

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE BAVIAANS
MUNICIPAL AREA:
A CHALLENGE TO A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL
ECCLESIOLOGY**

by

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A UFW&S%

Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any other any university for the purpose of attaining a degree.

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Date

SUMMARY

Talking about community development is not an easy task because it is a broad term employed by academics, civic leaders, governments, concerned citizens, faith-based organisations and simply people with an interest in the well-being of others. Each of these groups may have their own interpretation of what they perceive community development to be.

Currently many new voices speak out in favour of the upliftment of the marginalised, the periphery segment of the population. In government circles, we see an array of community development initiatives (of which integrated development planning is but one), aimed at empowering individuals to effect change in their own communities. The underlying principle is that within any community there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which, if used creatively, can be channelled into collective action to achieve the desired goals to benefit the community. Unfortunately, the majority of people who belong to the poorer segment of the population are still unable to access the full potential of these initiatives. Poverty and its many faces are still rampant, and the people feeling it most acutely are those living in “small towns”.

The first part of this study attempts to address community development in one such small town; the Baviaans Municipal Area. It seeks to “give voice” to the people, in order for them to take charge of their own development as **Chapter 4** attempts to show. The study also allows “small town” communities to break through the academic rhetoric of poverty to voice their own understanding of this social ill (**Chapter 3**). In this chapter ordinary people “unlearn to not speak”.

The second segment of this dissertation builds on the empirical findings of the first segment by exploring how community development challenges the church to be church. It acknowledges the fact that the church has a long history as a pioneer in social involvement; and that the church, unlike any other “civil institution”, enjoys credibility and trust from the majority of people on the globe. This assumption strengthens the hypothesis that the church can be a reliable, worthy and valued catalyst for community development within the social development paradigm. This dissertation consciously avoids the naivety of ignoring the challenges that accompany this premise. Whilst **Chapter 5** acknowledges the ceaseless involvement of the church in the development domain, **Chapter 6** unpacks the theological impact of these challenges on the practical daily life and essence of the church. It seeks to demonstrate theologically what it means to be church in our day and age.

Against the background of the preceding chapters, and mindful of the fact that no study can claim absolutism, **Chapter 7** concludes this study by making some practical suggestions and recommendations that could be helpful for local government, the church and those with an interest in community development.

OPSOMMING

Dit is nie maklik om oor gemeenskapsontwikkeling te praat nie want dit is 'n wye term wat gebruik word deur akademici, gemeenskapsleiers, besorgde landsburgers, godsdiensgroepe, en ook deur mense wat bloot belang stel in die welsyn van hul medemens. Al hierdie groepe het moontlik hul eie persepsie van wat gemeenskapsontwikkeling is of behoort te wees.

Tans is daar baie nuwe stemme wat hul uitspreek ten gunste van die opheffing van die gemarginaliseerde mense op die grense van die samelewing. Uit regeringskringe kom daar 'n rits van inisiatiewe (waarvan geïntegreerde ontwikkeling slegs een is) wat gemeenskapsontwikkeling ten doel het en inidue wil bemagtig ten einde verandering in hulle gemeenskap te bewerkstellig. Die onderliggende prinsiep is dat daar in elke gemeenskap 'n skat van kennis en ondervinding is wat, indien dit op 'n kreatiewe wyse aangewend word, gekanaliseer kan word in kollektiewe aksie ten einde die gewenste doel te kan bereik: om tot voordeel van die gemeenskap te wees. Ongelukkig het die meerderheid van die mense wat tot die armer segment van die bevolking behoort nog steeds nie toegang tot die volle potensiaal van hierdie inisiatiewe nie. Armoede in al sy gestaltes is nog steeds wydverspreid, en die mense wat dit die ergste ondervind, is diegene wat in "klein dorpe" woon.

Die eerste deel van hierdie studie probeer om gemeenskapsontwikkeling in so 'n dorpsomgewing, die Baviaans Munisipale Gebied aan te spreek. Dit poog om die mense se "stem" te laat hoor, ten einde dit vir hulle moontlik te maak om in beheer te wees van hulle eie ontwikkeling. Dit word in Hoofstuk 4 geïllustreer. Die studie gee ook 'n geleentheid aan mense in klein dorpies om die akademiese retoriek rondom armoede te verbreek en hulle stemme te laat hoor betreffende hierdie sosiale euwel

(Hoofstuk 3). In hierdie hoofstuk leer gewone mense om “op te hou om nie te praat nie”.

Die tweede segment van hierdie verhandeling bou voort op die empiriese bevindinge van die eerste segment, deur na te speur hoe gemeenskapsontwikkeling die kerk uitgedaag het om kerk te wees. Dit gee erkenning aan die feit dat die kerk ‘n lang geskiedenis as pionier in sosiale betrokkenheid het, asook die feit dat die kerk, anders as sommige ander gemeenskaps-instellings, geloofwaardigheid en vertroue geniet in die oë van die meerderheid van mense. Hierdie aanvaarding versterk die hipotese dat die kerk ‘n betroubare, waardige en waardevolle katalis vir gemeenskapsontwikkeling binne die sosiale ontwikkelingsparadigma kan wees. Dit sou naief wees om die uitdagings wat deel van die premis (uitgangspunt) is, te ignoreer, en hierdie verhandeling vermy dit doelbewus.

Hoofstuk 5 gee erkenning aan die onophoudelike betrokkenheid van die kerk in die ontwikkelingsdomein.

Hoofstuk 6 verwys na die teologiese impak van hierdie uitdagings op die praktiese daaglikse lewe en essensie van die kerk. Dit poog om in teologiese terme te wys wat dit deesdae beteken om kerk te wees.

Teen die agtergrond van die voorafgaande hoofstukke, en bewus van die feit dat geen studie op absolutisme aanspraak kan maak nie, word hierdie studie afgesluit deur Hoofstuk 7, met ‘n paar praktiese voorstelle en aanbevelings betreffende wat van nut mag wees vir plaaslike regering, die kerk, en almal vir wie gemeenskapsontwikkeling belangrik is.

DEDICATION

THIS DISSERTATION IS DEDICATED TO THE LOVING MEMORY OF

MY LATE PARENTS, JOSEPH AND JANE;

MY LOVING WIFE VALERIE (VAL)

AND THE SUNSHINE OF MY LIFE, MY CHILDREN

AZANIAH & VALRÉQUE

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My gratitude finds expression in the words: “All that I am and ever hope to be, I owe it all to Him”. The fact that I have started and completed this doctoral degree is a testimony that God is to be trusted. “To God be the glory”!

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Sincere thanks to the Frank Kulsen Memorial Congregational Church, for their moral support and prayerful assistance. I thank God for placing me in such a congregation.

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A sincere word of appreciation to the library staff at the Faculty of Theology. Your efficiency and approachable disposition needs to be commended; and has not gone unnoticed. A Big “Thank You” to Annemarie and Theresa.

My colleagues and friends have been a great source of encouragement in the perusal of these studies, and as such I wish to acknowledge the contribution of the Rev. Navan Adonis (my spiritual mentor), as well as the contribution of my friend, the Rev. Dr. Jacobus Bezuidenhoutd for believing in me.

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KEY WORDS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PARTICIPATION

EMPOWERMENT

SUSTAINABILITY

HUMAN NEED

POVERTY

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

POOREST OF THE POOR

DEPRIVATION

WELL-BEING

CHURCH

CHALLENGE

KINGDOM

PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL ECCLESIOLOGY

MISSIONARY-DIACONAL

LISTENING

CHAPTER 1:

RESEARCH FOCUS AND OUTLINE

1.1. INTRODUCTION

It seems almost redundant to remark that community development has become synonymous with democratic South Africa. All over South Africa, institutions and organisations have availed themselves of opportunities for “getting a community development project going” or “initiating some or other community based development program” (Swanepoel 1997:1). As a result, “community” has been prefixed to a host of subjects, such as community–based development organisations; community policing forums (CPFs), community elections, etc. (cf. Chipkin 1996:217-231). The South African government even employed community workers¹ to show their commitment to the upliftment of communities. Local government followed suit to show their commitment to “create a better life for all”. Thus the concept of community development has indeed become “contagious”.

In most rural areas – including the Baviaans Municipality – the focus on community development is striking. Equally striking however, is the impact development has on a local level. There are huge numbers of large and small institutions spread across the globe, which claim to be carrying out development, regardless of their impact on society. These developments leave “deep scars on both the social identity and the economy of local communities” (Swart & Orsmond 2011:1). It is precisely for this reason that the researcher deemed it necessary to focus on one such “small town” community namely

¹ Community workers are “employees of the government”. They also represent government departments at all three levels (National, Provincial and Local), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), aid agencies, welfare organizations and community-based organisations (CBOs), Even faith-based organizations (FBOs) have community workers in their organisations (cf. Swanepoel 1997: 1).

the Baviaans Municipal area. This is also what the first part of this thesis attempts to address, viz. community development at a local level.

The primary task of Community development is to uplift communities through sustainable job opportunities, but when the social fabric of that community is under pressure because of a lack of economic stability, the church as a socio-religious structure in that community is also challenged and put under pressure. These challenges compel the church to reflect on how the church, from a faith point of view, can influence the social and economic environment in which it finds itself. Furthermore what significant contributions can the church make within the geographical boundaries within which it carries out its task? The researcher also wishes to explore how (or in what way) community development poses a challenge to a contextually oriented practical theological ecclesiology. It is the researcher's deepest conviction that the church could and should play a major role in the upliftment and transformation of the community of the Baviaans Municipal Area (BMA). The BMA is one of those disadvantaged communities where much work still needs to be done.

The problem statement accordingly poses the question on the level of local church's involvement in addressing the socio-economic challenges within this area. It further suggests that while the church is in a favourable position to facilitate holistic development, it is still necessary for the local church first of all to understand these socio-economic challenges.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

When I started my ministry in Dysselsdorp, and particularly in Willowmore, I experienced at first-hand the effect that poverty has on the people of this area. I have

listened to many painful stories. I have seen farm-workers being treated unfairly by farmers. I have seen people suffering from socio-economic related issues such as crime, poverty and substance abuse. I have seen babies born with alcohol syndrome, and I have witnessed hopelessness in the eyes of many unemployed parents. I have seen hunger in its grimmest form. These realities opened my eyes and shaped my conviction that the church cannot afford to ignore the suffering of the community within which it resides.

These crushing and humbling experiences led me to pursue a Master's course in Theology and (Community) Development at the University of Stellenbosch. This course was carefully structured and introduced me to topics such as strategic theological planning and congregational analysis, the ecclesiological diaconate in context, and a theological perspective on community development amongst others. The course in Theology and (Community) Development made me realise that development had to be studied with the "full understanding and quest for clarity of the human (personal) aspect, the economic, political and social aspects and influences" (August 2010:90).

It was at this point that questions concerning the role of the church in (community) development became most apparent - especially in the light of the fact that a number of churches that had been involved in the struggle for liberation, now suddenly retreated to what they considered to be the 'true business' of the church.² What does it mean to be church? In what way is the church compelled to work for the improvement of human conditions? Can the church serve as catalyst for community development and by doing

² A day after the release of Nelson Mandela from 27 years of imprisonment, Desmond Tutu told reporters, "Now the Church can continue with its work", as if to say: the church has done its part in the dismantling of apartheid; now it's up to the politicians and the economists to build a new South Africa.

so make a difference in the social and religious life in its community? How must the church be involved in community development and what kind of development should it promote? These were but some of the questions that strongly influenced my thinking.

What motivated me further was the sluggish attitude of ministers regarding social issues. Many unstructured talks with ministers of my own denomination³ at regional level, as well as ministers of the fraternal brought to light that, whilst many of them felt the need to address social issues, some regarded it as too secular or too political. This affirmed my fears that many ministers and churches had a vague conception of the idea of development. To many of them, (community) development meant running “soup kitchens”. This strengthened my belief that a study of this nature could conscientise the church leadership of this and other areas to become more involved with the social issues confronting their local churches. Furthermore, it might ensure greater involvement and interaction of the church with the community, and allow the church to position itself as a major role-player within the broader development debate. It was further hoped that this study might be able to benefit these leaders and churches and the community in some way, because, as Kritzinger observes: “far too little of our sophisticated academic research ever reaches the religious communities we study”. He says, “We actually do research on people, or behind their backs, without helping them to understand themselves better and without learning from them which important issues need to be researched” (quoted in Schmidt 1997:16).

³ The researcher is an accredited minister of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA).

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

As the nature of this study is exploratory⁴, the question that we wish to pose is: In what way does (community) development challenge the church in the Baviaans Municipal Area (BMA) to be church?

The Baviaans Municipal locale covers an area of 7727.01 km² with two semirural nodes, viz. Willowmore and Steytlerville. Willowmore serves as the administrative hub of the area where the local municipal offices and the district offices of national and provincial government departments are situated. Agriculture, tourism and service industries form the basis of the area's economy. However, harsh climatic conditions, low rainfall, mountain areas and steep slopes are curbing development in this area.

Rising unemployment, crime, violence (especially against vulnerable groups such as women and children), drugs, and alcohol abuse remain dominant in the Baviaans Municipal area. There are very few job opportunities, which results in many "young minds" leaving the area in search of better life chances. Therefore, in exploring the research question, it is necessary to identify and describe the challenges faced by this "forgotten" community.

The Baviaans community, like many other communities throughout South Africa remains politically, economically and socially marginalised. They find themselves trapped in a vicious circle of poverty, which renders them vulnerable and powerless to defend themselves against the socio-economic shocks. The discriminatory practices and policies of Apartheid South Africa have had their impact even on this community, of

⁴ Being a resident of the BMA, the researcher (who also is a minister of the largest congregation in this area) spends much time in undertaking a careful exploratory study of the area. He found this to be very helpful as he has gained much practical knowledge of and insight into this area under study.

which nearly half is depending on a social grant.⁵ These challenges are not unique to the Baviaans community; they are indicative of greater challenges faced by many other communities. For this reason the questions, “What can be done? How will it be done? By whom, and for whom will it be done?” become epistemologically significant, and evoke the need for critical strategic reflection.

Since this is not an “island scenario”⁶, but a situation that demands action from all role-players, it becomes apparent that, for any community to move forward (socially, economically, politically, religiously), “they need to form partnerships with all role-players” (August 2010:73).⁷ Partnership means “working together, sharing responsibilities, calling forth each other’s gifts, caring for the life of the community” (ibid). It is in collaborating with others, that we “regain our common humanity, restore our communities and transform God’s creation” (ibid). Working in partnership with other role-players can strategically position a community to solve their own community problems in fighting crime and building developmental projects (ibid).⁸ This is where the church, as an integral role- player can make a difference. It is an irrefutable fact that the church is recognised as one of *the* institutions that have the capacity to address the challenge of poverty.

⁵ The 2007 Community Survey of the Baviaans Municipality counted nearly 16000 residents for the Baviaans Municipal Area. More than 5000 people benefit from social grants. This amount to nearly 40% of the total population that is dependent on grants (See Appendix H). This is an alarming figure. See also chapter 4:6 graph 6.

⁶ Any attempt to build sustainable communities must involve all the people of this land. It can never be the sole responsibility of the government.

⁷ Collaboration is a very important aspect in community development. One will dare to say that without collaboration no community development initiative will ever succeed. That is why forming partnerships is so important. The discussion on partnerships is taken further under section 1.7.1

⁸ Many of the newly formed structures in the BMA –after 1994-learned this lesson the hard way. They never realised the importance of pulling resources and working together for the common good. Even the church had a “holier than thou” attitude which resulted in the church drifting away from the real grass root issues of the day. Fortunately one senses a renewed urge amongst role-players to partner with one another.

It is a trusted and accepted institution in South Africa and especially amongst the poor. Hence, the government's repeated requested to the church to become its partner in the fight against poverty (Mbeki 1999:10).⁹ There are evidently good reasons why government is so eager to work in partnership with the church. For one, it is true to say that the church played a significant role in the demise of apartheid.¹⁰ No other institution, civil society, or NGO enjoys such credibility and trust.

The church not only has wide accessibility to the majority of people, but it also has a long history as pioneer in social involvement, and it has played a giant role in the creation of infrastructure (schools, hospitals and welfare institutions) (cf. Korten 1990: 116; Kritzinger 1996: 4-12; Bowers 2005:6). What further makes the church a valuable partner is its innate ability to “experiment with new lifestyles; filling in welfare gaps where government has failed; channelling the motivations of committed individuals into practical actions, and providing acceptance, belonging and encouragement within a community” (Nürnberger 1999:363). These ideal features make the church a favourable institution to collaborate with.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

The central thesis of this research is that the church could be a reliable, worthy and valued catalyst for community development within the social development paradigm. This assumption is based on the “community building nature of the church, which is

⁹ The South African government is well aware of its inability to take sole responsibility for the reconstruction and transformation of the many marginalised communities.

¹⁰ Pillay adds the following: “the involvement of the church helped contribute to the dismantling of apartheid. Its call for international sanctions and disinvestment helped to isolate South Africa and at the same time raised international awareness of the country's political situation, (2002: 2-3).

illustrated by its Biblical calling and injunction to serve the poor, as well as its theological capacity and ecumenical nature” (August 2010: 43).

(Community) development is not something that churches concern themselves with apologetically, or by default. On the contrary, it is “the work of God, part of God’s own mission to the world, and in Jesus Christ we see a continuation of God’s mission to this world” (Tsele 2001:214). Therefore, being involved in (community) development by serving the poor is not an option in terms of Christian doctrine, but it is a biblical command, as August (2010:47) so aptly points out.¹¹ God constituted the church through the earthly work of Jesus Christ. Thus, the church, as part of God’s creation, has a biblical mandate to work for the wholeness of all God’s people, just as Jesus did. This means that the church should embody the biblical message, viz. that salvation is not only spiritual: – “it not only changes people’s lives, but it also changes people’s relationships and living conditions”, (August 2010: 43). It is thus crucial that the church should accept its responsibility in development by taking seriously its biblical concern for especially the poor.

With its more than forty-eight congregations,¹² the Baviaans Municipal area shows a significant capacity to effect societal change. The church then has a ‘public responsibility’ and thus needs to assert what that responsibility entails.

¹¹ Scriptural reference of the aforementioned is also found in Luke 4:18-19 and Matt. 25:42-45

¹² The Baviaans Municipality recorded nine denominationally affiliated congregations and more than forty denominationally unaffiliated congregations during 2009. The denominationally affiliated denominations include: Dutch Reformed Church (DRC – *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk – NGK*), United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), Uniting Reformed Church (URC- *Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk – VGK*), Volkskerk van Afrika, Evangelic Reformed Church (ERC), Methodist Church, Roman Catholic Church (RCC), Anglican Church and the Christian Reformed Church (*Christelike Verenigde Kerk – CVK*)

1.5 POSSIBLE VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

The issue of (community) development and the impact that the church may have on it is receiving worldwide attention. This applies particularly to South Africa, which is in a process of building a “new nation”. The possible value of this research is eight-fold:

- It is a South African contribution about the church and its role in community development, in the context of a “small town”.
- It can create a platform for small towns to voice their concerns.
- It can keep alive the rich history of the church’s role in the demise of apartheid.
- It is to gain an understanding of the many socio-economic challenges faced by the community of the Baviaans municipal area and how these issues are being addressed by the local congregations.
- It can examine the local church’s understanding and awareness of these challenges that are congruent with its missional task and ecclesial identity
- It can persuade *glocal* (global and local) decision makers to become aware of the impact that their decisions have on small communities.
- This work calls on church-leaders and laity, governments and other groups who are concerned about the upliftment of “small town” communities to get involved in socio-economic issues.
- Finally, it is hoped that this work may create the awareness needed for a change in attitude and mindset of all role-players who work towards the upliftment of disadvantaged communities.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study is a combination of quantitative (to a lesser extent) and qualitative research, which is often, termed “triangulation” as well as a literature study. Triangulation as noted by Neumann (2000:124)¹³ simply proposes that, “it is better to observe something from several angles or viewpoints”, and therefore employs several kinds of methods or data.¹⁴

This proves to be a very useful method as the subject area “Theology and (community) Development” is interdisciplinary in nature. In a study of this nature, several viewpoints need to be represented interactively, because looking at something from multiple points of view also improves accuracy (Neumann 2011:164). Denzin and Lincoln (1994:215) speak of four basic types of triangulation, namely data-, investigator-theory- and methodological triangulation. They also add a fifth type of triangulation which they appropriately referred to as interdisciplinary triangulation. For the intent and purpose of this study, the researcher deemed it necessary to employ at least three of the five types of triangulation, viz. theoretical triangulation, methodological triangulation and interdisciplinary triangulation. Theoretical triangulation embraces several frames or reference or perspectives in the analysis of data which turned out to be very helpful in the literature review of this study.¹⁵ Given that, ‘Theology and Development’, is interdisciplinary in nature, qualifies the researcher’s choice of making

¹³ See also Denzin & Lincoln (1994:214).

¹⁴ The researcher also finds the “practical-theological” method or approach helpful since this approach allows for interplay between theory and practise (praxis). Praxis involves the ongoing integration of action and reflection through which political and social processes are maintained. Praxis, according to Fowler (as cited by Louw, 1998:91), refers to an intentional action which is aimed to transforming society.

¹⁵ The idea that “knowledge accumulates through learning from and building on what others have done”, serves to be valuable according to Neumann (2011:124). (Cf. also chapters 2-6). We read studies to learn from, compare, replicate or criticize them, (because) today’s studies build on those of yesterday. (Scientific) research, he says, is a “collective effort, one in which many researchers contribute and share results with one another”.

use of interdisciplinary triangulation. This type of triangulation not only allows other disciplines to inform the study, but “may broaden our understanding of method and substance”. The third triangulation to be used in this study is methodological triangulation, for the very reason that it creates space for the use of “multiple methods of data collection” (De Vos 2002:365; De Vos 1998:359). This study thus, employ unstructured interviews, census statistics (local government level), and a questionnaire. In addition, the study draws on relevant literature (books, journals, unpublished theses and seminar papers, articles, internet abstract etc.) and other sources that were available¹⁶, as well as the “researcher as participant observer”.¹⁷ However, it needs to be said that the dominant methodological paradigm is qualitative in nature and other methods are regarded as complementary to it.

1.6.1 Sampling

Since this study seeks to address the socio-economic situation of the Baviaans Municipal area, as well as how these development issues challenge the church to be church, the researcher deemed it necessary to employ quota sampling¹⁸ to both qualitative and quantitative segments of the study. The main purpose of quota sampling is to “draw a sample that is as close to a replica of the population as possible, and that represents the population as such” (Strydom & Venter 2002:207). As it is not always possible to cover

¹⁶ It needs to be pointed out that only relevant aspects of this methodology are applied in the subsequent chapters of this research.

¹⁷ Being an ‘active member’ of the Baviaans community, the researcher has gained ample insight from observing actions of this community over a period of ten years. The researcher is one of only five resident theologically trained ministers of this area (four reside in Willowmore and one in Steytlerville; other churches are served by acting or lay ministers).

¹⁸ There is no consensus among researchers with regard to the minimum of respondents that should be involved in an investigation. Some say 10% sample should be sufficient while others feel that 30 or even 100 respondents is sufficient to perform basic statistical procedures (Cf. Strydom & Venter 2002; [Bless & Higson-Smith 2000:93; Mitchell & Jolly 2001:496-497 - not in bibliography]).

the total population or to reach all the members of interest, the use of samples may result in more “accurate and reliable information than might have been obtained if one had studied the entire population” (2002:199). Bearing the aforementioned in mind, nine role players were identified. Amongst these role-players were: a social worker from the department of social development, the headmaster of the high school in Willowmore, a primary school teacher, a farmer, a professional nursing sister, the station commander of the local police department, the municipal manager of the Baviaans Municipality, two councillors (from the ANC and DA respectively), clergy and laity. With regard to the category of clergy, the researcher made a concerted attempt to include, not only ministers from the Reformed¹⁹ and Pentecostal²⁰ “tradition”, but also “clergy” from the Evangelical²¹ group.

The researcher recruited three volunteers²² with an interest in community matters to distribute the questionnaires, and to help collect information on the community.²³ Furthermore, as this study also sought to add a view from below, a small sample of thirty congregants across denominational bounds were selected.

¹⁹ As it stands in this context we refer to the Dutch Reformed family (*VGK* / *NGK*), United Congregational Church (*UCC*), Evangelical Reformed Church (*ERC*) and *Volkskerk* of Africa. The *VGK* is served by an acting minister who is residing in Aberdeen (180km from Willowmore).

²⁰ In this case this designation refers to the *Pinkster Protestante Kerk* (*PPK*), *Apostolic Faith Mission* (*AFM* / better known as *AGS* in Afrikaans); these two are the only (Pentecostal) denominationally affiliated congregations in the *BMA*. Both these congregations are served by elders.

²¹ These are churches which are not denominationally bound. According to the religious affiliation census statistics of the local municipality approximately 27 of these confessional groupings operate in the *BMA*. It is very difficult to keep track of these groupings. However, it needs to be stated that some of these confessional groupings are represented in the Willowmore Interchurch Forum (*WIF*). Most of the leadership of these groupings prefer to be called independent. Many of these groupings are served by lay-pastors with little or no theological training.

²² These volunteers were briefed on the subject area; and they also represented the nodes within the geographical boundaries of the Baviaans Municipal area. See Appendices A -E.

²³ As the questionnaire method may in some cases present a “potential problem with reliability” due to various reasons, the researcher made a concerted effort to “educate” people on the importance of the questionnaire.

In addition the researcher had “informal” conversations with many people who do not have any church affiliation. The estimate could well be around ninety people.

1.6.2 Data collection techniques

The qualitative part of this thesis which is considered to be the dominant paradigm in this mixed methodology employs unstructured interviews with the different community role-players²⁴, clergy²⁵ and laity²⁶ in the Baviaans Municipal area in order to obtain “research-relevant information” (De Vos 1998:298); but also to understand the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience.²⁷

This mode of interviewing allows the researcher to work with questions that have been predetermined as it employs guidelines, which contain questions and themes that are important to the research. However, though this mode of interviewing contains predetermined questions, it is by no way a rigid process of ‘yes and no answers’. On the contrary, this type of interviewing allows the respondents to deviate from the set order of questioning for the following reasons:

²⁴ The researcher also had informal talks with local government employees, members of various political parties, the chairperson of the Community Policing Forum (CPF), and a member of the Local Clinic Committee. See Appendix E.

²⁵ Interviews were conducted with three ministers. See Appendix E.

²⁶ Laity in this context refers to both confessing members of local congregations as well as people with no church affiliation. Furthermore, while these interviews were unstructured, informal and open-ended discussions, the researcher probed for responses to specific questions or comments such as: how do you understand community development? Is your local congregation involved in community development, and in what way? What are some of the main theological issues related to (community) development?

²⁷ Greeff in De Vos et al (2002:298) sees unstructured interviews as “a conversation with a purpose”. The purpose he says is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, nor to “evaluate” in the usual sense of the term. At the root of unstructured interviewing according to Greeff is an interest in understanding the experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience, but also to determine their perceptions, opinions, facts, and reactions to initial findings and possible solutions (2000:298).

- Though it planned questions around specific issues and general items, [it] also employs the freedom of an unstructured approach;
- it allows the people being interviewed to respond to questions in the language and the format most meaningful to them;
- it gives the interviewer / researcher enough room to allow people to deviate from the predetermined subjects, knowing that one can learn the specifics from others because you never know where one member's verbal wanderings may lead or what significant facts will be uncovered (Thumma 1998:206).

Furthermore, the guidelines for these unstructured interviews were informed by several sources, including the church's awareness of the needs and priorities²⁸ of the area in which interviewees reside, [its] understanding of their role in addressing these socio-economic issues, and their response to these critical issues.

The respondents were informed about the need to audio tape the interviews and they were further assured of anonymity and the value of their contribution. The researcher also made use of various interpersonal and communication techniques to facilitate the process of interaction. These techniques include probing, paraphrasing, reflection, summarisation, minimal verbal response, clarifying and questioning.²⁹

²⁸ The interview schedule concentrated, among other things, on issues such as housing, wages, unemployment, education, political leaders, services and facilities, moral and ethical issues, level of satisfaction, etc.

²⁹ For further reading on these techniques compare the following:

- J.E. Perko & H.Z. Kreigh, *Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing: A Commitment to Care and Concern*, 3rd ed. (San Mateo, California: Appleton & Lange, 1988).
- G. Egan, *The Skilled Helper: A Systematic Approach to Effective helping*, 4th ed. (California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1990), p. 141.
- A.E. Ivey, *Intentional Interviewing and Counselling*, (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1983).

However, this research displays some limitations, the main limitation being that it does not reflect the opinion of every role player in the community. Not all the clergy and congregations were covered in the church survey, which give the impression that only “a view from above” may have been presented. However, this was counterbalanced through questionnaires conducted with “ordinary” people³⁰, offering “a view from below”. This questionnaire was drawn up to serve a multi-purpose; to find out how the church sees her role in the wider community; to obtain the laity’s perspective on issues such as socio-economic challenges facing the community; to determine whether and why the community and church members in the BMA see the church as a reliable catalyst; and to determine the degree of their awareness and understanding of these challenges on the ecclesial identity and the missional task of the church. Once the data had been recorded, the researcher analysed the data according to an approach suggested by Huberman and Miles (in Poggenpoel, 1998:340), viz. data reduction, data display, drawing conclusions and verifications.

1.7 Theological conceptualisation

As this study also deals with the responsibility of the church in addressing her contextual challenges, this section on theological conceptualisation seems appropriate. The subtitle of this dissertation (A Challenge to a Practical Theological Ecclesiology) requires from this study to include theological conceptualisations (and arguments) which also deal with biblical-theological orientation to development.

• C.R. Rodgers, Reflection of Feelings, in *Person-Centred Review*, vol. 2, 1986, p375-377.

³⁰ Here we are referring to both members of local congregations as well as those who see themselves as ‘outside’ the church.

Therefore the subsequent concepts relate (in particular) to the theological orientation towards community development.

1.7.1. Partnerships

This study recognises the importance of partnerships in community development particularly in light of its significance for a practical theological ecclesiology in the Baviaans Municipal area. However we need to assert what kind of partnership we are talking about. When we hear the word Partnership(s) we often think of corporate business where people enter into partnership(s) almost daily. We tend to think in monetary terms. We also think of the “messiness”³¹ that surrounds partnerships in our day and age. This study is not naïve in disregarding these realities. However, what this study has in mind is to highlight the importance of partnership(s) for community development in its search for a practical theological ecclesiology. As if to say, “without partnership(s) there is no church”. But what does the bible say about partnership(s), and what is the theology behind partnership?

1.7.1.1 A Biblical theology of partnership

Partnership is central to God’s design. This is evident in the Genesis account of God’s plan for humanity. The creation account (Gen.1:26-27) indicates that God made humankind in his own image. He blessed them and gave them work to do. He commanded them to be “fruitful and increase in number”; to “fill the earth and subdue it”; to *share* dominion over all things but within the parameters God has set. The fact that God made humankind in His likeness and created them in His own image, is as if it

³¹ So often we read about schemes, and conspiracies between business partners which often result in death; we read of how unscrupulous government officials enter into partnership with people who have ulterior motives, in order to “get something out”; it is now common knowledge of how high ranking police officers partner with “business people of the underworld”. This is a bleak picture of partnership(s) in worldly terms. Needless to say that this is not the kind of partnership we wish for community development particularly in its challenge to a practical theological ecclesiology.

was His plan all along to call us into partnership with Him to be His personal extensions in fulfilling His creation plan (cf. Gen. 17: 7-8). But this was to be a partnership with a *vertical dimension*, starting with God as the “senior partner”. It was God who initiated this partnership because He knew how important partnership is to the overall design of His creation. He knew about partnership(s) all along because the doctrine of the tri-unity reflects partnership with the Godhead; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit live in and provide a perfect model of partnership. This is significant in that, from the beginning of human history (until the end of this age), the triune God calls and commands His children into a partnership with Him. This is a partnership not only in general terms but with a view to administer His kingdom rule, that is that His children should rule over the earth (cf. Gen 1:28; Ps.8:6-8). Thus, it is not unbiblical to suggest that this was His design even before the fall: a God who calls His children into partnership with Him to fulfil His plans.

When we say that this form of partnership (where God calls His children; where He enters into partnership with us, and where He is the initiator) implies a vertical dimension, is not to say that God wants us to be passive or “silent” partners. On the contrary our role is equally important, that is one of co-working (co-worker, helper³², and partner) and co-leading. He wants His partners to roll up their sleeves and start doing something to sustain this partnership (cf. Gen. 2:15). Incidentally, acknowledging God as “senior partner” comes with many blessings. This kind of partnership is sustainable in that the senior partner will always protect, support, and shield this relationship.

³² In Genesis 2:18 we read: The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (NIV). This ‘helper’ could also be translated with partner.

Knowing that His partners will make mistakes and sometimes would want to throw in the towel, He offers to comfort (cf. 2 Cor. 1:4) them, and giving hope in despair. In our mission of how community development poses a challenge to a practical theological ecclesiology this model could be of great help.

Just as there is a vertical facet to partnership, there also is a *horizontal dimension* (human-to-human) that is equally important. The Bible has much to say about this human-to-human element of partnership. One such model of human-to-human partnership is found in Luke's gospel where Peter, James, John and their friends are referred to as partners (5:6-10). We also see how in Genesis 1:27 (cf. 1Peter 3:7) wives and husbands are called "equal partners". This is an interesting comment especially in light of God's reaction to this, His creation. When He looked at what He created at each phase, He declared that it was good (Gen 1:3-26), but when He assessed the male and female that was created in His image, He called it "very good", implying that He is pleased with this partnership. Adam's reaction was just as striking when he admired God's handiwork and recognised Eve as his flesh and bone (Gen.2:23).³³ With these words he acknowledges that they are alike and as Tucker (1992:40) so aptly points: "it is this likeness³⁴ – not their differences – that he finds so striking".

Another example of human-to-human partnership is found in Paul's relationship with individuals (John, Mark, Priscilla, Timothy etc.), and supporting churches (several churches from his missionary journey).

³³ Adam looked at Eve and was amazed at what he saw. His words "This is now bone of *my* bones and flesh of *my* flesh; she shall be called 'woman' for she was taken out of man", emits a sort of proudness and admiration. These words acknowledges their *oneness*; their *sameness*. Not less than three times does he affirm this unity ...bone of my bones (een uit myself)...flesh of my flesh (een soos ek)...she was taken out of man (sy is uit die man geneem). This signifies a partnership of equal status but with different roles.

³⁴ In Eve, Adam found someone that he could relate to; someone with whom he could have a meaningful conversation; someone he could call partner; someone human.

Some of these partnerships display different levels of depth. His relationship with Timothy (1 Tim.1:2a; 2 Tim.2:2-5) for example was deeper than his relationship with John or Peter (Galatians 2:11-14).

This model shows that human partnerships are multifaceted; it can be individual as well as corporate. Thus, an understanding of the different levels of partnership³⁵ (limited, growing, deep) will be important for this study given that the problem addressed in this study is in general the situation of the poor (community development) in the Baviaans Municipal Area (BMA) and the role of the church (practical ecclesiology) in addressing this problem. This partnership relationship of Paul will hopefully complement this study as we seek to understand how community development challenges a practical ecclesiology.

1.7.1.2 A Biblical Theology of Partnership: *Rooted in Relationship*

A good basis for partnerships is that it should be rooted in and eventuates in a relationship. In an article entitled *Partnership: The New Direction in World Evangelism*, Lutz and Bush (2000) gives the following definition of partnership?

An association of two or more autonomous bodies who have formed a trusting relationship and fulfil agreed upon expectations by sharing complementary strengths and resources, to reach their mutual goal.

What is significant and perhaps the most crucial point in this definition is a need to build a *relationship based on mutual trust and respect*. No partnership can last without these values. Qualities such as mutuality, harmony, unity, trust and respect are

³⁵ In its collaboration - with other role-players within the geographical boundaries of the Baviaans municipal area - on how to address the challenges of community development, the church will have to discern with whom they want to partner. The different challenges will determine the intensity of partnerships. Some partnerships will be limited; others may grow, while still others may grow into deeper, sustainable partnerships.

Kingdom qualities that are innate to God. These are the same qualities that are present in the Trinity. The Trinity serves as perfect example of a ‘partnership’ based on a mutual, harmonious, unified, trusting and respectful relationship; how Three work as One. Though different in function, they are equal in existence.

So it is incumbent upon the church³⁶, to instil these values in those ‘autonomous bodies’ with whom it wants to partner. However, though most organisations might share the same goal (uplifting the poor), not all are religious entities. Thus in deciding who to partner with, it is hoped that the church in the BMA should opt for a partnership that will uphold the beauty and uniqueness of mutual interpersonal relations; particularly in this area where the majority of agents are non-religious organisations.

Sadly, partnership, as is true of all relationships worth pursuing is often risky and sometimes “messy”. The church exists in a sinful world and should know that nothing God created is unaffected. Sin has a way of *messing-up* good relationships. The entrance of sin in Genesis (3) for example crushed the perfect relationship between God and humankind; it corrupted the whole world and His pure intentions for it. Sin has a way of changing one’s good intentions and attitude towards what is pure. In the Genesis account Adam and Eve disobeyed God (3:6); they violated His trust; they did not respect their relationship; they were unwilling to trust God completely. This and the fact that they acted on their own desires altered the relationship between God and them (vertical), but also (horizontally) between Adam and Eve.

There are numerous other Biblical accounts of risky and messy relationships worth mentioning. One of the most blessed partnerships in the Bible is that of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 11:25; cf. chapters 11-15), yet even *this* relationship suffered because of

³⁶ This is with reference to the different congregations / local churches in this study which resides in the Baviaans Municipal area.

the “desires of sinful nature” (Galatians 5: 20ff). “They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company” (Acts 15:39).

Understanding this larger picture is important for understanding that partnership built on Kingdom values such as mutuality, harmony, trust, and respect has a better chance of reaching its mutual goal. And the one quality which binds all these virtues together in perfect harmony is love. August well says, “Love is the one virtue that causes us to engage in any human enterprise, not for what we shall get, but for what we shall give for the success of it” (2010:78). Though misunderstandings and conflict are an inevitable human norm and a spiritual /emotional reality, there is no greater understanding of partnership than the building of relationship in love (Col. 3:14).

Hence it is hoped that the church in its collaboration with other ‘autonomous bodies’, shall take this into account as it seeks to tackle the many challenges of the community.

1.7.2 Community development: A Missional Task

Upon reading for this dissertation, and in evaluating the empirical findings leading up to the writing thereof it is sad to note that there are still some churches who do not regard community development as a key missional task. (Those who do interact with their communities do so only if they can set the agenda and determine the kind of action; thinking being *in* the community permits them to prescribe *to* the community.³⁷ More so, if they are financing the different projects or programmes).

³⁷ Seeing from a community development perspective there are three basic ways that congregations may employ in their interaction with congregations: i.e. *in* the community, *to* the community, and *with* the community. The first two modes as Van Groningen (in Swart & Orsmond 2011:2) put it, are still “variations of an approach” whereby the development agent or congregation determines the initiative and kind of action. The third one, however, emphasises the importance of ‘working together’ in communities, the willingness of the church / congregation to take part in communal life ‘with other agents’ and a dynamic understanding of location for being church.

However, during the latter part of the previous century and the better part of this century there has been a (subtle but nevertheless decisive) shift toward understanding community development as a missional responsibility.³⁸ It is gladdening to see how more and more churches realise that community development has to do to with poor communities.³⁹ There is even a growing awareness that the work the church does among the poor is seen as a matter of community development.

They begin to see community development as their mission and hence their missional task. Rightfully so, because “mission” as Karl Barth observes “is an activity of God himself” (quoted in Bosch 2010:389). In other words God himself is the initiator of mission; and God is concern with the whole person in the whole society⁴⁰, as is evident in both the Old Testament and New Testament (cf. Deut.15, Lev. 25, but also the prophets Isaiah and Amos). The word “activity” presupposes action and the Old Testament for example, portrays God as a God who acts; *a busy God*. So do we see God act in the history of Israel when they were still an enslaved nation in Egypt. Exodus 3:8 read “So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians”⁴¹ (NIV). We see God act in the history of Israel when he elected them (Israel) primarily to serve the

³⁸ This we see in the way contemporary theologians (especially in the field of practical theology and missiology) interpret the realities of our time, particularly in terms of the biblical message. There seems to be a “renewed” theological sensitivity to the traces of God’s praxis in everyday events. The theological faculties of the Universities of Kwa-Zulu Natal and Stellenbosch (amongst others) had proven to be instrumental in this regard.

³⁹ It is noted that, in a South African context, the majority of the poor are black. It is no different in the Baviaans Municipal Area. However, it needs to be said that though we don’t have poor white communities, the researcher found that there are some poor white individual households in this area.

⁴⁰ This is what community development aims to do.

⁴¹ When we read verse seven of Exodus 3 we see God in conversation with Moses, expressing His concern for the people. “The Lord said, ‘I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers and I am concerned about their suffering’. Now the scenario is changing. Now God not only observes; He is beyond talking, He now acts. He came down to rescue. Here we see God taking personal interest in the well-being and safety of His people. His involvement is personal and specific.

marginal in their midst; the orphan, the widow, the poor but also the stranger (cf. Ex. 22: 21-27; Deut. 10:18-19; Is.1:17).

