter 2, i.e. 2.2.1 (economic and social inequality); 2.4.2 (oppression as sin) and 2.6 (dehumanization). In Chapters 3, 4, and 5 the concept of sin is given various descriptions, such as the disregard for "basic social minimum"; generational slavery and victimization (3.3.1.3); unfreedoms (3.3.2.4); capability depravation (3.3.2.5); maladjusted economies (3.4.4); corruption and inequality (4.2.5.2); injustice (4.26); lovelessness (4.3.6); violating human dignity (5.3.1); the broken image of God seen in people (5.4.5); ignoring the "other" (5.5); individualism (5.6.1); and selfishness (5.6.3). Whereas the contemporary notion of "sin" is often understood in the sense of doing something wrong, such as stealing someone's car, the idea of sin as presented in this research is shown to be of a more subliminal nature, as seen in the concepts such as "unfreedoms", "maladjusted economies", etc. A central result of this research shows that sin takes on a personal meaning where individuals are regarded as responsible for ignoring (and sometimes causing) the poverty of other people. These subconscious meanings of sin have helped to add value to this research from a sociological and economic perspective.

6.3.3 Sin as ignoring the "other": A core goal that has been reached and that has added to the significant results of this research is the notion of understanding the question, *Who is the "other"?* (4.2.1; 5.5.1). The importance of the "Other-self-other" nexus (4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.2.3; and 4.2.7) is a principal relationship in helping to achieve the goals of this study (1.3). Through further analysis and drawing from Osmer's normative and pragmatic tasks (1.7.2), it was established that ignoring one's neighbor

(other) meant a break in relationships with not only that person, but also with God (5.3.2). This system of broken relationships (highlight the unfortunate position that humankind finds itself in. The understanding and application of Osmer's strategic model has helped to show that an understanding of "relational sin" as the root cause of poverty can indeed assist poor communities in South Africa to eradicate poverty. This analysis of understanding (1) what relational sin entails, (2) who one's neighbor is, and (3) what the effects of ignoring the "other" entail, has also led to the answering of another question, *How does poverty and its causes relate to each other?* Therefore*,* by implication, this niche understanding pertaining to poverty and relational sin, has also strengthened the hypothesis that addressing the reality of sin more concretely will help to contribute more effectively to the transformation of poor and rich communities in South Africa and provide a better quality of life for all of its citizens.

6.3.4 A final result of this research project has demonstrated its dialogical nature (2.1 to 5.7). In keeping with the study's dialogical approach, Chapter 4 and 5 discussed what the Bible and theology has to say about poverty and thus had an epistemological basis. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 served as the key to unlock, in the first place, the connection between theological and contemporary development perspectives, and in the second place, served to further examine what the root causes of and response to poverty could be. Throughout this study, the discourse on the "scandalous condition" of poverty (4.3.3) has investigated and uncovered certain key themes both in the secular domain and also in the theological discipline of development. This intersection of certain theological and contemporary development themes is an opportunity for the dialogical process (Ballard & Pritchard, 1996) to either begin or continue, especially since development is deemed to be holistic in nature. Having already explained the correlation between each chapter in this dissertation, the researcher will reflect briefly on how these mutual, dominant themes in both theological perspectives and contemporary development discourse, have been in dialogue. In reflecting on these themes, two key correlational questions therefore remain:

1. *What are the important points where theological perspectives and contemporary development dialogues intersect?*
2. *What value do theological and contemporary development perspectives offer the poor?*

The research has showed that theology and sociology share several key themes. Here, the researcher will refer to three of the most dominant shared themes:

1. Human dignity
2. Justice
3. Freedom

Each of these mutual themes demonstrate that there is enough synergy across inter-disciplinary sciences to merit ongoing dialogue. The fact that prominent economists (Amartya Sen and Joseph Stiglitz) and sociologists (Manuel Castells) agree strongly with biblical issues of human dignity, justice, and freedom, are an indication that the "dialogical door" is always open for people from different disciplines to address the problem of sin and poverty in their own unique way. For the UN (3.2.9), sociologists such as Martha Nussbaum (3.3.1.3) and Amartya Sen (3.3.2) and Anti-Globalization Forum-ists such as Walden Bello (3.4.4), the contemporary global debate around human dignity, freedom and justice compare favorably with the biblical theological discourse (4.1 – 5.7) on poverty.