We also see God act when he called the prophets to admonish the mighty, the rich, the kings, because they were unjust to the poor, to the widows, to the orphans, to the outsider, to the lowly. (cf. Pieterse 2001:82). Clearly the election of this community (Israel) was to serve (Bosch: 2010:17-18), and every time the people of Israel renewed their covenant with Yahweh, they recognised that they were renewing their obligations to the victims of society (ibid). In this 'activity' we see God reminding Israel to do good to the vulnerable among them, as if to say 'this is your social responsibility; this is your missional task'. This is the essence of community development.

Not only do we see this inclination in the Old Testament but we also see a continuation of this concern in the earthly ministry of Jesus. We see how -in the New Testament - Jesus clarifies God's will for people and human society. Jesus' teaching and ministry were fully contextual; a perfect model of how the Church's twin responsibility, evangelism and social concern is to be integrated. He went through all the towns and villages preaching (Matt. 9:35, Mark 6:34), healing every kind of disease and sickness, but he also attended to their empty stomachs (cf. Matt.14: 13-21, Mark 6: 30-44, 8:1-10 Luke. 9:10-17; John 6:1-14). Pieterse (2001:84) well says: "Jesus often brought redemption and healing to those on the underside of society", clearly making a stance on behalf of the common people. For Jesus, material needs (societal transformation) were just as important as spiritual needs (personal transformation). Spiritual needs and material needs cannot be separated. This is the essence of community development.

The theology of community development is simply this: feeding the hungry, given the thirsty water to drink, welcome strangers, clothe the naked, nurse the sick, and visit the prisoner (Matt. 25:34-47).

This is the work the church needs to do among the poor and this means becoming actively involved, accepting this duty as its missional responsibility. To understand community development in this way is to realise that community development is actually *kingdom work*.

1.7.2.1 Community development is *Kingdom work*

What do we mean when we say community development is kingdom work, especially when in the past, becoming involved in social issues, was seen as too “this worldly”, and how in the same way kingdom was viewed as an “otherworldly” reality (Bowers 2005:27). Given that the discussion and definition of the kingdom gained prominence particularly in the development debate within the church as different “faith camps” sought to define the role of the church in the world⁴², on what then is our understanding that community development is kingdom work based? Would it be far-fetched to suggest that it should be based on Christ who stands at the very centre of it all? Christ, the God of the kingdom who revealed himself as the suffering servant, aligning himself with the poor, the needy and the wretched. Christ the God of the Kingdom who in the gospels (Mt.5; Lk.6:20) proclaimed that on earth the kingdom belongs to the poor. The same Christ who according to Pieterse (2001:84) “came from an impoverished environment; who lived simply; [who] owned only one set of clothes and [who] had no fixed abode”. In the person of Christ, the God of the Kingdom, one finds a perfect example of how community development should be viewed.

When in the Synagogue at Nazareth, he read the passage from Isaiah 61, Jesus applied it to himself (Luke 4:18-22), clearly aligning himself with those who counted as periphery

⁴² The evangelical camp emphasised Christ’s return and the spiritual aspects of the Kingdom whereas the ecumenical camp believed that it was their duty to bring about the Kingdom of God through their own socio-political actions (Bowers 2005:27).

people. With these words Jesus made it very clear what his ministry is all about; that He is God incarnate who shows compassion for the whole person in the whole society. We see this compassion expressed in both his words and deeds and by so doing, he undoubtedly presented his listeners with an alternative lifestyle before God: the Kingdom of God. When in Luke 17:21 Jesus was asked by the Pharisees as to when the Kingdom of God would come, he answered: “The Kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation ... because the Kingdom of God is within (among) you” (NIV), implying that “with the coming of Jesus God’s kingdom had already come” (Pieterse 2001:84).

The message of the Kingdom as good news to the poor was at the heart of Jesus’ message (Bowers 2005:29), and that scripture was fulfilled the day he read it in the synagogue (Lk.4:21).

However, while the kingdom was there with them, at the same time the kingdom was still to come as is evident from Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:10 (cf. Pieterse 2001:85).

The implication of this for the church in our day and age is simply this; while we wait for the kingdom to be fully realised in our societies we can here and now do our bit towards realising it. This also means that while we wait for a better world to come we can already start working for a better world today. This we do with the hope that everything that is “true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable” (Phil. 4:8) and righteous in this world today, “will somehow be preserved and perfected in the new world to come” (Kuzmic in Bowers 2005:28). The challenge to the church is this: while we wait for this new world to come we can already here and now exemplify the values of the kingdom. Kingdom values such as justice, peace, love, forgiveness, reconciliation, unity, etc., are intertwined with community development. These are values that are totally opposite to those that dominate the world (i.e. injustice, war, hatred, ruthlessness, etc.).

These are the values the church can execute even “while we wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ...” (I Titus 2:13 NIV)

Thus, reaching out to the weak, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, attending the poor, quenching the thirsty, providing shelter is community development and therefore kingdom work. When the church does this, they are doing kingdom work.

The church then, as Christ incarnate, should emulate the ministry of Christ. Wherever the church is, there the church should join in the *Missio Dei*, Gods mission to a world in need. For the church to join in the *Missio Dei*, (God’s mission), - that is God’s self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God’s involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world- is indeed a privilege and at the same time its mission (cf. Pieterse 2001:13, Bosch 2010:10). Just as *Missio Dei* enunciates the good news that God is a God-for-the-people, so, should the church, through its missionary activities (*missions ecclesiae*) become the visible instrument of Christ’s mission to a world in need. (Bosch 2010:10). Indeed a laborious task as Pieterse (2001:113) remarks.

1.7.3 Community Development: A Missional *Challenge*⁴³

Why should we regard community development as a (missional) *challenge*? Simply because, community development, as many authors in this field would attest, has to do with the upliftment of communities which is no easy task. Many agencies and practitioners who are involved in the upliftment of communities will tell what an arduous and challenging task this is. Currently government and various secular NGOs are performing this task very well and this we see in the countless projects conducted by

⁴³ The direct translation for challenge is “uitdaging” in Afrikaans, and it is in this sense that the researcher is using the word, to show that community development in itself can be a “uitdaging” for being church.

these agencies.⁴⁴ Most of these projects however, are aimed at satisfying the material needs of people.⁴⁵ Unfortunately people have different needs that need to be satisfied but many of these well-intentioned agencies do not always have the capacity to accommodate more than one need at a time. Given that a “human being is by definition a being-in-community” (Bosch 2010: 243) with social, political, psychological and spiritual ties, and given that the said agencies lack the capacity to uplift the whole person in the whole community, a different kind of agency is therefore needed. [And] as it will be shown in this study, the most probable institution best to give effect to this kind of holistic community development is the church.⁴⁶ We have noted (1.7.2) that the work the church does among the poor is actually seen as community development; and community development primarily has to do with poor communities and how these communities can be freed from the stranglehold of poverty.

For the church then, to engage in community development is to engage in the struggle against poverty, injustice, oppression, discrimination, violence, unemployment, inequality, hopelessness⁴⁷, etc. These realities are actual challenges that require deep reflection from the church as it affects all people in all aspects of their existence, (more

⁴⁴ Being said that, it should also be noted that many well-meaning agents find it difficult to reach remote communities. Sometimes the most vulnerable communities could not be reached because of the fact that in most instances the roads are inaccessible. Fortunately, one will almost always find a church in these remote areas. The area under study is no exception. Most of the local churches have outstations (Afrikaans: buitewyke of buitestaties) who are mostly dependent on the mother church (Moederkerk) for supplies.

⁴⁵ Food parcels and soup kitchens are among the most common examples.

⁴⁶ It should, however be noted that the church represents only one role player among many well-meaning agencies, conducting programmes/projects to help the poor in their development. The church could never take on this immense task in isolation. Collaboration with secular agencies (at a local level in this context), and even sister churches in an ecumenical context is vital.

⁴⁷ These are challenges or realities that will be dealt with in chapters 3 & 4 of this study.

so in small towns).⁴⁸ These realities are real; it exists; it is there; it is ever-present in the lives of millions of people who have to deal with these challenges on a daily basis. These realities were the struggles of the Old Testament as portrayed by the prophets (Isaiah, Amos and Hosea); it was the struggles of the earthly ministry of Jesus (cf. the gospels); and it continue to be the struggle of the church of today (more so in South Africa, and in particular in the area under study). It is to these challenges that the church need to respond.

In the Baviaans Municipal Area – as in many parts of the world- the poor generally see a close connection between God’s work and their situation. When they hear the spoken word they want to see that word come alive in actions (cf. James 2:14-18). They not only want to hear how God liberated Israel, or how Jesus sided with the poor. They want to know how these often quoted biblical texts can influence their situation for the better. They want to physically experience these often quoted texts in their lives. They look to this one institution (the church) who claims to side with them, to also act on their behalf through actions. “The church is not a closed circle but an inviting community” (Swart & Orsmond 2011:1-2), therefore challenges of this nature and magnitude compel the church to reflect on how the church (as a change agent) can make a difference in the lives of the many impoverished people in the area where it resides. For this reason a practical theological ecclesiology is crucial (cf. 3.9; 4.9 & chapter 6).

⁴⁸ To live in a small town (klein dorpie) is in its own a challenge and can become a contributing factor to the impoverishment of its inhabitants. This assumption is based on the grounds of the following: The absence of large retail chain stores (Shoprite/Checkers, Mr Price, etc.) in most small towns such as the Baviaans Municipal Area, results in its inhabitants, who are already struggling to survive, having to pay exorbitant prices for basic necessities at local businesses in their area. For instance, in most small towns, there is only one garage, one clothing shop (mostly a branch of Pep Stores), and one grocery store, which results in proprietors setting higher prices, as they see fit. Should people travel to the closest large town (in this case Graaff-Reinett or Oudtshoorn) to benefit from promotions (sales) they incur huge travelling costs. This is the reality which the poor in small towns are confronted with and which makes it the more difficult for the poor to escape the cycle of poverty.

Theologically speaking, the church as being sent into this world by the Triune God has a missionary obligation to join in God's mission to a world in need (Bosch 2010:117). The mission is God's, but it is a mission where the church can partake in his "ongoing mission, his ongoing praxis, his ongoing involvement with this world, with the poor and the sick, with the rich and the powerful, with earth and sky" (Hendricks 2004:25). Viewing from a Trinitarian perspective: Just as the Father has sent the Son to accomplish His redemptive work, and the Father and Son have sent the Spirit to incorporate his people into that redemption; so the Son sends the church to continue his mission and to participate in the reconciling work of the Spirit (Goheen 2000:117). Incidentally it is that same Spirit of Jesus who equips and empowers His people to continue as witnesses to God's redeeming love and work even in our day. God wants *his church (my emphasis)* "to internalise that we are a people called, a people sent to be an eschatological sign of a new kingdom, a new Jerusalem" (Hendricks 2004:25).

To understand this reality is to understand that the mission of the church is to participate in the sending of God. The church has been called to serve God and the world. Therefore, the church, in its missionary task to develop poor communities, should embrace community development as a missional challenge. The church stands in "the service of God's turning to the world" Bosch (2010:391). This is what Pieterse call "diaconal community development".

Unlike many agencies or organisations that have fixed agendas when it comes to the development of poor communities, the church must be different, meaning it must be dynamic and willing to cross frontiers, whether it is social, economic, political or cultural boundaries. Nürnberger (1998:240) seems to agree: "the mission of God *also* encompasses secular responsibility" he says. To say "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed" (James 2:15) without attending to the nakedness and hunger of people, is

“words without deeds”. To turn a blind eye when those who control the economy become slave drivers in order to generate more is a challenge to the church. When the political leaders pass laws in the name of development, the church need to ask, “Development for whom?” For the church to engage in, (and taking up the challenge presented by) community development is to recognise that, “human completeness is found in responding to spiritual, social and physical needs together” (August 2010:46). Integrating the different needs of people should form the basis of community development which in itself can pose a challenge to the church.

There is however another crucial factor that the church needs to take cognisance of if it wants to adequately respond to the challenge of community development and that is to fully understand the context of the poor. To grasp or to have knowledge of the “empirical profile of poverty” within the community is one thing, but the challenge for the church is to physically go out and “listen to the poor humbly and with open minds”; “to hear *from them* what their needs are” and to “learn from them what plans can be devised” (Pieterse 2001:116). To do this is to enter into partnership with the poor within the framework of the potency of the church as Pieterse (*ibid*) suggests. It is believed that the church do have the willpower and the capacity to take up the challenge as a missional priority (physically) and *also* to offer inspiration and vision to the poor in communities, so as to empower them to improve their own situation in order to liberate themselves from poverty.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One describes the background to the study and explains how the topic was chosen. Furthermore, it seeks to articulate the main research problem and hypothesis of the thesis. This chapter has outlined the research framework which includes sampling

and data collection methods. As this is a study in theology and development within the department of practical theology and missiology, this chapter also employ a section called 'theological conceptualisation' to highlight some possible theological concepts within the development paradigm, and which serves to be valuable for this study.

Chapter Two, deals with the issue of community development within the development domain. By means of a literature study, the researcher analyses the different concepts pertaining to the praxis of community development. This chapter further seeks to portray community development as a comprehensive, multi-dimensional strategy, which aims to satisfy the basic human needs of especially grassroots communities.

In Chapter Three the challenge of poverty is discussed in terms of its faces or dimensions. It not only deals with the results of poverty, but it attempts to spell out the causes of poverty. It builds on the information gained in Chapter Two to justify its academic investigation of the conceptualisation of poverty; it seeks to avoid vagueness by giving clarity on the interchangeable terms in poverty literature; it seeks to understand the importance of measuring poverty; it discuss how the poor experience and understand the challenges of poverty by connecting the academic and local experiential dimensions of the faces of poverty; it finally attempts to show the significance of these experiences for a practical ecclesiology

Building on the information in Chapter Three, Chapter Four, attempts to show how the integrated development plan (IDP) could/should serve as a tool for service delivery as part of community development. The first part explains the philosophy behind the IDP, and how it was developed, also how the Baviaans Municipality may use the numerous outcomes of the integrated development planning process to better serve the community

within its geographical locale. It further attempts to show the interaction between integrated development planning and the sustainable livelihood approach (SLA), and how the latter can complement the former. As poverty is the one dehumanising factor that development seeks to address, this chapter argues that, by using these “tools”, community development might prove successful in “reducing historical socio-economic backlogs” and hopefully alleviate poverty. Further as the programmes and projects contained in the IDP are directed towards the upliftment of people, and recognising the all-important fact that church happens where people live and work, this chapter also seeks to understand why the church need to be involved in what is seen as “secular issues”

Chapter Five shows how the church has always had a notion of development in its practice and theology. This chapter endeavours to demonstrate that the church, since its inception, has always understood development to be part of its mission. It acknowledges that the need for socio-economic transformation remains a challenge for the church, the three spheres of government and other civil society agencies. This chapter further deals with ways in which the church relates to the development debate by allowing contemporary academic literature to inform discussion. The prominent debates, in both secular and ecclesiastic views concerning development, are discussed.

Against the background of the preceding chapters, Chapter Six seeks to theologically demonstrate what it means to be church in our day and age. In line with the title of this study it attempts to discuss Community Development as a Challenge to a Practical Theological Ecclesiology. It discusses the importance of an ecclesiology that should equip us to go forward in a chosen direction in order to become the best church for our context. The context being one of despair and hopelessness viewed against the

background of unemployment and vulnerability, crime and violence, alcohol and drug abuse. This context compels the church to critically reflect on what it means to be a church in this area. It discusses the importance of a missionary diaconal approach; it discusses the importance of embracing development as its biblical mandate and hence accepts and embraces its theological foundation for development work. It theologically wrestles with how community development impacts the church. This chapter constitutes an earnest search for a contextually relevant church (for the context). It challenges the church to rethink “Why the church should want dialogue with others on matters of health, water, sanitation, poverty, unemployment, environment, global warming, etc.” This chapter challenges the church to rethink, “What is it in our faith that makes us partners in the task of development?” In its quest for answers, the church will have to look anew at how development challenges the church to be church. This chapter also seeks to recapitulate what has been discussed in the previous chapters, i.e. how our deliberations impact on the daily work the church is doing in the community.

Chapter Seven concludes this study by presenting the arguments, recommendations and the general conclusions of this research.

CHAPTER 2

THE PRAXIS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The process of specifying what we mean when we use certain terms in research is called conceptualisation (Babbie 2004:122). Concepts, according to Christenson & Robinson, help us define our perceptions of reality. It exists in our minds as the result of organized or systematic experiences of our senses and it defines and guide intellectual research efforts (1980:4). Since the first part of this study deals with community development, a clear grasp of the “capacity of the terms” (community and development) becomes important in order to gain a holistic understanding of community development (Coertze 1982:11), especially within the geographical boundaries of the Baviaans Municipal area. However, the aim of this chapter is not to engage in an analysis of the divergent definitions of community development; it accepts that a variety of definitions do exist which describe community development as a “process, a method, a program of movement” in development tradition (cf. Cornwell 1986).⁴⁹ Hence, for the purpose of this study, essential characteristics of community development will be discussed, to give us an inclusive overview. Thus, by focusing on contemporary concepts in the field of development, it is hoped to gain a better understanding of community development in the Baviaans Municipal area.

⁴⁹ Cited in Van Baalen (1996:23)

2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION

There is no attempt in this study to absolutise definitions. The attempts at conceptualisation, however, are merely intended to serve as guidelines that are mostly subjective individual constructions of reality. Thus, the conceptualisation should serve to facilitate clarity and to avoid ambiguity (cf. August 2010: xii).

2.2.1 Community

From the onset, one has to agree with Swanepoel that “Community is an elusive concept that defies definition” (1992:11).⁵⁰ This is common knowledge among readers of sociology textbooks and other experts in the field of development. However, over the years many attempts have been made to define this “elusive” concept. Among the many attempts, the following stand out:

- a social system composed of people living in some spatial relationship to one another, who share common facilities and services, develop a common psychological identification with the locality symbol, and together form a common communication network (Chekki 1979:5).
- a group of people in a given locality whose culturally structured social organisation is distinctive in its potentiality for providing the means for meeting the full range of daily needs” (Edward & Jones 1976:36).
- “...individuals or groups living in the same geographical area with different and often opposing interests”.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Traditionally in sociology, community referred to a group of interacting people living in a common location, however, the definition of community has evolved to mean individuals who share characteristics, *regardless* of their location or degree of interaction.

- Community is the specific system of action which arises when a human population settled in a given territory, establishes structural arrangements for adaptiveness to it in order to live and survive as a group (Ferrinho 1980:5).

These attempts at definition permit us to agree with Edward and Jones that community includes four components, namely, “people, location in geographic space, social interaction, and common ties”.⁵² It seems that, no matter how radically definitions of ‘community’ differ, they all have a common factor, namely people. This implies that without people a community cannot exist. People thus become the very substance of community and not the mere objects of the developing process.

This, according to August, calls for, or “implies community participation”. Community participation, he says, relies on a common awareness of problems and needs, determining common priorities, co-operative community action and access to resources. The key to this, according to August (1999:19; 2010:5) is to be found in the internal dynamic of community itself. He says “to those who take people seriously, community development is a humane undertaking” because it “involves people”

Most definitions also agree that a community is located within a geographic area⁵³ but, for the purpose of community development one should neither overemphasise nor underemphasise geographic locality, and it should always be combined with the

⁵¹ The online Etymology Dictionary (2001) gives the following explanation: “The word is derived from the Latin *communitas* (meaning, the same), which is a term derived from *communis*, which means ‘common, public, shared by all or many. *Communis* comes from a combination of the Latin prefix *com* – (together) and the word *munis* (which has to do with performing services). In biological terms, a community is a group of interacting organisms sharing an environment. But in human communities a number of ‘conditions’ (intent, belief, resources, preferences, needs, risks) may be present and common; affecting the identity of the participants and their degree of cohesiveness.

⁵² Cited in Kotze and Swanepoel, (1983: 7).

⁵³ Geographic communities range from the local neighbourhood, suburb, village, town or city, region, nation or even the globe as a whole.

existence of diverse (sub community) interest elements (Kotze & Swanepoel 1983:8). These elements are incorporated in a network of social interaction between people, which Poplin (1972:17) describes as “a chain of input-output relations in which each subsystem receives needed inputs from other subsystems and, in turn, contributes to the other subsystems and to the total community systems” (1972:17). This, as Swanepoel rightfully observe, implies that a community is almost always in “a continuous relationship with its own individuals, its environment, and other communities” (1992:11).

Apart from the elements of people, geographic locality, and social interaction, a community also has a certain psychic value, or what Kotze and Swanepoel (1983:8) call a “psycho cultural dimension.” This encompasses a community emotion, which entails shared communal values, convictions and goals with regard to humanity’s relation to nature, the supernatural, time, and other people.

It is also important to note that other aspects affect the community because “a community does not exist in a vacuum”. It forms part of a vibrant, living environment, manifesting itself on the natural, political, social, economic, cultural, psychological, and ecological and religious levels (Swanepoel 1997:61).⁵⁴

These elements may serve as yardstick against which the concept “community” could be measured, and will constitute a major part of the discussion on community development in the Baviaans Municipal area.

⁵⁴ Religion forms an integral part of most communities. In most instances, religion is interwoven with other activities of a community.

2.2.1.1 Types of Community

There are different types of community and many ways to categorise these different types. For the purpose of this study, the researcher's biases are revealed from the way he selects these types of community.

- *Geographic Communities* refers to local neighbourhood, suburb, village, town or city, region, nation. Communities of this type are also known as “communities of location”.
- *Communities of culture* refer to ethnic, religious, multicultural groups.
- *Community organisations* range from casual family or kinship systems, to more formal integrated associations, political decision making structures, economic enterprises, or proficient associations at a local, national or global level.
- *A Neighbourhood* is a geographically localised community, often within a larger city or suburb.
- *A Municipality* is an administrative local area generally composed of a clearly defined territory and commonly referring to as town or village. Although large cities are also municipalities, they are often thought of as a collection of communities, owing to their diversity.

In conclusion, it needs to be stated that communities are nested, i.e. one community can contain another – for example, a geographic community may contain a number of ethnic communities. Possibly the most common usage of the word “community” indicates a large group living in close proximity.

In some contexts, “community” indicates a group of people with a common identity other than location, who tend to interact regularly.

Definitions of community as “organisms inhabiting a common environment and interacting with one another”, while scientifically accurate, do not convey the richness, diversity and complexity of human communities. Their classification, likewise, is rarely precise. Untidy as it may be, community is vital for humans. Peck (1987:233) expressed this as follows: “There can be no vulnerability without risk; there can be no community without vulnerability; there can be no peace and ultimately no life without community”. From this, it is clear that the concept of the individual is not and can never be detached from the concept of community. Without the primary community of our family, or the secondary communities discussed above, we could not develop stable personalities as individual human beings. This conveys some of the distinctiveness of human community.

2.2.2 Development

There are many schools of thought or approaches to choose from when we debate the issue called development (Theron 2005:104).⁵⁵

It is a concept that is defined differently by different interest groups and intellectual traditions, each of which makes assumptions about what development is or is supposed to be (Davids 2005:23) .⁵⁶ History taught us that ‘macro-level’ development was largely conceived and characterised by the notions of progress, evolution and economic (GNP)

⁵⁵ See his article “Trends in Micro-level development”, in *Participatory Development in South Africa: A Development Management Perspective*, ed. by Davids et al. (2005).

⁵⁶ See his article “Development theories: Past to present”, in *Participatory Development in South Africa: A Development Management Perspective*, ed. by Davids et al. (2005).

growth (1960s). Termed Modernisation Theory, it emerged out of the climate of the Cold War and post-colonialism (Bowers 2005:35).

The essence of this thinking is that if “less-developed” countries (LDCs) are to become “developed”, they should follow the path taken by the “developed” countries (Davids 2005:9). This is like saying, “the West is best”. This is arrogance in its crudest form because it implies that non-western norms are inferior to Western ones. This is why the concept of development has suffered so much abuse and why “development graveyards” are scattered all over the world (Theron & Barnard 1997:35-62).⁵⁷ Taking the macro-picture and superimposing upon it the micro-picture of development brings us to the essence of this study – the situation of communities at grassroots level such as the Baviaans Municipal area – the so-called micro-level of development.⁵⁸ This is where the interest of this study lies. It is therefore not improper to lament the lack of understanding and appreciation of the ‘organised’ agents of change⁵⁹ concerning the many complex, social economic and political realities and environments at grassroots level. ‘Grassroots communities’ ultimately pay the price made by global decision-makers (cf.1.1). If this is development, then we need to mimic the many development practitioners, academics, politicians and beneficiaries of development who, since time immemorial, have been asking these questions: “Development from what? - by whom? - from whom?- and in what way? “Posing these questions suggests another way of analysing development; it calls for a reassessment of the focus of development, *that*

⁵⁷ See their article “Participation and development planning”, in *Participatory Development Management and the RDP*, ed. by Liebenberg & Stewart, (1997)

⁵⁸ Cf. Coetzee, (2001:119).

⁵⁹ It seems as if world institutions (International Monetary Fund, World Bank) and governing bodies (particularly governments who “control the development process”) appointed themselves as “Masters” over “Servants”, meaning they decide who will benefit.

focus being people taking centre stage in the development debate. It is, however, a widely accepted view that development is about people⁶⁰, as is evident from the following abstract:

Development is not about index numbers of national income, it is not about savings ratios and capital coefficients: it is about people and for people (Streeten 1981:283).⁶¹

The focus should not be on macro-economic statistics which often conceal the humanness, the need and the distress of ... people (Coetzee 1989:2-5).

However, though many development practitioners affirm that people should be central in their own development, it seems that not everyone believes that development is about people. Far too many professionals, experts, project managers, consultants and policy-makers want “to do development for the people”. The danger in this approach is that the “real experts” – the people - are expected to adopt an “apartheid Ja-Baas (yes boss) attitude”. This realisation has led development practitioners such as Robert Chambers to ask: “Whose reality counts? Putting the first last; suggesting that if people are the top priority of development then the powerful, – the “firsts” – “should take a step back to allow the people to take their rightful place as the authors of their own development process” (Theron 2005:104-105). This is the essence of micro-level development - *people experiencing the reality within which they find themselves day by day and moment by moment, feeling its implications and seeing its practical functioning around them.*

⁶⁰ A few well-written books that need mentioning are: “*Putting people first: sociological variables in rural development*” (Cernea, 1991); “*Whose reality counts? Putting the first last*” (Chambers, 1997); “*Putting People first; a guide to self-reliant participatory rural development*” (Burkey, 1993); “*Development by people: citizen construction for a just world*” (Gran, 1983); *Development for people* (Haq & Kirdar, 1989); *People-centred development* (Korten & Klauss, 1984).

⁶¹ P. Streeten (1981) Development perspectives, cited in *The political economy of development and underdevelopment*, ed. by C.K. Wilber, (London: Random House, 1979), p. 283.

Bowers cites August (1999:24) in noting that “the participation of the people themselves in their own development is both an essential part of human growth and a process whereby the people themselves become aware of and understand their problems and the social reality within which they live in order to affect lasting change themselves at grassroots level” (2005:36). Thus, any development effort that concerns people should be meaningful to the people.

It is against this background that the South African government, for example, “deemed it necessary to embrace people-centred development through its 1994 socio-economic policy framework, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)” (Davids 2005:18). The goal of this programme was to address the injustices of past development efforts.⁶²

Unfortunately this programme did not last very long even though it was hailed by the church⁶³ as “good news for the poor”. The RDP, according to Sam Abrahams⁶⁴, was to be a “people-centred and people-driven” programme, given that development was far from being people-centred during the apartheid era. The success of micro-level development “depends” on concepts and strategies such as people-centred development, participatory development, capacity development and community development

⁶² Sadly, RDP was replaced with GEAR, the government’s macroeconomic strategy called Growth, Employment and Redistribution whose main aim was to reduce the debt, which the current government inherited from their predecessors. We say “sadly” because it is the researcher’s opinion that RDP was a step in the right direction to eradicate poverty. In a report entitled “Church and State in the post-Apartheid South Africa: Christian Witness in contemporary society”, Samuel Abrahams (University of Fort Hare) writes: “The RDP would at least have grappled with a fundamental issue in a report entitled Key Indicators of Poverty in South Africa, that poverty has emerged as by far the biggest challenge facing the nation”. “The RDP”, he writes, “was to be people-centred and people-driven”.

⁶³ The Church in this instance refers to those churches that were involved in the Ecumenical Movement at that time, especially within the South African Council of Churches (SACC).

⁶⁴ Samuel (Sam) Abrahams is professor in Old Testament Studies at the University of Fort Hare.

approaches, to mention a few. Perhaps rightfully so, because its aim is the people at grassroots and their basic needs. Thus, to understand micro-level development, is to embrace the following six core values as pointed out by Coetzee (2001:122-126):

- People can be more than they are. Development should act as catalyst for transformation towards a better life for all. This means striving towards social justice, participation in decision-making, etc.
- Meaning. This core value relates to people's personal experience of their social reality. Thus, development initiatives should stress the principle that progress depends on continuous affirmation of meaning – the will to lead a meaningful life.
- Emphasis on the experience of the life-world refers to possibility that development is more likely to succeed if people are allowed to incorporate the meaning of their social reality into their desire to improve their situation.
- Desirable direction. The focus of any development initiative should be driven by the people's own experience of their reality along with the indigenous knowledge system (IKS) of such a community.
- Consciousness. When people shape their own development, they create a world of meaning that enables them to understand their own social reality. This empowers them to exercise their right to reject development interventions which are not conducive to their well-being.

- Public participation and self-reliance are crucial elements of development at grassroots level, because it entails the full participation of beneficiaries of development at this level.⁶⁵

This brings to mind the fact that development is not something that can be done *for* the people, or *to* the people; it should always be done in co-operation *with* the people.

This further implies that development should be a process by which people are awakened to opportunities within their reach, because development at grassroots level involves literally millions of people of varying socio-economic status. Upon looking at the concept 'development' it is not difficult to understand why Todaro (1989:88ff) uses loaded words such as *multi-dimensional process involving major changes ... development ...must represent the whole gamut of change.*

2.2.3 Community Development

Although community development deals with simple day-to-day activities, it is by no way simple to define. Many attempts have been made to define what community development is all about. Some attempts tie it to a vague notion of community participation, while others regard it as an umbrella term for all kinds of local development projects. However, most development models claim that they are community development and although this is intentionally true, it contributes to the confusion in community development terminology (cf. August 1999:19; 2010:5)

Hence, it will be helpful to gain clarity on this concept. As pointed out elsewhere (2.2), the purpose of concept clarification is not to give exhausted definitions, but to indicate in some way how these concepts complement the study. ⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Coetzee (2001: 122-126) as quoted by Francois Theron, Trends in micro-level development, p. 106.

Christenson and Robinson (1980:22ff.), for example, take their definition from the 1948 Cambridge Summer Conference on African Administration, which refers to community development as:

“...a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation, and, if possible, on the initiative of the community Community development embraces all forms of betterment. It includes the whole range of development activities ...”⁶⁷

Biddle and Biddle (1968) describe community development as a:

“... social process by which human beings can become more competent to live with and gain some control over local aspects of a frustrating and changing world” .⁶⁸

Another thought-provoking description comes from Conyers (1982:115) who cites the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs’ (1963) definition that community development:

“...connote[s] the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress”⁶⁹.

⁶⁶ But also clarifies the meaning in which concepts will be used in a study.

⁶⁷ Cf. De Waal (1980:16ff.); Ferrinho (1980:39); Cornwell (1987:90); August, (1999 & 2010). During this conference delegates suggested to change the name of the British Colonial Informal Training and Community Literacy programme from mass education to community development.

⁶⁸ Cited in Hendriks, *Gemeenskapsontwikkeling as Missionêre Taak van die Kerk*, Unpublished BDiv thesis, (Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch, 1998); De Waal (1980:17).

⁶⁹ See also August (1999:20), Van Baalen (1996:23).

This process, according to Conyers is made up of two essential elements: (1) The participation⁷⁰ of the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living, with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative; and (2) the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help and make these more effective. It is expressed in programmes designed to achieve a wide variety of specific improvements”.⁷¹

There is no doubt that the emphasis in community development is on improving the lives of the whole community, especially the “lowest level of aggregation” of people who, in some way or other, are dependent upon each other for their existence (Midgley 1986:24). Thus, in its quest to promote a better live for the whole community, community development needs to develop and mobilise the physical, financial and human resources at its disposal.

One way of doing that, according to August (2010: 7-8), is to allow external development agencies and the members of a community to combine their efforts. These combined efforts will undoubtedly intensify maximum impact and hopefully lead to an integrated approach of micro-level development. This view presents community development as method.⁷² But, as August warns, one should be cautious about viewing development as method only, because this strategy or approach may overlook people in the development process.

⁷⁰ Participation is but one of three interrelated elements that constitute the process of community development; the other two elements are empowerment and sustainability.

⁷¹ Ibid. See also chapter 4 on the IDP.

⁷² Cf. August (1999:22), for a discussion on community development as method and (learning) process. Community development as method is a unique comprehensive approach, which makes allowance for the co-operation of different agencies in order to embody an integrated approach of local development. The central idea is to intensify, in terms of interventions, maximum impact by means of co-ordinate actions.

This may further lead to external development agents becoming the main actors who decide who should benefit, or which project the community should engage in. However, a strategy that offsets community development as method is community development as (learning) process. The value of community development as learning process is five-fold, according to August (1999:2).

- It starts with what is happening in communities.
- The community is conscientised about what they are busy with.
- The development agent together with the community gets the opportunity to reflect on the described action.
- The learning process exposes the community to new knowledge.
- New action is planned.

This is what Swanepoel (1992:3) calls “the heart of the matter” because in this process people learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems.⁷³ Thus as a *process*, community development puts emphasis upon what happens to people, socially and psychologically; it represents incremental development; it moves by stages from one condition or state to the next: it involves a progression of changes in terms of specified criteria, according to Kotze and Swanepoel (1983:83).

In this view, community development changes from a state where few participate to one where many participate. According to Kotze and Swanepoel (1983:3ff.), another way of looking at process and method, is to view the process as the *attitude and action* of a

⁷³ Cf. Burkey (1993:56).

community in its own improvement; and method as the *efforts from outside* to create the attitude and set the action in motion in order to enable a community to improve itself. The binding factor between the process and the method is what give meaning to development.⁷⁴

The area under study falls in the category of a combination of these approaches, “while the community is assisted by an external agent, it takes control of its own progress.” From both the above viewpoints of community development, the central position of the community’s needs is apparent. The *process* of community development will never be set in motion if the community does not feel a need. The community itself must feel competent to do something about the need. One of the main ingredients of community development as a *method* is to make a community realise its needs and to help it plan and act to fulfil those needs. In the community development circle, one cannot separate community development as method from process. This brings us to what constitutes the process of community development: *participation, empowerment and sustainability*.

⁷⁴ Community development could also be viewed as a programme or movement. When we look at community development as programme, the emphasis will be on development activities. When a highly formalised plan, for instance a five year plan is implemented, the focus is placed on the programme rather than what happens to the people involved in this programme, says Lombard (1991:113). One is reminded of apartheid South Africa where non-whites had to be guided by Whites in the organisation, and the implementation of programmes designed for the non-whites says Gumbi (2001:39). As a movement it tends to become institutionalised, building its own organisational structure, accepted procedures and professional practitioners (Cornwell in Van Baalen, (1996)), p. 23.

2.2.3.1 Participation⁷⁵

The “buzz value” of participation is so great that debate on whether it is good or bad has ceased (Swanepoel 1997:4). It has evolved into an approach in its own right, designated as “participatory development or community participation” (Swanepoel 1985:364; Cornwell 1987:91-92). Whether participation is good or bad does not matter. What matter is that “every person, whether relatively poor, poor, or the poorest of the poor, has a right to be part of the decision-making mechanism affecting his or her development (Swanepoel 1997:5).⁷⁶ The central position that humans have begun to occupy in the development arena, has become noticeable over the last few decades. This is a viewpoint that gained prominence with many authors of development literature. What makes participation such a crucial element according to Rahman (1993:150) is that it is “an active process in which the participants take initiative and take action that is stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation and over which they can exert effective control”.⁷⁷

This viewpoint coincides with the perception that participation is ‘the exercise of people’s power’⁷⁸ to equip themselves to take charge of their destiny. Empowering people enables them to come up with solutions to their own problems and to seek

⁷⁵ According to Kotze and Kellerman (1997:37), public participation became part of the development lexicon during the late 1960s and 70s. The idea of public participation, they say, was not received well by the governments of developing countries at first, because it was perceived as threat to their existence.

⁷⁶ See also the United Nations’ definition on Community Development.

⁷⁷ The initial articulation of this view was made jointly by a number of agencies known as the ACC Task Force on Rural Development (1978)

⁷⁸ While ‘people’s power’ needs organization for purposeful action, the concept of people’s power transcends that of people’s organizations which vest power in offices which can be abused, and create rules of operation which may be inhibit initiative and may also become passé over time (Rahman 1993:151).

alternative ways of dealing with the socio-economic realities affecting their lives.⁷⁹ This is a desirable gesture, but it is not easy to implement in practice because of the complexity of human nature. It is often said that the South African public is not interested in participating in development decision-making. This lack of interest should be understood within the context of South Africa's apartheid past where [community] participation was no more than a cosmetic and spurious gesture (Davids 2005:20).

Bearing in mind this background, the value of "external stimuli" becomes apparent, that is, to gently guide "those who are variously poor, powerless and remote, to control more of their lives, to have more choice and to demand and use more services" (August 2010:10). This, undoubtedly, is a learning process that the people need to embark on in order to make a meaningful contribution to their own well-being.⁸⁰ Participation, as Theron and Barnard put it, gives birth to "a process of social learning, capacity building, empowerment and sustainability" (1997:38).

It is important however, as Potter (1985:154) warns, not to confuse participation with consultation or involvement.⁸¹ Participation, as Yadav (1980:87) points out, should be understood in the sense of decision-making, implementation, monitoring, evaluation of programmes and projects, and sharing in the benefits of development.

⁷⁹ Cf. August (2010); Burkey (1993).

⁸⁰ The model which serves this process best, according to August, is Participatory Action Research (PAR). This learning process is a process where all stakeholders share and learn from each other (becoming partners in learning).

⁸¹ Consultation involves a process whereby people's opinions are asked, e.g. through social surveys or opinion polls. Although this implies that communities' views may be taken into consideration, it has not generally meant that people are actively engaged in the decision-making process. Involvement refers to certain individuals or key groups who are taken to represent the views of wider groups, via public hearings or consultation with community leaders.

No development is possible without participation, which implies the opportunity for choices. Development, as Bruwer (1996:2) puts it, “should widen the opportunities for choice, but macro-decisions of developers often make choice at the grassroots level impossible”.

2.2.3.2 Empowerment⁸²

The principle of empowerment stipulates that “people participate because it is their democratic right to do so” (Wignaraja et al 1991:202). Participation, therefore, is decision-making (Gran 1983:23), and participation means having power (Tacconi & Tisdell 1993:41)⁸³. According to this principle, participation is the natural result of empowerment. It is not a means to an end – it is the objective of development. However, empowerment necessitates more than having power to make decisions. It demands knowledge and understanding to make the correct decisions (Swanepoel 1997: 6-7).

It is more than simply bringing people who are outside the decision-making process into it. It includes the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to occupy the decision-making space. Davids (2005:21) refers to this scenario as “power to” and “power within”. Empowerment in this sense deals with the “ability of people to articulate and assert by word and by deeds their urges and thinking” (Rahman 1993:205-206). In its purest form, according to Swanepoel, empowerment means the acquisition of power and the ability to give it effect (1997:7). Empowerment must therefore enable people to express and assert what development means to them.

⁸² Though power - the root concept of empowerment – can be defined from different perspectives, it should rather be defined in a way that takes power and the distribution thereof, into account (Rowlands 1996:91).

⁸³ Cited in Swanepoel, (1997:6).

Unfortunately, empowerment has become an abused concept in most communities. Development professionals are often trained to work in ways that disempower – they tell other people what they should do. Such people, according to Rowlands, must learn to “relearn, or unlearn” (1996:90).

Relearning, according to Davids (2005:21), is a very sensitive issue for most professional people who, sometimes through their professional training, have developed a culture of “know all”. This attitude is more evident in “small towns” because of a perception that small town communities are uninformed. Empowerment that seeks to engage people cannot be effective if the development planning methodology is top down and directive, or encourages dependency (ibid.). Instead, empowerment, as Freire (1972:63) points out, requires dialogue, which is based on trust ... an “ability or willingness to listen and respond with empathy to people and to encouraging involvement” (Mokgohloa 1995:2).