Chapter 6, as the concluding section of this study, culminates in reinforcing the correlational-hermeneutic (cause and effect) approach that flows through the research. Chapter 6 draws together Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in a way that returns to the research question (1.2.1) and reflects critically on the relevance of theological and contemporary perspectives. Lastly, Chapter 6 also draws from this theological-contemporary development dialogue (6.2.4) to test the hypothesis (1.2.2) stipulated in Chapter 1. The crucial function of Chapter 6 is therefore to determine how the ethics of a Christian perspective of poverty intersect and differ with a contemporary perspective of poverty and to what extent the two are able to engage dialogically in favour of the poor.

6.3.5 Testing a theological perspective in current development dialogues: Shared themes and concepts in theological-contemporary development discourse (Chapters 2-5):

Chapter 2: A glocal socio-economic analysis: *what is going on? Why is it going on?* **Unemployment (*What does unemployment do to a person?*)**

It was presented in Chapter 2 that unemployment (2.4.1) is one of the most dehumanizing experiences that could ever happen to people in South Africa and anywhere else in the world. Unemployment is dehumanizing because it makes people to feel unworthy and inferior (2.4.2). Unemployment often prevents people from acquiring the most basic human needs (2.4.3) that are necessary for their survival. Unemployment has many causes including political, economic and social reason, and also by events that take place in other parts of the world. Unemployment therefore comes about as a result of historical and contemporary unjust political, economic and social systems that exclude people from the opportunity to find meaningful employment and occur at local level (2.5.2 and 2.5.3). Unemployment has the potential to disrupt every possible relationship that a human being could possibly have – with self and with other people, the immediate family, with the environment, and with God (5.3.2). It is possible that unemployment can make people vulnerable and expose them to exploitation by the non-poor. Therefore, the dehumanizing character of unemployment makes it an important discussion point, and calls for activism in both the theology and contemporary development disciplines.

Inequality (*Why are people economically unequal?*) and Human Dignity (*How does poverty affect poor people?*)

A second and third shared theme between theology and the sciences is the increasing **inequality** (2.2.1) between the poor and the non-poor (4.2.5.2). Macro-economic policies such as BEE (2.4.1) and the world's increasing technological advancement (2.3; 3.3.2.5; 3.4.2; 3.4.3) have largely created an even larger inequality gap between rich and poor people, benefitting only a small percentage of people. Inequality has also brought with it further social and economic exclusion (3.3.2.1) of the poor. Inequality also impacts on **human dignity** (3.3.2.2; 3.4.2; 4.2.4.2; 4.3.3; 4.3.5; 5.2; 5.3; 5.4.4) because it creates a class system in which those who are poor. It has also been shown in Chapter 3 (development dialogue) and in Chapters 4 and 5 (biblical theological discourse) that human life has the same value and that human dignity must at all times be protected.

Self-centredness (*How important is the "other" who lives in poverty?*)

A fourth dominant theme that is shared between the theology and present-day development discourse focuses on the self-centredness (4.2.5.1; 4.2.5.2; 4.3.6; 4.4;

5.3.1; 5.4.5; 5.7; 5.6.3) and profit-driven nature of many non-poor people and those who drive the global economic system. The unquenchable pursuit of money (2.2.1; 4.3.4) becomes the focus rather than the pursuit of the holistic well being of all of humanity, non-human life and the environment (2.2.4).

Human potential (*How are people the "real wealth" of nations?*)