2.2.3.3 Sustainability

Sustainability is a long-term approach that seeks to understand and respect local conditions. It also seeks –through participation and empowerment – to ensure that projects bring lasting change that will strengthen people’s ability to fend for themselves and improve their lives long after the project has ended. This route makes sustainable development a slow-moving and never-ending process according to August (2010:12). References to sustainability, such as those in the RDP White Paper (1994: 7-8) emphasise its importance in current South African development policy. Sustainable development can be defined in a number of ways as pointed out by Treurnicht (1997a:85-88; 1997b:30-32). However, the best-known definition is that of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) which states:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.⁸⁴

However, according to Myers (2003:128), we need to be careful how we think about the idea of sustainability. He says we must recognise that even the poorest community already has some level of sustainability. If the community were not sustainable before the development agent came, it could not exist.

Myers cites Jayakaran (1996:8) in stating a proven fact “that poor communities are quite sophisticated in developing sustainable survival strategies, in terms of food, water, [and] housing...”⁸⁵ This is true of many “small town” communities including the Baviaans Municipal area.

We have dealt with the concepts community, development, and community development. Now we shall briefly look at the objectives of community development as well as its purpose for this study.

2.2.4 Objective of Community Development

(Community) development’s main goal is to eradicate poverty; to free people from the deprivation trap; to meet their abstract needs of self-reliance and dignity. It is a well-known fact that people have basic human needs that are not always amply dealt with. The reason for this is that the extent of the poverty crisis is not always realised - especially when the ‘not-so-poor’ or the ‘enterprising part of the community’ are targeted for development (Swanepoel 1997:8).

⁸⁴ United Nations report cited in Davids, (2005: 22). See also Chapter 4:2.3.6.

⁸⁵ South Africa is a good example of this scenario. Because of our apartheid past, the majority of black people had to learn how to survive with the minimum. Sad to say that for the majority of people in South Africa, and especially those in the platteland, the situation remains unchanged.

This is often the case in “small town” (platteland) areas where those who are not in dire need are the beneficiaries of development efforts while those in real need – the poor – remain exactly where they are with no hope of a better life.

If the aim of community development is to release the whole person from the jaws of poverty, then community development becomes “an effort at total transformation”.

This implies that community development should move from “conforming efforts”⁸⁶ to “transforming efforts”. Transforming efforts, according to Swanepoel (1997:8-9), are unlike the ‘conforming efforts’ in Chambers’ deprivation trap (1983) that only bring relief to entrapped people, without freeing them from the trap.⁸⁷ The aim of ‘transforming efforts’, on the other hand is to do more than bring short term relief: it is to restore people’s dignity by making them self-reliant, so that they can gradually improve their own situation.

This is what community development endeavours to do: *to free in order to improve* (ibid.). In order for community development to free, it needs to be conscious of, and distinguish the needs of a community⁸⁸. At the heart of every community development programme, there is a recognised need to be satisfied and until there is an appreciation of a need it is very difficult, if not impossible, to get a community development programme underway... and the recognition of this need must be expressed in specific terms (Wileden 1970:278). Kotze and Swanepoel (1983:13) distinguish between real needs and felt needs.

⁸⁶ Swanepoel is of the opinion that development efforts often maintain the status quo; this restricts them to short term or repetitive relief to a situation without addressing the causes. Such efforts, he says, ‘conform they do not of transform’ (1997:8-9).

⁸⁷ This is like “treating the symptoms”

⁸⁸ See also Groenewald in Coetzee (1989:263-4).

Real needs are those “needs that a community ought to have, viewed objectively”. Felt needs are those that a community clearly expresses, and these could include real needs.

What is important to note is that the community should be led to discover the real need in such a way that their full cooperation is retained. The community must express its own preferences (ibid: 15). It is however, the aim of community development to realise self-identified needs of the target community, according to Swanepoel (1985:361). However, as Jeppe (1985:29) remarks, “these needs and the community action that follows their identification may not fit in with the requirements or priorities...as viewed by development authorities or agencies”.

A further distinction can be made between the general, hidden (process- oriented) goal, and the specific or concrete (task-oriented) objectives of community development. The “process-oriented or general objectives refer to qualitative objectives such as self-help, participation”, etc.; whereas the task-oriented or specific objectives refer to “tangible, quantifiable objectives” (Chekki cited in Kotze & Swanepoel 1983:12).

In view of the above it befits us to conclude this section with an informed perception on the goal/objective of community development:

The ultimate goal of development is the growth and development of the individual within the context of his or her own collective fellowship, e.g. the family, the group, the community, and nation... the measure of development is its effect on the individual and the collective fellowship (Burkey 1993:205).

It thus becomes pivotal to look at community development in a holistic way, i.e. to consider symptoms, primary causes, and secondary causes. There must be a clear view and understanding of the relationships between these ‘wholes’.

A holistic view requires a social intervention capability and capacity that supports its goals (cf. Ickis 1983:12). It is also imperative that the process of community development be guided by a vision, a philosophy, and a belief system that is informed and supported by *principles*,⁸⁹ acting as guiding lights on the difficult road to development.

2.2.5 Principles of Community Development

There are basic principles underlying the process of community development. It is important to understand these principles that seem universally applicable, especially when taking into consideration the global impact on grassroots development. Amongst the many principles only a few applicable to the purpose of this study will be discussed.

2.2.5.1 The principle of human need

Authors of development literature agree that people in the deprivation trap have basic needs that are not met. These needs include certain minimum requirements such as food, shelter and clothing as well as certain household equipment. It further includes necessary services provided by and for the community at large, such as safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, and health and educational facilities (Burkey 1993:31).⁹⁰

These are basic needs that an individual must have to survive as a human being⁹¹.

Nevertheless, people also have needs that are not necessarily physical.

⁸⁹ See Swanepoel (1997: 2-13) for an in-depth discussion on the principles of community development. The researcher deems it not necessary to go into a discussion of all the different principles, but only wants to use principles applicable to the context.

⁹⁰ Max Neef includes the following as basic needs: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness, creation, identity and freedom (1991: 32-33).

As people strive to meet their basic physical needs, they realise many of their abstract, human needs. According to Swanepoel (1993:3), the most important abstract human need is dignity. Dignity is promoted by giving people recognition for being capable of making their own decisions and accepting accountability for their decisions.

Dignity is further enhanced when people become self-reliant and self-sufficient. In other words, dignity grows as people fulfil their potential (Gran 1983: 327). When a person's dignity is restored, such a person commences to "progress in realising his inner potential while working to fulfil his physical needs. Hence all development initiatives must have a single focus, the human being (Swanepoel 1997:3).

2.2.5.2 The principle of ownership

The principle of ownership seeks to entrench the ownership where it belongs - with the community. It must be clear in whom the authority is vested. Hence, development projects should be owned by the community and not be manipulated by developers with a stake to protect. If the principle of ownership is to be adhered to, it must be clear as to where the authority should lie (Swanepoel 1997:7). Gran (1983:169) points out that development should not be managed externally, but "should be guided lightly..."

2.2.5.3 The principle of adaptiveness

The principle of adaptiveness does not include words such as expert, blueprint, top-down or rigid. On the contrary, adaptiveness is in direct contradiction to these words. Blueprint top-down planning makes no provision for adaptiveness; it leaves no space for ordinary community members in decision-making; and the architects of this approach are driven by wealth (Swanepoel 1997:11).

⁹¹ Burkey (1993:31) sees basic human needs as those things that an individual must have to survive as a human being.

The principle of adaptiveness, instead, requires a transforming mindset and a willingness to learn as you go forward. It asks that errors should be embraced, and greater freedom of action be allowed. It recognises the simple truth that people learn from mistakes.⁹² This principle is closely related to the principle of learning. To learn is to adapt. Adaptiveness is to respect, to know, to learn from, to become part of, and to follow the community before they can follow you (cf. Bruwer 1996:1).

2.2.5.4. The principle of simplicity

This principle, according to Swanepoel (1997:11), contrasts sharply with the Western view that 'bigger is better'. The more complex and sophisticated a project is the more support it will get from the developed countries, he says. In South Africa, for example, politicians and many development agencies are following the same route. They opt for or promote very large, visible projects that are sometimes far removed from what communities need. Swanepoel (1997:15) remarks, "... because they are grassroots oriented, community development efforts are small, simple and address the basic needs of those at grassroots". He says, with the principle of simplicity in mind, we can safely say that "community development seeks simplicity, avoids complexity and focuses on the micro-level". Chambers (1993:27) phrases the wisdom of this principle as follows:

The right starting point is not the means but the end, not the library but the village, not the methodology of appraisal but the poorer rural people – ...true sophistication lies in simplicity; in short, that simple is optimal.

It is not the intention that these principles be held to in every situation encountered, or that the methodology be followed slavishly.

⁹² Cf. Chambers (1997:15), Swanepoel (1997:11), Gran (1983)

These principles serve as guiding lights, or a series of reference points for the analysis of each situation and the eventual choice of the methodology. Hence it would be unwise (of the Baviaans Municipality, in this case) to deviate from any principle without taking considerable time and effort to analyse the possible consequences that such changes may have on the development process.⁹³

2.2.6 Poverty

It is a known fact that poverty is a “relative concept, which eludes specific definition” (August 2010:1). It is not the intention of this section to explore that route because the whole of chapter three is devoted to the reality of poverty. However, for the purpose of this chapter it is important to highlight poverty as a concept amongst others. Poverty is a pressing reality within the context of development.

It evokes images of starving children, overcrowded squatter camps, and shabby street children. These images, according to Davids (2005:37), form the basis of how many people understand poverty. This is also how many in the developed world perceive the developing world - as charity cases. Poor people, according to Davids (ibid), have their own understanding and interpretation of their social reality, which is often far removed from the outsiders’ perspective whose knowledge of poverty often comes from books, television, newspapers and questionnaire interviews with the poor. Though poverty has been the object of careful research by different disciplines (i.e. political, economical, sociological, theological etc.), and despite all the academic research, scholarly papers, and media coverage, this evil continues to be a persistent *glocal* phenomenon.

⁹³ See also Kotze and Swanepoel (1983:12-16).

To this end the economist, Henry Hazlitt remarks, “The history of poverty is almost the history of mankind”.⁹⁴ Burkey (1993: 3-4) gives a broad overview of poverty, which augments this research. He distinguishes between absolute and relative poverty. “**Absolute poverty** is the inability of an individual, a community, or a nation to satisfactorily meet its basic needs. De Beer (in Swanepoel & De Beer 1997:2) describes this condition as a life and death situation. **Relative poverty** according to Burkey (ibid.) is the condition in which “basic needs are met, but where there is an inability to meet perceived needs and desires in addition to basic needs”. Hence, whereas absolute poverty refers to desperate situations, relative poverty refers more to a comparison of levels, according to August (2010:2).

De Beer (1997:11) further notes the distinction between **case poverty** and **community poverty**. Case poverty is found in societies that are more affluent where individuals or families do not share in the well-being of society. Community poverty on the other hand, manifests itself where almost everyone in a community is poor. This is more or less the case in the Baviaans Municipal area. Community poverty is found mostly, but not exclusively, in rural, informal and peri-urban areas like squatter camps⁹⁵. It is also worth mentioning that poverty is not a static condition among individuals, households, or communities: while some are permanently poor, others move into and out of poverty owing to life cycle and other changes. In everything we have said so far, it is evident that people hold the central position.

The well-being of people thus becomes the focal point. This realisation forces us to discuss one more important concept to bring this chapter to a conclusion: the church.

⁹⁴ Cited in Davis (1984: 27). Sawhill (1988) describes poverty as a war.

⁹⁵ See also Hendriks 1998:28.

2.2.7 The Church

This study also seeks to determine the level of the church's involvement in community development especially in the light of its distinct self-understanding of its character as being both a 'called out' and 'called to' community. This will not be a lengthy discussion, as Chapters Five and Six extensively deal with how development challenges the church to be church. However, the reason for including the 'concept church' in this chapter is to show that every community has a 'built-in' spiritual component. In Christian communities, that 'spiritual component' would be the church. It is also important to recognise that while the church is not the sole source of values, the church is a "sign of kingdom values such as freedom, equality, justice, peace hope and participation" (Myers 2003:127; Bowers 2005:59). Lastly, including church in this chapter is to affirm the role of the church in community development, especially at a time when development professionals see the church as a distraction, or even worse, an "impediment to transformation" (Myers 2003:126). Batchelor (1981:134) remarks:

"Where a church exists, however, it is important that she should demonstrate her concern for the people's social and economic needs. She must do this in a practical manner at the same time as she points the way in which spiritual needs can be met".

This makes the biblical injunction of "salt and light" of the earth more applicable to the church in any given context. To this end, Maggay (1994:48) observes:

As 'salt' we penetrate society and act as a preservative against social putrefaction, restoring and affirming whatever is good and just and lovely in the things around us. As 'light' we stand before forces of darkness, a sign of the truth about the human condition and the meaning of history and human existence.

This makes the church a powerful and instrumental force and it uniquely positions her to respond aptly to both the spiritual and material nature of people. Elliott (1987:14), like Wilson and Ramphela and others, supports the theory that the Church possesses the institutional infrastructure and a potential for caring for the poor, as well as the understanding that development – not charity – is the method of choice:

“... the heart of the most difficult part of the churches’ role in development ... can be put simply, if still crudely, like this: a key component of development (indeed of the process of becoming fully human) is ... the process by which poor people cease to be the object of blind forces and/or of other people’s wills. To take control of one’s own destiny and accept responsibility for one’s life and the choices it poses is central both to personal and societal development.

It is central both to the inward journey of inner transformation and to the outward journey of structural change that makes justice possible”.

Churches are continuously engaged in caring for the needy in their respective communities. Their situation is ideal for becoming involved in community development work. After all, as Bruwer (1994:14) warns, “poverty has become the most burning issue for the church to handle; [therefore] a shift of emphasis from word to deed and dogma to action has to take place.” Deeds and action summon the church to be:

“...servant of its communities, harnessing the wind and wood and water into technologies that make [their communities] a little more habitable ... or working side by side with all people of good will toward a better social order” (Maggay 1994:127.

Another interesting observation is that the word development does not appear anywhere in the Bible. However this does not mean that the Bible is silent about development.

The Hebrew tradition (Old Testament) frequently refers to God's preference or concern for the well-being of His people, the poor, the widow and the orphan.

Woe to you who make unjust decrees and who write oppressive laws, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be your spoil and that you may make the orphans your prey" (Isaiah 10:1-2). Or: "Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, 'Open your hand to the poor and needy ... in your land (Deuteronomy 15:11).⁹⁶

This speaks clearly of the deeply rooted covenant between God and His people, but it also shows that Scripture recognises poverty to be an experience that will always accompany humanity in its development, as it has been through all the stages of human evolution. The New Testament (Christian) tradition shows a continuation of this preference for the poor. Through this action Jesus shows that the mission of the church is not just preaching and celebrating the sacraments, but also building up a new society. For Him human development *is* primary to the Gospel. His actions speak of a leader who worked tirelessly towards the transformation of his community. His intention was not just to institute the church but to create a new society on a just and impartial order; hence his fervour to address the socio-political and religious injustices in his time. "The life and the words of Jesus and the teachings of His church call us [to follow suit and] to serve those in need and work actively for social and economic justice", writes Maguire (in Thompson 2000:1).

⁹⁶ Quoted from The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version. The New International Version renders this verse in the following way; "There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open-handed towards your brothers and towards the poor and needy in your land". Also cf. John 12:8.

Through this stance, Jesus appears to have been generating a social revolution because he knew that socio-political dimensions are inseparable from the religious. Therefore, as a community of believers we know that our faith is tested by the quality of justice amongst us; we can best measure our life by how the poor and vulnerable are treated. Through the ages the Bible has placed a high premium on the value of people created in God's image and likeness.

2.3 CONCLUSION

It has been argued in this chapter that:

- community development is a form of planned change, based on the participation of people in all the phases and the provision of material and technical assistance in order to ensure sustainability;
- the central position of the community's needs is the basic starting point of community development;
- it is value-based and normative, and subsequently based on the political preferences of groups within the community; the culture of a community is part of the process of human social growth and must be addressed both in research and in action.
- it is an independent approach to development which postulates the unique local circumstances of the community;
- The meaning of development, as determined by the community, will be the binding factor between community development as a method and community development as a process which brings communities and external agents together (Van Baalen in August 2010:6-7).
- (Community) development involves people living in the full realisation of their God-given potential. It is concerned with the total human milieu.

Underlying community development is the philosophy that local people not only have the right, but also the responsibility to choose their own development objectives, and to make their own decisions. It carries with it the concern for changing the local situation with a view to improving conditions in the community; it embodies the belief that lasting progress can only be achieved through the development of local understanding, local initiative, and local self-help, with as much local participation as possible. Community development is a matter of organisation with a concern for the development of the total community. It assumes that outside resources including counselling and technical assistance must be available to local community situations (Cf. Kotze & Swanepoel 1983:2-3).

The basic question, however, is how to integrate all these challenges to enhance community development at grassroots level. The answer, as the South African Government believes, lies in the integrated development plan which according to them will strengthen community development as a tool to better the lives of people. But before we attempt a discussion on this “super plan”, another crucial challenge needs to be discussed first viz. Poverty. Poverty is the single biggest social evil of our time and no debate on (social and religious) upliftment is complete without engaging this thorny issue. Therefore the next chapter is an attempt to engage this all-important issue which since time immemorial impedes those created in the image and likeness of God viz. people, more particularly the poor.

CHAPTER 3

POVERTY AND ITS MANY FACES

3.1 INTRODUCTION:

At the beginning of the 21st century poverty is still a major global reality. It still dominates the agendas of world institutions. It still touches the lives of the majority of people in any given country. It has many dimensions – material, social and psychological – and many side-effects. It is characterised above all by a lack of income and power. It is universally recognised that poverty is one of the most important realities confronting the world in our age. Global statistics on poverty bear testimony to this. It is in fact sky-rocketing. More than a billion people in the world have to survive on less than a dollar a day. Some calculate that half the world is poor. In some countries like Bangladesh, where 60 million out of 120 million people (50%) are poor, poverty is the overwhelming reality. In India a third of the population are poor. In some other countries the proportion is even higher.⁹⁷

Poverty is also a reality in South Africa where the majority of people do not know where their next meal will come from. This is not only a national scenario but is a reflection of what happens in communities all over South Africa, especially small town communities. This chapter seeks to address poverty and (development) in one of those communities, the Baviaans Municipal Area. However, before we attempt to explain how poverty manifests itself in the Baviaans municipal area it is important to allow space for the articulation of divergent views in the poverty literature.

⁹⁷See chapter 2, “Eradication of Poverty”, paragraph 19, World Summit for Social Development: Report A/CONF. 166/9.

3.2 POVERTY: A CONTESTED CONCEPT

Poverty is a contested concept, and with good reason.⁹⁸ Arguments over how poverty should be conceptualised, defined and measured go beyond semantics and academic pedantry. “The conceptualisation, definition and measurement of poverty in a society are like a mirror-image of the ideals of that society” (ibid).

When we conceptualise, define and measure what is acceptable or unacceptable in a society, we actually say a lot about the way we would like things to be in that society. Hence it is imperative that the concepts, definitions and measurements of poverty are pertinent to the society in which they are applied (ibid). This scenario is especially true in South Africa where poverty is deep and widespread and where the degree of inequality is as great as in any other country in the world (cf. Wilson & Ramphele 1989:4).⁹⁹

It is clear that any attempt to comprehend the essence of poverty and the development of impoverishment here must take one to the heart of the society and its challenges. The fundamental challenge, some would argue, is the development of effective strategies to deal with poverty. Poverty is also clothed in a political blanket, because it relates to the distribution of resources, and “reflects the impact of past and present policy choices” (Meth 2007:5).¹⁰⁰

That is not necessarily a bad thing because poverty as it exists has an inherent “messiness” about it. That in itself makes the concept of poverty very powerful and

⁹⁸ See *Studies in Inequality and Poverty Institute (SPII), “The Measurement of Poverty in South Africa Project: Key Issues, (2007:5).*

⁹⁹ Poverty is such a vast concept that one can easily drown in the arguments addressing this issue. Hence the intentions of the researcher to delimit the scope of this research to South Africa and in particular the area under study, namely the Baviaans municipal area. The researcher is also aware that, in order to address a local situation on poverty, one needs to look at the global trends on poverty. Nevertheless, this section will draw on issues that directly impact the situation in the area under study.

¹⁰⁰ See also Wilson & Ramphele (1989:4).

important in the debates by which government, social arrangements, institutions and policies are legitimised. It can be a politically contested question whether poverty went up or down during the term of office of a particular government and whether this can be ascribed to the programmes of that government.¹⁰¹ It allows the concept to be used in very “nuanced, complex and responsive ways” (Du Toit in SPII 2007:5). There is, however, increasing consensus that initiatives to tackle the root causes and the impact of poverty are required in the international as well as the national arena.

3.2.1 Is there a link between poverty and colour?¹⁰²

It would give one enormous joy to say that there is no linkage between poverty and colour. It might still be true for other parts of the world where poverty is measured in terms of class or creed. However, in South-Africa which has just emerged from a history of apartheid, poverty was always linked to skin colour. History taught that the Great Depression of 1928 served as an eye-opener to the government of the time. It was during that time that large numbers of whites – uprooted from the land during the previous generation by war, drought, pestilence, population growth, and the capitalisation of agriculture- were pouring into the cities to live, ill-equipped for modern industrial society, in dire poverty (Wilson & Ramphela 1989:ix).

This was a situation that troubled the government tremendously, so much so that a team consisting of academics and clergy used this “poor white problem¹⁰³” as basis for the

¹⁰¹ Republic of South Africa, Public Service Commission, “Background Notes for the dialogue on Poverty reduction strategies and Interventions” (June 2009), p.2

¹⁰² Given the history of South Africa, and the sensitivity around colour, this question may sound like a cliché. However the researcher deemed it necessary to include this section in an attempt to show that deprivation in our context, for the greater part, was based on skin colour. Put simply, black people were deprived of certain privileges prior 1994. We use black as an umbrella term to include coloured people as well, because in apartheid South Africa you were either classified as white, black or Asian.

¹⁰³ This presupposes colour.

first Carnegie Commission Inquiry into poverty. This was that government's attempt to address the "poor white problem".

Though this section presupposes that poverty has no colour, the contrary is true. Colour and prejudice did play a role in the first Carnegie Inquiry into poverty. Although the first Commission mentioned the problems of black poverty, their focus remained on whites. However, for whites the situation changed dramatically with the expansion of gold mining during the 1930s onwards. Blacks on the other hand – though drawn into the economy- remained poor. Thus the need for a second inquiry was suggested but it lay dormant until the early 1980s.¹⁰⁴ This urge for a second inquiry came as a result of concerns about the growing levels of poverty amongst the population as a whole¹⁰⁵. The difference between the two inquiries was that whereas the first Carnegie Inquiry mainly concentrated on one group i.e. the minority white populace, the second inquiry had the well-being of the whole populace at heart. In other words, colour would be secondary to the primary task of determining the levels of poverty amongst all South Africans.

However, in the South African context where the majority of those who are poor are black, this meant that, as far as possible, the centre of gravity of the Inquiry had to be black rather than white (ibid.).

In democratic South Africa this shift might still prompt people to question the authenticity of the second Inquiry into poverty; but this is beyond the scope of this

¹⁰⁴ See the preface of Wilson & Ramphela, 1989, p. x.

¹⁰⁵ The Second Carnegie Commission Inquiry into Poverty in South Africa paved the way for many other discussion documents i.e. the 1993 "Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development. This study was a joint effort between the World Bank and South African researchers for the ANC who wanted a definite assessment of the extent of poverty in South Africa before they took office (Magasela, 2005). Democratic South Africa saw a number of decisive reports on poverty i.e. the 1995 Key Indicators of Poverty in South Africa, the Participative Poverty Assessment – South Africa Report, and the Poverty and Inequality Report among others.

research. The way people perceive poverty though, could well depend on how we conceptualise poverty.

3.3 POVERTY CONCEPTUALISED

Academic literature on poverty distinguishes between concepts, definitions and measurements of poverty¹⁰⁶ - rightfully so, because these concepts may lead to confusion, particularly when used interchangeably. This is also the opinion of Lister (2004:3):

“... In practice, concepts are mediated by definitions and measures and it is important to differentiate between the three as they are frequently conflated. Thus for instance, ‘concept’ and ‘definition’ are often used interchangeably. A clear separation between the three terms helps to avoid confusion and unnecessary confusion between the broader and narrower notions of poverty.”

The Institute on Poverty and Inequality (SPII) concurs with Lister’s opinion by saying: “...*Concepts* mean the frameworks out of which definitions are developed. These frameworks are themselves informed by competing ideologies. *Definitions* may be used to distinguish e.g. the “poor” from the “non-poor”, within the framework of the concepts, and *measurements* operationalise the definition” (SPII 2007:24). The immediate question that comes to mind is: “What are these frameworks?” Academic literature suggests that some of these frameworks might include concepts such as “absolute, relative, capability and well-being” modes amongst others. We will briefly look at two of these genres.

¹⁰⁶ See Noble et al (2004) for an informed discussion on concepts, definitions and measurements. In this study they show how concepts lead to definitions and definitions to measures, and they argue that any definition should have a sound conceptual underpinning. See the Public Service Commission’s (PSC) background notes for the dialogue on poverty reduction strategies and interventions, p.2.

3.3.1 Absolute view of poverty

In its concept paper, *the Measurement of Poverty and Inequality in South Africa Project: Key Issues*, the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII) relates the concept “absolute poverty” to the late nineteenth century British reformers Booth and Rowntree (1901).¹⁰⁷ Both SPII and Rowntree links absolute poverty to “a state of deficiency” which is defined in relation to a supposedly unbiased, unchanging and value-free external definition of basic human needs (ibid.). This, however, is a mystification because any definition of basic human needs is in fact based on underlying political and ideological assumption¹⁰⁸. Rowntree, as cited by SPII, made use of a concept “primary poverty” which he described as: *“Families whose total earnings are insufficient to obtain the minimum necessities for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency.”*

Currently this approach is seen in the development of food poverty lines which base their computation only on the income needed to secure minimum human calorie requirements.

Absolute poverty thus, is far from being an objective notion, because it has been established that it is totally reliant on the views of those who ascertain the minimum requirements or essential needs at the definition stage. Realising this “insufficiency”, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen (1995) came up with another, more multi-dimensional view of absolute poverty, saying that absolute poverty is “a

¹⁰⁷ In their report, “Attacking Poverty” the World Bank also drew on Rowntree’s classic study when they attempted to conceptualise poverty in the global development context, (2000:17).

¹⁰⁸ SPII argues that the popularity of food poverty lines, for example, owe some of their power to their supposed foundation in “facts” of human biology, so that food poverty lines paradoxically mean that there are many people above the poverty line whom common sense would call poor. However, they are also linked to a deeply conventional assumption that people can only be called truly poor if they are on the verge of starvation (2007: 25).

condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information”.

It depends not only on income, they say, but also on access to social services.¹⁰⁹ There is significant relevance, when poverty is considered in its multi-dimensional reality and not just restricted to income poverty, say Nalugala and Mutua (2002:14). It seems, however, that any definition of poverty should allow for different assumptions about how people survive and therefore must, to some degree, be relative.

3.3.2 Relative view of poverty

The concept of relative poverty, on the other hand, clearly relates poverty to a reference group and to a specific variable, such as income. This perception of poverty is particularly relevant when debates on social justice not merely focus on basic needs to survival but also address the painful question of inequality in society.

However, the parameters of a concept of relative poverty can range from the impression of making ends meet, or fulfilling a socially sufficient minimum standard of living, to living in a way which is customary or average for society, and beyond that to full participation in society.¹¹⁰

People are poverty-stricken when their income, even if adequate for survival, falls markedly behind that of the community. Then they cannot have what the larger community regards as the minimum necessary for decency; and they cannot wholly escape, therefore, the judgement of the larger community that they are indecent.

¹⁰⁹ See chapter 2, “Eradication of Poverty”, paragraph 19, World Summit for Social Development: Report A/CONF.166/9.

¹¹⁰ Cf. also May & Govender (1998), Goedhart et al., (1977), Townsend (1979) and Noble et al (2004).

They are degraded, for, in a literal sense, they live outside the grades of categories which the community regards as respectable.

The above observation suggests that people are judged to be poor if they are poor in comparison to those around them. Another important observation which, in some way, coincides with the above notion and which explicitly addresses the situation of exclusion¹¹¹ from customary or accepted living standards, comes from Townsend, who writes:

Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average family or individual that they are in effect excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities (1979: 31).

This further informs Nalugala and Mutua's opinion that "*social exclusion*¹¹² *is responsible for imbalances in the sphere of resource distribution, wealth and accessibility to social amenities, healthcare, education, assessment of human rights and gender equity...*" (2002:13). They see social exclusion as "*the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society within which they live*" (ibid.).

¹¹¹ There are many ways of being excluded i.e. land owners can exclude the landless from access to land; landlords can exclude the homeless from housing; the elite may exclude the working classes from power-sharing positions and from equal access to social rights benefits; religions may exclude those who do not follow certain rites and rituals; minorities are excluded from expressing themselves, or minorities in power rule and oppress the majority as in apartheid South-Africa and currently in Zimbabwe.

¹¹² The term, Social exclusion stems from European debates on welfare policy. Since then the term has gained prominence and currently it refers to the process by which poor people are excluded or marginalized from mainstream socio-economic and political life. Social exclusion is different from other poverty related concepts in that it focus on social process and –relations and also accentuates ways and means in which hostile power relations, discrimination and identity can help to marginalize and impoverish people (Hickey & du Toit as cited in SPII: p.12).

However, this approach, they say, “contradicts social integration, which underlines the importance of belonging and being included in society...” (2002:12).

These observations demonstrate that debates about poverty have made a significant shift over the years: from focussing exclusively on the minimum resources for survival, to the minimum required, in terms of resources and other endowments, to participate in society with dignity as a full citizen (SPII 2007:26). These are but two of the frameworks that inform definitions of poverty. Equally important is how people engage with the terms used in poverty literature. Thus the next section briefly deals with how poverty literature explores terms on poverty.

3.3.3 Exploring interchangeable terms on Poverty

When scholars the world over discuss and debate poverty they often use terms interchangeably. However, these terms can sometimes refer to quite different things. Before we attempt to arrive at a best practice definition of poverty, we first need to explore the meaning of some terms which are used interchangeably in poverty discourse. We consider this important because whenever we use terms, we need to be certain of what we mean when using these terms.¹¹³ Thus, this section attempts to explore some of the meanings attributed to these terminologies.

3.3.3.1 Poverty

Poverty can mean a number of different things, and it can be construed in a narrow or broad sense. In the narrowest sense it means lack of income, especially the lack of resources for survival. It may further consider people who are poor to be those who are unable to survive, even in the short term.

¹¹³ The adage “Knowledge is power” is true in this regard. The more poor people know, the better equipped they will be to discover their own resources. Development is meant to help poor people think of themselves as able and willing to move out of poverty.

In a broader sense poverty can be seen as multidimensional (as already established), encompassing other issues such as landlessness, unemployment, lack of housing, poor health, education, access to services, resources, productive assets and social relation, etc. It is indeed a ‘portmanteau’ concept that captures a range of meanings.¹¹⁴

3.3.3.2 Deprivation

If one were to consult the Encarta Dictionary (online), one would find different meanings of deprivation. Deprivation is being expressed as (i) a state of poverty, meaning: “a state of being without or denied something, especially of being without adequate food or shelter”; and secondly as the “act of taking something away from somebody or preventing somebody from having something”. In essence deprivation refers to the effects of poverty on a person’s life and that can be compared to what people “have or do not have”. Poverty and the poor are associated with a state of want ... with deprivation. Such deprivation, says Boltvink (1998:2), is related to the necessities of life.¹¹⁵ There is, however, no consensus as to what these necessities of life or the dimensions of poverty should be or how many there are, says Van der Walt (2004:7).¹¹⁶ What most do agree upon is that “the state of deprivation will indicate the state of poverty”, meaning the more deprived a person is, the poorer that person is (ibid.). According to SPII (2007: 10) the term “deprivation” is trendy with some critics as it is not tainted with notions of nominal subsistence which is sometimes associated with the word “poverty.”

¹¹⁴ See chapter 2, “Eradication of Poverty”, World Summit for Social Development: Report A/CONF. 166/9.

¹¹⁵ Online Available: http://www.undp.org/poverty/publications/povred/Poverty_Measurement_Methods.pdf [2009, 07 March]

¹¹⁶ See his paper, “A Multidimensional Analysis of Poverty in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa”, *BER Economic Working Papers 3 / 2004*. P.7. Online Available: <http://www.ekon.sun.ac.za/wpapers/2004/wp032004/wp-03-2004pdf> [2010, 07 August].

3.3.3.3 Indigent

The word “indigent” is an archaic word which refers to extremely poor people. In the South African context the government often uses this word to refer to people who are eligible for certain municipality-administered poverty relief programmes.

3.3.3.4 Poorest of the poor

There is no official definition of the term, but it is taken to refer to the most vulnerable groups within the country, including poor children and old age pensioners, women and child headed households and rural rather than urban dwellers. Hence, it can lead to confusion if it is understood to suggest that the states of poverty experienced by others who do not fall into these groups should not be addressed with the same intensity. It may further imply that only the “poorest of the poor are deserving of assistance, and that those who are among the poor (but not among the *poorest*) should be left to fend for themselves” (SPII 2007:14). On the other hand, it may just be a practical decision, within the constraints of limited resources, to target those first who are the poorest.

3.3.3.5 Chronic Poverty

Chronic poverty refers to a “state of poverty that exists over time” (ibid.). The term ‘chronic poor’ as defined by the Manchester based Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC 2004), refers to people who experience poverty for extended periods of time throughout their entire lives. According to this definition, chronic poverty is likely to be transferred across generations, and so will probably affect the children of adults currently living in a state of chronic poverty. Though chronic poverty is sometimes juxtaposed with the concept transitory poverty, the latter refers to a state in which people are able to “move out of poverty after a short while” (ibid.).

3.3.3.6 Poverty:- Relief, Alleviation, Reduction, Eradication.

These are all very popular terms in the global arena. It has become part of the vernacular of governments, trade unions, NGOs, FBOs and many others. But what do all these concepts mean?

i) Poverty relief or “emergency relief” as it is also coined, are policies and interventions aimed at helping people who are living in poverty. Unfortunately these policies and interventions are not intended to be sustainable, but merely to give short-term assistance to people in need. The “Social Relief of Distress Grant”, as well as drought or flood relief and food parcels, are all emergency programmes.¹¹⁷

ii) Poverty Alleviation

Unlike poverty relief which is “short term emergency relief”, poverty alleviation aims at reducing poverty in a more sustained and permanent way. Both these programmes are driven by the South African government through the Department of Social Development. Poverty alleviation programmes tend to have longer term goals and are more developmental than poverty relief programmes.

They include the state’s social grant programmes which lessen the impact of poverty for many people, especially in rural areas. Empirical research has shown that the social grant policies of government have had a positive outcome, in that they provided immediate relief for poor people, but also provided a developmental stimulus by empowering people to look for jobs or start their own small businesses.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ It must be stated that although these are all well-intended programmes, they push people into a more severe state of vulnerability. However, without these short-term relief programmes many farmers would not be able to make ends meet. In the Baviaans area many farmers had to lay off several farm workers because of the severe drought. At the time of writing this chapter, the Langkloof which is adjacent the Baviaans area, had already laid off a few hundred workers.

¹¹⁸ This might be the case on a national scale but unfortunately does not apply to the Baviaans Municipal area. In this area the opposite is true. More and more people apply for social grants and refuse to find jobs. It must also be stated that the Baviaans area has an 80% unemployment rate (24% unemployed

iii) Poverty reduction and Poverty eradication

The goal of poverty reduction is to introduce strategies and policies aimed at reducing the percentage of people living in poverty. The South African government has introduced a number of these programmes to lessen the severity of the impact of poverty on the lives of poor people. Poverty eradication¹¹⁹ on the other hand not only wants to reduce the number of poor people, but strives to end the existence of poverty.

3.3.3.7 Well-being¹²⁰

Well-being is a term that is increasingly used in analysis of poverty and development. It serves as an umbrella term for different theories and approaches. All of the above terms can lead to confusion if they are not understood properly. Having said that, we will now briefly look at how these concepts and terms have informed some definitions in poverty literature.¹²¹

employable people and 54% economically inactive – pensioners, children, beneficiaries of social grants). However, the researcher noted how only a few (less than 1%) used their entrepreneurial skills to open spaza shops (huiswinkels) or become hawkers.

¹¹⁹ The eradication of poverty requires access to economic opportunities that will promote sustainable livelihood and basic social services, as well as special efforts to facilitate access to opportunities and services for the disadvantaged (World Summit for Social Development, 1995, chapter 2 par. 24).

¹²⁰ Well-being, as is true of most of the afore-mentioned terms has been well researched by many academics. The debate on well-being alone is endless and could most certainly cover a whole thesis. However this thesis is only interested in how these terms are used by various people with an interest in poverty.

¹²¹ SPII noted the possibility to choose whether poverty is to be defined indirectly in terms of Rand value, or directly, using a set of indicators. There are however, as pointed out by SPII, weaknesses and strengths with both approaches to defining poverty (2007), p.28.

3.4 POVERTY: SIMPLE DEFINITIONS ¹²²

The history of the development of definitions of poverty started off with simple definitions based on a basket of goods and services needed for physical survival. Concepts such as participation,¹²³ capacity,¹²⁴ income, relative deprivation, basic needs, powerlessness, vulnerability, livelihoods, capabilities, well-being and voice have been included over the years¹²⁵

Nevertheless there has been extensive debate globally about who is best placed to define poverty. Is it the “experts” on poverty literature or the ordinary people who knows how it feels to be poor?¹²⁶

If one were to ask different people to define poverty, one would probably get different answers because poverty means different things to different people. For some poverty would mean the absence of furniture, while for some others it will be a lack of employment. Poverty is a human phenomenon that affects real people who have aspirations and feelings and hopes.

¹²² The researcher is aware of the fact that there are literally volumes of definitions on poverty - Perhaps rightfully so, because, as already been established, poverty is a complex multidimensional problem with origins in both the national and international arena. It is not the researcher’s intention to engage all the different definitions in the poverty literature but to only refer to those which inform this study. Under section 3.2 we have said that our concepts and definitions should be pertinent to the society to which they apply.

¹²³ Participation was defined as the lack of resources to participate in the activities and having the living conditions which are customary or at least widely encouraged or approved, in societies to which (the poor) belong. Cited in PSC, *Background Notes for the Dialogue on Poverty Reduction Strategies and Interventions*, p.2.

¹²⁴ The concept of “capacity” has come to assume greater importance in the definition of poverty, and it refers to poor people’s powerlessness, their inability to take decisions for themselves, their lack of education and technical skills, and poor health.

¹²⁵ Cf. also Everatt (2005), “The Politics of Poverty. *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*. 2(1). Online Available: <http://www.bangladeshsociology.org/BEJS%20-%202.1.2%20-%20Everatt.pdf> [2009, 03 May]

¹²⁶ Some would argue that the real experts are those people who are facing poverty on a daily basis and not the academic wizards.

The Oxford Dictionary (1989) describes poverty as “deficiency in”, “lacking of”, “scantiness”, “inferiority”, “want of”, “leanness or feebleness”. Thus, the ways people experience poverty differ from person to person, from region to region and across time.¹²⁷ The perception of poverty in Zimbabwe differs from how people in South Africa perceive poverty. Even between the provinces and towns of South Africa one will find differences in how people experience poverty. It is very difficult to arrive at one single inclusive definition of poverty, one that gives a true reflection of what poverty is. It seems the best way is to do what the South African Participatory Poverty Assessment (SA-PPA) did. Their quest to find a proper definition for poverty started by asking individuals to define poverty in order to get an idea of what constitutes poverty.

They “listened to the stories of the suffering poor people in order to see something of the complex faces” of poverty (Smit 2003)¹²⁸. One such story from a woman in the Karoo is a reminder of the lives of many impoverished people:

Poverty is not knowing where your next meal is going to come from ...and always praying that your husband must not lose his job. To me that is poverty (Wilson & Ramphela 1989:14).¹²⁹

The next observation comes from a widow in Willowmore, heading a household of seven.

Ek is hier gebore en ek gaan hier dood, ek is ‘n arm ou ‘weduvrou’. Ek het swaargekry in die wit regering en ek kry nog steeds swaar in die swart regering. Ek sien nie my

¹²⁷ Cf. Van der Walt (2004:5). Online Available:

<http://www.ekon.sun.ac.za/wpapers/2004/wp032004/wp-03-2004pdf> [2010, 07 August]

¹²⁸ See Dirk J Smit, “On learning to see? A Reformed Perspective on the Church and the Poor”, In P. Courture and B.J. Miller-McLemore (Eds): *Poverty, Suffering and Aids: International Practical Theological Perspectives*, (Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press, 2003)

¹²⁹ These were the exact fears that the researcher encountered during his research in the Baviaans Municipal area.

'oumenspay' nie, want die skoppervrou 'pay' my geld.¹³⁰ (*I was born here and I will die here, I'm a poor widow. I have struggled in the white government and I'm still struggling under a black government. I don't see my old age pension because of the loan sharks. DEJ*).

Another story comes from a grandmother in Fiji on how she experiences poverty:

You ask me what poverty is. It is here, staring you right in the eye. Look at me! I live alone. I do not have enough food. I have no decent clothes and accommodation. I have no clean water to drink. Look at my swollen legs. I can't get to the dispensary, which is too far for me to walk. I have to walk a mile to catch a bus. I cannot see well. I can no longer do farming. So don't ask me to tell you what poverty is. Just look and see for yourself (Taylor 2003:2).

These are not exceptional stories, but they encapsulate circumstances known to many in South Africa, and in particular in the BMA. The ways people experience poverty differ from person to person, but the one reality remains; people do experience unacceptable levels of poverty.

From the above one can see that even in the vast literature that exist on poverty it is still not easy to get to a (so called) best practice definition that will suit every situation.

The only certainty is that most people agree that poverty is multifaceted, a perception that coincides with the definition of poverty, given by the World Bank (2002).

Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not being able to go to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom.

¹³⁰ Conversation with "Moekies" on September 17 2009. See also Appendix B: Interview with Community

These are all observations from people in the trap of poverty, the 'real experts'. However, many others have seen the effects of poverty and how deeply this reality impacts the lives of ordinary people. So much so that it troubled their conscience. One such concern comes from former president F.W. de Klerk, who observes:

“... Poverty, unemployment, housing shortages, inadequate education and training, illiteracy, health needs and numerous other problems still stand in the way of progress and prosperity and improved quality of life...” (cited in Webb 1994:120).

There is however big debate in the literature as to whether poverty should be viewed as absolute or relative; or whether it should be measured as necessities or capabilities or functions; or whether it is only a monetary phenomenon.¹³¹

One key issue in the debate around definition of poverty is which concepts to include in the definition. The PSC's report noted that over the past twenty years the emphasis has been placed on the fact that poor people's experience of poverty involves much more than sufficient income or consumption. Current definitions of poverty seek to reflect its multifaceted nature, and include things like “service poverty and asset poverty”.¹³²

These debates will continue to feature on the agenda of poverty literature, particularly in South Africa where poverty still continues to be a major social challenge.

However, as observed by Taylor “many of the more official-sounding debates on poverty are couched in these basic terms” (2003:3). But is poverty still prevalent in democratic South Africa, and if so, to what an extent? The next section attempts to address this question.

¹³² Public Service Commission: Report on an Audit of Government's poverty Reduction Programmes and Projects (2007:.14), cited in PSC, *Background notes for the dialogue on poverty reduction strategies and interventions*, p.2.

3.5 POVERTY, STILL A COMMON FACE

1994 marked the beginning of freedom for all South Africans. South Africans now had a new political dispensation, a constitution based on human dignity, and a bill of rights that protected this newly found freedom and dignity. Never again would we want to relive the gutter education, the slums and the dehumanisation of people created in God's image and likeness. The dreams of a better South Africa felt real.

The hopes of millions of marginalised people - that they would also eat of the fruit of the land – were high. However, sixteen years down the democratic line one enormous problem still makes it impossible for most people in this country to achieve and enjoy a good life. This obstacle that is a thorn in the flesh of most South Africans is called poverty (cf. Pieterse 2001:3). Poverty still continues to be a big issue in post-apartheid South Africa. The reality is that the majority of South Africans are still poor and their quality of life has not improved significantly.

South Africans still experience unemployment because of sluggish economic growth; there are still a substantial shortage of houses, crime is still rife (even if SAP statistics show the contrary); we still see alarming corruption in government circles and the gap between the “haves” and “have not's” is continuing to widen at a distressing pace (Mathole 2005:21). We still have people, across the landscape that are unable to provide for their basic needs, poor people who cannot afford to pay for their daily necessities.

Furthermore, the distribution of income and wealth in South Africa may be the most unequal in the world says May (2000:2). If this inequality continues, “it will derail us in achieving our vision of becoming a truly democratic, just peaceful, reconciled and prosperous nation” (Mathole 2005:21ff). Given the past of the country, South Africans cannot afford to be a society in which only a select few enjoy the privileges of affluence

whilst the majority struggle for survival. South Africans need to ensure a “progressive equalising of life chances, for all who live in it” (Vorster 1991:26).

Though South Africa is a well-resourced country with a per capita income similar to that of Botswana, Brazil, Malaysia or Mauritius, the experience of the majority of South African households is either one of complete poverty, or of continued vulnerability to becoming poor. However, in defence of democracy in South Africa, not everything is “gloom and doom”.

The South African government has many initiatives in place to address poverty, emanating both from government and civil society. As Aliber rightfully notes:

The principal strategy of the new government for poverty alleviation appears to have been to promote economic growth, which in turn would expand employment opportunities and raise incomes (2001:3).

However, as he further observes, “real growth in the economy since 1994 has been modest, and has failed to reverse the trend of formal sector job losses that has been evident since the early 1990s”. Meanwhile, he says, the redistribution of the country’s assets has been very limited.

The most tangible anti-apartheid impact attributable to the post-apartheid government is the improved access to services and infrastructure in many rural and urban areas.

But, says Mathole (Mathole 2005:23), these efforts towards the alleviation of poverty do not seem to be enough, since the same communities have several other real needs that exceed the support they get from government.

In their paper *Poverty and Equality in South-Africa*, May and Govender summarise these needs as: “alienation from the community; lack of food, clean water and job opportunities; lack of decent housing and break up of families” (1998:3-4).

If this seems to be the current scenario of post-apartheid South-Africa what is it that causes this situation?

3.6 THE CAUSES OF POVERTY IN SOUTH AFRICA¹³³

Poverty has many causes, some deeply rooted in history. If we were to analyse them we would have to go all the way back to ancient times. Bad governance, natural disasters, personal qualities and cultural practices all contribute. The lack of income and power which characterise poverty also maintain it. The “global economy with its neo-liberal policies and unequal trading systems” is regarded as most to blame (Taylor 2003:12). It seems as if the causes are universal, but some need special attention especially in a South African context. Amongst the causes of poverty given in poverty literature are the following:

3.6.1 Poverty, the result of apartheid

It is an undisputed fact that apartheid legislation¹³⁴, policies and repressive practices created an environment which caused tremendous poverty in the Black community of

¹³³ Poverty Literature acknowledges that poverty has many causes, but again, it is not the intention of this section to stray into the myriad causes of poverty. The researcher is somewhat selective and attempts to highlight only those causes that serve the interests of the area under study.

¹³⁴ Pieterse (2001: 46-48) informs us about these laws. First there was the Group Areas Act (1950) which was considerably modified and strengthened by the Group Areas Amendment Act (1957) & (1960). These Acts made it practically impossible for black people to move into the cities where the jobs were. The Population Registration Act (30 of 1950) enabled the government to implement the Group Areas Act. This new Act compelled everybody to be classified according to race or colour. Then the Bantu Education Act (1953) was passed; it chose to put emphasis on the education of communities rather than individuals. This says Pieterse was not acceptable to churches and they opposed it. (See also Lombard 1981: 129). Today the country is reaping the fruits of this policy in the form of poor teaching conditions and performance in traditionally black schools. The Native Construction Workers Act (27 of 1951), as amended by Act 38 of 1953, and Act 60 of 1955, came next. This law prohibited the employment of blacks in skilled jobs in the building industry in urban areas outside a Bantu area (1961:32). Then there was the Industrial Reconciliation Act (28 of 1956) as amended (41 of 1959) which included section 77. This law created the necessary mechanisms to reserve jobs for whites and stipulated the procedure for such reservation. Meanwhile the Black Labour Regulations Act (48 of 1953) was passed, prohibiting black people from establishing trade unions. This rendered black people powerless in the workplace and with regard to job reservation legislation. These laws, says Pieterse, some of which were abolished only in 1990, systematically prohibited the black population from any substantial economic progress.

our country South Africa, and which is even felt today, sixteen years later. Chief Albert Luthuli noted this in 1952: “*the past thirty years have seen the greatest number of laws restricting our (blacks) rights and progress, until today we have reached a stage where we have almost no rights at all*”.¹³⁵ These laws condemned people to living in appalling conditions; they disrupted the potential of people to empower themselves; they deliberately stifled the progress of black people on many significant fronts; they dehumanised people, as if people didn’t matter (Mathole 2005:24). This is indeed a “scandalous condition”¹³⁶as Gutierrez called it.

Though some (previously advantaged) people may argue that it would be unfair to put all the blame for the current situation on apartheid, it would equally be unfair to not recognise apartheid’s devastating contribution to today’s social problems. We need to understand the past (no matter how painfully horrendous it might be) to shape a better vision for our future as a nation, or as Barrington J. Moore (cited in Louw and Kendall 1986:3) puts it: “if we ever want to break the chains of the present we need to understand the forces that forged them”. It is indeed so that “the present has grown out of the past, and for the future to be different it is essential to understand the way in which the present has been formed, in order that we may act to overcome the past and, hence reshape the future”. Thus, we cannot allow our past to keep us hostage. Connor (1998:12) rightfully remarks: “History cannot be undone, those killed cannot be brought back to life, nor can lost years of suffering and anguish be given back”.

¹³⁵ Cited in Louw & Kendall (1986:3).

¹³⁶ See also McLellan, (1997:117-118).

These unjust conditions could never have been favourable to any kind of equality; it could only augment the gap between rich and poor. Thus the relationship between poverty and inequality as a result of apartheid in South Africa runs deep.

3.6.2 Poverty, a result of Inequality¹³⁷

From cradle to grave, a person's life chances are dominated by the extraordinary levels of inequality that characterise the modern world, says Green (2008:2). Former president Nelson Mandela attests to this by saying:

Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times – times in which the world boasts breath-taking advances in science, technology, industry and wealth accumulation – that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils (London 2005).

One may argue that poverty is to be found in many different parts of the world, or that the degree of inequality in our country is as great as in any other country. Why then should one treat poverty in South Africa as a special case? The fact is, as Badsha (in Wilson & Ramphela 1989:4) attests, that there are three interlocking factors, which validate the assertion that poverty in South Africa is unique. The first is the huge gap between rich and poor which increases the degree of inequality.

Secondly poverty and inequality in South Africa came as a result of deliberate policy, and the third aspect has to do with the way in which material poverty is reinforced by racist policies that are an assault on people's humanity¹³⁸.

¹³⁷ Inequality is perhaps the greatest global challenge of the 21st century and it concerns all nations because poverty and suffering do not remain confined within frontiers but spill over in the form of conflict and tension, migration, and environmental mortification. Inequality incites resentment and criticism because it disregards the widely held notion that all people, wherever they are, enjoy certain basic rights. For this reason it is of pivotal importance for countries to address inequality in a meaningful way if they are to live up to their obligations under the UN's international human rights framework to guarantee equal civil and political rights and to pursue the progressive realisation of socio-economic and cultural rights (Green 2008:5).

For poor people such inequalities “cancel out the benefits of living in a better-off society” (Green 2008:4). To speak of poverty in this sense is to speak of human degradation so profound that it undermines any sensible and decent standard of human life. That means that we live in an unequal world where inequality is overwhelming. There must be something deeply unjust about a system that allows more than 800 million people to go hungry, says Green (ibid). This is what the Peruvian theologian Gutierrez calls a ‘scandalous condition’. This however, is a clear indication that “inequality matters”, particularly in South Africa because of the following five reasons says Green (2008:5-6).

- Inequality wastes talent. When banks refuse to lend to poor people, good economic opportunities are wasted.
- Inequality undermines society and its institutions, because in an unequal society the elite find it easier to “capture” governments and other institutions, and use them to further their own interest, rather than the overall economic good.
- Inequality undermines social cohesion. “Vertical inequality” between individuals is linked to rises in crime, while “horizontal inequality” (e.g. between different ethnic groups) enhances the likelihood of conflicts that set countries back decades.
- Inequality limits the impact of economic growth on poverty. A one percentage point increase in growth will most definitely benefit poor people in an equal society but not in an unequal one.

¹³⁸ Wilson & Ramphela (1989: 5) quote David Hamburg (1984) of the Carnegie Corporation who says: “Poverty is partly a matter of ... human dignity”. It is one thing to have a very low income but to be treated with respect...; but to earn a very low income and to be harshly depreciated by others is human degradation which undermines any reasonable and decent standard of human life.

- Inequality transmits poverty from generation to generation, for example, the poverty of a mother can blight the entire lives of her children. This is summed up in the following words: “Ever since I can remember, I’ve lived in poverty. My grandparents were poor, my parents and my brothers and sisters are poor, and I, my wife and my children are poor, and we live in a poor sector”¹³⁹

Whilst human rights benefited the poor almost immediately in 1994, majority rule was not an immediate cure for the country's deep economic inequalities and, sixteen years later, South Africa is still on the road to narrowing the gaps.¹⁴⁰

Recent research done by the SPII indicates that there are two equally important meanings attached to inequality. One is taken from a sociological platform and the other is wrapped in an institutional cloth¹⁴¹.

Sociologically, inequality is characteristic of social power relations who, in this sense, exclude the poor from access to equal political and or socio- economic rights.

Nowhere is this more true than in South Africa where class, identity and race played a pivotal role in gaining access to these rights. In a much narrower quantitative and economic sense inequality can refer to an imbalance in the distribution of particular

¹³⁹ Group meeting with members of churches in Chile (in Taylor 2003:23).

¹⁴⁰ The government has had some success in creating new jobs. 1.6 million Sustainable jobs were created between 1995 and 2002 and the Executive Public Works Program has created more since. [More than 700 people benefitted from this program in the Baviaans Municipal Area, since 2010]. However, the initial policies to address inequality have been superseded by others such as the Growth Employment and Redistribution Program (GEAR). Government policies such as affirmative action and economic empowerment, have focused on a few black entrepreneurs who have become millionaires and billionaires overnight, thus contributing to inequality between and within race groups

¹⁴¹ In this sense inequality is deeply linked to social hierarchies, such as between masters and servants or in societies where class, identity and race are closely linked (SPII 2007: 11).

sources such as income, in a specific population. In a well-resourced country, the existence of poverty can be said to be a manifestation of inequality.¹⁴²

3.6.3 Poverty: A Racial issue

It is common knowledge that poverty in South Africa is linked to the legacy of apartheid which divided people along racial lines. The history of apartheid has meant that poverty has affected some people more than others.

Black people in general were confined to low income jobs and were most affected by unemployment and landlessness. Aliber (2001:5) remarks: "...South Africa's circumstances have shaped the present configuration and opportunities according to racial lines", (where the ethnically and politically black majority) ...were not allowed education of a quality similar to that of whites, and were forced to adopt coping strategies – such as spatially divided households – which have left a complex and agonizing social legacy. It is further known that this system created much racial tension, where one group claimed superiority over other groups¹⁴³, where one group claimed or felt entitled to certain privileges, and where the colour of one's skin determined whether one would live in a mansion or in the squatter camp.

It is common fact that even income was distributed according to racial lines which rendered black people unable to "save and invest and unable to meet charges for provision of essential services" (UNDP 2003:70).¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Cf. SPII (2007:11).

¹⁴³ This is also how racism is described by Thompson (2000:102). He says, "...Racism consist in a belief that one racial group is inherently superior to another racial group".

¹⁴⁴ UNDP, *South Africa Human Development Report 2003: The Challenge of Sustainable Development in SA: Unlocking People's Creativity*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press)

This is not a historic accident but the result of deliberate policies that deprived ethnic and politically black people of their land, kept them out of skilled work and confined them to ghettos and Bantustans. Given the iniquities of apartheid South Africa, where people of colour were structured unjustly and violently, and turned into “have not’s”, we should not just forget about the past and merely focus on the future.

Mathole (2005:28) cautions that “we cannot just imbibe change without a proper understanding of our history”. Similarly, Pillay (in Voster 1991:1) reminds us of the importance of our history: “We are far more conditioned to our past than we can hope to understand”. He says, “Many of our present crises are the fruit of a historical harvest, a confirmation of the truism that in spite of the good intentions of the harvesters, one can only reap what one sows”.

Thus the legacy of this system is that throughout South Africa, millions of people are unable to meet their basic needs for housing, water, sanitation, food, health care and education. This is the dark past of racial division. But is race still an issue in the South African democracy?

Thompson (2000:102) answers: “Race is not the problem; racism is”. But how does the past affect the present? One can safely say that poverty in South Africa is not confined to one racial or ethnic group.

Statistics show that it cuts across all racial groups.

African	Coloured	Asian	White
60.7%	38.2%	5.4%	1.0%

Source: May & Govender 1998:29¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ See also the United Nations Development Report (1998).

Sadly one must admit that the concentration is manifestly higher among black/coloured people despite our democratic dispensation. South Africa still experiences a high degree of racial disparity and this manifests itself in the levels of the distribution of poverty that is rife in our country. This is evident in the standards of living and therefore in the quality of life of people within our society.¹⁴⁶

South Africa is indeed a country of contrasts where one will find extreme affluence adjacent to extreme poverty. Some other causes of poverty in a South African context include the following:

3.6.4 Poverty, a result of economic sanctions¹⁴⁷

Partly because of its apartheid laws and partly because of major pressure from the churches and liberation movements¹⁴⁸, worldwide economic sanctions were imposed on South Africa during the 1980s. These economic sanctions were devastating and caused tremendous economic damage in South Africa. It further resulted in foreign

¹⁴⁶ There is a growing uneasiness amongst Coloureds that nothing has changed since apartheid. In the Baviaans Municipal area where interviews were conducted, most of the participants were very verbal about their situation. Coloured people have always taken an active part in shaping South African society alongside the fighting masses. They have always been part of the march towards freedom and democracy. But now they feel betrayed by the ANC government whom they have voted into power. They feel that the ANC government has failed them when it comes to job opportunities especially within government structures. They blame affirmative action for this (see Appendix B).

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Pieterse, 2001: 48-49.

¹⁴⁸ It is a known fact that sanctions contributed negatively to the poverty situation in South Africa. Many church leaders like Tutu and Boesak, were severely criticised by the apartheid government for supporting sanctions. The apartheid government said that sanctions would further impoverish the black people. They (apartheid government) used this propaganda to vilify especially the church leaders by saying they did not care for the poor. However, black people were so used to poverty in those years, they so desperately wanted to see change, and they so frantically hoped for a better life, that this state propaganda had no impact on them. To blacks in the apartheid era poverty became part of their daily lives. Another day without food because of unemployment would make no difference to their already impoverished lives, as long as the long-term goal was achieved.

investments being withdrawn, which caused the country to suffer enormous capital and investment losses. May and Govender (1998:48) give some idea of the situation then:

Total investment in South Africa grew steadily from the immediate post-war (1945) period until the late 1970s. Total investment rose from 19% in 1960 to almost 28% in 1980, before falling to a low of 17% in 1993 and recovering somewhat in 1996. If South Africa is to significantly reduce the level of unemployment, economic growth must be increased to around 6%. To achieve such growth rates, the level of investment needs to be above 25% of GDP... Between 1980 and 1990, public investment fell from 12-13% of GDP to less than 6%. Over the same period private sector investment declined from 16% to 13% of GDP (cited in Pieterse 2001:48-49).

This worsened the poverty situation and contributed immensely to the fact that many jobs were lost and that the chances of new job opportunities amounted to zero.

3.6.5 Lack of capital

Economists see a lack of capital as a major obstacle to economic growth and job creation in South Africa. In other words, a shortage of capital will have a negative effect on economic development which will result in people losing their jobs. One way in which the country can acquire capital is through fixed investments by foreign and domestic investors. The other means is by way of private savings generated by the people of the country.

However this is where the problem lies. South Africans are “high spenders and low saver”. The poor savings rate in South Africa undoubtedly influences and worsens the situation of poverty. For the past few years now, commentators have cautioned us to get into a habit of saving. As Pieterse (2001:49) observes, our “savings are mobilised via banks, insurance companies and stock exchanges for investment in factories and

business enterprises, which in turn employ workers to keep production going". Another important observation in this regard is made by May and Govender (1998:49ff.) who say that the country cannot only rely on foreign investments as this constitutes only a small portion of total investments. With markets fluctuating daily there is no guarantee that investments will be secured. In essence this means that growth will now largely depend on private savings.

This is vital for economic development. May and Govender (1998:50) point out that: "Private savings have ... declined gradually from more than 25% in the 1970s to just over 19% in 1996". However it is equally true that government, a major spender, needs to apply the same discipline when it comes to savings. At present it seems as if government is serious about "cutting the costs in order to save". The new minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan, in his first budget speech sounded very optimistic about our economy.

Twenty years ago, we showed the world that we could unite around a common cause - a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa. We showed ourselves, and the world, that we could compete politically and yet find a shared understanding on matters of concern to all of us - building a better South Africa for our children and grandchildren. Now, we must again use this remarkable national capability to, energetically, and urgently address the problems of jobs, growth and poverty" (Budget Speech, 17 February 2010).

In tabling his Medium Term Budget Policy Statement in October 2009 the Minister was cautiously optimistic. He said "I indicated that recovery from this deterioration would be slow and uneven. We projected that growth this year would be just 1.5 per cent". This year's budget speech shows more optimism from Pravin Gordhan, in that he predicts

that growth will be about 3%. This sounds good on paper, but it remains to be seen how this will be achieved. The Minister seems to have the answer to this:

Our people need hope. Our people want government to lead. We will lead. Our people want government, business, labour and social organisations to work together to create a better economic future. Our people want to be positively energised so that they can take the initiative to improve their own lives and communities. Our people want action on jobs, growth and poverty. We must build a new common purpose so that we can use all of our talents, skills and resources to tackle our economic and social challenges (Pravin Gordhan).

This means that South Africa will have to work very hard to restore confidence in the country because it is a fact that foreign investors are nervous to invest in a country that is unstable. The more confident people are that things such as savings and valuables will actually still belong to them in the future, the more they will save (cf. Pieterse 2001:50). Another cause that has led to poverty is the unequal distribution of income.

3.6.6 Unequal income distribution.

Research done by Statistics SA, revealed that 10% of the richest South Africans, earn 48% of the country's income, and the richest 20% secure 65% of that aggregate. On the other hand the poorest 10% in the country receive a meager 1% of the income, whilst the poorest 20% receive approximately 3%.

A further breakdown shows that the poorest 30% get 5% and the poorest 50% earn 11%. This means that 50% of the population is classified as poor. This is a clear indication that unequal income distribution not only reflects the poverty situation in South Africa but in itself causes poverty that impedes economic growth.

Trade unions are very verbal about the negative impact unequal income distribution has on the economic growth rate. They correctly believe that a higher economic growth rate will in some way address the problem of poverty in South Africa. During the 2008/9 global recession, trade unions applied pressure on the Reserve Bank to reduce interest rates to a satisfactory level in order to stimulate the economy. As shown above, it is clear that poverty has many causes, some of them very basic, but such basic causes are quite intractable and not easily eradicated. In most cases, the causes and effects of poverty interact, so that what makes people poor also creates conditions that keep them poor. The further question that one needs to ask is whether poverty is measurable.

3.7 MEASURING POVERTY.¹⁴⁹

South Africa, like many other countries, has, in terms of the Copenhagen Declaration (1995)¹⁵⁰, committed itself to adopt an official measure of poverty.

Thus, when Trevor Manuel, who at the time was the South African Minister of Finance, received the SA Stats Report, *Measuring Poverty in South Africa*¹⁵¹, on 06 September

¹⁴⁹ This section attempts to show the importance of measuring poverty and why it is important to have a poverty line. However, to the poor this is only of academic interest. In the interviews conducted, one of the questions was: "How do you measure poverty in your community?" The reason for asking this question was to find out what yardstick poor people would use to determine the levels of poverty in their own communities. They do not use poverty lines and other sophisticated scientific measurements; they use simple things such as clothing, the size of one's house and whether one drives a car or not. They do not have University degrees but they have "graduated from the University of Life" (Conversation with J.H 08/07/2009)

¹⁵⁰ South Africa was one of the signatories of the Copenhagen Declaration (1995). In addition to this South Africa is bound by a number of international obligations to adopt a poverty measure as well as working towards ending the current levels of poverty. Such obligations include: (a) The United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Under this treaty the signatories are compelled to halve poverty and unemployment by 2015. South Africa has taken a bold step by committing itself to reach these goals a year earlier (2014); (b) the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (c) the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, (d) the Convention on the Rights of the Child, (e) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and (f) the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (see Liebenberg quoted in SPII).

¹⁵¹ Stats SA, *Measuring Poverty in South Africa* (2000).

2000, he praised the research results in this document, because, as he had said often before, the dictum for the government is: *“If we can’t measure it, we can’t manage it”*.¹⁵² This report gives a comprehensive analysis of poverty in the country, province by province, district by district and region by region. Speaking about the report, Manuel says, “It measures our poverty by income, by expenditure and by development indices such as access to electricity, education, housing and employment. It combines census and survey data, drawing a poverty map, showing where the worst poverty is to be found”.

Manuel highlights the value of this report by saying: “...mapping the poverty indices like taps, toilets, electricity and unemployment makes it possible for government to see where what kind of poverty is experienced, and how it is distributed across race and gender”.¹⁵³ Nevertheless some people might argue that in a country such as South Africa where poverty is so obvious, there is no need to measure poverty. However, “being able to measure aspects of poverty helps ground debate and it is essential for policy design and government interventions” (SPII 2007:20).

Wilson and Ramphele (1989:8) put it this way:

If we are to develop strategies against poverty we ought to know in some detail the nature of the problem with which we are dealing. This implies not only a factual description of what exists but also an analysis that illuminates as clearly as possible why it exists.

¹⁵² The most widely known information gathering concerning the well-being of citizens is the population census every five years, complemented by a number of other surveys every year on a randomly selected sample of the population, such as the October Household Survey (OHS) and the General Household Survey (GHS).

¹⁵³ STATS SA, *Measuring Poverty in South Africa*.

In its concept paper, “*Measurements of Poverty in South Africa Project: Key Issues*,” the Institute on Poverty and Inequality (SPII 2007:20) suggests four reasons why it is important to measure poverty.

- *Firstly*: by being able to measure poverty government can begin to map geographically where poverty is more severe and so direct resources accordingly.
- *Secondly*: by understanding the various dimensions of deprivation experienced by people living in poverty government can focus its resources on specific programmes, such as housing, education, health, basic services, etc.
- *Third*: poverty measures enable government to evaluate whether the poverty programmes are effective in moving people out of poverty and improving their well-being, in the short-term, as well as the long-term.
- *Fourth*: knowledge is power; thus, placing information about the levels of poverty and the resultant inequality in the country in the public domain, can create a national commitment to eradicate poverty that goes beyond government.

As Wilson and Ramphela (ibid.) put it “*the scandalous particularity of the detail of what it means to be poor can jolt people into awareness that something must be done*.”

Measures are thus necessary as a foundation on which to build strategies for action. Currently each national department in South Africa uses its own operationalised definition and measurement of poverty, which has been developed in accordance with how each understands its mandate. While it is necessary for departments to dovetail their definitions to their functions, it is important that these are based on an empirical understanding of levels of poverty, says SPII.

The question that needs to be asked is: How do we empirically count, analyse and describe the lives, the experiences, the relationships, the fears and hopes of the poor in

our country? In attempting to answer this, one must take note of the fact that there are mainly two problems when measuring poverty i.e. “identifying those people in the population who are poor and constructing an index of poverty using the available information on the poor” (Sen 1976:1). The next section attempts to deal with the method used in measuring poverty.

3.7.1 Selecting a Poverty Line:¹⁵⁴

Poverty lines are extremely useful for descriptions of poverty. As far back as the late 19th century, social analysts found it useful to focus debate through reference to a minimum desirable level of income, or a poverty line.¹⁵⁵

A poverty line¹⁵⁶ divides the population into two groups, on the basis of some measure: below the line a household or individual is considered to be poor, and above the line it is considered non-poor. Hence by defining a line that is regarded as some kind of minimum living level, one is able to determine the number of poor people, as well as the depth and severity of poverty (cf. Woolard & Leibrandt 2006:17).

¹⁵⁴ This section is indebted to Woolard and Leibrandt’s paper “Toward a Poverty Line for South Africa”. It should be noted that various poverty lines had been developed in South Africa. The Poverty datum line (PDL) was introduced to South Africa by Batson at the University of Cape Town during the Second World War in order to help measure the extent of poverty in the rapidly growing slums and townships of the Western Cape. It was subsequently refined and modified; at the beginning of the 1970’s as the trade unions re-emerged, guidelines were needed in the debate with management about minimum wages. Secondly the minimum living level (MLL) and the supplementary living level (SLL) developed by Nel are used by the Bureau of Market Research at the University of South Africa. The household subsistence level (HSL) and the household effective level (HEL) have been monitored by Potgieter at the University of Port Elizabeth (now Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University – NMMU).

See Wilson & Ramphela, p.16. It should further be noted that a selected comparison of poverty lines in South Africa (1993) selected only the MML, SLL, HSL, a 40th and 20th percentile of households ranked by adult equivalence, minimum per capita calorie intake and minimum per capita adult equivalent intake (Cf. Bowers 2005: 122).

¹⁵⁵ See Gazeley & Newell (1979:19) as quoted by Woolard & Leibrandt (2006:17).

¹⁵⁶ There are occasions, as argued by Woolard and Leibrandt, where one might want to calculate world poverty rates between countries. Under these circumstances one needs to use the same poverty line for all countries in the world. The World Bank and also the UN Millennium Development Goal uses the \$ 1 a day (about R7 in South African currency) poverty line which provides a useable methodology for linking poverty lines and poverty measures across countries.

However, as Woolard and Leibrandt (2006:18) observes, poverty lines are no perfect construct, but for the purpose of analysis one frequently needs to draw the line somewhere in order to go forward towards understanding the nature of poverty. The point at which one draws the line is, however, always “somewhat subjective and often highly contentious”, because assuming that a household earning R999 per month is in poverty, while a household earning R1000 is not, is rather crude (ibid.).

Another contentious issue in poverty literature / debates is whether poverty should be seen as a state of “absolute or relative poverty in the construction of a poverty line” (Ravallion 1995:24). An absolute poverty line is not meant to change with the standard of living in a society whereas a relative poverty line will move with the standards of living. More simply put: an absolute poverty line is calculated by reference to a fixed basket of goods, and so it does not take into account shifts in the average standard of living in society.

A relative poverty line on the other hand, is set “in relation to changing standards of living”,¹⁵⁷ hence the “distinction between absolute and relative poverty lines” (Sundrum 1990:64).¹⁵⁸ This distinction is important because it affects the way we perceive poverty reduction policies. After all, as Beckerman (1984:10) has observed, it does not really make sense to define and measure poverty at some minimum level when people continue to survive below it.

¹⁵⁷ A relative poverty line could well be calculated as a set proportion of the average, or the median level of household incomes or expenditure, or it could be defined by a specified share of the income distribution like the poorest 10, 20, or 40 percent of the population. It is comparatively easy to calculate and also takes into account that standards of sufficient household well-being shift with rising prosperity over time. However, if the primary focus is to measure progress in meeting basic needs or reducing poverty and vulnerability, then a relative measure is not appropriate.

¹⁵⁸ See also Stats SA: A national poverty line for South Africa.

To fight poverty requires reliable monitoring and measurement tools. Thus it would be helpful to consider the following questions in designing a national poverty line:

- i. Should a single poverty line be adopted or would several reference lines better capture different degrees of poverty deprivation?
- ii. Should a poverty line represent an “absolute” level of household requirements, or should it be a “relative” index that adapts to rising general living standards and income?
- iii. Should different measures for urban and rural areas or for different geographical areas be adopted?
- iv. How should household size be taken into account?
- v. How regularly should the basket of goods used for calculating the poverty line be reviewed?
- vi. How can we assure that a poverty line remains relevant and accurate over time?

3.7.2 Why do we need a poverty line?

In its report: A national poverty line for South Africa, Stats SA attempts to give an answer to the above question. They say: “The nature of poverty, vulnerability and income inequality, and their shifts in response to economic trends and policy, need to be better understood if poverty reduction and social development programmes are to be well-designed”. They see a poverty line as an appropriate index to assist in measuring and tracking poverty over time, which further makes it a useful statistical instrument for research and analysis.

The idea of a poverty line is not that household vulnerability can be satisfactorily reduced for analytical purposes to a single index, but rather that a consistent measure, while imperfect as a gauge of household needs, can nonetheless serve as a useful

comparative index of trends over time and of relative well-being across the social landscape.¹⁵⁹

3.7.3 The necessity of a Poverty line for South Africa

Reduction of poverty and inequality has been a central concern of democratic South Africa¹⁶⁰. Many studies have been conducted to identify those persons and households that are poor¹⁶¹.

In keeping with practice in many other countries¹⁶², an official poverty line has been proposed for South Africa to assist in measuring the extent of household poverty and monitoring progress in poverty reduction.¹⁶³

In its quest to design an official poverty line for the country it was proposed that the poverty line should be constructed as a “measure of the income required to attain a basic minimal standard of living”, meaning enough to purchase a nutritionally adequate food supply and to provide for other essential requirements.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ A poverty line is only one of several poverty measurements that can be used to develop a better understanding of poverty and to begin to eradicate it in all its dimensions. The Programme of Action adopted in response to the country review of South Africa under the African Peer Review Mechanism commits government to design a “national barometer” as part of the official statistics system and to contribute to improved identification and targeting of vulnerable and marginalised groups (Stats SA 2007:2-3).

¹⁶⁰ See also the document: “Towards a fifteen year review” (2009). This document is government’s way of taking stock of how far it has gone in achieving the objective of improving the quality of life of all its citizens. It further seeks to assess progress since the attainment of democracy fifteen (now sixteen) years ago.

¹⁶¹ See Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (2004), Nqwane et al (2001a), Alderman et al (2000), Hirschowitz et al (2000), Klassen (2000), Leibbrandt & Woolard (1999), May (1998), RSA (1998), etc.

¹⁶² Official poverty lines have a long history worldwide and in a country such as India for example, poverty lines date back to the 1930s.

¹⁶³ See Stats SA: A national poverty line for South Africa, National Treasury 21 February 2007.

¹⁶⁴ But this suggestion raises some questions such as: “What is a basic minimal standard of living? What is nutritionally adequate food? Who decides what these should be? There is no single blueprint for what goods and services constitute basic needs (SPII: 29). Some may even argue that basic needs differ from race to race, that it is *culturally specific* as pointed out by Hulme and Mc Kay, (in SPII) (2005). In other words basic needs in Europe differ from basic needs in Africa; thus it is not possible to decide on a

In the absence of an exact definition of an official poverty line, and despite widening global experience, there is no agreed best practice on how to design a national poverty line or what a minimum consumption bundle should comprise. It is not surprising to find that approaches vary from country to country.¹⁶⁵

The latest seminal report, “Towards a Fifteen Year Review” (due to the absence of an official poverty line), used two poverty lines for their review, i.e. a lower poverty line of R174 per person per month; and an upper line of R322 per person per month based on prices in 2000.¹⁶⁶ A selection of available measures and thresholds is summarised in the table below:

Table 1: Rand values and poverty incidence:

	Poverty line in 2000 Rands	% of individuals below the poverty line (2000 income and expenditure survey)
Poverty line set at per capita expenditure of the 40 th percentile of households	R346 per capita	54.9%
Poverty line set at 50% of mean national per capita expenditure	R538 per capita	68.1%
Stats SA – lower bound	R322 per capita	52.6%
Statistics SA – upper bound	R593 per capita	70.4%
“Dollar a day” – International poverty line of US\$370 (1985 prices) per capita per annum	R81 per capita	8.1%

minimum core of basic needs which are universally endorsed. Basic needs even differ among the different ethnic groups in the same country (South Africa is a shining example thereof).

¹⁶⁵ Most countries have a single poverty line, while others have two or more. They will e.g. have different poverty lines for different commodities such as rural and urban households. See also Stats SA.

¹⁶⁶ There is however confusion as to what the official poverty line is. In a telephonic conversation Malesela, who is working with Social Stats at Stats SA, pointed out that the current “official” poverty line is measured against the old age pension which at that stage was R1010. This figure increased to R1080 by 1 April 2010 (Pravin Gordhan: Budget Speech, 17 February 2010). In essence this means that a household that is earning less than R1010 will be regarded as poor.

“Two Dollars a day” – International poverty line of US\$ (1985 prices) per capita per annum	R162 per capita	27.0%
“Poverty Line” implied by the Old Age Pension means test for married persons, assuming a household of 5 persons	R454 per capita	63.4%
“Indigence” line of R800 per household per month (in 2006 prices)	R573 per capita	11.7%
“Indigence” line of R2400 per household per month (in 2006 prices)	R1720 per household	55.1%

Source: Stats SA and National Treasury: A National Poverty Line for South Africa 2007

Using the 2000 IES survey data, Stats SA estimated that consuming the kinds of foodstuffs commonly available to low-income South Africans costs R211 per person per month in (2000 prices) to meet the daily requirement. Stats SA and National Treasury further argued that households need other goods and services beyond food to meet basic needs, for example housing, electricity etc.

Based on this argument, Stats SA has attempted to estimate the non-food component of a poverty line based on the assumption that non-food items can be regarded as essential as such households forgo spending on food to acquire these non-food items.

Stats SA further estimated the cost of these non-food items to be R111 per capita per month. Adding the two figures gives a poverty line of R322 per capita per month in 2000 prices and a poverty line of R431 per person in 2006 prices. The same calculation applies to an upper bound poverty line.¹⁶⁷

Government has a pressing need to understand both the poverty head count and the levels of poverty experienced by people in South Africa. Hence further discussions on

¹⁶⁷ Abstract taken from the PSC background notes for the dialogue on poverty reduction strategies and interventions, p.3-4.

the poverty line should not only focus on the level of the line but also on the ways in which these indicators are to be used, and what other indicators may be used in addition to the poverty line.¹⁶⁸ Stats SA is currently studying best practice trends in other countries, with a view towards developing a more comprehensive statistical instrument to measure poverty in all its dimensions on a regular basis.

How does what we have established thus far influence or affect the people of the Baviaans Municipal area? How do poor people experience poverty in the Baviaans Municipal area? ¹⁶⁹. The next section attempts to deal with this question.

3.8 THE EXPERIENCES OF THE POOR IN THE BAVIAANS MUNICIPAL AREA¹⁷⁰

It is true that we are best able to observe poverty in our own immediate environment. This chapter started off by addressing poverty issues in our own country (nationally), which, despite being rich and prosperous, in many aspects harbours millions of poor (locally). We allowed the academic literalism to inform our understanding of poverty and poverty-related issues. We have selected those topics that are of special interest to our analysis of the causes of poverty. Now we need to focus on the experiences of the people of the BMA. Poverty manifests itself in different ways in this area, as will be shown in the next section.

¹⁶⁸ If a poverty line is to remain useful it needs to be revised or at least supplemented with additional measures from time to time. It also needs to be said that poverty lines are extremely powerful tools because of the way they can influence discussion and debates about policy. This, however, also brings with it an element of abuse in that, the decisions that inform the design of a particular tool, could be hidden from view.

¹⁶⁹ The researcher was very selective in gathering the information for this chapter, the reason being that we wanted the information to address the situation under study.

¹⁷⁰ This section draws together what many of the respondents had to say. Where they are quoted, their English (which in most cases are a second or third language) and or Afrikaans have not been edited. In most cases it is their exact words. The intention of this section is also to let the poor speak for themselves about how they experience poverty in the BMA.

3.8.1 Poverty and Vulnerability

The connection between poverty and vulnerability is very complex. Vulnerability is often perceived in terms of the interaction between physical and social variables, with poverty entering as one of the social dimensions affecting overall vulnerability.

It involves the intersection of economic, political, cultural¹⁷¹ and institutional factors that, in conjunction, influence overall vulnerability within a given hazard-scope.¹⁷²

Being poor means living a life without security, implying that the poor are subjected to a life of insecurity - a life exposed to potentially devastating threats which they may not be able to avert because poor people often lack access to resources to reduce their vulnerability to natural disasters or economic and social shocks. The following statement from a single female parent attests to this:

Wanneer dit reën dan stroom die water deur my mure. Die meubels wat ek oor die jare bymekaargemaak het is al verniel want ek moet dit gewoonlik uitneem en in die son sit sodat die meubels droog kan raak. Ek is 'n enkelma wat afhanklik is van 'n staatstoelaag. Ek het nie geld om nuwe meubels te koop nie". (*My house is always under water when it rains, and my furniture gets wrecked as a result thereof. I then have to take it out in the sun to get dry. I'm a single parent dependent on grant, so I don't have money to replace my ruined furniture.* DEJ)

¹⁷¹Social vulnerability is also dependent on a number of factors, e.g. cultural constructions surrounding gender, age, beliefs and norms, and physical vulnerability, among others. See also Mustafa 2002, cited in Committee on Disaster Research in the Social Sciences: Future Challenges and Opportunities (2006), *Facing Hazards and Disasters: Understanding Human Dimensions*, Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press.

¹⁷² Poverty and Vulnerability, From Risk to Resilience: The Collaborative programme. [Online] Available: <http://www.climate-transitions.org/climate/poverty> [2010, 20 March].