A fifth, more positive and critical theme for both theology and contemporary development discourse, is the notion of human potential or human capabilities (3.2.8; 6.4; 5.4.4) rather than human weaknesses or deficiencies. The idea of human potential and capabilities (3.2.8; 3.3.1.3; 3.3.2.3; 3.3.2.4; 3.3.2.6; 3.3.2.7) correspond well with the theological concept "image of God" (5.4.2; 5.4.4) and highlights the creativity with which human beings (poor and non-poor) have been created and also the ability participate (3.2.7; 5.4.4; 5.7) in their own development . Thus the resource-rich non-poor plays a crucial role in poverty eradication. This collective action of humankind, rich and poor participating to eradicating poverty, is what this researcher chooses to conceptualize as "mutual development", referred to in Chapter 3. In Chapter 2 there are intermittent signs that human beings hold the future in our own hands (2.3; 2.4). The African ideal of "Ubuntu" (5.6.2; 5.7) through which humans make space for other humans (3.2.1; 3.2.3; 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.2.3; 4.2.4; 4.2.5; 4.2.6; 5.3.2; 5.4.3; 5.5.1; 5.5.2; 5.6), accentuates the human potential that is available in the world to address the root causes of poverty. The positive thing about human potential is that people have the ability to be agents of their own history and masters of their own destiny (5.7). Human potential is therefore also open to a process of joint partnership and collective effort in tackling the root causes of poverty, as demonstrated by the shared values between theology and contemporary development discourse.

Relationships (*What matters the most?*)

The fifth mutual theme surfacing in this study introduces the relational nature of poverty, unemployment, inequality, self-centredness, and dehumanization of people (2.4.1). In the estimation of the researcher, severed relationships are at the root of poverty. As the research shows, the relationship between the poor and the non-poor (2.4; 4.2.5; 4.2.6; 4.2.7), the poor and political systems (2.2.2;), the poor and economic systems (2.2.1), and especially the poor's approval and understanding of themselves (5.4), stem mainly from relationships that are severed or unjust (5.3.2). At

the heart of poverty, lies the belief that people are the primary cause of poverty (3.3.2.4; 4.2.1; 4.2.3; 4.2.4; 4.2.5; 4.2.6; 4.3.2; 4.3.3; 4.3.6; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 5.6; 5.7) This is so because it is people who make political and economic decisions, as well as decisions determining their or others' quality of life (3.3.1.3; 3.3.2; 3.4.3; 3.4.4; 3.3.5; 4.2.5.2; 4.2.6; 4.3.1; 4.3.5; 4.3.6; 5.1; 5.3). This brings into perspective the question, *how do political leaders and economists relate to the poor?*

CHAPTER 3: contemporary development discourse: *what is going on? Why is it going on?*

Themes: Quality of Life, Human Dignity, Human Capabilities, Holistic Human Development, and Participation (*Which creative resources are available for human beings?***)**

This critical development theme of Chapter 3 emphasizes the inherent creative nature of human beings (human capabilities) that will lead to a good quality of life for the person herself and for others. Thus suppression or oppression (3.3.2.2; 4.2.5; 4.2.7; 4.3.2; 4.3.6; 5.4.3; 5.6.3; 5.7) of a person's creative capabilities can lead to poverty. Enjoying a good quality of life includes having a good education, good health and good income, all three of which are central to a person's human dignity, self worth, and holistic human development. In addition, when quantified, a person's good quality of life will also contribute significantly to a country's economy, the person's community, as well as the person's family and their quality of life. Through having a good quality of life free from unfreedoms such as unemployment and poverty, a person's abstract human needs are also fulfilled, alleviating the person from psychological and emotional pain. When people are not bound by unfreedoms, then they are able to participate more freely in their own development and also in that of their community's. When human capabilities and human potential are "unlocked" it produces life, enhances dignity, ensures holistic human development, and creates hope within a community.

Human Rights, Justice and Freedom (*Why are human rights important?***)**

The sixth theme of significant importance is that of human rights (3.2) and Freedom (3.3.2). Human rights serve as the bedrock of human development. This implies that holistic human development is impossible without the unconstrained application of basic human rights. The enactment of human rights is integral for inequality,

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injustices, poverty and dehumanization to be eradicated from the experiences of poor people. Human rights in the democratic South Africa enshrine the rights of all people and affirm the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom (3.3.2). It is the duty of all countries, especially those that are democratic, to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights of all people, including the poor. However, one of the major challenges to South Africa's human rights society is the threat of economic globalization. Finally, human rights are life-enhancing and must be protected and defended at all costs.

Gender and the Feminization of Poverty (*Why do women suffer the most?*)

In the fourth place, the immense progressive leaps in affirming all women in South African society since 1994 is proving to be life-enhancing, nation-building and hope-inducing characteristics of the young Government. There are still many challenges ahead with regard to the rights of women pertaining to property, traditional or customary marriage, poverty, etc. The history of women's rights in South Africa, especially rural black African women, painted a devastating picture. However, in less than twenty years, many women in South Africa today can testify to a better quality of life thanks to the affirmation of their human rights and implementation of appropriate "rehumanizing" rights-based legislation.

Freedom and Unfreedoms; Capabilities Depravation; and Justice and Injustice (*How do unfreedoms contribute to poverty?*)

In Chapter 3 there is a strong case promoting the freedom and human capabilities of people. The consequences of the unethical denial of these freedoms, as well as the intentional or unintentional deprivation of people's capabilities by other people and systems of injustice, create and exacerbate poverty and dehumanization. Thus, the ideas of unfreedoms, capabilities depravation and injustice, stand in stark contrast to freedom, the unleashing of human potential, and justice. These anti-life forces work against human well being and are devastating for the opportunity of living a good quality of life.

CHAPTER 4: A biblical perspective of poverty: *what is going on? Why is it going on? What ought to be going on?*

God, and humankind's " ultimate concern" (4.2.2; 4.2.6)

Chapter 4 illustrates the centrality of God in everything. The chapter examines the importance of a theological contribution to poverty and contemporary development dialogues. Thus, Chapter 4 utilizes and draws from specific Old and New Testament examples and references that have a direct bearing on poverty. In this chapter it was shown that people are important to God and that he is concerned about the plight of the marginalized, especially the poor. A key aspect of this chapter based on a biblical perspective of poverty has shown that apart from God being the Creator and Ultimate Owner, God desires to accomplish his purposes of holistic human well being through people. In other words, in the fight to eradicate poverty, God uses people (especially the non-poor) to help other people (poor).

Otherness and "imperative concern" *What ought to be going on?*

The sections on "otherness" (4.2.1; 4.2.6; 4.3.6; 5.6.3) as depicted in a biblical-theological sense, stems from a response to the descriptive-empirical question, *What is going on?* (4.1) The question and subsequent examination of what it means to "love others" helped to direct the research closer to the hypothesis in which it is argued that addressing the reality of sin more concretely will help to contribute more effectively to the transformation of poor and rich communities in South Africa and provide a better quality of life for all of its citizens (1.2.2). Likewise, love for the "other" (4.2.1) brings into tension the understanding of sin as the root cause of poverty, as hypothesized in 1.2. Thus, if love for God (4.2.2) can be construed as the "ultimate concern" according to Tillich, then love for "other" may very well be described as the "imperative concern[93]". If this is true, then Osmer's normative task (1.7.2) that asks the question, *What ought to be going on...* is a prelude to the final evaluation concerning the identity of the "other" in Chapter 5.

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[93] Based on Deut. 6:5, Tillich (in Jacobs, 1973) proposes the "ultimate concern" as the highest form of human expression of love for God. Against this background, and also against the background of Jesus' double commandment to show "ultimate concern" for God, and to "love your neighbour as yourself", the researcher here proposes the idea of "imperative concern", meaning the urgent, non-negotiable concern for loving the "other".

CHAPTER 5: Poverty, relational sin, and human dignity: *how might we respond?*

Chapter 5 engages the theme of poverty with the concept of sin (5.4; 5.5; 5.7) in order to bring to conclude the discussion that asks the hypothetical question "how can the understanding of sin as the root cause of poverty assist rich and poor communities in South Africa to eradicate poverty?" In order to arrive at a hopeful answer, the researcher posed the question, "Who is the "other" (5.5). Consequences for the way this question is answered could have a significant bearing upon the Human dignity (5.3.1) of people. By asking the question about the identity of the "other", it became evident that the "other" is created in the image of God (5.4.2) and those contraventions of the call to love the "other" constitutes "relational sin" (5.6). For this reason, the idea of "liberation" (5.7) is put forward as a hopeful means (5.7) for the poor and the non-poor to be experience freedom so that restored relationships can contribute to affirmation of the "other", and a new way of life that also brings new life.

6.4 CHALLENGES

In this research, there are perceived challenges that could serve as a counter-force to achieving the goals of this study. A critical reflection on this research's findings needs to ask whether the question of sin and its relationship to poverty is not perhaps "too dogmatic" a question to ask, as pre-empted in 1.2.1. It was argued in 1.2.1 that "society cannot avoid to ask the difficult questions" and it is possible that some could see the idea of "sin" as irrelevant to the poverty-development discourse.