Vulnerability and insecurity are often used interchangeably to describe situations in which people are not able to cope with threats to their well-being without damaging loss.¹⁷³ Green (2008:201) describes vulnerability as “the reduced ability of some communities or households to cope with the events and stresses to which they are exposed”.¹⁷⁴ Stress events, as Green (ibid) rightfully observe can tip poor families over the edge into a downward spiral of increasing vulnerability and poverty as is the case in small town communities and also the area under study. These stress events could be everyday threats such as a fire, floods, crime, illness and death, an eviction or job loss, loss of crop, poor agricultural conditions, droughts, or a conflict that affects the whole family, amongst others.¹⁷⁵ It is a general rule that poor people are far less able to withstand the blows of fate which fall on them, because being poor “robs one of the ability to deal with any potential disasters, whether they are natural or caused by humans” (Mathole 2005:42)¹⁷⁶. Poor people are haunted by fear and uncertainty on a daily basis. The web of insecurity and fear (job losses, unemployment, income, shelter) is very real. We have said elsewhere (3.6.5) that South Africans are ‘high spenders’ and ‘low savers’, and though that might be true, we cannot ignore another heart-breaking comment of a man heading a household of four. He said:

¹⁷³ See Decron’s article “Vulnerability: a micro perspective: (2005). See also Wisner et al (2004) who understand social vulnerability as to be “the characteristics of a person or group and their situation”.

¹⁷⁴ The risk that a poor individual or household faces, can be understood as a simple formula: risk = hazard x vulnerability. For further reading see Green (2008).

¹⁷⁵ The Baviaans Municipality, (like many other municipalities) also made use of poorly qualified building contractors to erect low cost RDP houses which do not comply with SABS standards. People living in those poorly constructed houses fear when it starts raining because the walls are not water-resistant. This in itself poses health risks. The researcher experienced first-hand the devastating effect of fire on these structures. While writing this chapter, a substantial portion of the town Willowmore (where the researcher resides) was flooded. Within less than an hour 93mm rain was measured. One of the townships (Lovemore) is literally built on the banks of a river and we have seen how vulnerable those people are to floods. Town planners should be very cautious when they “plan” townships for poor people.

¹⁷⁶ The Baviaans municipal area had its quota of disasters, and it has been attested to that these disasters do have a major effect on the poor people of the area.

“My first-born is now in standard eight (grade 10) and she is doing very well at school. She has dreams of becoming a psychologist, but where will I get the money from? Oh, ‘meneer’ (sir) I fear that day. It’s not that I don’t want to save money but the grant and childcare that I’m getting from the government is not even enough to take us through the month. There’s just nothing left to save”.

Vulnerable people are desperate people and desperate people sometimes lose their creative senses. Only 30% of all people – low, middle and high income earners- in the BMA do make an effort to save money. However there are others who believe they have too little to save, or who do not know how to use of the little they have to save.

You talk to me about saving and I do appreciate it, but can you tell me how I can save what I don’t have.

The majority of the people in the BMA are trapped in this vicious circle of poverty which leaves them vulnerable to fall into other traps. It is a proven fact that the sector of the majority that is most vulnerable is women, children and the elderly. They are the ones in our society that carry the burden of poverty. This group is at a disadvantage the world over and the Baviaans Municipal area is no exception. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of women and children living in poverty in this area. One can clearly see how poverty increases the vulnerability of this contingent in our society and it is indicative of most of the small towns of the “platteland”.

This is further worsened by the unfair patriarchal structures that are common in families. Women and children are hardest hit by the effects of unemployment, substance abuse, crime, violence, etc., and they carry the scars of such abuses.

Poverty is like a cancer, attacking the very being of a person; and it reduces poor people's ability to recover from losses. It is correctly defined by Dhanani & Islam (2002: 1211:1231) as "the deprivation of basic capabilities".

3.8.2 The fear of Unemployment

The fear of unemployment and its consequences adds greatly to the burden of poverty. The United Nations Development Report attests "Unemployment is a significant contributor to poverty" (1998:23). Currently in South Africa one in four adults seeking work is unemployed and almost half our young people have not found work (Pravin Gordhan: Budget Speech, 2011). Recent reports highlight the fact that unemployment is currently increasing at a disturbing rate. This is a national phenomenon that is also a stark reality at local level. Many of the people in the Baviaans area are jobless, with very few prospects of permanent employment. Those who are not fortunate enough to get a social grant, have to rely on temporary jobs (casuals).

The reality in the Baviaans is that there simply are very few permanent job opportunities and many people leave the area in search of a job elsewhere. Statistics show that only 19% (3186) of the people are employed, whilst 56.15% (5378) is economically inactive¹⁷⁷. Adding the 24% "unemployed employable" people, paints a bleak picture for this area. This undoubtedly led to an increase in Shebeens in the Baviaans area. This is a common phenomenon in the BMA. Needless to say, such conditions create tensions in marriage and family life, as one grass-widow (Mrs. M) so aptly remarks:

Hier is nie werk in Willowmore nie, nou moet my man maar in Johannesburg werk om die pot aan die kook te hou. Ek is dankbaar dat hy ten minste 'n werk het, maar wanneer

¹⁷⁷ This includes learners, students, or children not studying, house managers, pensioners and retired personnel. These estimates might be conservative.

hy huis toe kom, en dis meestal oor 'groot dae' (paasnaweek & kersfees tye) dan het ons nie veel vir mekaar te sê nie. Hy kom gewoonlik so twee keer 'n jaar huis toe.

The unemployment rate and the rate for those who are not economically active, is indeed alarming. Unemployment undermines the dignity of people, because not being able to provide for one's family makes you feel worthless. This is how a 57 year old male put it:

Not being able to provide for my family makes me feel unwanted. It kills me to look in my children's eyes, knowing that I cannot give them what other children have. It is not that I don't want to work; the fact is nobody wants to employ someone my age. They say I'm over the hill and that I should apply for a grant. Personally I think I can still add value to the community, if only I can find a job.

Another frustrated segment of the community is the young people, especially within the coloured community. Their frustration is firstly linked to the fact that they have no work experience, and secondly because of affirmative action, which they call "reverse apartheid". It is a common fact that businesses are reluctant to employ people with no experience. For many businesses affirmative action means employing only ethnically black people whereas affirmative action is supposed to be non-racial and for all those who were disadvantaged by apartheid. A 23 year old unemployed male, voiced his frustration in this way:

What do I care about affirmative action? My father says we were not white enough in apartheid South Africa and now we're not black enough in democratic South Africa. What do I care about colour? I can't help it that I'm not dark skinned. All I need is a decent job to make a decent living for my parents and siblings. Since 2007 I applied for

a job but to no avail. They want experience but how must I gain experience if they don't want to give me a chance? This affirmative action and experience thing sucks.

Though the above is true of the scenario in the Baviaans, there is another reality that needs to be taken into account: people who do not want to work. "People, can always find jobs or make money for themselves in some way, but sometimes they choose not to work", say Wilson and Ramphele (1989:85). They call such people the "voluntary unemployed" (in Willowmore they say these people belong to the *wil-nie-werk-society*, which they pronounce as *willie-werk-society*). Sometimes you find healthy individuals in the community suffering hardships because they do not want to work for low wages.

They prefer not to work because of a lack of opportunities (Wilson & Ramphele 1989:86). However, the fact that some people choose not to work, does not for one moment imply that there are not people who wish to work but cannot find any kind of job. In order to restore the dignity of the many unemployed "healthy individuals" in the Baviaans area, we need to create jobs which would "affirm their humanity instead of degrading them". Minister Pravin Gordhan (2010) puts it this way: "...none of us can rest or sleep peacefully until every South African can say: I can see a better future. I can find a job. I can learn a skill. Hard work will enable me and my family to have shelter and food... our people need hope... our people want action on jobs, growth and poverty..."¹⁷⁸

However, this does not mean that the poor should work in appalling conditions which even violate the labour law. Access to jobs with appropriate remuneration, is not only an important means of improving living standards; it is also a means of exercising skills

¹⁷⁸ Pravin Gordhan. Budget Speech, February, 17.

creativity, making productive contributions to society, and enjoying self-respect, dignity and empowerment” .¹⁷⁹

Thus far we have said that unemployment is a significant contributor to poverty and that poverty makes people vulnerable to other threats. There is a further tendency amongst some of the poor of the Baviaans area to believe that alcohol will solve whatever problems they may encounter (that is of course a myth). However, it is a proven fact that poverty heightens the use and abuse of substances.

3.8.3 Poverty enhances substance abuse

The insecurities and fears experienced by those who are poor in this area are further aggravated by alcohol, with devastating results for individuals and households. From personal experience in the Baviaans we know that men and women, young and old, people infected by Aids and other Aids related illnesses, even those breast-feeding their children¹⁸⁰ sit from dawn to dusk in taverns with loud music, drinking “kraantjie” (cheap liquor).¹⁸¹ It is a known fact that alcohol is a serious social problem that especially entraps the poor. Alcohol abuse and drug abuse are still regarded as some of the BMA’s biggest challenges as noted by the social worker (Matanda 2007).

¹⁷⁹ See UNDP, South Africa Human Development Report (2003:10).

¹⁸⁰ The researcher noted how approximately 17 pregnant women (swollen tummy and by word of mouth) over a period of 30 days visited different taverns in Willowmore and Steytlerville. This was reported by volunteers who helped with the research. At the request of the researcher those with medical expertise in the Congregational church had numerous workshops explaining foetal alcohol syndrome. Pregnant mothers were made aware of the dangers of alcohol abuse by pregnant women. There are on-going awareness campaigns run by the clinics to caution people in this regard.

¹⁸¹ The sad part is that taverns also trade on Sundays. Being a minister in this area, the researcher experienced how tavern-owners sell liquor to people (including under aged children) on Sundays. Upon enquiring from a tavern owner (who happens to be a member of the church the researcher is serving) as to why they trade on Sundays, the researcher was shocked to hear that Sundays are the best trading days for liquor sales.

As Shorter (1991:50) rightfully observes, “Alcohol has always been the refuge of the desperate and the destitute, and there is constant demand for it”. The alcohol trade is flourishing in the Baviaans area.¹⁸² Shebeen, tavern and bottle-store owners abuse this demand because it is a very lucrative trade. In an open discussion with tavern owners they remarked: “We sell liquor because we want to survive, and if you want to survive you must make a plan”.

In noting the widespread drunkenness amongst the poor in the Baviaans municipal area, the Carnegie Inquiry findings pointed out: “Plain poverty and adverse social circumstances have a lot to do with this high incidence of alcoholism, for alcohol has a numbing and care-diminishing effect which makes life more tolerable for those who have to struggle for the bare necessities of living”.¹⁸³

Behind alcohol abuse lays the despair that eats away at the soul and overwhelms individuals with a sense of utter hopelessness. It makes people lose their sense of meaning and their self-respect, as one minister noted (Swart 2006). The problems associated with substance abuse are not peculiar to the poor but their effects are more devastating for poor people because of their greater vulnerability and limited access to rehabilitative facilities¹⁸⁴ (Cf. Wilson & Ramphele 1989:159ff.). It traps those who have fallen prey to it in a vicious circle of poverty. Research in this area has shown how people have been using their social grants to feed these “self-destructing habits”.

¹⁸² There are approximately 32 liquor outlets in the Baviaans municipality (Willowmore: 12 legal and 5 illegal; Steytlerville 9 legal 5 illegal and 1 in Baviaanskloof). In a discussion with tavern owners we openly discussed why they prefer selling liquor rather than “soft drinks”. The alcohol trade is apparently the fastest way of making money.

¹⁸³ Nomusa Ndaba, “Nutritional status of adults in Willowmore”, Report 209, p.9. In Wilson & Ramphele (1989:160). Discussions with many alcohol abusers led the researcher to conclude that the majority of them realise the seriousness of this problem.

¹⁸⁴ It is interesting to note that, especially in small towns where the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs is significantly high there is virtually no rehab centre. The closest rehab centre for this area is in Port Elizabeth (250km).

It was noted that most of the beneficiaries of social grants pawn their “All Pay” cards and identity documents for liquor. This led the Willowmore Interchurch Forum together with Social Development, South African Police services and the Department of Justice to take action against this habit.

A further painful reality of life in the Baviaans is this: it is a fact that there is virtually nothing to do. Boredom hangs like a cloud over this area and that leads to despair¹⁸⁵. This is the unfortunate reality that is prevalent in many small towns. Substance abuse (alcohol and drugs) is the major cause of violence and crime in this area.

Even president Nelson Mandela (in his first opening address to Parliament in 1994) specifically singled out alcohol and drug abuse¹⁸⁶ as among the pathologies that needed to be combated. He referred to alcohol and other drug abuse as a major cause of crime, violence, poverty, reduced productivity, unemployment, dysfunctional family life, political instability, the escalation of chronic illnesses such as Aids and TB, injury, and premature birth.¹⁸⁷ Its sphere of influence reaches across social, racial, cultural, language, religious, and gender barriers and, directly or indirectly, affects everyone. In our struggle to fight poverty we have to deal with these social iniquities that are part of the dependency culture of those whose human dignity has been smashed by poverty.

¹⁸⁵There are no recreational facilities in the Baviaans Area (See chapter 4 on IDP). Young and old, married and unmarried visits taverns on weekends. In a group interview with 135 young people (90 in Willowmore, 15 in Steytlerville and 30 in Baviaanskloof) on why they go to taverns, they said: “We have nowhere else to go. The only reason we go to taverns is to enjoy ourselves”. One young lady said: “The church does not want to make their facilities available to us. We want to play our kind of music; will the church allow us to play hip-hop and R&B in their church halls? Give us something better to do. At least the taverns provide us with music that is to our liking”.

¹⁸⁶ Substances such as alcohol, dagga, tik, losmaak (a new drug that makes users behave like animals) are readily available in Willowmore and Steytlerville (Baviaans). According to the headmaster of the Elmore Primary school (Mr.GDP Lindoor), children as young as 7years are using these drugs.

¹⁸⁷ National Drug Master Plan (1999).

3.8.4 Poverty, crime and violence

One of the most tangible social consequences of poverty is crime. It is not the intention of this study to explore the complex roots of criminal behaviour; we simply note that where there is acute poverty, where there is chronic unemployment and work scarcity, people are more likely to rob or assault others in order to gain a living or to make ends meet. They do so sometimes out of sheer frustration. Crime is both a “product and a cause of profound insecurity and despair in which millions of people find themselves trapped” (Wilson & Ramphela 1989:152). Thus poverty in itself is a crime against human dignity, and it sometimes leads the poor to respond violently to their desperate situations.

Aliber (2001:24) made another informed observation: “Crime and violence”, he says, “contribute to the experience of poverty at two levels”. On the one level, “the exposure to crime and violence directly detracts from the quality of life” of its victims and those fearful of being victimised.

On another level, the high “incidence of crime and violence, which forms a salient feature of everyday life in South Africa, is symptomatic of a profound social malaise, in which the cycles of poverty and violence are indistinguishable”.

To the 16000 inhabitants of the Baviaans Municipal area crime and violence is no new phenomenon. Housebreaking (4.1%), robbery (1.3%), assault (17.9%), violence (39.9%), rape (1.6%) (gang-rape) and murder (1.6%) has become part of the daily lives of the people of Willowmore and Steytlerville. People experience a sense of lawlessness and injustice which is frightening. A disgruntled resident voiced similar sentiments at a community gathering:

When you need the police, they're never available, and if they do come it's always too late. Even when they catch the troublemakers, nothing comes of it. There's no justice in this life, so why worry?¹⁸⁸

The effect of crime that is prevalent and wide-spread has far-reaching implications for the community exposed to it, and contributes to the erosion of the moral fibre of society. Crime and violence (as a result of poverty) poses a serious threat to moral regeneration. Mathole (2005:42-43) says "It creates scenarios of desperation where the quest for survival makes people to be less committed, to upholding the commonly shared social values that encourage moral responsibility. Not because poor people as such are immoral, but because of the emotional impact continuous unemployment had on them".

What has been highlighted here is but the tip of the iceberg; it is obviously not the complete picture but the researcher's perspective on the experiences of the people of the Baviaans area. This is the reality of a large percentage of the 16000 people residing in this area and given that church 'happens' in every location where people (church members) spend their daily life and do their work, how does these experience impact on and challenge church life in this area?

3.9 THE EXPERIENCE OF THE POOR AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL ECCLESIOLOGY

The experiences identified in the previous section impact on and at the same time challenge church life in the BMA. It is threats that render poor people powerless and vulnerable to exploitation by the powerful. Accordingly there is this skewed impression that small town people do not know better (because they are not *well schooled*) and for

¹⁸⁸ See Appendix D.

that reason will accept everything that comes their way (Rev. O 2007). These and the fact that only 25% (4.6 graph. 5) of the Baviaans population have some secondary education further fuelled this notion which indeed creates a platform for exploitation. But, on the other hand this scenario is loaded with opportunity for a contextually orientated practical ecclesiology. It is against this background that we need to look at church action that will change the situation for the better for those caught up in it.

3.9.1 Taking up the challenge

The experiences of the people of the Baviaans compel the church to deeply reflect on its role in a community where more than half of the populace who claim to have some Christian or religious affiliation is poor. Given the seriousness of the situation and the numbing effect it has on the people, how best can the church exercise its role as an agent of change in an environment where only 19% (cf. 4:6 graph 6) enjoys permanent employment? Where the effect of unemployment turns good people (young and old) into criminals (cf. 3.8.2); where crime and violence (cf. 3.8.4) gravely contributes to the moral decay of the society; where young and old see no other alternative but to drink excessively (cf. 3.8.3) in order to “forget their poverty and remember their misery no more” (Proverbs 31:7). This situation creates a challenge that begged a response from the church community of the Baviaans.

However, on their own, local congregations would not make much of an impact. It is in working together (forming partnerships, cf. also 1.3 & 1.7.1) that they would be able to influence decisions from local government and if they would push hard enough, even set the agenda. The forum best positioned for this task would be the (Willowmore)

Interchurch Forum¹⁸⁹. In the absence of a minister fraternal then, the Interchurch Forum¹⁹⁰ has taken up the challenge to act as a mouthpiece for not only members of the religious sector, but to engage local government on all community issues. For this reason they took on the slogan: “Making a Difference (Right Where You Are)¹⁹¹”. The slogan came as a result of the experiences of the people in this area. These experiences filled the air with expectancy that something momentous is to happen.

Representatives (clergy and laity) of the local congregations, on a weekly basis, report on matters of concern, and also how their congregants want to see action from the church. They wanted the church to bring their plight under the attention of the local government (Elder De Vos 2007). They wanted the church to bring together “words and deeds” and to show their faith by what they do (James 2:18).

They not only wanted to hear that God is present in their situation; they wanted to see God acting in their situation; whether by the promise of food on the table, the prospect of a job, or the assurance that the next house would be theirs.

The key question that begged an answer was: “What would the practical implication of their slogan “Making A Difference”, mean in light of the realities, the experiences, the hardships (cf. 3.8) of the very same people they preached to on a weekly basis? How can the church from a faith point of view make a difference? Furthermore, how best can the church redirect the contributions made by other non-religious agencies to serve the

¹⁸⁹ Most of the local congregations are represented on this forum.

¹⁹⁰ The Interchurch forum (IF) is also called the Willowmore Interchurch Forum (WIF) because Willowmore is the administrative hub of the Baviaans Municipality. Thus IF and WIF will be used interchangeably as to refer to the same forum.

¹⁹¹ The initial slogan was “Making A Difference”, and the part “right where you are” was add later. The researcher prefers to use the initial slogan.

cause of social justice and the love of God's kingdom? These questions undoubtedly create an exciting opportunity and basis for a practical ecclesiology in the BMA.

The first attempt in answering these questions is to understand that "Christian mission" is not only about spiritual aspects but it is also concerned about "physical, social, cultural" and even emotional aspects of "all life for all people" (cf. Maluleke 1999:2, 4; Pieterse 2001:116). In this context it would mean communicating God's love, and grace by way of physical acts of upliftment. This is best summed up by Jesus in Matthew 5: 35-36: "...I was hungry...*you gave me something to eat*, I was thirsty ... *you gave me something to drink*, I was a stranger ... *you invited me in [giving me shelter]*, I needed clothes ... *you clothed me*, I was sick ... *you looked after me*, I was in prison... *you came to visit me*." This not only mean preaching the word but acting in a way that the people of this area can experience God's grace in concrete terms. The cursive "*you gave me ... you invited me... you clothed me ... you looked after me... you visit me*" from a theological point of view would mean that the ministry of Christ clothed with his teachings cannot be separated from the ministry of Christ clothed with the need and plight of the poor and needy. Furthermore, in the context of the BMA it could mean "summonsing" individuals to rethink *their* responsibility in light of need in their own environment. What can *I* do to ease the plight of my neighbour? It is needless to speak of hunger without feeding the hungry; or pity a homeless without giving him shelter.¹⁹² Making the gospel relevant in concrete realities in order to penetrate the deepest point of human need should be the mission of the church. This is what would be regarded as the nature of a practical ecclesiology. A church that cannot bring together word and

¹⁹² "Giving shelter" could become very dangerous especially in our South African context. Many well-meaning people – the so called good Samaritans have had bad experiences and some have even paid with their lives after having welcomed strangers in their homes.

deed has lost touch with the suffering poor to whom they preach week after week, for *this is* what makes a difference in the lives of many destitute people, where they not only hear about the love of God, but also feel his love in a tangible way.

In an area where religion still enjoys preference it gets all the more important to allow for the “Word to become flesh” (Jn.1:1) in every aspect of our context, be it spiritual, physical, social, cultural or emotional (cf. Bosch 2010:21). In this modern era where the church is under constant pressure from non-religious agents (and even religious individuals) who – in line with their agenda – wants the church to adapt its message to their desires, it is up to the church to hold forth the image of Christ in every aspect of its context. Thus these are interrelated factors that challenge the character of the church; it challenges the church to be relevant in its context “both in witness and service and in word and deed” (cf. Swart & Orsmond 2011:2).

It was this same urge for contextual relevance (that of making a difference) that drove the Interchurch Forum to identify initiatives that could positively influence the people of this area and making a difference to their situation. (This was done with extreme caution to not create a “dependency syndrome”). Some of these initiatives included amongst others:

- *Soup kitchens*: soup kitchens are common practice in most parts of the country and remain a popular way of showing faith by deeds. It is not different in this area where the Interchurch Forum runs what they call an “ecumenical” soup kitchen. Their target group includes children of unemployed parents, people with life-threatening diseases such as TB, Aids and cancer, and also people who have no income. Because of limited resources they can only provide this service thrice

a week. However, cautious not to create the idea of hand-outs, and being aware of how easy people can become dependent, beneficiaries are asked to perform certain duties in and around the centrum. These chores include washing the cups, peeling the vegetables and dishing out food.

- *Food Parcels*: one of the congregations started a project called “pak ‘n sak” (pack a bag). This idea came as a result of a sermon on Acts 20:35 (NIV) “*In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work, we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’*”¹⁹³ The target group is needy households with no income.
- *Adopt a learner*: This is an initiative whereby individual members in the church community “adopt” a needy learner for at least one year. Some of the “adoptive parents” really walk the extra mile with these learners, so much so that they even provide in the physical needs of these children. This initiative received high praise from the school principal of one of the surrounding farm schools. It created a sense of pride amongst his learners, he said (Bennet 2008)
- *Counselling services*: The Interchurch forum also identified counselling as a key service for this area, but they also acknowledge their inadequacy in this field. Not all theologically trained ministers are skilled counsellors. In a community such as the Baviaans it is expected of the minister to “know all”. Role players in essential services departments¹⁹⁴ such as the police, schools, clinics and the hospital usually refer counselling cases to local ministers. Realising the

¹⁹³ Interesting to note that, not in any of the four gospels do we find these words of Jesus: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’ as quoted by Paul (Acts 20:35).

¹⁹⁴ Most of these institutions (SAPS, schools, hospital) do have trained chaplains and or counsellors in their departments but these services are not readily available, because of distance. The chaplain who is serving the SAP in the Baviaans for example is stationed in Port Elizabeth, some 250km away. The closest school psychologist to this area is in Graaff-Reinet, nearly 200km away.

importance of this service compelled some of the ministers to take short courses in counselling. The Congregational Church in partnership with the departments of primary health care and social development facilitated the training of lay counsellors. These lay counsellors proved to be invaluable to the community of Baviaans. They offer services to victims of rape and violence, those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS as well as cancer patients.

- *Victim Empowerment Programme*: This is a programme initiated by Social Development where victims of any form of abuse are empowered to see themselves as survivors instead of victims. One of the local ministers (Rev. D) is currently running this programme as a joint initiative between the Social Development, the SAP and the Interchurch Forum.

These are some of the programmes (directly or indirectly) initiated by the religious sector in the community to see how best they can bring about change in the Baviaans community within the confines set by a contextually orientated practical theological ecclesiology.

Making a difference in the second instance would mean to “speak up for those” in the community “who cannot speak for themselves” and “defend(ing) the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:8, 9).¹⁹⁵ One particular concern here is this: *speaking up...* and *defending* presupposes confrontation and or conflict. To “speak up” for someone in many instances mean to “speak down” on something; to sometimes reprimand ones very own. Doing this, almost always lead to confrontation (cf. the gospels).

¹⁹⁵ Church leaders such as Allan Boesak, Desmond Tutu, Beyers Naudé, and others paid a high price (some of them were imprisoned) for defending the rights of the poor and for becoming the voice of the voiceless. This is what is expected of church leadership; to fearlessly defend the defenceless. In Proverbs 31:8,9 King Lemuel’s mother advised him to (always) speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves and to let justice prevail in his kingdom.

The pedants of his time, almost constantly confronted Jesus with their understanding of the law (cf. c Matthew 12:2, 10; 19:10, Mark 2:24, John 5:10). Just as Jesus had to confront the wiseacres of his time, he also had to –from time to time- reprimand his very own.

When an unknown women¹⁹⁶ (according to Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9 [sinful woman – Luke 7:36-50]) anointed Jesus, it annoyed the disciples tremendously (Matt. 26:8 [Judas – John 12:4]), and rightfully so. Their dismay comes in reaction to the waste of perfume which could have been sold for more than a year's wages.¹⁹⁷ His words: "Leave her alone (Mark 14:6), why are you bothering this woman (Matthew 26:10) must have left the disciples ashamed. In these words Jesus did more than one thing; (i) he stood up for the woman, acknowledging her actions as an (religious) act of love and compassion (Matthew 26:10; Mark 14:8), and defending her right to do good¹⁹⁸, (ii) he uncovers the greed of Judas and therefore all humanity, (iii) He gave them a lesson in culture sensitivity and gender equity), but in doing so he also disapprove of the actions of the inner circle. Speaking up for the voiceless, and or defending the rights (actions) of the defenceless was a crucial part of the earthly ministry of Jesus. The church as Christ Incarnate should do likewise.

¹⁹⁶ Note that there are three versions of the story but the message is the same. All three these versions say that Jesus was anointed by a woman (Matt. 26:7 "a woman came to him, Mark 14:3 "a woman [came to him]). John 12:3 attached a name to the woman; "then Mary took ...", and that those who objected, thought it was a waste.

¹⁹⁷ See also the New Revised Standard version: "Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor". The denarius was the equivalent of one day's wage for a labourer.

¹⁹⁸ But the woman on the other hand gets empowered by Jesus' response. Like Jesus – but not equal to – this woman through her action, also took a firm stand. Not only does she refuse to become the object of someone else's story but she demanded to make her own choices; not only did she lead in initiating this unthinkable action, she claimed her cultural and religious rights; not only did she challenge the patriarchal system of her time, she also broke the bond of exploitive power and became contended in her humanness in that act of anointing Jesus.

Similarly, and also interesting to note that when the church in the BMA started to speak up for the poor and vulnerable in this area, they found themselves “speaking down” on the malpractices of their very own members. This brought them in direct conflict with the tavern owners, the loan sharks (skoppers) and the micro lenders, of whom the majority are members of their congregations. Translating the biblical message in such a context becomes a challenge in itself. Empirical findings revealed that in most instances it was “kerksmense” - church-people - who were abusing the social grants of their very own people (pensioners, children, and disabled).¹⁹⁹ (It is interesting to note that many of these “skoppers” and tavern owners are confessing members of a congregation). If then the church was to be faithful to its calling and character as Christ Incarnate, it had no choice but to follow His example in condemning any practice that could harm the members of the Body of Christ, even if this would mean “reacting against its own kind” (cf. 6.3.1 -our discussion on systems).

This led the Interchurch Forum, the SAP and the department of Social development, not just to condemn, but to act decisively by deploying police officers (and members of the WIF and Social development) at all pay points in the area, to secure “visible (police) presence”. Given the reality portrayed in the experiences of Gods people in this area, the church had no choice but to become practical in its context.

The question on the practical implication of “making a difference’ and its significance for a practical ecclesiology, in the third instance evokes the need to pool resources.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Keeping identity documents and “all pay” cards – though illegal - is a general practice in the BMA. The Interchurch Forum in collaboration with the SAP held numerous gatherings to educate people on this issue. It was at one of these meetings where we learned who the main culprits were: Tavern owners and micro-lenders.

²⁰⁰The most viable congregation (in terms of infrastructure and resources) in this area is the Congregational Church. Even if all local congregations pool their resources it would not match the

This we do in obedience to His word which states that “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). A biblical analogy of pooling resources is found in Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37 where the early Christians shared everything they had. It is important to note that “no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own” because giving up or sharing their possessions with others would ensure that “there were no needy persons among them”. This they could do only if they “were one in heart and mind” (4:32-36).

Though it was indeed a humble act of service to those in need, it was more a service of obedience to Christ and His commandment of which the specific commandment is to love one another (John 13:34, 35). This kind of service is totally grounded in Jesus Christ, for “it was the kind of person *he* was and the kind of ministry *he* undertook that determined the form of mode of all Christian service” (Torrance 1979:717). Though it is sad to note that many affluent congregations keep on accumulating for themselves in order not to lose their status as “the biggest or richest”, giving up what one has accumulated is not the easiest thing to do, and it is not by far what this section suggests we do. Pooling resources in this context would rather suggest tapping into the strengths of the different partners, whether financial, intellectual, physical or otherwise.

Given the magnitude of need in this area; the finite resources to the church’s disposal (coupled with the sometimes sheer reluctance of some congregations to share their resources) and the instruction to follow a ministry of love and compassion to those in need, the church will indeed have to cross frontiers. This means that if the church wants to secure the success of its services to the needy, it will have to partner with not only religious agencies but also with non-religious entities. The church as the people called

resources of this one church, but that is beside the point. What is important though is that local congregations nevertheless contribute, even the little they have.

and who exist in the national, social and economic structures of human life, cannot isolate its ministry from the services provided by government for the welfare of its people. It was the unjust laws of the state who impoverished the people of this area anyway. So it is not improper to utilise the resources of the State for the well-being of Gods people.

This is what one local congregation did. They partnered with primary health care (the State) to build a fully equipped clinic at one of their outstations.²⁰¹ This outstation (Zaaimanshoek) is located in the Baviaanskloof which happens to be the third biggest settlement in the BMA (the biggest portion of the 24% population percentage allocated to rural areas). The leadership of this church further successfully engaged the Baviaans Municipality (local government) to provide recreational facilities (in the form of upgrading the existing rugby field and a playfield for children), basic services such as electricity and water, educational facilities such as a fully equipped computer centre as well as a mobile library.

Thus, to adequately address human need the church definitely need the organised services (resources) of government. They need to ask how best they can utilise the vast wealth (natural resources) with which God has endowed the earth (Gen. 1) and of which government is currently the “legal” custodian. If this means building up power structures through ecclesiastical and social and political instruments, in order to relief human suffering, then this is the road the church need to travel. (But in doing so the

²⁰¹ They utilised the “emotional” (willingness to do something) and financial resources of the state to achieve their goal (the upliftment of its people). Zaaimanshoek is the biggest outstation of the Frank Kulsen Memorial Congregational Church –a constituent church of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) - in Willowmore with a membership of approximately five hundred (500) confessing members. If they want to buy food or need medical attention, they have to travel to Willowmore on a 94km gravel road. Those with transport charge them preposterous prices to get to a doctor. This situation compelled the church and primary health care to join hands to build a clinic for the Baviaanskloof.

church should exercise extreme caution). This by no means suggests that the church should compromise its autonomy or secularising its life in the community within which it carries out its task.

On the contrary, the church may very well use this opportunity to ensure its effectiveness as a worthy and valued partner. How deep the level of that partnership (cf. 1.7.1) should run, is for the church to determine. Different community issues will determine the different levels of partnership. With all the projects running in the BMA, the relationship between the different role-players could be said to be growing (cf. 1.7.1.1). It is hoped that this relationship would grow into a “deep” relationship because we will always have the poor and needy ones among us (cf. Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12). That is the one reality that will always compel us to work together, to pool whatever resources we have to our disposal in order to ensure that there are no needy ones among us (cf. also Deuteronomy 15:4).

However, what is further important to note in partnering with non-religious agents though, is that these agencies allow their services to gain worldly prestige. It is different with the church. It's in the demeanour of the government to publicise their achievements, (sometimes for selfish reasons - in most cases to rub salt in the wounds of the opposition [cf. Matthew 6:2]). When they speak, one clearly detects the “I” in the “we”.²⁰² It is, (supposed to be) different with the church. It is not in the character of the church to show off their successes because the church does not exist for itself. For the church, in everything they do, He, Christ, must become greater; [they], (the church) must become less” (John 3:30). They claim no success unless Christ is glorified.

²⁰² When politicians speak they do so as representatives of the government. Government is seen as an entity so everyone who speaks on behalf of this body/unit, do so on behalf of the unified voice of government. When they say government they refer to one “unified” body (the “I”).

Jürgen Moltmann's (1993:5) words, "Without Christ no Church" ring true here. The message that it conveys is simple "There is only a church as long as Jesus of Nazareth is glorified and acknowledged as Christ. With this sentence he puts Christ right at the centre of the church and acknowledges that Christ laid the groundwork for the Spirit's creation of the church by carefully selecting a band of followers who would serve as the core leadership of the church and who would be among its first members (cf. Van Gelder 2000:102). It acknowledges Christ as his church's "foundation, its power and hope" (Moltmann 1993:5); its sole and all-embracing, determining factor and hence, its *raison d'être*. This is what separates the church from any other community, social organisation or human institution that has ever existed. To comprehend this distinctive nature of the church is to understand that the church is not a building consisting of a group of "glory-seeking" persons but it is a community instituted by God himself; a community of faith and obedience; a community of (sinful) people living from the word of God; a social community made of people who are reconciled with God and with one another; a community who claim no success unless God is glorified. To boast with their achievements is just not in the character of the church.

Therefore the church may not claim to themselves the right of their actions; they simply need to act in obedience to their Lord. They do so even without acknowledgment from those to whom service is rendered (cf. Luke 17:17-18). Not all the initiatives produced by the Interchurch forum for example, received high praise from all who benefitted from it, but that should not stop the church community from doing good to them anyway. Knowing that it can only exist as they serve him, the church, in obedience to him and his commandment need to remain faithful to the diaconal nature and significance of Jesus' ministry of mercy, love and compassion.

Making a difference in the final instance brings with it the element of accountability. Our discourse on how poverty manifests itself in the experiences of the poor portrays a picture of helplessness which allow for a high level of dependency and self-pity. The plight of the single mother (cf. 3.8.1) who live in a substandard RDP house; the unhealthy unemployment rate (cf. 3.8.2), the high level of substance abuse (cf. 3.8.3), the lamentations of the people with regard to lack of recreational facilities, the fear of job losses, unfair application of affirmative action, the despair of the young people, are all negative imprints which could result in self-pity. This by no way suggests that the experiences of the people of the BMA are mere irrational complaints.

The fact of the matter is that these realities can easily change people into chronic complainers, where people get tempted to pass the buck to other agencies without taking responsibility for their own development. So too, can the church, through her relief work (soup kitchens), contribute to a situation of dependence instead of restoring the dignity of people by offering them the opportunity to do what Paul suggests in Acts 20:35, to use one's hands (everything at one's disposal) to supply one's own needs and those of one's family. We need to be creative in our poverty. It is sometimes necessary to look beyond need to providence. Asking questions such as "...what do you have in your house" (2 Kings 4:2), or "how many loaves (of bread) do you have" (Mark 6:38), or simply "what do you have" makes people to become creative. Some will have a little oil; others may have only one loaf of bread, still others will have their ability to do something. It is not what you do not have (negative), but what you have (positive) that brings out the creativity in you.²⁰³ This may sound harsh but given the "dependency

²⁰³ The most creative people are those who are poor. This statement is based on the experience of the researcher (in his own life) in the BMA. It is remarkable what people (women) can do with the little they have to their disposal. Many times one will hear these words from mothers: "n Mens moet die bietjie wat

context” of the BMA, people need to be exposed to other possibilities that could ignite their latent creativity. It is up to the church to ignite that creativity so that people may see what they can achieve with a positive attitude. Many poor people are like the widow (2 Kings 4), so caught up in what they don't have, that they can't see the possibilities of what they already have. This is “creative poverty”. This is what the church, as the “moral conscience” of the community, can do.

Approaching a practical ecclesiology from this position creates an opportunity for accountability in the sense of asking reflective questions such as: “What can I do to improve my situation? Instead of waiting for outside help to fix my house, how best can I apply my innate skills to solve the problem? How best can I (positively) apply my inborn creativity to curb my boredom in order to become pro-active?²⁰⁴ How responsible is it to blame my situation on something or someone else? Should I not be held accountable for my actions and act responsibly? Smit (1994:21-24) remarks, “... To be responsible means to deliberately, consciously, take responsibility for what is going to happen, for the results of our actions, for the implications of our present behaviour, in short for our future”. Responsible, “unemployed-employable, poor people ask: “What must [I] do now, as [a] responsible [person], to contribute to a “good society” in the future, one in which [my] children will be able to live, peacefully, in justice, happily humanly? What must [I] do now, given the situation as it is, reality as it is, conditions as they are, the options as they are, limited by present realities?

ky het maar rek, sodat almal kan kry”. Being in a minister in this area further opened the researcher's eyes to the creativity and wisdom of poor people, God's people. It is as if God endowed them with “better insights” to make much of less. This is indeed remarkable.

²⁰⁴ It is gladdening to see the fruits of this approach as many people started to utilise the possibilities around them. Amongst the many possibilities they have pursued, the following income-generated initiatives needs mentioning: Cultural dance groups, crafting, bricklaying, organic farming and recycling of waste material.

[Only] When we are able to achieve something, to contribute something, to do something, to be something... then we are responsible". This is accountability to oneself but also an opportunity to reclaim ones dignity and integrity as people created in Gods image and his likeness. Accountability in this sense, calls for a change of attitude in the lives of the nearly 16000 people of this small community, and it is up to the church to bring about or to ignite that change.

3.10 CONCLUSION

Many studies have been conducted, many books have been written, and many volumes of papers have been presented in order to critically analyse poverty and its causes at a macro as well as at a micro level. In trying to understand the extent of poverty in our country and how it manifests itself at a local level we allowed contemporary poverty literature to inform our view of the reality of poverty in South Africa. This chapter attempted to encapsulate some of the historical facts and findings that have shaped our nation. Though some of the findings and research are disputable the one truth that is embedded in all the arguments is that poverty is an absolute reality and it is closely connected with the social framework of a society. For this reason the chapter further attempted to show how the poor experience and understand the challenges of poverty, but more importantly how from a faith point of view the church, as an enabler of the poor sought to deal with these experiences. "The eradication of poverty cannot be accomplished through anti-poverty programmes alone, but it requires active participation and changes in economic structures in order to ensure access for all to resources, opportunities and public services, to undertake policies geared to more equitable distribution of wealth and income, to provide social protection for those who

cannot support themselves, and to assist people confronted by unforeseen catastrophe, whether individual or collective, natural or social”.²⁰⁵

However, “it must be admitted that there are governments, intergovernmental bodies and voluntary agencies, including churches, with the support of well-meaning people from the ranks of the rich and powerful, who have genuinely tried to do their best for the poor and the oppressed. The South African Government is one such agency who strongly believes that poverty could be reduced if not eradicated. Driven by the urge to create a better life for all they enacted and implemented a multi-purpose plan that would, amongst other functions, change the situation for the poor. This plan they called the Integrated Development Plan. However, it is hoped that that this plan will not treat the poor as objects of their charity and good efforts or as recipients of their goodwill” (De Santa Anna: 1979: xix), but as partners in their own development. That is the purpose of the next chapter

²⁰⁵ World Summit for Social Development (1995), chapter 2, par. 23. That is why there is such a strong inclination towards the forming of partnerships in this chapter but also in chapter 1.

CHAPTER 4

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: A CATALYST FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Prior to 1994, South Africa was globally known for its inhumane apartheid²⁰⁶ laws which were euphemistically referred to as “separate development.” The apartheid government was mainly concerned with the well-being of a certain section of the populace to the detriment of the majority. These apartheid policies have - undoubtedly - left grave ‘psychological and physical imprints on human settlements and even government institutions’.²⁰⁷ Hence, the 1994 democratically elected government²⁰⁸ – through its manifestos – promised to address these imbalances, which ranged from capacity problems with municipalities, lack of creditworthiness and relations with capital markets, lack of involvement in municipal affairs, a declining economy, segregated residential areas, and backlogs in infrastructure, amongst others (DBSA 2000:1).²⁰⁹

The democratically elected South African government was quick to recognise that “its ambitious programme of reconstruction and development” (RDP) would reduce these socio-economic backlogs, inherited from the apartheid regime (Bardill 2000: 103-

²⁰⁶ Saunders (in Selethi 2004:193) refers to apartheid as “a set of policies implemented by the National Party Government from 1948 on”. However, apartheid was the extreme form of a system of racial segregation created over a much longer period. It is also a known fact that “apartheid was designed to systematically impoverish (economically, culturally, and psychologically) the indigenous people and to keep the masses in a state of dependency...” says August (2005:214).

²⁰⁷ See also Giliomee & Schlemmer (1985), Tomlinson & Addleson (1987), Swilling et al. (1991), Parnell et al. (2002), Theron et al. (2005).

²⁰⁸ Buthelezi (2004: 1) defines democracy as the “ability of citizens in society to effectively take part in choosing their representatives and to effectively participate in the decisions made on issues that affect them and society in general”. He further states that “for democracy to be meaningful it must be representative, accountable and transparent”.

²⁰⁹ The acronym DBSA stands for Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA).

108).²¹⁰ This they would achieve through accelerating the service delivery to local communities according to Mogale (2003:16). Hence a host of fashionable phrases such as Community-driven Development, Reconstruction and Development, Integrated Development became part of South Africa's political vernacular (cf. Chipkin 1996: 217-223).

This chapter encompasses two sections. The first section covers the evolution of IDP thinking; and for the greater part, the relationship between the Baviaans Municipality and its IDP²¹¹ insofar as to how the Integrated Development Planning process -as a strategy – could strengthen local government initiatives and also how it (the IDP) could enhance successful implementation of service delivery within the Baviaans Municipality. The second section - in recognising these challenges - attempts to deal with the fundamental question of how to integrate all these challenges so as to benefit the poor. Furthermore, and in line with section 17(2) of the Municipal Systems Act (MSA 32 of 2000), which requires local community participation in the affairs of the municipality, how the church - as a local community agent - plan to be a catalyst of micro-level community development in the context of the IDP.

²¹⁰ The country's new leaders realised that their commitment to democratisation, nation building and reconstruction and development could not be realised without a fundamental restructuring of the post-apartheid bureaucracy from an instrument of discrimination, control and domination to an enabling agency which serves and empowers in an accountable and transparent way.

²¹¹ The acronym IDP will be used interchangeably with reference to both the *planning process (integrated development planning)* as well as the actual *plan (integrated development plan)*.

4.2 THE EVOLUTION OF IDP THINKING AND ACTION IN THE BAVIAANS MUNICIPALITY

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)²¹² makes provision for three spheres²¹³ of government which are *distinctive, interdependent, and interrelated*²¹⁴ (section 40[1]):

- a central government sphere, also referred to as the national sphere
- a provincial government sphere consisting of the nine provincial administrations
- a local government sphere.

The Constitution requires that all spheres of government and all organs of state should secure the well-being of all people of the country (section 41[b]) and provide effective, transparent and accountable government for all [41c]. The local sphere of government consists of municipalities who have the Constitutional mandate to “manage the local government affairs of their own constituencies” in sync with national and provincial

²¹² The Acts essential to the Integrated Development process are:

- i. Municipal Systems Act (MSA 32 of 2000), especially chapters 4 and 5
- ii. Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998
- iii. The Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 together with the Municipal Structures Amendment Act 33 of 2000
- iv. Public Finance and Management Act
- v. Disaster management Act 57 of 2000
- vi. Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act 13 of 2005, and
- vii. Local Government and Property Rates Act

²¹³ The term ‘spheres’ is used in the Constitution to connote the principle of co-operative governance and thus calls for new types of relations between government structures and public institutions and civil society. According to the Constitution (Section 41) all spheres of government and organs of state must ‘co-operate with one another in mutual trust and good faith’. The Constitution further obliges all spheres to help other spheres build their legislative and executive capacities.

²¹⁴ While acknowledging the relationship of equality between the three spheres (National, Provincial, Local), national government and other role players have emphasized the need to place less emphasis on separateness and autonomy, and more emphasis on the need for all spheres to support each other to achieve national common objectives according to Flusk (2000:10).

legislation (cf. Zybrand 2000:3)²¹⁵. As the sphere of government closest to the people, municipalities are tasked with promoting the development priorities. It is incumbent on municipalities to adhere to the following developmental duties:

- 153(a) *to structure and manage its administration and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community; and,*
- (b) *to participate in national and development programmes.*²¹⁶

However, South African municipalities *are* facing immense challenges to fulfil their development mandate and to ‘manage their constituencies in a sustainable manner’ (Stoker in Parnell *et al.* 2002:31-39). Given the South African reality, municipalities are further burdened with additional historical challenges such as:

- Inefficient and costly settlement patterns
- The redeployment of taxable economic resources among all areas within the boundaries of a municipality
- Backlogs in service infrastructure in underdeveloped areas
- Creating viable municipal institutions for dense rural settlements
- Entrenched modes of decision making, administration and delivery based on urban apartheid social engineering
- The need to rekindle a culture of public participation between municipalities and the communities they serve.
- Vast backlogs in service infrastructure in underdeveloped areas

²¹⁵ See also the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 Of 1996, 151 (3).

²¹⁶ See footnote 212 for the different Acts.

- Great spatial division and inequality between towns and townships and urban sprawl which increase the cost of service provision and transport (Theron 2005:134).²¹⁷

The challenge posed by the Constitution to municipalities, is to reverse such disparities and to consciously integrate²¹⁸ its localities (DBSA 2000:1).

Flowing from that Constitutional expectation arises the question: “How does one reverse years of segregated planning with limited resources?” This in itself poses an even greater challenge to municipalities. To address these disparities, the post-apartheid government – through the Local Government White Paper (1998)²¹⁹- adopted a vision with the sole purpose to reverse apartheid patterns of development. They coined the term, Developmental Local Government.

The *Developmental Local Government approach* acted as a “springboard” for integrated development planning (Theron 2005:134). Some of the key principles that underpin local government in South Africa are²²⁰:

²¹⁷ Cf. the White Paper on local government (Notice 423 of 1998 :4:1)

²¹⁸ Integration in this sense would mean that municipalities examine their planning methodologies.

²¹⁹ The White Paper on Local Government is the brainchild of the Ministry for Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development. Local government – in terms of the Constitution- is a sphere of government in its own right and has been given a distinctive role in building democracy and to promote socio-economic development (Vali Moosa, former Minister of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development). The White Paper institutes the basis for a system of local government which is mainly concerned with working with local citizens and communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives. The White Paper is the expression of the belief that our decentralisation of a special type can work. South Africa has developed a unique form of decentralization in the context of the creation of three spheres which are required to govern in a cooperative manner (Pravin Gordhan, former chairperson: White Paper Political committee)

²²⁰ Sutcliffe (2000:8) argues that in the old dispensation “principles” such as authority and control; treating non-white citizens as transients; the creation of a racial-geographical order; financial segmentation and underdevelopment; and having advisory local government for black South Africans, were the basis that underpinned local government.

- a) Developmental municipal governance. The functions and actions of Municipalities should be exercised so as to impact on sustainability and integration, to reduce poverty and to build human capital.
- b) Integrated service delivery with integrated development plans.
- c) Ensuring equity and sustainability in the system.
- d) Ensuring democratic representation and accountability through encouraging participation in the system. Communities should be engaged in the 'design and delivery' of municipal programmes and projects.
- e) Leading and learning. Extreme influences at global, national and local levels are forcing local communities to rethink the way they are governed. Local government has a vital role to play in helping a community to find local solutions to local problems by creating a sense of common purpose (DPLG section B)²²¹

Furthermore, local government is urged to focus on development outcomes such as:

- The provision of household infrastructure and services;
- The creation of liveable, integrated cities, towns and rural areas
- The promotion of local economic development
- Community empowerment and redistribution

The developmental role of local government is further clued-up by mammoth historical processes as indicated by Lemon (2002:19-30).²²² Present-day South Africa has come a long way in not only democratising local government but, in line with global thinking,

²²¹ The acronym DPLG refers to [The] Department of Provincial and Local Government. Also cf. Theron 2005:135; Harrison 2002: 219-230; Pieterse 2002:10-13; Roodt 2001: 469-481; Treurnicht 1997c: 93-103, Democratic Local Government (2000-2001)

²²². For further reading on the historical processes which have informed local governments' development role, cf. Oldfield and Parnell(1998); DBSA (1998:3-21).

recognising that local government is the “key agent in transforming and democratising development in South Africa” (cf. Oldfield & Parnell 1998; DBSA 1998: 3-21).

The 1994 White Paper on Reconstruction and Development also identified municipalities as key institutions for the effective implementation of development projects, in consultation with other stakeholders, such as community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, when translated into action the RDP had a limited impact on securing the developmental role of local government. In the post-liberation period a wide-ranging set of policies have been developed to provide a legislative framework of developmental and democratic governance ensuring there is an “effective, equitable, and efficient system of delivery of infrastructure and services at a local level” according to Sutcliffe (2000:7).

4.2.1 What is integrated development *planning*?

The government²²³ realised that, in order to control its destiny in an ever-changing global environment, it needed to do more formalised planning. The apartheid planning which they inherited after 1994 left them with cities and towns that:

- have radically divided business and residential areas;
- are badly planned to cater for the poor – with long travelling distances to work;
- have poor access to business and other services;
- have great inequality in the level of services between affluent and underprivileged areas;

²²³ Here we refer to the post-apartheid ANC-led government which happens to be the first democratically elected government of South Africa.

- have sprawling informal settlements and expansive residential areas that make cheap service delivery difficult.

Determined not to make the same mistakes as the apartheid government (who excluded the majority of people in decision-making) they further realised that the inputs of the ordinary citizen would be pivotal to the success or failure of such a plan. This was the inspiration behind the idea of an integrated development plan.²²⁴

Integrated Development Planning, then, is an *approach* to planning that involves the entire municipality and its citizens in finding the best solutions to achieve good long-term development. In the business community this type of comprehensive planning is called *strategic planning*.

Thus, the developmental role of local government calls for a strategic approach to planning. In the *integrated development planning approach*, municipalities have found a vital tool for development. The value of integrated development planning for municipalities lies in the formulation of focused plans, based on development priorities. It is the principal tool for bridging the gap between the current development reality and the vision of equitable and sustainable development and service delivery (Coetzee 2000:13). It is “simply a single process of planning that incorporates sectoral phases and has been adapted specifically for municipalities” (DBSA 2000:4).

Local municipalities in South Africa are bound by law to use integrated development planning as a method to plan future development in their local constituencies. The planning process should be designed in such a way that it should become more strategic,

²²⁴ True to the nature of democracy even the term “integrated” suggests that all people regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender or social class should be included in this newly founded democracy. All people should become contributors to the planning process.

visionary and ultimately influential in their modus operandi. The inter-governmental Forum for Effective Planning described integrated development planning as:

“... a participatory planning process aimed at integrating sectoral strategies, in order to support the optimal allocation of scarce resources between the sectors and geographical areas and across the population, in a manner that promotes sustainable growth, equity and the empowerment of the poor and marginalised”.

In order to achieve that ideal, integrated development planning should adopt an interdisciplinary approach which aims to bridge the gap between economic and physical development planning. This requires an integration of the expertise of economists, sociologists, anthropologists, town planners, geographers, engineers, stakeholders and the existing knowledge²²⁵ within communities.

4.2.2 What is an Integrated Development *Plan*?

The IDP is the written plan that results from the integrating planning process, which spells out the Council's medium and long term development strategy. Though it is the principal strategic planning instrument which guides and informs all planning, development and management actions and decisions in a municipality, it is not *merely* a collection of programmes and action plans decided on by Council alone. The Integrated Development Plan is the result of a *process of debate between relevant stakeholders with different views and needs*.

The plan is a collective vision of the development that must take place to benefit all stakeholders.

²²⁵ Municipalities and/or development managers would do well if they drew on the indigenous knowledge within a community and respected indigenous knowledge systems (IKS).

An Integrated Plan is regarded as a *super* plan that gives an overall framework for development. The Plan provides a set of guidelines for why, what, where and when resources will be allocated to ensure realistic, sustainable development in line with the shared vision. The plan should look at social and economic development for an area as a whole.

However, though the IDP can be a powerful pictogram of unity for a community in its quest for development, it should not be seen as a quick fix solution for municipal, community-based or developmental problems.

On its own the plan is not a blueprint for success and cannot increase limited resources. What the plan can do is to exemplify what the options are for the community to use.

As has been stated above, all municipalities are bound by law to produce an integrated development plan. Once the IDP is drawn up, all municipal planning and projects should happen in terms of the IDP.

The IDP has a lifespan of five years and is linked directly to the term of office for local councillors. After every local government (municipal) election, the new council has to decide on the future of the integrated development plan. The newly elected council can decide to adopt the existing integrated development plan²²⁶ or simply develop a new IDP that may take into consideration existing plans. In most municipalities, an IDP co-ordinator oversees the IDP process.

Public participation is of the utmost importance when an IDP is drawn up. Whatever tool is used in planning, it has to show that the municipality has consulted widely and has the support of its communities in order to deliver its development plans.

²²⁶Before a newly elected municipal council can take a decision as to whether they want to adopt the IDP of its predecessor, it should firstly comply with Section 29(1)(b)(i), (c) and (d). A newly elected municipal council that adopts the integrated development plan of its predecessor with amendments must effect the amendments in accordance with the process referred to in section 34(b).

To authenticate the IDP process, many municipalities have established Integrated Development Forums (IDPF)²²⁷. As reflected in the Municipal Systems Act, integrated development planning is not only meant to be a once-off planning exercise, but a way of running a municipality.

It is meant to assist municipalities to be strategic in how they address the development challenges facing their constituencies according to the DBSA (1998). The IDP supersedes all other plans that guide development at local government level, and for that reason need to be approached holistically.

4.2.3 Characteristics of an Integrated Development Plan

No one will argue against the importance of IDP, but to engage in a planning process where development issues - land, housing, transport, infrastructure, water resources, energy supply, waste management, health issues, education, recreational activities, welfare, arts and culture, etc. - are planned for and managed in an integrated and sustainable way calls for a plan with outstanding qualities. Coetzee (2000:13-14) has formulated some of the characteristics that need to undergird the integrated development plan.

4.2.3.1 Integrated

In order to manage competing interests and functions the planning process should include:

- a. the integration of sectoral planning requirements, interests and issues
- b. the Co-ordination of line function priorities and activities

²²⁷ The researcher happens to be a member of the Baviaans IDP forum.

- c. the balancing of economic, social and ecological considerations in planning
- d. the integration of strategic, operational, sectoral, financial and spatial planning
- e. Co-ordination between municipalities and local and district councils
- f. Linking planning to management, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and review
- g. the integration of development information
- h. Alignment between priorities and actions of all three spheres.

4.2.3.2 Participatory

Participation, according to Ambert²²⁸ (c2000), gained its popularity from a growing recognition of the need to involve all stakeholders in development interventions, implying the full participation of the beneficiary of development at the local levels²²⁹. Experts like Chambers (1997) and Korten (1990) argue that if stakeholders are included in decision making, they will become self-reliant. (The beneficiaries of development must also be its contributors).

In essence this means dismantling the “top-down, prescriptive and often arrogant knowledge, transportation and communication styles which are imposed on communities by outsiders” (Theron 2005:106; cf. Chambers 1997). Transforming top-down planning practices, allows ordinary citizens to have a say in development issues

²²⁸ Available from the World Wide Web: <http://www.wits.ac.za/urbanfutures/papers/ambert.htm>. [2010, 15 June]

²²⁹ See also Oakley (1991); Oakley & Marsden (1984); Chambers (1997) and Burkey (1993).

affecting them.²³⁰ The following principles, amongst others, should form the basis for participation in the planning process:

- The need to consider the special concerns of people who have traditionally been marginalised when devising community participation procedures and mechanisms²³¹.
- The need to be cognisant of gender issues in participatory processes.
- The importance of taking into account language preferences within a municipality.
- The need to ensure that the participatory processes are in line with the financial and administrative capacity of the municipality.

Adding to the above principles, the Manila Declaration on People's Participation and Sustainable Development (1989)²³² draws attention to a few more principles to take into consideration:

- a) Sovereignty resides with the people, the real social actors of positive change. The sovereignty of the people is the foundation of democracy.

²³⁰ The Municipal Systems Bill (2000) fundamentally redefines a municipality as consisting not only of the structures, functionaries and administration of the municipality but also of the community of the municipality and therefore redefines the relationship between Council and the people. The planning process of truly developmental local government should therefore be a collaborative process of setting local priorities, resulting in partnership around implementation (Coetzee 2000:13ff).

²³¹ People with physical disabilities and elderly people were often overlooked in the planning of development procedures and mechanisms. Fortunately the leadership of the Baviaans Municipality has taken this seriously and has put mechanisms in place to include disabled people in the participation process. They have established a forum for the disabled, which happens to be very outspoken in development issues.

²³² See the Manila Declaration on People's Participation and Sustainable Development, (Philippines: ANGOC, 1989).

- b) The legitimate role of the government is to enable the people to set and pursue their own agenda.
- c) To exercise their sovereignty and assume responsibility for the development of themselves and their communities, the people must control their own resources, have access to relevant information, and have the means to hold the officials of government accountable. Freedom of association and expression, and open access to information is fundamental to the responsible exercise of this sovereignty.
- d) Government *must* protect these [principles]. People must work in solidarity to ensure that government accept and act on this responsibly.
- e) Those that would assist the people with their development must recognize that it is they who are participating in support of the people's agenda, not the reverse. The value of the outsider's contribution will be measured in terms of the enhanced capacity of the people to determine their own future.

These principles mean that an IDP should be published after adoption to ensure that the community, other stakeholders and other organs of state can have access to the document as a source of information.

4.2.3.3 Strategic

Coetzee (2000:14) is of the opinion that the South African reality with its limited resources and numerous demands makes it impossible to address all development issues in the short to medium term. She argues that an integrated development plan should empower municipalities to prioritise and *strategically* focus their activities and

resources. Coetzee further proposes a strategic, rather than a comprehensive planning approach. But what does this mean? Rauch (2003:13) states that the IDP was expected to become a strategic planning and decision-making process based on a debate on the “big” picture, “real” issues and appropriate ways of resolving them.²³³

The DBSA (2000:5) states that although some of the lexis used to describe IDP are different to those used by the business sector when it refers to *strategic planning*, IDP and strategic planning are the same. In essence it is a management tool which allows municipalities to take a broad, *strategic* view of their development needs, and to address all of the key issues in a holistic, integrated plan known as the IDP²³⁴. Putting it more comprehensibly: a strategic approach will enable municipalities to use what resources are available to do as much as possible of what is critically important.

4.2.3.4 Outcomes oriented

The success of integrated development planning must be assessed in terms of the extent to which it has promoted the developmental objectives of local government as stipulated in the Constitution. The outcomes of integrated planning should include:

- a) The co-ordination of infrastructure and service delivery
- b) The spatial integration of place of employment and residence
- c) The integration of multiple land uses
- d) The eradication of spatial segregation
- e) The integration of urban and rural areas

²³³ The IDP is taken from a concept that the business sector refers to as strategic planning.

²³⁴ See also Thompson & Strickland (1999); Rothwell (1989).

- f) The social and economic integration of different communities (DPLG 2000)

4.2.3.5 Principle led

The principles contained in the legislative and policy framework of IDP as defined in relevant Acts / White Papers should be kept in mind when embarking on the integrated development planning process. These principles should be used as yardstick to measure the relevance of municipal visions, goals, strategies and development decisions.

4.2.3.6 Sustainable²³⁵

Sustainability is an important concept in the South African development policy as contained in the following statement enshrined in the RDP White Paper of 1994:

“We require an integrated and sustainable programme...”, “Due regard will be given to affordability, given our commitment to sustainability and to achieve goals...” and “... creating a sustainable and environmentally friendly growth and development path”.²³⁶

Sustainable development can be defined in a number of ways but the best known definition, according to Davids, comes from the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) who define sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.²³⁷ It demands the full participation of the community in development.

²³⁵ Cf. also section 4:7 of this chapter

²³⁶ See RDP White Paper of 1994, p8. & p.7, respectively.

²³⁷ See World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). See also Davids (2005:22).

Such participation not only appropriately informs development plans but is also necessary for the sustained success of all development initiatives, including the environment.

In their quest for “better” development people can slowly but surely destroy the natural environment.²³⁸ There should be a “synergy between people and the environment” (Davids 2005:22-23). Economic growth cannot be sustained unless it is supported by ecological and community development. Integrated development planning should support community life and power, and “distribute the benefits of development equitably”, in order to sustain them over the long term. Sustainability considerations should be incorporated into all the aspects of the integrated development planning process (Coetzee 2000:14).

4.2.3.7 IDP is cyclic

Coetzee is of the opinion that integrated development planning should be a cyclical rather than a linear process. The advantage of a cyclic process is that the various phases of the planning process inform each other. Put differently: the short to medium term priorities and objectives should form the building blocks for the long term vision of the future.

The onus will be on the municipalities to adjust their plans annually and to make the required amendments based on developments within their geographical precincts.

4.2.4 Key Components of the IDP

The Municipal Systems Act (2000)(26) identifies the following minimum requirements to be crucial to IDP, i.e.:

²³⁸ See August 2005 (Lecture on Participatory Action Research) Stellenbosch

- (a) The vision for the long term development of the municipality, with special emphasis on the municipality's most critical developmental and internal transformation needs. A vision statement should express the essential purpose of the municipality and should not change unless a major development takes place which changes the purpose of the municipality's existence. A vision statement enables the municipality to use it as a "measurement for their achievements".²³⁹
- (b) The Council's assessment of the existing level of development including the identification of those communities which do not have access to basic municipal services.
- (c) The Council's development priorities and objectives for its elected term including its local economic development (LED) aims and internal transformational needs.
- (d) The Council's development strategies which must be aligned with national/ provincial sectoral plans and planning requirements binding on the municipality in terms of legislation.
- (e) The Council's spatial development framework which must include the provision of basic guidelines for a land use management system for the municipality.

²³⁹As DBSA (2000:17) states: Municipal vision statements often have a common theme i.e. "to provide affordable and need-satisfying services", "to enhance the quality of life of all its people", and "to be effective and efficient in service rendering."

- (f) The Council's operational strategies. Each operational strategy can be a project in itself²⁴⁰, which is why it should be well-defined in terms of value, time, volume, quality and monetary implications.
- (g) Applicable disaster management plans for the municipality. The best strategies can be thrown off course by unexpected events. The Council must as far as possible identify those issues that could have a catastrophic impact on achieving the objectives and goals and include a contingency plan to minimise the impact of such a disaster should it occur.
- (h) The Council's financial plan with budget projections for at least three years. A Municipal budget is a plan stating what activities a municipality intends to undertake in the forthcoming year, as well as what each activity will cost and what income will be necessary to finance this.²⁴¹
- (i) The Council's key performance indicators and performance target.

²⁴⁰ Normally the development objectives are the aftermath of the situational analysis done by a municipality. Based on those objectives, the municipality determines specific operational strategies through which it wants to achieve the objectives. Operational strategies are – unlike development strategies that have a future focus (long term) - short to medium term. They are directly focussed on accomplishing specific priorities (DBSA 2000:18).

²⁴¹There are two types of budgets that need to be prepared by Municipalities: 1) Operating budget and 2) Capital budget (DLG p.24). See also DBSA chapter 9

4.3. THE PLANNING, ADOPTING AND REVIEWING PROCESS (PAR)²⁴² OF AN IDP²⁴³

The IDP cycle involves the planning and drafting, the setting and monitoring of performance indicators²⁴⁴ and targets; the implementation; the annual review of, and amendments of the IDP, should circumstances dictate this. Each district municipality as defined in section 155(1) (c) of the Constitution (1996), is compelled to widely consult with the different local municipalities in its area. Only when this consultative process is followed can they adopt a framework for IDP in the area as a whole. This framework binds both the district and local municipalities.

During the consultative process the district and local municipalities need to identify the 'collective planning requirements, issues, principles and procedures' to be followed (Theron 2005:136ff.).

²⁴² The acronym PAR in this context refers to Preparing/Planning, Adopting and Reviewing and not Participatory Action Research

²⁴³ Before starting with the IDP process, some in-depth knowledge and understanding must be obtained of national and provincial policy documents relating to IDP. Every senior municipal employee should acquire an in-depth knowledge of this documentation as it guides the role and functions of developmental local government. The documents in question are the following: a) The White Paper on Local Government (1998) as it clearly outlines the basis for developmental local government. It describes among others the characteristics and outcomes of developmental local government; b) The IDP Skills Programme Learner Guide offers an in-depth discussion of the characteristics and outcomes; c) The different Acts op.cit. The IDP Skills Programme Learner Guide (p. 24-26) summarises the different acts. A prerequisite for implementing the methodology of the IDP is a thorough understanding of these acts; c) The National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP) as developed by the Office of the President in March 2003, is an indicative tool for development planning in government; d) The Provincial Growth Development Plan (PGDP); e) The intergovernmental planning cycle; f) Process Plan etc.

²⁴⁴ Indicators are designed to present information in the best possible manner for decision-making processes. They enable policy formulation, the setting of goals and objectives, and the monitoring of the policies being implemented (Isandla 2005). Indicators as stated by Fairfax (2002a, ii) can either be historical or defined by calculation or experimentation because they relate to data, statistics and indexes. For a view on different types of indicators see the report prepared by the Isandla institute on key performance indicators. See also Innes de Neufville (1975); Carley (1981); Parnell & Poyser (2002).

After following that procedure local municipalities are obliged to adopt a process to guide the planning, drafting, adoption and review of its own IDP²⁴⁵. Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act (2000) makes it clear that community participation²⁴⁶ is pivotal in the decision-making process. That process – as stipulated in section 29(1) - should be in compliance with a predetermined programme, specifying timeframes for the different steps in the process. The Act further states that the process should:

- (i) Be structured to allow for the community to be consulted on its development needs and priorities
- (ii) Allow the community to participate in the drafting of an integrated development plan
- (iii) Allow for the identification of and consultation of *all*²⁴⁷ role players in the drafting of an integrated development plan.
- (iv) [Be] Adopted after *proper* consultation with the community.

Essential to the above-mentioned process is the management process. According to section 30 of the Municipal Systems Act (2000), the management of the IDP drafting process becomes the responsibility of the executive committee, executive mayor, or committee of councillors appointed by the municipal council.

They will assign responsibilities to the municipal manager and submit the draft plan to the municipal council for adoption.

²⁴⁵ See Section 28(1)(2)(3) of the Municipal Systems Act. 2000.

²⁴⁶ In essence what is meant by community participation is this: if you want to address the needs of a community, then you must involve the community. But there is a deeper meaning that involves changing power relationships by including communities in decision-making processes. Participation in this sense may be seen as an encounter between the pursuit of livelihood by the popularity based groups and policies pursued by the state and other developers as Steifel & Wolfe (1994) so aptly point out.

²⁴⁷ The cursive *all* refers to the different participants within the given context.

Section 31 of the Municipal Systems Act explains how the province needs to monitor and support the IDP process before the IDP can be submitted to the MEC for local government for approval. Only when the MEC for local government has approved the IDP, can a municipality use it as “the principal strategic plan instrument” to guide and inform their planning, development, decisions, and management. Section 35 of the Municipal Systems Act further states that the municipality is compelled to follow its adopted IDP and that it must give effect to its integrated development plan in a consistent manner (cf. Theron 2005:133-147).

As already been explained, IDP is a product of an integrated development process, the key strategic planning instrument which guides and informs the actions of a particular municipality. Mogale (2003:232) highlights the importance of the IDP by referring to it as the “overarching fulcrum” around which local governmental development revolves.

To put it another way: the IDP then becomes the “artery” of a municipality; the “primary development champion, the major conduit for poverty alleviation, the guarantor of social and economic rights, the enabler of economic growth, the principal agent of spatial or physical planning and the watchdog of environmental justice”, as Parnell and Pieterse (2002:82) point out.

Putting it this way suggests that there are numerous advantages and benefits for municipalities in undertaking integrated development planning.

4.4 THE BENEFITS OF AN IDP

Like any “approach” the IDP has its advantages and benefits but also its impediments. Integrated planning serves as a catalyst for a municipality to focus itself and to develop a future-directed vision and pro-actively position itself in a changing environment. Through integrated development planning, a municipality will better understand the

challenges it faces and be able to identify ways of dealing with such challenges. IDP has the potential to enable municipalities to expand on the opportunities (strengths) while controlling and minimising the threats and weaknesses. (Cf. DBSA 2000:9). It further empowers municipalities to conduct an internal organisational audit or analysis in order to understand its internal dynamics. The aim of this analysis or audit is to take an unbiased view of the weaknesses²⁴⁸ of the municipality and to identify remedial steps. An Organisational audit focuses on exposing the vulnerability of the municipality to identified threats, but it also enables a municipality to capitalise on opportunities and to be pro-active and future-oriented. A further benefit is that IDP provides an opportunity to match resources to needs through a financial plan and to allow the community to make an informed decision on how to prioritise their needs and development services.

The Integrated Development Plan – which is a product of the integrated development planning process – is a holistic²⁴⁹ process that works according to the principles of project management²⁵⁰. It contains a range of projects aimed at specific development objectives. It enables the municipality to identify implementation steps, assigns project managers or task teams, links targets with dates, and monitors and evaluates the steps to ensure that the intended objective is achieved.

²⁴⁸ The word “weakness” in this context serves as an umbrella term for shortcomings, problems, limitations and imbalances of a municipality. Relevant, too, is the acronym SWOT which stands for “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats”.

²⁴⁹ Theron argues in favour of an IDP that is linked to a holistic approach. He follows Kotze & Kotze (1997: 61) and Rodinelli (1993: 90-117) saying, “A holistic approach ... stands opposed to the mechanistic, fragmented approach that has left so many unforeseen consequences and failures in its wake”. No single municipality / official can adopt a “know what is good for the community” notion. It is by journeying together –not on a vertical, top down, arrogant road, but horizontally- that the municipal official as change agent and the local community ‘change agent’ can find ways to understand each other’s contexts.

²⁵⁰ For further reading on project management principles, see Knipe et al. *Project management for success*, (Sandown: Heinemann, 2002); Burke, *Project Management: planning and control techniques*, 3rd ed. (Cape Town: Bernd Schuttler Print, 1999); Cusworth & Franks, (eds) *Managing projects in developing countries*, (New York: Longman, 1993).

It is clear, then, that IDP provides direction to improved performance and measurement, set targets and criteria for performance management²⁵¹ and as such enables management by objectives. Public participation in the planning process allows the municipality to develop a realistic, achievable plan for future development, and empowers stake holders with knowledge about the municipality's SWOT²⁵² status.

IDP creates a platform for stakeholders with different needs and priorities to learn from each other, and to negotiate and compromise around their established viewpoints. This can augment teamwork and lead to unification and consensus building.

Integrated development planning can also be termed “participative planning” because it “involves” stakeholders in decision-making.

Chapter 3 of the Constitution (1996) calls for all three spheres of government to promote co-operative governance. This means that a municipality, as the sphere closest to the people, should involve *all* stakeholders in decision making. Meaningful participation will lead to stakeholders being empowered with the necessary information and knowledge.²⁵³ There is, however, as De Beer (2000:271) caution, a difference between involving participants and empowering them, something policy-makers should be aware of.

IDP further facilitates budgeting in accordance with planning as required by the Local Government Transition Act, Second Amendment (LGTA). It provides for strategic

²⁵¹ Cf. Chapter 6 of the Municipal Systems Act (32 of 2000) for a summary on the establishment, development, monitoring and review of performance management system as well as Sections 41 & 45 which deal with the core components and audit of performance management respectively.

²⁵² The acronym SWOT, (as already indicated) stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

²⁵³ See White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997), Batho Pele Principles – “People First”.

management based on a budget driven by the priorities arrived at through a participatory planning process. IDP further provides a tool for change management which automatically comes with development. It creates the platform for people to think out of the box, to address contemporary issues and to embrace the opportunities the future holds. If carried out correctly, integrated development planning may lead to a new approach to management and planning, according to the DBSA (2000:9-11).

Looking at the benefits IDP brings to a municipality, no-one can argue against its importance, in that it can be a powerful symbol of unity for a community in its quest for *authentic* development. But as argued previously, the IDP is not a quick fix solution for municipal, community based or developmental problems. Like many other approaches it has its pitfalls to be aware of (ibid. 12-14). The following section summarises these pitfalls as taken from the DBSA.

4.5 PITFALLS TO AVOID IN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Municipalities all over will agree that, notwithstanding the good intentions of integrated development planning it is no easy task to put such planning into action, as Theron and Barnard points out (1997:35-62).

It is stated as a fact - by the department of local government- that the gap between government's delivery initiatives and the beneficiaries are still too huge. The DPLG (2004) argues that a lack of skill at local government level leads to weak interpretation and coordination of human resource problems and an inadequate dissemination of information. It is not always clear whether the municipal officials have a holistic understanding of the concepts, contexts and strategies of development planning and whether they have been exposed to new thinking and training in this regard. A lack of "know-how" can impact negatively on the IDP process at grass root level.

Municipalities would do well if they guard against treating IDP as an isolated, unilateral planning process. Sometimes they see IDP as the domain of a privileged few, whilst it is in fact a collective effort which calls for a culture or ethos of participation.

Hence Theron's (2005:140) warning that municipalities should guard against the "silo" approach²⁵⁴; they should rather opt for an interdisciplinary approach among officials and engage the community through an IKS²⁵⁵ approach. Some municipalities may regard the IDP as an end in itself instead of a continuous process that needs to be reviewed, monitored and evaluated regularly.

Failure to review the plan may lead to disillusionment amongst stakeholders. The content of an IDP should be transformed into specific, tangible and implementable operational strategic plans. Municipal officials must always be *realistic* about the implementation plans in order not to create false expectations among the stakeholders.

Rather than setting idealistic goals that might not be attainable, the municipality should be guided by realistic operational strategies and implementation steps. The best way to identify the realities of the day is to do a SWOT analysis. However, as DBSA (2000:12) correctly states, the IDP is more than just a theoretical document that highlights the SWOT status of a municipality. Unrealistic development strategies will result in IDP being experienced as a failure.

Another pitfall to avoid is when there are conflicting objectives and goals in the same municipality. Although diversity is important and may enhance the process, it should be stated that the development objectives of the IDP should complement each other.

²⁵⁴ Theron explains that a "silo" is a rigidly demarcated group of officials in a department who works in isolation. He strongly warns against this approach as it undermines a holistic and integrated planning approach.

²⁵⁵ The acronym IKS stands for Indigenous Knowledge System.

So often – as in many organisations - one find strong policy makers / interest groups who are exerting pressure on the organisation to follow a certain route.

A municipality cannot allow pressure groups or power-hunger officials to hijack the development process thereby creating wrong perceptions and false assumptions. Instead, the municipality through its IDP should recognise specific conditions and circumstances that are unique to the municipality. One way of doing it is to question past as well as existing policies, practices and procedures through the said SWOT analysis (cf. Theron 2005: 133-147).

Municipalities may be trapped in focussing their energy on current issues and ignoring the future. However, IDP is not only concerned with the municipality's current reality; rather, it aims to equip the municipality to deal with future expectations. Clearly, then, an IDP demands a proactive approach, a moving out of comfort zones and embracing change. As stated previously, municipalities are bound by law to use integrated development planning as a means to plan current and future development in their areas. However, this is exactly what IDP could become, an excellent development plan on paper which means nothing, unless the municipality demonstrates enthusiasm, commitment, proficiency and the political determination to transform development objectives into operational strategies.

Many, if not all, South African municipalities, traditionally followed a hierarchical approach when it comes to decision making. Hierarchical thinking can become a stumbling block in IDP, especially when the expertise is not vested in senior management. Without teamwork, relevant expertise, participatory planning, mutual respect and trust, IDP is doomed for failure. The success of IDP lies in the different municipal departments realising that the parts are not bigger than the whole.

For IDP to become what it is intended for – a realistic and holistic integrated development process – all relevant departments need to buy into the vision and mission of IDP as outlined in the different acts *op cit*.

4.6 IDP: THE CURRENT REALITY IN THE BAVIAANS MUNICIPALITY

The Baviaans Local Municipality completed its IDP for the current term of office (2006-2011) in March 2007. It is important to note that this IDP was not based on the previous IDP and that a new process was followed to compile the current adopted IDP. The municipal leadership followed the process described by legislation²⁵⁶ – as already outlined above – to complete the IDP process. It is commendable to see that they currently value the IDP as a development tool in the sense that they see it as a “strategic framework for municipal governance; a yardstick for political accountability and continuity; a vehicle to facilitate communication; an agent for transformation; a catalyst for socio-economic development; a weapon in the fight against poverty; a device for attracting investment; and a mechanism to fast track delivery – and above all the platform from which to engage in public participation”.²⁵⁷

Public participation was earnestly sought; they made it their duty to ‘involve’ the community as well as other stakeholders in the integrated development planning process²⁵⁸. The municipality confirmed its belief in developmental local government by

²⁵⁶ The researcher deems it not important to unpack the whole process overview that was followed by the Municipality to plan their IDP. There are nevertheless, some steps worth mentioning. It is clear that the municipality was informed by the legislative context *op cit*. However the researcher wants to highlight the current reality in the Baviaans Municipality with regard to the development priorities. See also the diagram (table 1) where the local process is depicted.

²⁵⁷ Cf. Davids and Maphunye’s article, “The public sector: promoting development and good governance, in *Participatory Development in South Africa: A Development Management Perspective*, ed. by Davids, et al. (2005:52-66). Also cf. Parnell et al. 2002 and Mhone & Edigheji, 2003a).

²⁵⁸ This was done through live debates in the library hall in Willowmore. As a member of the IDP forum the researcher noted the active participation of the community members in the IDP process. (Note the

taking a principle decision that the development of the people in the area is going to underpin the implementation of the IDP²⁵⁹.

In planning their IDP the Baviaans Municipality has taken into consideration, not only the legislative context, but also certain guiding policies and frameworks²⁶⁰ to ensure sustainable development that is horizontally and vertically integrated. Apart from the National and Provincial policies as outlined in the Constitution, the Municipal Structures Act (2000) guides District Municipalities to seek to achieve the integrated, sustainable and equitable social and economic development of its area as a whole by:

- ensuring integrated development planning and promoting bulk infrastructure development services
- building the capacity of local municipalities within its area.

The Baviaans Municipality not only considered these guidelines, they also cross-examined the problems identified by the institution and the community to formulate the development priorities for the Baviaans Local Municipality. In the analysis phase²⁶¹ of the IDP (problem analysis) the municipality not only examined the current reality by focussing on the existing problems, but also looked at what caused the problems in the municipality. They not only considered the community's perceptions and needs but also

explanation on participation, consultation and involvement in Chapter 2.2.3.1. This was a combination of consultation and involvement which may be termed 'active participation'.