Since poverty encompasses every sphere of society (2.2.1 – 2.2.4) (economic, political, religious and environmental), and is evident in almost every glocal context, the threats to achieving the stated goals are real, just as the reality of those living in poverty are real. To this effect, the research is required to probe a few critical open-ended questions that pose challenges for the researcher and for people who are concerned, in solidarity, or activists, for the poor:

- Is there enough political will for the implementation and follow-through of pro-poor democratic economic, political, and rights-based policies (3.3.2.5) by corporations and governments?

- How are the ongoing global economic, political, religious and environmental crises (2.1) that threaten the existence of humankind and the natural environment to be addressed?

- To what extent can the limitations of inequality through lack of resources (2.2.1), technological skills, collective action of people, solidarity (3.2.6; 3.2.7; 3.2.8; 3.4.4; 4.2.7; and 4.4), inaction, powerlessness, and hopelessness give sin a chance to continue its grip on poor people?

- How, in a certain places where there are still strong feelings against "otherness" (5.4.2), can churches and religious organziations play a role in actualizing pragmatic processes of love for the "other" (4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 5.4; 5.5; 5.6 and 5.7)?

- In which pragmatic ways can people talk about sin and poverty in order to see the transformation in people from poverty to holistic well-being in society?

Lastly, given the diverse settings within which poverty is experienced, it could mean that the results of this dissertation may not be readily understood or accepted. It could also mean that certain constructs as postulated in this research may not even be understood in, for example, India. What therefore is challenging to the researcher with regard to the diverse cultural audience, who may read this study, is the fact that the researcher's own context, biases, and perspectives also informed what was being said. This is perhaps one of the limitations and a "natural" obstacle that comes along with this type of phenomenological research.

6.5 CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD AND CONCLUSION

Before concluding this literature study with a few recommendations, it must be stated that this research makes an important contribution to the debate on theology and development. One significant contribution that the thesis makes is that it *informs* faith communities and secular society to deal with the challenges that relational sin and the eradication of poverty pose. To deal with poverty from this angle is justified because, as proposed in Chapter 1 and asserted by Korten, the researcher has shown the value that it is imperative to deal with the causes of poverty rather than merely with the consequences of poverty. This research shows further that poverty implicates all of humanity. At the same time, it also shows that human beings have the capacity and

capabilities to reverse most of the causes of poverty through loving one another as they love themselves.

A second contribution that the thesis makes is that it *enhances* inter-disciplinary dialogue and calls for increased interaction between various disciplines in order for society to contribute more efficiently to the process of poverty eradication. This dialogue between faith communities and secular society must be an on-going interchange because poverty cannot be treated in isolation. Through drawing faith communities and the sciences closer together in the fight against poverty, people from various walks of life are drawn together. In the South African context, where polarization between people groups still largely defines its society, more interdisciplinary and cross-cultural interaction is needed. The contribution of this thesis therefore promotes a "neighbourliness" paradigm of solidarity that helps to eradicate poverty, as opposed to the polarizing "us-them" notion that appears to sustain poverty. In essence, therefore, this thesis states that poverty is not "their" problem but that poverty is "our" problem.

The third and final contribution that this thesis makes is that it emphasizes that sin in its many facets is the prime destructive cause that human beings must continually combat in order to overcome the poverty that dehumanizes millions of people. It has been shown that sin, as the root cause of poverty must be dealt with. Therefore, especially from a theological perspective, it is imperative that the potential eradication of poverty should be seen in the light of how people and also political, social and economic structures can be transformed if the phenomenon of "sin" in all of its guises is also addressed.

The researcher's discourse on the root causes of poverty, and also the dialogue between theology and contemporary development disciplines has put forward many questions but he has also made several claims. The aim of asking these questions were primarily to search for what theology and contemporary development authorities say about theses causes. In assessing what theology and development theorists had to say about poverty, a dialogical process was inevitably begun. It was established that one of the most fundamental ways how poverty is created and sustained is through people, primarily the non-poor, and the decisions that they make pertaining to politics,

economics, society, etc. Both disciplines, theology and contemporary development, grapple with difficult questions in order to gain an advantage over the phenomenon of poverty. Through grappling with these difficult questions, theology and contemporary development face the same issues connected to poverty and they dialogue about many shared issues such as justice, freedom and human dignity.