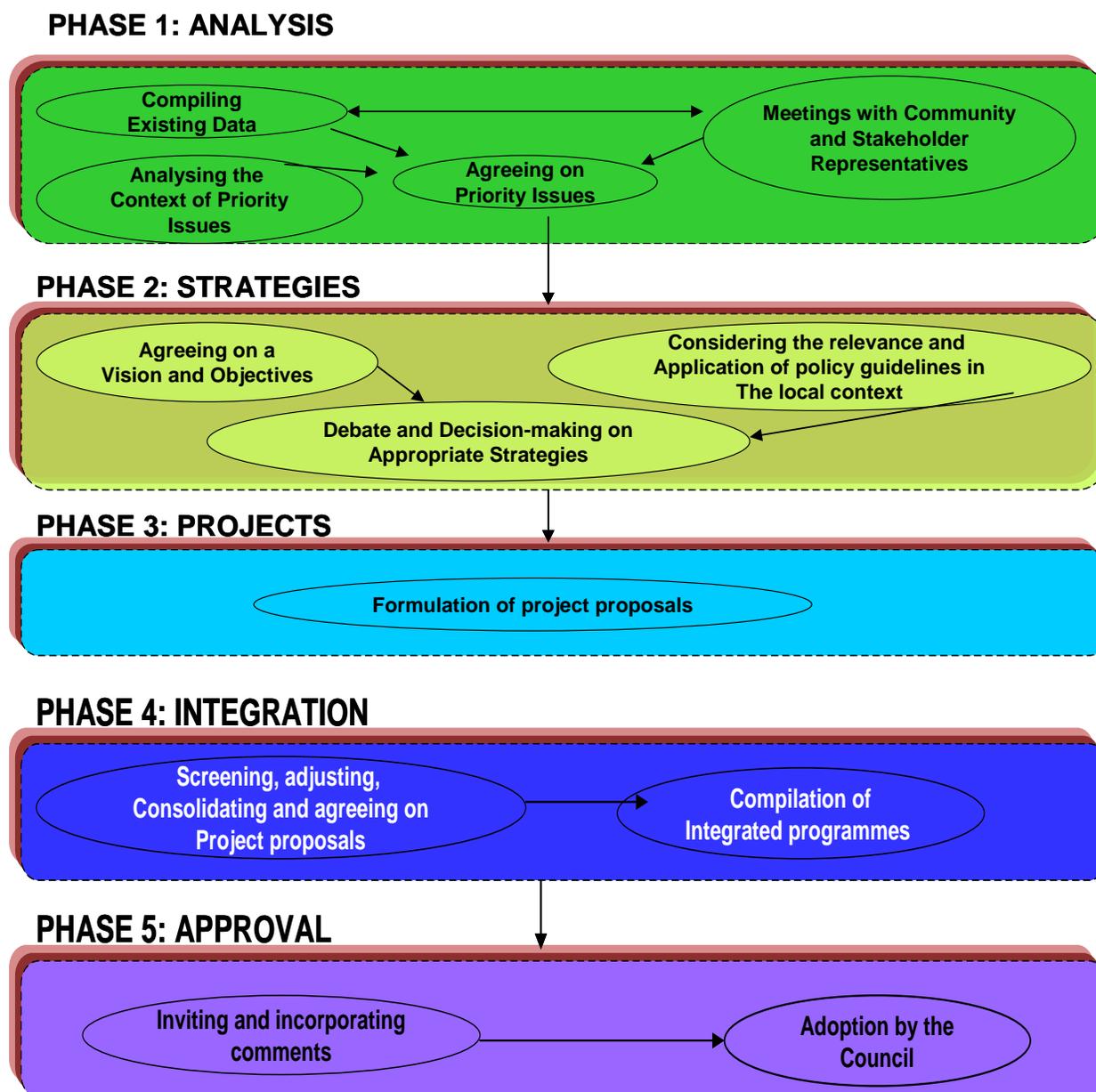
²⁵⁹ It is a hopeful sign to observe that the Baviaans Municipality is committed to economic growth, employment creation, sustainable service delivery, poverty alleviation and the eradication of historic inequities. It is further gladdening to note that they in many ways acknowledging the fact that infrastructure investment and development spending should happen in the most cost effective and sustainable manner.

²⁶⁰ Cf. footnotes 212 and 243.

²⁶¹ The process followed by the Municipality in the analysis phase was to have community workshops with the three communities in the local municipal area, i.e. Steytlerville, Willowmore and Baviaanskloof - to identify problems. Thereafter they looked at the current reality in terms of facts and figures. This was followed by a workshop on institutional problems with officials and politicians. Finally the Steering Committee met to discuss and decide on the development priorities for the Municipality.

facts and figures. The diagram below depicts the thinking behind the approach that was followed by the municipality.

Diagram 1

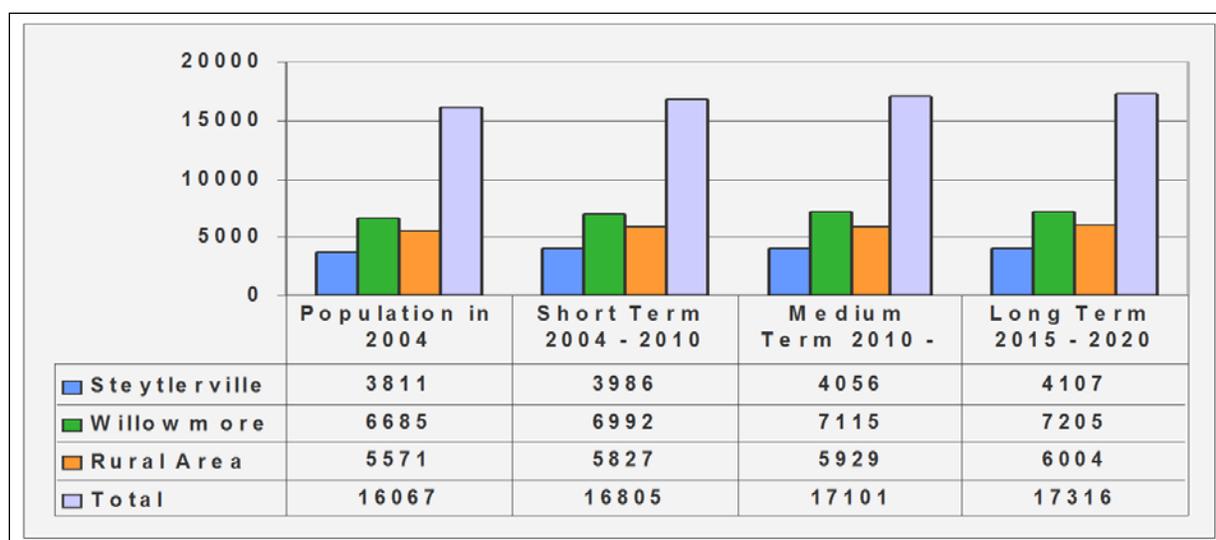


(Source: Baviaans Local Municipality)

The Baviaans municipal area covers an area of 7727.01 square metres with two *semi-urban* nodes and various smaller settlements. As noted before it serves a population of

almost 16000 people.²⁶² Approximately 41% of the population resides in Willowmore, 35% in Steytlerville and the remaining 24% of the people lives in the various smaller settlements. The percentage of people living in the rural areas has decreased considerably because many farmers are now recruiting their labourers from people living in the towns. Unfortunately no recent statistics are available to confirm the degree of urbanisation that has taken place. This influx has put immense pressure on the demand for service delivery²⁶³. The following demographic profile portrays the current situation in the Baviaans Municipal area with regards to housing, basic services, age distribution, level of education etc.:

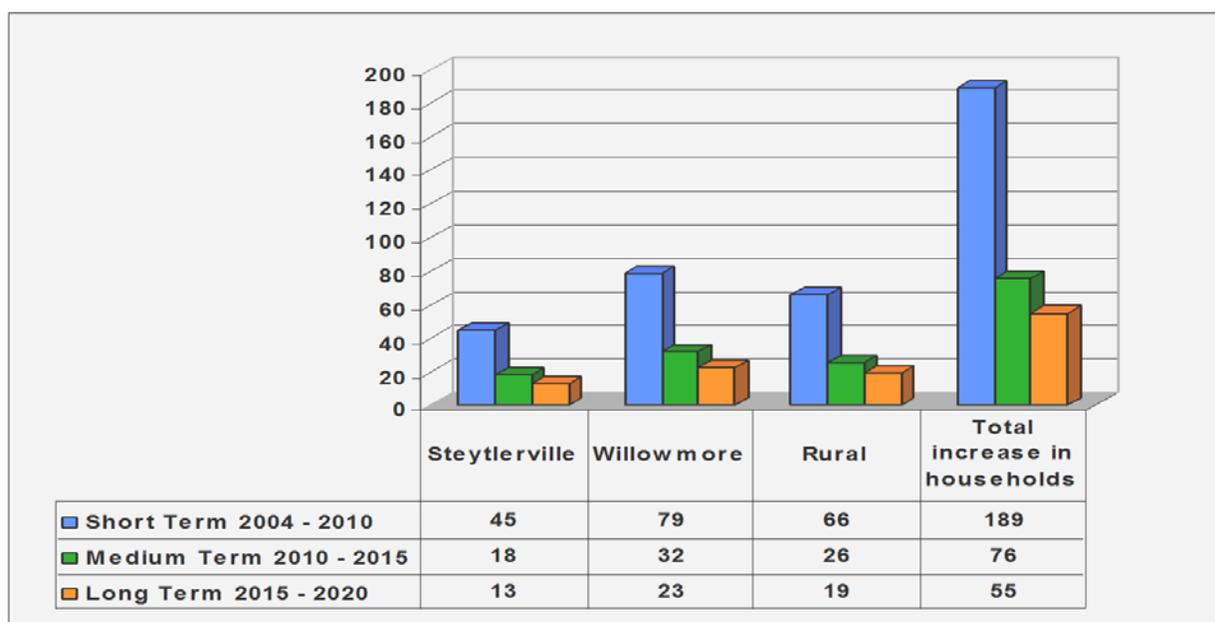
Graph 1: Number of households



²⁶² According to the Draft Spatial Development Framework, a negative population growth rate is projected in the medium term. This scenario points to the area losing people that could have contributed to the growth of the area. If this tendency for population growth in the Baviaans area continues, the revenue base of the municipality will be affected negatively. When the municipality is not able to stimulate development as a result of lack of funds, there will definitely be an exodus of people from the area. Sustainable projects and programmes become essential for the future survival of the area. To avoid a situation like this the Baviaans Municipality are well-advised to heed the assumptions and principles laid down by the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDP), i.e. (i) location is critical to the poor in order to exploit opportunities for growth and (ii) in areas with low development potential, government spending should focus on providing social transfers, human resource development and labour market intelligence.

²⁶³ This scenario is worsened by the following factors: only 19% of the people in the area are employed; 86% of the people earn an income of R0-800 per month.

Graph 2: Increase in number of households



(Source: Baviaans Local Municipality)

Housing is posing a big challenge to the Baviaans Municipality. Although 373 low-cost houses were built since 2001, the municipality is still faced with a backlog of more than 800 houses.

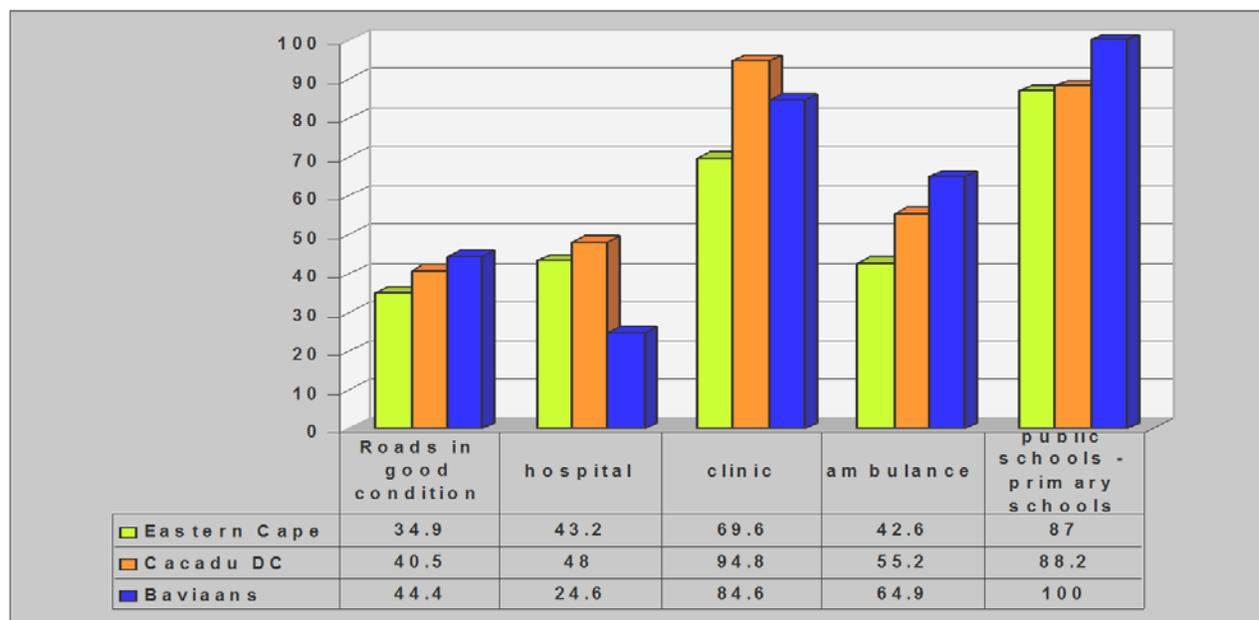
Both towns and virtually all settlements are faced with a shortage in low-cost housing.

At least the projected population growth rates will not exacerbate the need for houses.²⁶⁴

What make this situation worse are people who after been allocated a house never inhabited the house for reasons of their own. Some others are using these houses for spaza shops or Shebeen. Up until recently nothing has been done to solve this problem.

²⁶⁴ These figures were based on the 2007 Adopted IDP of the Baviaans Municipality. The situation has drastically changed since. Information gained from an interview with the municipal manager, suggests that the housing problem is “under control”. The researcher has done fieldwork and can attest that there are no shacks or squatter camps within the geographical boundaries of the Baviaans Municipal Area. This, says the municipal manager, is because “we are serious about service delivery”. One of the aims of the IDP, he says, is to fast-track service delivery. There is still a backlog but it does not create any significant problem for the Municipality at this time, as the greater part of the people who are on the waiting list still live on the farms where they are employed. It seems that the short term projections are covered by the number of houses that were built since 2001.

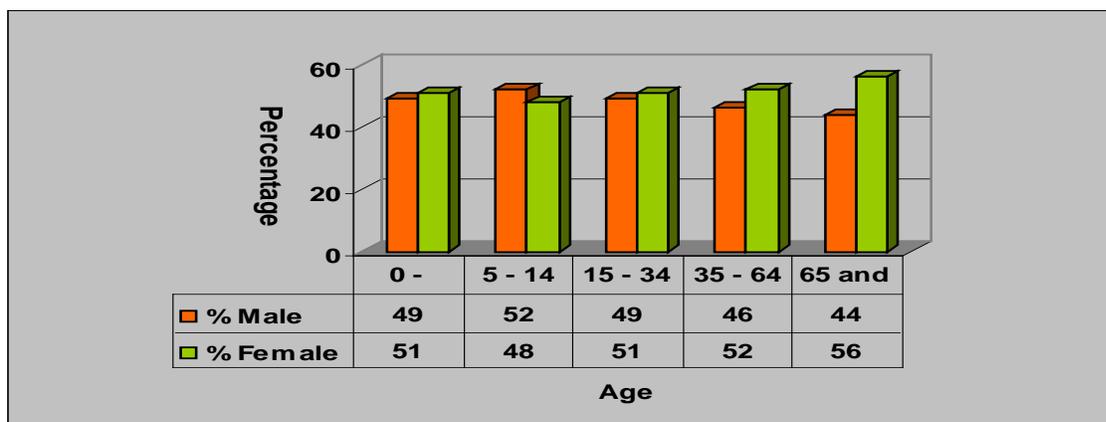
Graph 3: Household access to Basic Services



(Source: Baviaans Local Municipality)

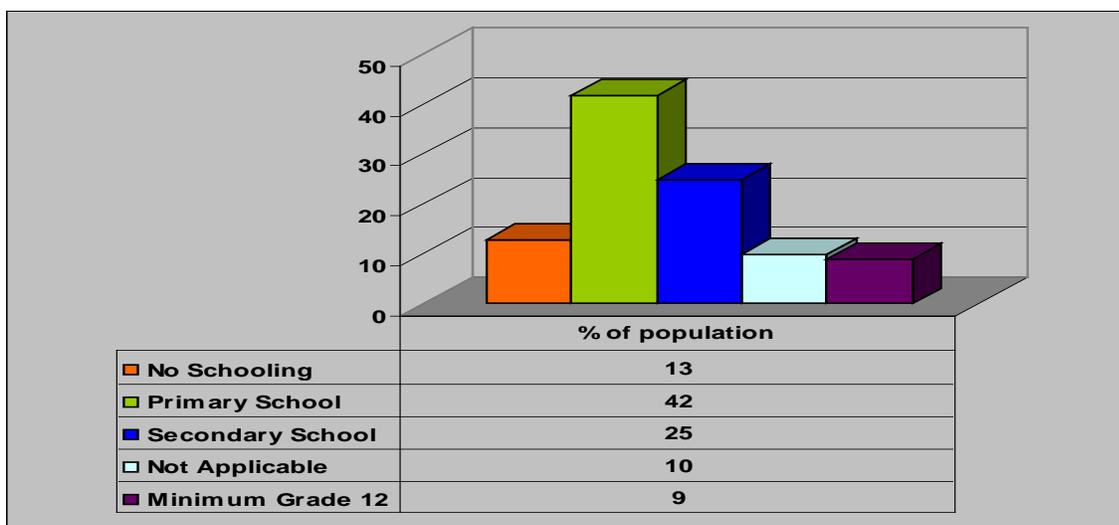
Service delivery is a major problem for many municipalities across the country. Communities in mostly all the provinces are taking to the streets to display their dissatisfaction with service delivery with regard to basic services. Somehow the Baviaans municipality must do something right as it never encountered the problem of people taking to the streets to boycott because of a lack of service delivery. This is not to say that there are no disgruntled residents, but they constitute a small percentage of the population, and it is mostly politically motivated. Nonetheless the Baviaans Municipality through its municipal manager seems serious about fast-tracking service delivery. One can only hope that this will still be a priority after the municipal elections, and that the municipality will keep on delivering these basic serves to the community of this area.

Graph 4: Age Distribution per Gender



The gender distribution of the populace across the various age groups is comparatively equal. Most of the male persons (52%) are in the age group 5-14 years and most of the female persons (56%) in the age group 65 and older. (See graph 4). Unemployment remains a problem as the majority of the male residents between the age group 21-64, are unemployed or economically inactive. The same applies to women.

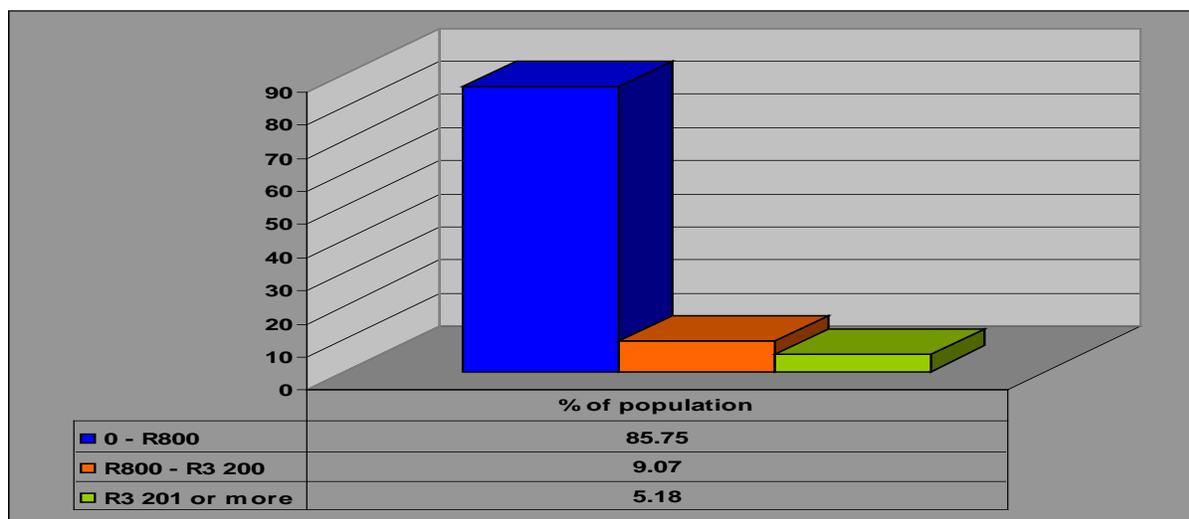
Graph 5 Level of education



(Source: Baviaans Local Municipality)

Only 25% of the population have some secondary education. 9% at least have a minimum of grade 12 of which only two percent will obtain a tertiary qualification. Sadly 13% of children who are supposed to be taken up by the schooling system do not attend school for reasons varying from socio-economic to material and religious reasons.²⁶⁵ There is furthermore no educational facility in the area that provides vocational or technical training. Considering the unemployment rate and level of income in the Baviaans municipal area, technical or vocational training could assist in reducing the unemployment rate and increase the monthly income of the people in the area. Local people could be employed in infrastructure and tourism projects when equipped with the necessary skills.

Graph 6: Monthly income as % of population



(Source: Baviaans Local Municipality)

The majority of people (86%) in the Baviaans Municipality generate an income less than R800, while 9.07% generate an income of between R800 and R3200. The remaining

²⁶⁵ We have a small segment of people belonging to Rastafarian faith. The children of these parents were not allowed in the primary school because of their dread locks. According to the school principal "It is not school policy that children should wear dread locks".

5.18% are seen as the well-off segment of the community. The first bracket (0-800) includes (people in elementary occupation) domestic /char workers, temporary workers, and people receiving some sort of grant from the government. The second bracket (R800-R3200) will be employees in for example the municipality, cleaners in the hospital etc. The other groups include health workers, safety and security officers etc. There is also about 2% who fall in the bracket (R9000 Or more). This category includes the professional people in the Baviaans Municipal area (teachers, professional nurses, social workers, police officers, etc.)

The diagrams above show the current reality in terms of the mentioned factors. The following section however will show the current reality of the IDP in the Baviaans Municipality in terms of its development priorities. The issues identified by the community and the various stakeholders/role-players were considered by the IDP Steering committee and analysed in terms of the current reality (statistics, resources, capacity) and the root causes. Four development priorities were identified, and they are:

- 1) Building the Institution and Employee Capacity

The Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) that is driven on a national level has identified six factors that constrain growth in South Africa. One of these is the shortage of skills, which is especially relevant since it affects all aspects of local government. In this regard the municipality is faced with serious challenges. A strong institution with the necessary capacity is vital to address these challenges successfully. Flowing from this, the municipality identified building the institution and employee capacity as its first priority. Hence they identified the following objectives:

- A well-established municipality with sufficient resources and institutional capacity to deliver an excellent municipal service and
- Working towards the creation of a positive, capacitated personnel corps geared to increase service delivery and good performance in services delivered (IDP 2007/8)

2) Enhance Community Services

Based on the limited resources and capacity in the area a strategic choice was made to invest in the people of the Baviaans municipal area. The municipality realised that though economic development and the provision of physical structures are important, it is even more important to invest in “developing” the people in the area. The municipality accepted this to be their second priority and identified the following objectives:

- Proud citizens that contribute to the development of their towns
- The Youth to be actively integrated into community development
- Improve community access to a comprehensive health care service
- Communities to have easier access to social services (IDP 2007/08).

3) Economic Development

The third development priority identified by the municipality was economic development. They realised that, in order to reverse the negative impact of the unemployment rate and the low level of monthly income in the area, they needed to stimulate economic growth in the area. Agriculture, tourism and service industries form the basis of the area’s economy. The Municipality envisaged the following goals:

- A pleasurable tourist experience.

- Investigate the financial viability and sustainability of all resources and facilities of already existent agricultural projects and their contribution to LED (IDP 2007/08).

4) Provision of Basic Infrastructure

Infrastructure development and maintenance is vital to the existence and development of a municipality. It also facilitates economic growth.

In addition, municipalities are constitutionally mandated to provide in the basic needs of communities. The fourth development priority has the following objectives:

- To supply sustainable basic infrastructure to all inhabitants of Baviaans: -
 - Water and Sanitation (90.6% have water on site while 52% have flush toilets)
 - Refuse removal and management of Dumping Sites
 - Housing and Electricity (73% use electricity as energy source and 25% use solar energy)
 - Streets and Storm Water Drainage
 - Municipal Buildings
 - Town and Regional Planning

According to the IDP process (see diagram 1), objectives, strategies and projects should be identified for the development priorities agreed upon in the analysis phase of the IDP. A template was designed to present priorities, objectives, strategies and projects as a whole. From the template a project list was compiled according to the development priorities. Each project that the Municipality embarked upon was to be carefully considered in terms of its financial implications, its source of funding, the department/person responsible for implementation and timeframes for completion of

such projects. However, looking at the current reality in the Baviaans Municipal locale (all the plans and projects highlighted on paper) it becomes important to ask whether the IDP –as a strategy- is sustainable. To answer this, we shall briefly measure the sustainability of the IDP against the core principles of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF).

4.7 THE IDP AND THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD APPROACH (SLA)

The Sustainable Livelihood Approach is versatile, and can be used in a variety of different circumstances, from project through to programme and policy level. At a grassroots level it is very important that a livelihoods analysis (analysis of circumstances) is conducted in a fully participatory mode, taking into account the many lessons already learnt from participatory methods and approaches.

The SLA was developed to help understand and analyse the livelihoods of the poor in order to improve the effectiveness of development assistance. The SL approach essentially comprises six core principles. It is -

- **People-centred:** it focuses attention on people's perspectives, priorities and strengths, and the various assets on which they can draw to achieve their objectives.
- **Responsive and participatory:** people themselves must be instrumental in identifying and addressing livelihood priorities. Outsiders need processes that enable them to listen and respond to the needy.
- **Multi-level:** recognise multiple actors (spheres of government, community / faith-based organisations, etc.) Poverty elimination is an enormous challenge that will only be overcome by working at multiple levels, to ensure that micro-

level activity informs policy development and that macro-level structure and processes support people to build on their own strengths. This relation needs to be considered in order to achieve sustainable development.

- **Building on strengths:** central to this approach is the recognition of everyone's inherent potential to achieve his or her own objectives.
- **Dynamic:** external support must recognise that people's livelihood strategies can rapidly change. Just as people's livelihoods and the institutions that shape them are highly dynamic, so is the approach, in order to learn from changes and help mitigate negative impacts, whilst supporting positive effects.
- **Sustainable:** it emphasises multiple dimensions of sustainability (economic, environmental, social and institutional).²⁶⁶

From the SLA flows the sustainable livelihood framework (SLF) which is the core of the approach. The most widely recognised (and used) SLF is the framework that was designed by the British Department for International Development (DFID).²⁶⁷ The SLF is based on the livelihood assets²⁶⁸ presuppositions viz. Human²⁶⁹, Social²⁷⁰, Natural²⁷¹, Physical²⁷² and Financial²⁷³ capital.

²⁶⁶ See Department for International Development (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/>). See also Bebbington (1999:2021-2044).

²⁶⁷ Other development agencies produced variations with differing degrees of emphasis on different components but all the models essentially share the same principles, components and interrelationships between the components.

²⁶⁸ Assets or capital in this context refer to people's strengths. Assets are of special interest for empirical research in order to ascertain if those who were able to escape from poverty, started off with a particular combination of capital, and if such a combination would be transferable to other livelihood settings. Furthermore it would be interesting to evaluate the potential for substitution between different assets/capitals, for instance a replacement of a lack of financial capital through a better endowment with social capital. Hence an accurate and realistic understanding of people's capital is crucial to analyse how they endeavour to convert their assets into positive outcomes says Kollmair and St. Gamper, (2002) in their input paper for the Integrated Training Course of NCCR North South (Switzerland: DSG).

This framework is not intended to be an exact model of reality but to provide an analytical structure to facilitate a broad and systematic understanding of the various factors that constrain or enhance livelihood opportunities.²⁷⁴ It should further be noted that the framework is built around these five assets to underline its interconnectedness and the fact that livelihoods depend on a combination of assets from various kinds and not just from one category.

Put another way, the SLF offers a way to detect people's access to different types of assets (human, social, natural, physical, financial) and their ability to put these to productive use (Krantz 2001:19). This is also the underlying assumption of the IDP.

The potential for the application of the SLA / SLF is diverse. Its flexible design and openness to change makes it adaptable to diverse local settings, where it can be applied to different extents associated with development research or project objectives.

²⁶⁹Human Capital is a very widely used term with various meanings; however, in the context of the SLF it is defined as "the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives" (DFID, 2000).

²⁷⁰ The meaning of Social Capital is a much debated issue but in the context of the SLF it is taken to mean the social resources upon which people draw in seeking for their livelihood outcomes, such as networks and connectedness, social claims, social relations, affiliations, associations, etc. Access to social capital is sometimes determined through birth, age, gender, and may even differ within a household.

²⁷¹ Natural capital refers to the natural resources (soil, water, air, genetic resources, etc.) and environmental services (pollution, erosion, etc.) from which resources flow, and services useful for livelihoods are derived.

²⁷² Physical capital comprises the basic infrastructure and producer goods needed to support livelihoods such as affordable transport, secure shelter and buildings, adequate water supply, sanitation, etc..

²⁷³Financial capital denotes the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives, and it comprises the important availability of cash or its equivalent that enables people to adopt different livelihood strategies. Among the afore-mentioned assets / capital, financial capital is probably the most versatile as it can be converted into other types of capital or it can be used for direct achievement of livelihood outcomes (e.g. purchasing of food to ensure food security). However, as Kollmair and St. Gamper (2002:7) observe, "it tends to be the asset least available to the poor..."

²⁷⁴ Department for International Development (DFID), Sustainable Livelihood and Poverty Elimination: Background Briefing, November, 1999.

Within the IDP (projects or programmes) SLA can be used to sharpen the focus of monitoring and evaluation systems. For instance, one can apply SLA to a water project in order to analyse, monitor and evaluate its efficiency. Similarly SLA can be used to refocus existing projects within the IDP to better address the needs of the needy. Thus, to summarise this section, the core principles of the SLA and the asset presuppositions of the SLF are all contained within the confines of the IDP.

4.8 IDP: An objective assessment

In their assessment of the IDP during 2003, the National Capacity Building Strategy, the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) gave the IDP a very low rating. The PSC, for example, conducted a survey in 2000 to see how IDPs comply with Batho Principles and found, inter alia, that the people were seldom consulted about their needs; access to service was poor; and that there were huge communication gaps between local government institutions and the communities they served.

Similarly, the CDE conducted its own research (2003) and found the IDP process to be over-ambitious, inadequately detailed, consultatively driven and not responsive to public input. Reasons are that IDPs are treated like “state secrets”; that public input and participation are constrained by the absence of functional Ward Committees, and, most importantly, that many municipalities and their IDPs fail regarding the crucial issue of public participation principles and strategies. This was the scenario in many local municipalities during the inception of the IDP.

The researcher's own empirical research (2005/6) echoes these findings.²⁷⁵ However, much has happened since 2003, particularly with regard to how people see the IDP.

To verify these assessments, the researcher conducted unstructured and informal interviews with many local residents in order to get a "grassroots-understanding". The findings revealed that, where in the past people were uninformed about the IDP process; they now are active participants²⁷⁶ in the processes. The IDP as it seems is not a municipal-owned process anymore, but is co-owned by the community, as is evident from the next insert:

Ons het, in samewerking met die plaaslike munisipaliteit, projekte op die IDP geplaas wat ons (die gemeenskap) behoeftes kan aanspreek en daarom is die IDP 'n werkbare plan, wat werk skep. Al is hierdie slegs 'n tydelike werk is ek dankbaar want nou sal ek ten minste my kind se skoolfooie kan betaal en vir my gesin sorg".²⁷⁷ (*The IDP is a workable plan because, (i) we had a say in what projects we would like to see on the IDP, and (ii) because it helped me to provide for my family. Though this a temporary job, I can at least pay for my child's education, DEJ*)

The following remark comes from a small-scale building contractor in Willowmore:

Ons baat ook nou by projekte wat op die IDP verskyn want ons het 'n munisipaliteit wat luister na ons. In die verlede het die munisipaliteit slegs kontrakteurs van buite die dorp gekry, maar dis nie nou meer die geval nie. Ons doen nou self die werk in ons dorp en dit

²⁷⁵ The following crucial point needs to be made. Informal interviews were conducted with community members who belong to different political parties, i.e. Democratic Alliance (DA) and the African National Congress (ANC). These are the two major political parties in the Baviaans Municipal Area. The other political formations (Cope, "ID") are virtually non-existent. We have also informally conversed with people who were a-political. Though there were complaints, it was not against the IDP as such, but more against the DA-led municipality.

²⁷⁶ "Active participants" in this case refers to communities being involved through duly elected representatives of their respective areas. This however is not "authentic participation", but what Rauch (2003:18) refers to as "structured participation".

²⁷⁷ This remark comes from a young unemployed father with whom the researcher had an informal discussion about unemployment issues in the Baviaans Municipal Area.

laat my goed voel. *(In the past IDP projects were given to contractors outside the geographical boundaries of our municipality, but it is not the case anymore. Our municipality listened to the plight of the residents and I am pleased to say that we benefit tremendously from the IDP, DEJ).*

From the above statements it is evident that the IDP is held in high esteem by at least some of the residents of the Baviaans Municipal Area. This observation strengthens Rauch's assessment as quoted by Theron that the IDP was expected to create a platform for governing bodies and communities to debate and agree on the direction a municipality wanted to take. It is clear that IDP was intended to be a strategic planning and decision-making process based on a debate on the 'big' picture, 'real' issues and appropriate ways of resolving them. Thirdly, that IDP was intended to become a tool for better and faster delivery. This is also how the municipal manager of the Baviaans municipality, views the IDP.

According to him the Baviaans municipality is "well on track with most of the projects" identified in the IDP. The reason for the successes of the IDP, according to him is firstly, that the municipality formed partnerships with the community, and, secondly, that the community forms an integral part of the decision-making, planning and implementation process. He sees the IDP as an "opportunity for the municipality (local government) to journey with the local community to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and to improve the quality of their lives."²⁷⁸ This is precisely why the church - as one of those role players (and perhaps the strongest voice) in the community, - decided to join the journey in search for a better life for all. The next section briefly deals with the stance of the church with regard to the IDP.

²⁷⁸Interview with the Municipal Manager (MM) of the Baviaans Local Municipality on February 16, 2010.

4.9. IDP AND THE CHURCH: A CHALLENGE ²⁷⁹

It should be remembered that the ultimate aim of the IDP is to improve the quality of the lives of all people, especially the poor and marginalised in the community. The programs and projects contained in the IDP have been drawn up with people as the focal point. When government introduced this plan their intention was first and foremost (or so they say) that people should benefit from it (cf. Theron 2005: 134). Thus, local government (municipalities) was entrusted with this mandate as they were the institution closest to the people. However, local government realised that there was another institution much closer to the people, viz. the church and if ever they wanted to be successful in their endeavours they will have to recognise the church as major influence in the lives of many.²⁸⁰ For this reason, the Baviaans Municipality through its mayoral committee, invited the church to join in.²⁸¹ (The church in this area was on board since the inception of the IDP)

²⁷⁹ The researcher is aware that in other parts of the country, the IDP is not hailed as a super plan by the church. Being said that, (and for the sake of clarity) the researcher needs to emphasise that the focus of *this* study is on a demarcated area called the Baviaans municipal area. It is precisely for this reason that this section seeks to investigate how the church *in this* area plan to integrate the IDP challenges for the well-being of the people *of this* area.

²⁸⁰ There could be many other reasons why they wanted the church on board. Given the influence of the church in this area it could be that they genuinely wants to tap into the strength of the church to better the life conditions of all the residents. It could also be that they strategically wants to silence the church in the same way as is happening with our once “vocal” church leaders who have become bed mates with the state.

²⁸¹ At first local congregations used to represent their own constituencies (members) at these meetings. Most of these meetings were attended by the minister of the United Congregational Church as he displayed a keen interest in community matters. (This is also the largest congregation both in terms of membership (3000) and infrastructure (five school buildings and a fully equipped clinic). This however changed when the Willowmore Interchurch Forum (WIF) was formed in 2003. This forum took over most of the responsibilities of the Ministers fraternal who dissolved in 2003 because of a shortage of trained ministers. Representation on the IDP forum is now on behalf of the WIF who speak for the majority of local congregations in this area.

4.9.1 Why the church in the BMA decided to join in the IDP process

Many reasons could be given, but what follows could be regarded as important to the context of the Baviaans area.

4.9.1.1 *The human element*

It is noted that the IDP carries a strong human element. It is hailed by many as the single most inclusive plan that will “improve the life conditions of people” as the DA counsellor said.²⁸² It is not about projects and programmes; it is about people, according to the architects of the IDP. Improving the quality of lives is what it is all about they say. Uplifting the poor through decent sustainable jobs will not only improve the lives of the poor, but will restore their dignity as people created in the image and likeness of God. This is also Bruwer’s view that “the basic cry of the poor is for human dignity” (1996:4). This viewpoint is further reinforced by Pieterse (2001:114) that “we must realise fully that the human dignity of the poor should top our list of priorities”.

This explains the church’s presence in this otherwise “political process”; to ensure that human dignity is entrenched in the development priorities of the IDP.

If then, uplifting the poor is what the government and other non-religious agencies so eagerly aspire to do, then the church as the body of Christ, “who has been called to serve” the poor, should equally be concerned about the well-being of God’s little flock (cf. Pieterse 2001:113) Meeting the needs of the naked, the hungry, the disabled, the oppressed, the sick, the homeless, the bereaved, the widows and orphans is actually kingdom work and therefore the mission of the church (cf. 1.7.2.1)

Was that not what Jesus meant when he opened his ministry with these words: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor”

²⁸² Conversation with DA counsellor, Japie Booysen, (06 September 2010).

(Luke 4:18). His deep concern for the well-being of humanity is reflected in this verse. “Do not deprived foreigners and orphans of their right; and do not take a widow’s garment as security for a loan (Deut. 24:17). It was for reasons such as these that the church needed to engage the morals of the IDP.

The main concern for the church should always be the well-being and wholeness of God’s little flock (cf. Luke 12:22f). This the church can do only if it becomes the conscience of the government in the service of Him who has sent us into the world with the message that the Kingdom of God is near (cf. Luke 10). He is sending us forth like lambs among wolves (10:3) knowing all too well how difficult it is for a lamb to confront a wolf. This is not an easy charge that is laid upon the church but it is a necessary and worthy one. This brings us to the next reason why the church needs to be involved in the matters of the IDP.

4.9.1.2 To be its conscience

The IDP is hailed as a super plan, while the truth of the matter is that the IDP is a political initiative, created by politicians for political gain. In an imperfect society where corrupt men/women looking after their own interest first, lining their pockets and lacking integrity at the expense of the poor, we need men and women of integrity to become the conscience of such people. Caring for the people of God involves care that confronts these malpractices (cf. Gerkin 1997:25). This young democracy is a living testimony that the poor of this country cannot rely on the goodwill of politicians. It seems as if “no political project is capable of inaugurating a just society, for human nature is corrupt and we live in a fallen world, where the only politics that is worth taking seriously is politics of imperfection” (cf. Forester 1998:45).

Many reports documented how outspoken the church was; always ready to defend the defenceless and be the voice of the voiceless; and how eager it was to be the conscience of the apartheid government, because that was their “calling”. This is how one of the most outspoken and respected church leaders, Frank Chikane put it:

Our mandate to carry out these activities comes from God and no man and no government will stop us. If the state wants to act against the church of God in this country for proclaiming the Gospel, then so be it (1998:34).

How sad that the very same church prefer to keep silent when politicians defraud the state; when building contractors pocket millions of rand that was intended for decent housing; when IDP projects cannot be implemented because the contractor fled the country with the money that was intended to finance these projects. This is a common face in especially small town areas. The people that suffer the most is the very same people who are sitting in our pews on a Sunday, listening to our theological interpretations of how God is on the side of the poor and vulnerable, and how he will come to their rescue. It seems as if the church does not want to come into conflict with the power structures of its time. The voice of the church has become very quiet since 1994. Even the former minister of finance, Trevor Manuel lamented the silence of the church: “

What worries me the most of the church in the past ten years is that it became silent. The challenge to the church for the next ten years is to incarnate God in the context of South Africa (cited in Boesak 2005:133).

If quality of live is what the IDP aims for than it is upon the church to ask: how will a substandard two roomed RDP house improve the quality of life of a household of eight?

If the government hails the IDP as *the* plan, than it is upon the church to make sure that the integrity and dignity of the beneficiaries of *that* plan is not compromised. The presence of the church in these local government processes should never be a “rubberstamp presence”; rather it should, in Christelike manner engage government, on the issues of the day (water, sanitation, accessible roads, decent housing, sustainable jobs, education, health etc.). These are crucial spheres of public life in desperate need of public opinion.

The government is very well aware that “church happens in every location where church members spend their daily life and do their work” (Swart & Orsmond 2011:2). That is why the church cannot decline the burden of human need by running away or keep silent. It needs to – like in the apartheid era - engage the power structures without fear and without compromising its nature as the people called. Likewise “it has to remain identifiably different from the *power structures*, (my italics) else it will cease to be able to minister to it” (Bosch 2010:388). Even if they don’t listen to us we still need to be their conscience with the hope that the voice of their conscience will speak louder than any other voice, or in the words of a wise old man, “*die stem van ‘n mens se gewete praat harder as enige ander stem*”.²⁸³ At least we can find comfort and hope in Luke10:16: “He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me”.

4.9.1.3 *To restore hope*

Hungry, homeless, unemployed people can easily become despondent. These stress events greatly contribute to the irrational behaviour of the poor. It is noted how poverty

²⁸³ These were the wise words of the late “Oom Jan Maganie”, a life deacon (elder) in the Congregational Church.

enhances substance abuse (3.8.3) and how it contributes to crime and violence (3.8.4). Drug and alcohol related crimes account for nearly 60% of all criminal activities in this area, with alcohol abuse topping the list, according to the warrant officer responsible for this criminal activity.²⁸⁴ It is not rational behaviour to steal from another person. It is not normal for peace-loving members of congregations to be arrested for robbery. Something must be terribly wrong if a pastor of a church gets arrested for stock theft which amounts to 7.6% in this area. This is what poverty does to people. It humiliates and degrades people to thugs and troublemakers.