From a theological perspective, many questions still remain to be asked, not just for the sake of asking, but also mainly for the sake of pragmatism and activism. For this reason, the researcher has put forward a list of further questions based on seven key characteristics of poverty that are described by Hennie Lötter. Lotter (1999:346-7) proposes seven key issues that contemporary development practitioners should address in order to establish an ethical basis for poverty eradication:

1. Poverty concerns matters of life and death
2. Poverty causes or exacerbates bad relationships
3. Poverty leads to squandered human potential
4. Poverty means public humiliation for people
5. Poverty means more burdens and reduced quality of life for many people
6. Poverty shows people's inhumanity towards one another
7. Poverty exposes widespread responsibility for a condition of injustice

Given the key finding of the research that relational sin is destructive to human life, the natural environment, and is also the root cause of poverty, then Lötter's seven proposals have significant implications for an ethics of love for the "other". When one reflects critically on Lötter's key issues here, as well as the findings that "love for the *other*" plays a significant role in addressing the root causes of poverty, then very important claims could be made in response:

1. Since poverty concerns matters of life and death, the non-poor ought to respond to the "scandalous condition" (4.3.3) of the poor with selfless love
2. Since poverty often causes or exacerbates bad relationships (5.3.2), people ought to consider what better approach could be taken to restore the relationships of the poor with the non-poor, God, and self
3. Since poverty often leads to squandered human potential (3.2.8), the non-poor and the poor can do much to enhance human capabilities (3.2.9; and 3.3.2.6) of the poor

4. Since poverty means public humiliation for poor people, the non-poor should act compassionately and affirm the poor's human dignity (3.3.1.3; 3.3.2.2)

5. Since poverty means more burdens and a reduced quality of life (3.3.1.3) for people, the non-poor can be advocates of the poor and help to ensure that poor people can experience the "basic social minimum" (3.3.1.3) and loving the other (in practical ways), as a matter of social, political, and economic justice (4.2.6)

6. As poverty shows people's inhumanity (4.4) towards one another, the non-poor can advocate for a humane way of life (5.3.1) to be promoted on behalf of the poor

7. Since poverty exposes widespread responsibility for a condition of injustice (3.3.1.3; 4.2.5.1; 4.2.6), then loving the other (in practical ways), as a matter of social, political, and economic justice (4.2.6) mitigates that responsibility and promotes the eradication of poverty in ways that restores justice (4.2.5) for the poor

The posing of these claims is helpful, because it respond to Osmer's (2008:4) main question in his pragmatic task, *How might we respond?* Thus, based on Osmer's pragmatic question and Lötter's key issues here, and with reference to the research question (1.2.1), ***how can the understanding of sin as the root cause of poverty assist rich and poor communities in South Africa to eradicate poverty,*** the researcher therefore believes that, in the light of the findings that have tested the hypothesis (1.2.2) of the research, that ***addressing the reality of sin at all levels of society will help to contribute more effectively to the transformation of poor and rich communities in South Africa and provide a better quality of life for all of its citizens***, the goals of this study have been accomplished.

It has been seen that the NT (4.3), like the OT (4.2), shows in no uncertain terms that God cares about all people, especially the poor. Not only does God care about all people, but he also mandates the non-poor to take care of the well being of the poor. The OT laws of the Sabbath and Jubilee Years were distinctly earmarked to help people to think and act "in community." Similarly, Jesus' words also implied that people were to "think and act in community" by being *pragmatic* and doing good to others.

In conclusion, based upon relevant investigation and analyses pertaining to poverty and sin in this study, the following themes have become prominent and are recommended as continual research areas for individuals, theology students, churches, NGOs, Civil Society, governments, and all glocal citizens:

1. The relationship of sin and poverty

2. Relationships matter to God: i.e. between people and God, between people and other people, and also between people and their natural environment

3. Economic, political and social justice: as seen in the spirit of the Sabbath and Jubilee Years, as well as in the book of Amos

4. Freedom in terms of conversion, salvation, liberation and transformation, as opposed to unfreedoms in all of its forms

5. Joint active participation/collective activism by the poor and the non-poor in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty

6. The relationship of human dignity, human rights, and human capabilities to a meaningful quality of life

In this search for the root causes of poverty and the testing of a theological perspective in development dialogues, I discovered freedom as "love for the other" being the transformative force for poverty in all of life:

> The freedom to which we are called presupposes the going out of oneself, the breaking down of our selfishness and of all the structures that support our selfishness; the foundation of this freedom is openness to others. The fullness of liberation – a free gift from Christ – is communion with God and with other men

(Gustavo Gutierrez, 1973)

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APPENDIX 1

MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS & TARGETS

Box 3.1 . The Millennium Development Goals

In September 2000, the United Nations' Member States unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration. After consultations among international agencies including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the specialized agencies of the United Nations, the UN General Assembly recognized the Millennium Development Goals as part of the road map for implementing the Millennium Declaration.

The Goals, along with the specific targets set for each, commit the international community to an expanded plan of action aimed at encouraging sustainable and equitable development, one that promotes human development as the cornerstone for sustaining social and economic progress, and recognizes the importance of creating a global partnership for development. The goals and related targets, set out below, have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than US$1 a day.

Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

2. Achieve universal primary education

Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

3. Promote gender equality and empower women

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015.

4. Reduce child mortality

Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

5. Improve maternal health

Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.

6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

7. Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the losses of environmental resources.

Target 10: Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Target 11: Have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.130   World Employment Report 2004-05

8. Develop a global partnership for development

Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. Includes: a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally.

Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries. Includes: tariff and quota-free access for least-developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPCs and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction.

Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small-island developing states (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly).

Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures.

Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.

Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.

Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

APPENDIX 2

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

ARTICLE 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

ARTICLE 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

ARTICLE 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

ARTICLE 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

ARTICLE 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

ARTICLE 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

ARTICLE 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

ARTICLE 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

ARTICLE 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

ARTICLE 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

ARTICLE 11

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence. (2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

ARTICLE 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

ARTICLE 13

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

ARTICLE 14

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

ARTICLE 15

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

ARTICLE 16

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

ARTICLE 17

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

ARTICLE 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

ARTICLE 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regard- less of frontiers.

ARTICLE 20

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

ARTICLE 21

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

ARTICLE 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co- operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

ARTICLE 23

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

ARTICLE 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

ARTICLE 25

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

ARTICLE 26

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

ARTICLE 27

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to

enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

ARTICLE 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

ARTICLE 29

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

ARTICLE 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

APPENDIX 3

CONFERENCES AND ACADEMIC EVENTS ATTENDED IN LIEU OF RESEARCH

1. 20-22 June 2007: Attended the Annual Meeting of the Theological Society of South Africa in Pretoria on "***Saints, martyrs and ancestors: Theological reflections on prophetic witness"*** where the researcher presented the paper "Community development as prophetic witness".

2. 26-29 June 2007: South African Netherlands Partnership for Alternative Development (SANPAD) The Poverty Challenge: Poverty Reduction in (South) Africa, India and Brazil Conference

3. 19-20 February 2008: Attended the "Globalization Symposium" headed by the Beyers Naude's Centre Dr Allan Boesak at Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Theology

4. February 2008: Lecturing exchange between Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Theology and Högskolan Dalarna in Falun, Sweden. The researcher presented lectures on Human Rights and Democracy as well as on African Economic Development

5. 19-22 May 2008: the researcher attended the Beyers Naude Centre's conference on "Religion and the Eradication of Poverty" at Stellenbosch University

6. 18-20 June 2008: Attended the Annual Meeting of the Theological Society Society of South Africa in Grahamstown on ***"Grace, Race and Space"*** where the researcher presented a paper on The healing space of the kingdom in the infirm space of humanity: Churches responding to brokenness in violence-stricken communities [Focus on place and social conflict]

7. 8-11 July 2008: the researcher attended the Development course of Eastern University's Summer School (Philadelphia, USA) held annually at the Faculty of Theology

8. February 2010: Lectured at Högskolan Dalarna and Rättvikskolan in Sweden on "Tangible Community Development"