It makes people lose hope and fail to see light at the end of the tunnel. Helplessness makes people find meaning and purpose in something else, mostly pleasure as is the case in the Baviaans.²⁸⁵ Bennet and Hughes (1998:44) explain: “For the poor, having no future, hope is reflected in hopelessness about the present”. The church, as Christ incarnate, is the one institution that can restore that hope as Bennet and Hughes further explain “Finding hope in Christ and the future establishment of his Kingdom transforms everything. The poor whose life was drenched in blackness, see light at the end of the tunnel and even their present material circumstances begin to change for the better in this glow” (ibid). “Christian hope” says Bosch (2010:508) “does not spring from despair about the present”. “We hope” he says, “because of what we have already experienced”. Bosch (ibid) continues: “Christian hope is both possession and yearning, repose and activity, arrival and being on the way... Christian eschatology ... in this sense is taking place right now” (:508, 9).

²⁸⁴ According to the police officer the figure could be higher because as he said “drugs and alcohol played a major role in almost all the cases that we have investigated”.

²⁸⁵ Interesting to note that most teenage pregnancies happen as a result of youngsters visiting taverns (hokke as it is known in the Baviaans) looking for pleasure.

It is remarkable how people – literate and illiterate- depend on the spoken word to become alive in their circumstances.²⁸⁶ In childlike way they would bring their fears and misery, trouble and disappointment to the church. They will come as unemployed, miserable people because the system has failed them. They will bring to the church their incomprehension as to why they were overlooked for a job that perfectly matched their qualifications. They will bring to the church their frustrations of not being awarded a tender for an IDP project. [And] In childlike anticipation, they will wait for something to happen; something in the line of “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him...” (Rom 8:28), or perhaps the ever popular verse in Jeremiah 29:11: “For I know the plans I have for you...plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you *hope* and a future”. Just as they are eager to seek answers so are people eager to find answers and the only place they would come to –most of the time- is the church. The church is seen as the bearer of that “hope in Christ”. Our mission according to Botman (2001:5) is to confess this hope not passively “but dynamically in our context” (*my emphasis*).

When the government promised the people “a better life for all” it created expectations. We see the frustration and anger of the people in the countless protest marches against lack of service delivery. They have lost hope in the empty promises of the power structures. The church should be aware of this false worldly hope and put something better on the table, and that is Christian hope. Christian hope is real, it’s not an illusion “it is based on the faith in the redemptive actions of the triune God which culminates in the cross and resurrection of Christ” (Koopman 2006:39). Koopman continues: “This hope builds upon the promises of this God who proved in history that he keeps his word

²⁸⁶ People in small towns are known for regularly “going to church”. The average church attendance over a period of one month is about 60% for the largest congregation and 55% for the smallest congregation (100 members).

and that He is worthy of confidence” (ibid.). It flows from this that the church needs to engage in the development priorities set out by the IDP; to see that it brings a glow to the faces and lives of the hopeless. Since one of God’s key values is the protection and strengthening of [all] the poor and [all the] vulnerable, “much development work is therefore kingdom work” (cf. 1.7.2.1) (even where no one personally accepts Jesus as King) (cf. Hughes & Bennet 1998:26). The establishment of God’s kingdom does not begin only when individuals accept the lordship of Jesus, but occurs whenever God’s values are established in a particular situation.²⁸⁷

There are numerous examples in the bible where Jesus heals people, even though they did not express faith in him. However, this did not stop Jesus from healing them. He reaches out *to help them* and in the process of doing so brings them to faith and trust in the God of justice (cf. Pillay 2002:139). It behoves the church, therefore, to have concern for all - especially the poor - and to resist structures and powers that dehumanise and oppress people. To work towards the well-being of all people becomes the church’s Godly-imposed calling.

²⁸⁷ The kingdom -which is so different from the world which has not bowed before God- continually seeks to reach out to the world. In his mercy God sustains and provides for all his creatures, irrespective of their response to him, but he promises to provide in a particular way for those who seek his kingdom and his righteousness first (Mt. 5:45; 6:33; Acts 14:17). He reveals his power and nature to all through creation, but he reveals himself far more fully to those in the kingdom (Mk. 4:11-12). He rules over and will judge all nations and individuals, however evil their actions, but he rules in a unique way over those who confess him as Lord (Acts 17:26; 2:23). He delegates the care of creation and the protection of humanity to Christians and non-Christians, but he delegates a unique authority to those who have entered his kingdom (Rom. 13:1ff; Mt. 16:19). God fulfils his aims for the world through a humanity that retains something of the image of God, but he works particularly through those who are ‘transformed’ into the ‘likeness’ of Jesus (James 3:9; 2Cor.3:18- *eikōn*, ‘likeness’ here, is the word used in the Septuagint to render *selem*, ‘image’, in Gen. 1:26). Overall, God intends that his providential concern for the whole of humanity should point humanity to the fuller experience of his care authority that awaits them if they bow before him and enter his kingdom (Hughes & Bennet 1998: 32).

4.9.2 The Church: a worthy and valued catalyst

The question that begged a response here is: How can the church participate in the upliftment of the poor and needy without compromising its autonomy and secularising its life in worldly forms of society? Would it not be better for the church to leave the corporate responsibility for the welfare of the people in the hands of the government, and other secular institutions, seeing that they have the means? The answer to these questions could be found in the character of the church which is both political and spiritual at the same time. This “dual orientation” does not mean the church should become a political force per se, because the church should never go out in search of political power. The church’s *being-in-the-world* is at the same time a *being-different-from-the-world* (Berkhof 1979:415 quoted in Bosch 2010:386). It lives by a political reality beyond the politics of the world. This is a political reality based on kingdom values where the poor enjoys preference. Fact of the matter is that everything that happens in the political realm touches the lives of people in and around the church.

It is noted how the IDP as a political initiative may have impacted the lives of the people, and also how the church, by becoming involved actually “*incarnated*” herself into the political realm. This is not new for the church given the unjust, abnormal situation of the previous political era. Human need, from a South African perspective could very well be attributed to the unjust political, social and economic structures. That is why it is not strange for the church to concern themselves with issues that is regarded as belonging to the political domain. Unclean drinking water or inaccessible roads are just as much a religious concern as it is a political issue and it touches the lives of all who haven prey to it.

Nonetheless the fact of the matter is that the church in this area could never be an effective aid in the creation of a better life for the people of this area unless it *incarnates* itself in the realities of the poor of this area.

The reality of the poor is precisely this: they are poor: too poor to acquire basic needs, poor in education, poor in health, poor in living conditions, too poor to be fully human. They are the ones who cannot but be anxious about tomorrow (cf. Mt. 6:34) and worry about what to eat and to wear (Mt. 6:25). The standard wage (or government assistance) (cf.4.6 graph 6) is “barely enough to keep a small family at a subsistence level”. When poor people pray “Give us today our daily bread” it is literally a prayer for survival (cf. Bosch 2010:27). This is the social reality in which the church lives its life. Unless the church lives in and with and for the poor it can never claim to be the bearer of the word and promise of its founder.

We are told in Luke 12:32 that it pleases the Father to give the kingdom to the little flock. This is a kingdom where justice prevails and unjust practices condemned. We further note how in Matthew 5, we not only hear Jesus’ announcement that the Kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor, but we also experience how Christ through his selfless service to the poor made known to them his kingdom. From a theological point of view He, Christ himself was and is ever present in our situation, not only as the king of his kingdom, but he is constantly presented to us as the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the homeless, the sick and the imprisoned.

What does this mean for the church in the Baviaans? Simply this: From where it stands the church should be the sign²⁸⁸ of Christ’s presence among the people of the Baviaans. (Interesting to note that the percentage of people who believe that the church should be

²⁸⁸ This we do with the understanding that terminology such as this can be problematic as Kässemann (in Bosch 2010:375) alerts. The only legitimate ‘sign’ of the church for Kässemann, is the cross of Christ. See also Bosch 2010:374-376.

more visible in the community, is higher amongst confessing members (80%) of the church than those with no church affiliation (33%). The church according to Boesak (2005:154):

...is called still by God to be a prophetic, healing, critical eschatological presence. No political sea can change that. Now, as then, we are still called to be the voice of the voiceless.

Where people suffer from hunger, insecurity, lack of education and basic infrastructure as a result of poverty, there the church should make the presence of Christ real and effective. This is what a practical ecclesiology strives to do and what August (2005:29) would call the church's "public role". Stressing this point, Boesak (2005:3) remarks:

It has always been my belief that Christian theology, if it is to be anything, is a public theology. ...public, because it is a theology of the kingdom of God which is God's public claim on the world and the lives of God's people in the world ... public because of Jesus of Nazareth, who took on public form when he became human person, and because his life was lived in public servanthood and public vulnerability in obedience to God...public because He was crucified in public... public because He rose from the grave in the light of day and defied the power of death for all to see. Hence Christian theology is public, critical and prophetic in our cry to God; ...in our struggle with God... in our stand against the godless powers of this world... (and), in our hope in God.

Incidentally this is what the IDP (perhaps unknowingly) does; creating an opportunity for the church to demonstrate its public role and thus becoming a practical contextual ecclesiology. Where in the past the church (in this area) did not fully comprehend its public role, and demonstrated it mainly through "timeless public responsibilities" such as preaching (kerygma), worship (eucharistia), teaching (didache) fellowship (koinonia),

and witnessing (*marturea*), it now begin to understand the importance of yet another responsibility viz. service (*diakonia*) (cf. August 2005: 27-29).

Through his earthly ministry of service, Jesus “drew his listeners’ attention to the altogether real conditions of the poor, the blind, the captives and the oppressed” (Bosch 2010:118). “Preaching the good news to them is quite in order” (Pastor J 2008)²⁸⁹ and that is what most local churches are doing (well), but “the gospel cannot be good news if the witnesses (*church*) are incapable of discerning the real issues and concerns that matter to the marginalised” (Bosch *ibid.*) (*My italics*). This is mostly what made people lose confidence in the church.

However, the people of the Baviaans have always been people of faith, who have always looked to the church to give meaning to that faith. In most instances people do not have time to analyse their situations, they leave that to the church to interpret it for them. All they want to do is to meet their basic needs.

The question at the beginning of this section further detects some fear from the church with regard to its autonomy and becoming secularised. Bosch (2010:385) explains:

The church is an ellipse with two foci...the first acknowledges and enjoys the source of its life (where worship and prayer are emphasised). From and through the second focus the church engages and challenges the world”.

Following the report of the Vancouver Assembly of the World Council of Churches (1983:50) Bosch (2010:386) further explain:

It is only a church which goes out from its Eucharistic centre, strengthened by word and sacrament and thus strengthened in its own identity that can take the world on to its agenda ... not fearful of being distorted or confused by the world’s agenda, but confident

²⁸⁹ Conversation with Past. Jerry, 07April 2008.

and capable of recognising that God is already there. There will never be a time when the world, with all its political, social and economic issues, ceases to be on the agenda of the church.

The projects and programmes contained in the IDP (Housing, education, job creation, infrastructure etc.) might well be seen as belonging to a secular domain, and therefore as out of the domain of the church, but as Bonhoeffer (quoted in Bosch: 2010:375) aptly remark: “The church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating but helping and serving”.

4.10 CONCLUSION

The first section of this chapter (4.1-4.8) comprehensively deals with the context of the IDP as defined in relevant Acts/White Papers. It explains the philosophy, principles and ideals of an IDP process at local government (municipalities) and community level. This section in the chapter attempted to show how local government through IDP strives to better the lives of people through the development of infrastructure etc. If municipal statistics is anything to go by then IDP seems to be successful in this region. This very sentiment was positively expressed by the MEC for Local Government and Traditional Affairs in the Province of the Eastern Cape, Sicelo Gqobana. (See appendix H).

However, being said that, the IDP still has a long way to go, notwithstanding the positive feedback from the community. No system, no plan is perfect and there will always be space for refinement. One such suggestion for refinement comes from Mogale (2003:219) who is of the opinion that the Baviaans municipality should recognise the “primacy of linkages between development, service delivery” and community participation. However, this was not to be the sole responsibility of local government alone as the second section (4.9) attempted to show.

The fact that the projects contained in the IDP are aimed at addressing the needs of people created an opportunity for the church to demonstrate its public role in the community. IDP projects such as housing, health, job creation, education, and infrastructural programmes, are “life-touching” issues, that qualifies the church’s presence in the IDP. It creates an opportunity for the church to deeply reflect on its identity, its role, its character.

These issues almost inevitable bring the question of practical theological ecclesiology to the fore. The next two chapters will further engage this topic.

CHAPTER 5

THE CHURCH AND THE DEVELOPMENT DEBATE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

“I find it astonishing to see how far ahead the church in the world was in its thinking about the things that have become so important ...” (Boesak 1995:21)²⁹⁰ This statement acknowledges the all-important involvement of the church in the development domain. When the World Council of Churches called the *Church and Society* conference in Geneva in 1966, it spelled out many of the basic themes that would become part of the global development vernacular: terminology such as “sustainable development” and “sustainable economy”, amongst others.

It was the church that placed on the agenda of the world bodies the necessity for something like a social contract: where the economic affairs of the world could be discussed between the governments of the world and the workers who were building the economies of the world. The church was instrumental in confronting racism head on. The church stimulated the debates on individual and social rights at a time when the United Nations were still not sure what to make of these terms. But even beyond these practical matters the church -in South Africa- was acting as perhaps South Africa’s most effective Non-Governmental Organisation for many decades, in terms of development and all of the other related issues (ibid.). And so “the church has a record that [it] can fall back upon, a firm foundation of things that were proved to be correct” (ibid.). If this is true than uplifting the poor (cf. Ch. 3-4) is what the church has done all along.

²⁹⁰ These were the words spoken by Allan Boesak at the third Church and Development conference that was held between 5-7 October 1994 in the Lord Charles Hotel in Somerset West. It was the first conference held after South Africa’s democratic elections in 1994.

It stems from this that the relationship between the *church* and development on the one hand, and *development* and church on the other hand, needs to be told.

5.2 RELATING *CHURCH* AND DEVELOPMENT

It is of utmost importance to understand what is meant when reference is made to the church in its 'core practices in society'. As a prelude to the discussion, August (2005:27) poses the vital question: "Is it comprehensible what the *church* is, or is supposed to be?" If one attempts to relate church and development theologically, one immediately faces a number of conceptual questions. This section of the chapter will attempt to unpack this query.

5.2.1 What does church mean?²⁹¹

The concept church as argued by Koegelenberg (1992:1) is an ambiguous one. It is vague in the sense that, though it is a community of ordinary people – with all the imperfections of humankind - it is also a community constituted by God himself. "The root of this community does not lie in a common legacy or culture or faith" he says, "but is rooted in the fact that God has constituted the church through the work of Jesus Christ" (ibid.).

Since New Testament times one does not get simple depictions of what the *church* is; it is a term that portrays different associations amongst different people according to (August 2005:27; Smit 1996a:120).²⁹² However, in Blackman's (2007:7) opinion the New Testament uses the term "church" in the following ways: "*meeting of Jesus' followers*" -which to him, is the common use of the word-, *a gathering of people that*

²⁹¹ This question was raised at a midweek prayer meeting of the Willowmore Interchurch Forum (WIF). Most of the members understood church to be a group or community of people who share a common faith which is characterised by mutual love and solidarity. Cf. Koegelenberg (1992:1-13)

²⁹² Cf. also, Hanson, & Hanson (1987).

meet in a house; believers in a particular locality under the care of a group of elders; all believers in a particular locality – the people who belong to a group of believers even if they are not gathered together-; all believers everywhere – the global church.

Following Blackman's view one can deduce that there *are* common elements in all the depictions of the church i.e. that the church consists of a group of people; the group of people are followers of Jesus Christ; the church is the community in which Christ lives through His spirit.

But, says Smit (1996:120), the concept of church is much more complex than many perceive it to be, and cannot be described as a single, unchanging, a-contextual or transcendent concept. In fact the traditional understandings of the term church “has become to refer to a collective term for diverse moments, institutional and organisational forms, groups and communities” (August 2005:27; Bowers 2005:20). It is further evident from academic writings that there is a differentiation between the different configurations of the church. As a result August (2005:27) identifies at least six depictions of the church that are moderately representative of what it means to be ‘church’.²⁹³ These configurations include:

- *The church as worshipping community:* According to Bowers (2005:21), this depiction presupposes that whenever and wherever people meet they do so to worship God. It is always an open service and not exclusively for members only. As a worshipping community the church “draws people into the proclamation of the Word and its celebration of the sacraments. Bowers is of the opinion that as a worshipping community the church should “create the space and place” for the

²⁹³ Cf. Bowers (2005); Smit (1996);

oppressed, the marginalised, the vulnerable, the abused and those upon whom harm is inflicted. This is what a practical theological ecclesiology implies: that the *ekklesia*, the fellowship of believers, should create such a space, *koinonia*, in order to support people to be healed and to discover meaning in their *topos* (MacMaster 2010:122).

- *The church as local congregation* sounds like an embracing and loving community where people can be accepted without fear of prejudice, where the people can become members of a local congregation and perform rituals which are characteristic of its identity. Local congregations are best positioned to shape the “moral fabric of the local environment” by firstly becoming the “vehicle for communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ both in word and *deed*”²⁹⁴ and secondly to make their members sensitive and responsive to issues of social justice.
- *The church as denomination*: Bowers (2005:21) is of the opinion that if churches want to be heard they cannot do so by operating in isolation. That is why local congregations form “confessional entities” like Congregational and Anglican churches. Denominations have special doctrines and rituals to which they adhere. It thus becomes the responsibility of the denomination to act as the public voice of the local congregations with regard to ethical and moral issues of common interest.²⁹⁵ For most denominations the challenge remains to think critically how to engage public issues effectively.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴See Article VII:41 of the Wheaton Declaration especially the document entitled: Transformation: The Church in response to Human Need.

²⁹⁵ Cf. August 2005: 28-29.

- *The church as ecumenical body.*²⁹⁷ For churches to become more effective and influential in context, and if they want to take sustainable action, they need to pool their resources. They can do that by moving across denominational and confessional boundaries towards the formation of an ecumenical body. In South Africa many such ecumenical bodies exist. In almost every town in South Africa we find local ecumenical bodies such as ministers' fraternal or regional (ECCC)²⁹⁸ national (SACC)²⁹⁹ and international bodies (WCC / Global Ministries, CWM).³⁰⁰ One of the major forces which have drawn and held the churches together in the ecumenical movement has been the necessity to unite their thought and action in response to the vast political, economic and social problems of the world. A very large part of the energy of ecumenical bodies is directed toward seeking a common Christian way of meeting the challenge of the human social order.³⁰¹

²⁹⁶ The researcher is a staunch but critical member of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA). As a denomination the UCCSA is somewhat reluctant to engage in public issues. That is why it was gladdening to note, how, the General Secretary of the UCCSA, Rev. Dr. Prince Dibeela, in an open letter to the church, suggested that this should change. He made the following remarks: "I encourage you to speak the truth to power in your communities. There is much that is happening that is unjust and that diminishes God's image in humans. We are called to speak when our governments fail the poor, trample upon our liberties and stray away from God". In his message to the church he says: "The church continues to grapple with a lot of issues that affect us on a day-to-day basis, which keeps [us] on [our] feet ... [we need] to try and find ways in which we can attend to the issues raised. The issues range from injustices relating to land taken from our churches and communities in the past, issues relating to our senior citizens, people with disabilities and health and wellness to name but a few. We are therefore charged with a responsibility as a Church to go out of our way to become a caring church in the situations that our communities face". (20 April 2009). At a first glance these statements speak to the heart of people, but it would have a much bigger impact if it was to be directed to the government of the day. An open letter to the state would have had much greater impact than an open letter to the member churches of the denomination. But in all fairness to the UCCSA, this is a step in the right direction, to say the least.

²⁹⁷ Churches group themselves wherever they are. The most popular way of doing it is by locality or area, province or region, nationally and internationally. See the following footnotes (290 -294).

²⁹⁸ Eastern Cape Council of Churches

²⁹⁹ South African Council of Churches

³⁰⁰ World Council of Churches (WCC); Council for World Mission (CWM)

³⁰¹ See Statements of the World Council of Churches on Social questions (1956:5)

- *The church as believers in their involvement with voluntary organisations.*³⁰² Bowers (2005: 21, 29-30) notes that “faith communities and individual believers are constantly challenged to form partnerships in plural society with other groups to combat social evils” effectively in order to achieve goals for the common good. Churches should encourage their congregants to engage with society by getting involved in movements that espouse the values of society in accordance with biblical convictions.
- *The church as individuals in their daily lives.* As an individual believer living in the spectrum of a socio-political and economic environment, it becomes difficult to practise their faith as “light and salt of the world” in their daily life and environment. People need to take the responsibility to “let their voices be heard” in all aspects of life.

These modes of being church are identified by Smit in August (2005:29) as helping to influence public life “in various ways” (Bowers 2005:20). We need to go further, though, in order to gain a holistic understanding of church, or at least get close to such an understanding. The next section is attempt towards a comprehensive view of church.

5.3 UNDERSTANDING CHURCH IN CONTEXT.

The afore-mentioned depictions attempt to bring us closer to an understanding of church, however to move to a holistic understanding of church, it is also necessary to examine the relationship of church to other publics³⁰³ or society at large.

³⁰²Voluntary organisations might include community forums and organisations (police, civics, hospital board, social development etc. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and others.

³⁰³ This is by no means an attempt to give an academic account on the meaning of the ‘public’ church. August (2005) has done exceptionally well in capturing the core meaning of public church (cf. Chapter 2: A theological perspective: Meaning of the public church). Hanna Arendt (1998:192 -199), as cited by

This section draws strongly on the work of August (2005) who in turn is indebted to Smit (1996a: 119-126) for his informed argument, that, the church as an integrated entity in society cannot be denied because it stands in different relations to the public of society.

Smit in August (2005:33) is of the opinion that there is no “timeless, context-less, always and generally accepted unique place and role for and of the Christian Church within society”.³⁰⁴ However, as August (2005:34) rightfully points out, Smit also acknowledges the church as a “unique entity, with a unique place and nature” that finds itself always in specific historical societies. But does the church have a societal role to play? The simple answer to this question would be an unequivocal “yes”, especially in view of our South African context where it “addresses political and socio-economic issues”. The church’s relation to the following will be discussed briefly:

5.3.1 The church in relation to state-politics³⁰⁵

South African churches know from experience that the unique nature of the church does not mean that it should withdraw from the governmental and political processes but that it should, as church, be *critically* involved (August 2005:37) (see also our discussion under 4.9). Although there are voices ... who mistakenly calls for the church’s

August defines public as “a human sphere of co-activity constituted and defined by its surrounding borders and by the standards determining it. See also Hütter (1997: 161) who suggests that a ‘public’ is characterised by four constitutive features i.e. *a specific telos, mutually binding principles expressed in distinct practices, laws and doctrines, a movable locale; and the phenomenon of freedom*. Hütter also speaks of the structural concept of the public as having a ‘heuristic advantage over the concept oriented toward the specific political development and phenomenon of society. Cf. Cady (1991a: 108) who explains that the meaning of public takes on different nuances depending on what it is being contrasted to (August 2005:19-20).

³⁰⁴ See his article, Oor Kerk as ‘n Unieke Samelewingsverband, in *Tydskrif vir Geestewetenskappe*, p. 119-126.

³⁰⁵ Kenneth Cauthen, in his article, “*Church and State, Religion and Politics*” (2001), points out the difference between religion and politics, and church and state which can become confusing if a distinction is not made. He further states that church and state have to do with institutions and practices; the relationship of institutions that are independent of each other, whereas religion and politics have to do with two spheres of activities in the life of the same person.

withdrawal from political matters (Botman 2000:101) the church- owing to its nature and calling - cannot leave the political sphere totally in the hands of the politicians. It is thus in this sense that the following pointed questions are posed about the relationship between church and state politics: Does the church have a political role to play in our modern world, and, if so, what should that role be in our young democracy? Is it proper for the church to maintain links with the State given the bad Church-State relations during the dark days of apartheid? If we take into consideration that the traditional approach –to *juxtapose church and state* – presupposes that the state, to a large extent, determines the nature and quality of public life, it now becomes the responsibility of the church to “pay attention to it, to be involved in it and to guard it” (Smit 1996b: 190-204).³⁰⁶ Some will argue that the responsibility of the church stops with “paying attention to” and “guarding” of the quality of life. To become “involved” would pose another set of issues.

Upon looking at the relation between church and state, Cauthen (2001) points out that neither must trespass beyond the boundaries that define their legitimate spheres of influence.³⁰⁷ However what might be seen as trespassing by one may be seen as “calling” by the other. When, in 1926, William Temple and nine other bishops However, religious beliefs have moral and social implications and it is thus appropriate for people of faith to express these through their activities as citizens in the political order. The fact that ethical convictions are rooted in religious faith does not disqualify them from the political realm (ibid.). Although the church and the state are each independent in their respective spheres, in some respects, they can collaborate to help the same people to

³⁰⁶ We note that the modern approach has changed that perception. We do not see the state play the same intense role as it used to do in an autocratic dispensation.

³⁰⁷ It is also appropriate to say that members who belong to a religious grouping are also members of the secular society and it is this dual association that generates complications for some.

achieve and fulfil their personal and social aims, says Ddungu (1989:21-26). Both church and state are mandated to serve the people holistically without dichotomising their lives. The church in her relation to state-politics should be prepared to deal with such complexities and overlapping realms (Ddungu 1989:21).

Further, democratic governments are bound by constitution to elevate their people's standard of living. They are charged with creating conditions for promoting justice and the common good of their citizens and other residents. The state achieves its full justification and meaning in serving the common good, and draws its original and distinctive right from this source. The common good comprises the sum total of those social conditions in which all people can be facilitated to develop themselves (ibid.).

Unfortunately, as pointed out by August (2005:35), powerful global institutions including the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF)³⁰⁸ and the World Trade Organisation (WTO)³⁰⁹ are practically robbing third world countries of their democratic right to guide the economies and governments of their nations.

The single most important set of policies behind this thinking is the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP)³¹⁰, a program championed by the World Bank and the IMF (cf. Perlas 2000:63ff.). To understand the nature and impact of these policies and

³⁰⁸ As has been previously mentioned, the IMF (The Fund) and the World Bank (The Bank) were born at a United Nations Conference at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in July 1944. Forty-four (44) countries were represented at the conference, and they drew up Articles of Agreement that defined the purposes and functions of the IMF. (Hacche 2003:22).

³⁰⁹ The World Trade Organisation (WTO) was created in 1995, with a mandate to enforce and expand the reach of free trade rules. Trade used to mean the commercial exchange of goods across national borders. Trade rules have since been extended to cover exchanges involving any conceivably tradable activity including health, education, water and patents on life forms (World Council of Churches: Justice Peace and Creation Team)

³¹⁰ SAP was conceived in the 1970s and tested in a few countries, including the Philippines. From these "modest" beginnings, the plague of more than 500 Structural Adjustment Programs was imposed on most third world countries around the world. However, according to a 1999 statement from the Group of Seven finance ministers and Central Bank Governors; a 'comprehensive development framework' replaced the existing structural adjustment programmes, reports Bello (2001: 50-51). See also Mshana (2003)

programmes, however, we must go deeper and examine the worldview and values implicit in the policies and programmes. At the deepest level we will meet the force behind globalisation, the particular individuals and institutions that stand behind it³¹¹.

The fact is that when all the mathematical equations and the technical jargon are stripped off, the policies and programmes essentially emphasise one message, namely, that countries and firms and the markets have to be competitive. The market has to be competitive, and it does not matter if you exploit the labour of another human being, as long as the costs remain lower than the competitor's. This scenario places pressure on governments of developing nations to compete for international investments. For them to gain access to foreign investment, they will have to provide infrastructure, a safe social situation and an environment-friendly context, according to Pieterse (2001:56-60).

For this reason it becomes imperative that the church should become involved in the aforementioned issues - not only in the shaping of the morals of the society but also in the development of the economic welfare of the people, says Museveni (1989:13-20).

It therefore stands to reason that the church cannot align itself with the State, or as Tsele (2001) very strongly put it: "...we must run away from an incestuous cohabitation with government. Neither can the church allow itself to be co-opted or controlled by the State. To do this, according to Tsele, would be "to neglect our mission as a Church. We would cease to exist as an autonomous body"³¹². The church should in terms of its relation with the State position itself in such a way that the integrity of the church is not blemished (as noted in 4.9.2).

³¹¹ It is good to note that these policies were – and are still - open to criticism. Criticism of these policies came from different platforms.

³¹² Molefe Tsele, a former general secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), delivered this address on 30 October 2001 in Durban, to the Diakonia Council of Churches.

The identity of the church ought not to be usurped by the State. As an autonomous institution the church should rather be positioned next to the State; they should be seen as mutual partners in the service of the people. But this partnership should be in critical solidarity with the state. The theological challenge facing the church, according to Bam (1995:50) is to know when to say 'yes' or 'no' The common denominator here is: *to serve the needs of the people*. After all, the State serves because of its democratic mandate from the people. The church serves because of its divine mandate not to serve church structures, or any State, but God's people (cf. Abrahams 1995).³¹³

5.3.2 The church in relation to the Economy³¹⁴

The church has always taken the business of economics seriously. As early as 1924 Archbishop William Temple organised the Anglican "Conference on Politics, *Economics* and Citizenship" (COPEC) where the following ideas were highlighted in a report:

- i. That Christians should replace the profit motive by service in industry and trade;
- ii. That the goal of industry should be to serve the needs of the community;
- iii. That unemployment is morally unacceptable and its causes should be removed;
- iv. That extreme poverty and riches are unacceptable and a Christian social order requires a just division of income. (Van Drimmelen 1992:23-56).

³¹³ Samuel Abrahams, "Church and State in the Post-Apartheid South Africa: Christian Witness in Contemporary Society", Paper presented to South African Council of Churches (SACC), 1995.

³¹⁴ The researcher has visited many South African Universities over the years, and the one thing that is noticeable is the distance between the faculties of economics and theology - as if to say that economics is an issue for economists and politicians and therefore has nothing to do with theology. This is sad, because, the Christian faith cannot and must not make a separation between spiritual and material life. However, it is gladdening to see that more and more churches have - through pastoral messages, declarations and statements - begun to reflect on economic issues and also about the relationship between the Christian faith and economic life.

Similar points appear in reports of the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work that was held in Stockholm in 1925.³¹⁵ The Stockholm conference went even further to defy the notion that Christian faith and economics are two detached categories, and sturdily emphasised “the necessity of applying the spirit and teaching of Christ to the economic and industrial life...” It also expresses the wholeness of the ecumenical calling by affirming that the “Gospel is for all realms of life”. It was at the Stockholm Conference that the churches were called upon, firstly, to take a firm stand on challenges arising from modern industrial society, and secondly, to work towards visible unity. In modern times, with the increasing industrialisation, urbanisation and the centralisation of economic activities, the influence of the global economy impacts gravely on the quality of people’s lives. What the globalised neo-liberal economy according to de Gruchy seems to do “is to suck money up through the system and leave in its wake closed factories and mines, unemployment, the casualization of labour and the survival economics of the informal sector” (2007:2). It is to that phenomenon of economic globalisation that the churches have reacted with great theological conviction.

August (2005:37-38) noted that theologians in the developing countries responded harshly to the harmful effects of global economy. Even the United Nations Development program (UNDP)³¹⁶ from 1996-1999 warns that economic growth³¹⁷ brought by (elite)

³¹⁵ The Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work that was held in Stockholm in 1925 was the first representative ecumenical conference on social questions. This conference was held just after World War I. It was the War that acted as a powerful stimulant because immediately after the war Christian leaders came together to “secure united practical action on the problems of industrial, political, social and international life”. It is also noteworthy that in their first meeting together the churches were starting from scratch – there was no common body of social thought, no common experience in dealing with these issues, not even any common agreement as to which issues were of primary importance. They shared a common concern about the urgency of the world’s need for social reconstruction, especially in the face of the disasters of the World War and the years following it, and a common conviction that the *church* were called to play a part in reconstruction (See statement of WCC, 1956).

³¹⁶ The UNDP makes this assumption on the basis of its analysis of an extensive empirical database spanning a period of approximately 40 years.

globalisation has unleashed less desirable forms of growth that are “ruthless,³¹⁸ jobless,³¹⁹ futureless,³²⁰ rootless,³²¹ voiceless³²² and meaningless”.³²³

However, the development behind theological thinking on economics continued after the Stockholm conference. This culminated in the famous World conference on Church, Community and State, which took place in Oxford in 1937.

According to the Oxford Conference, the Church should as its primary duty insist that economic activities stand under the ruling of Christ. That presupposes that the church should enquire about its own responsibility in this regard.

In essence that would mean that the church should bear witness to its faith within the existing economic order and also to test all economic institutions in the light of its understanding of God’s will (Van Drimmelen 1992:26).

³¹⁷ It goes without saying that economic growth has brought many benefits. Indeed, as a WCC study document says, the production of goods can be a blessing, as the word “good” in fact suggests, but economic growth needs to be qualified. Growth for the sake of growth is – in the words of the seventh assembly of the WCC- the strategy of the cancer cell. (Van Drimmelen1998:119).

³¹⁸ Perlas (2000:61) notes that “*ruthless growth*” is forcing close to 2.4 billion people to live in poverty, keeping them from developing as full human beings. It is very interesting to note that in 1999 Bill Gates and two of the top owners of Microsoft had assets equivalent to those of 43 countries and their 600 million people. Speculative funds or hot money destroyed the economies of Southeast Asian and some East Asian countries. After decades of building their economies, these countries watched their efforts collapse in a matter of months.

³¹⁹ For Perlas *jobless growth* means that economies can boom while underemployment and unemployment remain out of control. This result in factories closing down in record numbers and/or relocating to cheaper sites and retail chains exploiting the labour of low-income labourers – what we call casuals.

³²⁰*Futureless growth* results from elite globalisation that consumes and destroys nature.

³²¹*Rootless growth* according to Perlas refers to the cultural erosion and decay that often accompany economic growth fuelled by elite globalisation.

³²²*Voiceless growth* is economic growth devoid of respect for human rights and democratic processes essential to modern society.

³²³ He adds another undesirable form of growth namely *Meaningless growth* which comes about when unhealthy forms of growth inflict soul and physical turbulence and illness, blocking the creativity of the human spirit.

It would further mean that the church, in the words of August (2005:39), “keeps the dream of social justice alive, that it should witness for life and against conditions of death and misery and that it remains the champion of the voiceless and all marginalised”. After all, if people are starving, it is as much a religious as an economic problem. The debate on economics entered a new phase when the WCC came into existence in 1948.³²⁴ They realised that “the world is too strong for a divided church: doctrine divides while service unites” (Van Drimmelen 1992:25).

They further realised that a crisis is developing in world civilisation because of the “concentration of technological, political and military power in rich Western countries to the exclusion of the world’s majorities” (August 2005:38). That is why the ecumenical partners (WCC, LWF and the WARC) continuously engaged in studies of economics as a religious issue, and it should not be different today.

They see the global village as a society consisting of two classes i.e. the rich who manipulate the market and the poor who are excluded from the markets. A market economy, where only the fittest survive³²⁵ and where profits are more important than human health and safety. A market that is free from state intervention in the economy and social services. It is also free from moral considerations and ethical interventions; it has its own internal law which, neither the state nor theology and ethics may inhibit (August 2005:38; cf. Pieterse 2001; Smit 1996).

³²⁴ It is interesting to note that the Second World War intervened between two major church events, i.e. the Oxford Conference and the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1948. The work of the World Council of Churches in process of transformation involved a great deal of study and thought on social questions.

³²⁵ This is neo-Darwinism’s survival of the fittest projected into the realm of economics.

Parenthetically neo-liberalism³²⁶ is based on the autonomy of a free market³²⁷. Every economic era has an ideology that seeks to legitimise the policies and practices that benefit the dominant interests of that time. These ideologies come and go, as their way of viewing economic and social life is contested and ultimately displaced by a new orthodoxy.

Each new economic theory must be vigorously tested against the standards of God's justice and the system's actual impact on the lives of the poor and the well-being of the earth community – and it must be rejected if it fails the test. In essence, neo-liberalism renders national governments powerless to protect public goods and services. Neo-liberalism places the utmost importance on private capital and so-called unfettered markets to allocate resources efficiently and to promote growth.³²⁸

The WCC repeatedly stated that it rejects the neoliberal economic policies promoted by the World Bank and the IMF. Far from reducing poverty or enhancing ecological sustainability, these policies have widened the gap between the rich and the poor. A report on neoliberal economic restructuring in ten African countries for example, found that “all too often policy decisions strengthen or exacerbate existing disparities”. In many cases, economic restructuring has increased poverty, says Pamela Brubaker (2001:39).

³²⁶ Neo-liberalism denotes those ideologies that underlie, promote and seek to legitimise the concentration of multifaceted power structures. It is manifested in “neo-liberal capitalism” and “neo-liberal globalisation”.

³²⁷ It is a myth to assume that markets are free. “Free” markets are not free. The reality is that markets and capital are highly controlled to secure the maximum benefits for the owners of capital. Neo-liberalism assumes that free markets, free trade, self-regulation and competition will liberate the “invisible hand” of the markets for the benefit of everyone; yet there is no divine force that guides markets.

³²⁸ See the background document of the World Council of Churches on “Alternative Globalisation Addressing Peoples and Earth (AGAPE), prepared by the Justice, Peace and Creation Team of the World Council of Churches, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2006:9ff.).

Instead of promoting economic growth, institutions such as the IMF “institutionalise economic stagnation”, thus making the World Bank irrelevant rather than central to the goal of eliminating poverty (Bello 2001:60). To this effect, the US Congress’s Advisory Commission on International Financial Institutions, also known as the Meltzer Commission, produced a number of devastating findings.³²⁹

In his critique against the policies of the IMF, Joseph Stiglitz³³⁰ refers to the deregulation of the capital markets, claiming that it increases risk without increasing growth.

He further states that “ideology guided policy prescriptions” and countries were expected to “follow the IMF guidelines without asking questions or debate”. This, to Stiglitz, was anti-democratic. The ecumenical community maintained that authentic human development can never be achieved when the ultimate goal is the “amassing of wealth and material goods, creating an unquenchable thirst for more power, profits and possessions”³³¹.

Many people feel numb and powerless in the face of the massive misuse of mal-distributed economic and political power and the arrogant use of force. Jesus speaks of “Mammon” and “empire” when such powers force people and nature to conform to their own spirit and logic, and when life is sacrificed for their sustenance. This is a reality that

³²⁹ They say that 70% of the World Bank’s non-grant lending is concentrated in 11 countries, with 145 other member countries left to scramble for the remaining 30%; 80% of the Bank’s resources are devoted not to the poorest developing countries, but to the better off ones with positive credit ratings... the failure rate of bank projects is 65-70% in the poorest countries and 55-60% in all developing countries (See Bello 2001:40-41).

³³⁰ Joseph Stiglitz is a former World Bank chief economist who published numerous articles and a book on the policies of the IMF.

³³¹ See Pamela Brubaker’s article, *The International Concept of wealth Creation and Social Justice: A WCC Perspective*, p.31-45. See also the WCC paper ‘Justice: The Heart of the Matter’ which sets out the views of the ecumenical community on wealth creation and social justice.

we experience in various ways and in different places and social locations where powers, intended to serve life, degenerate into structures of sin and death.

It is against this background that the church needs to “educate and equip its people for a virtuous life in order that they may not selfishly strive for merely their own interests, but that they shall care for the needy” (August 2005:39). The church needs to give guidance and take the lead in this regard. One way of doing that, according to Abrahams, is to remain focussed on the distinction between PROFIT and PROPHET. The poor are thrown into ‘global economy dens’, filled with hostile and greedy people who put a higher premium on profit than on the value of people. The church has no other option than to make God’s concern for the poor our own by working for their fulfilment. After all, the church stands in relation to people created in the image and likeness of God - people who constitute civil society.

5.3.3 Church in relation to people: civil society

Various writings teaches us that human beings are created to live “in community”, (in *koinonia*), to sustain and stimulate each other. That sense of “togetherness” propelled people to structure themselves in ways that could enhance their quality of life and to satisfy their basic needs. As a result, a variety of organisations, institutions, societies, movements and clubs came into existence. They did so to make their presence felt and to become self-reliant. In our day and age, these “public life institutions” vary from ‘close [secret]’ to ‘public’, from cultural, educational, academic and juridical to interest groups, voluntary organisations, societies and many more (cf. August 2005:40). All these formations - in some way - fall under the umbrella term “civil society”.

It is important to mention that civil society as a category-symbol with ambiguous definitions is the result of present social complexities; according to Batista (1995:223), it is not a univocal theoretical concept.

In a world different to yesterday's history, civil society is an ideal *and* a reality because it offers a way of orientating and organising society which seeks sustainable life, good sense and the common good of all members in society. Hence it is sometimes -as argued by August (2005:40f)– a call for the people to unite in civil action to oppose the power of the state; to work collectively for greater freedom and better quality of life; to urge individuals in liberal democracies to become involved in the social issues of their time.³³² Civil societies are by definition *a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed ... of the intimate sphere (family), the sphere of associations (voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication.*³³³

It is further a space which, if it does not offer easy solutions to the contemporary political, economic and social theories, at least provides a way of rethinking these problems. It is within this discourse where the church is seen as a unique public institution in which people who share a “mutual interest” organise themselves voluntarily.

But how do we understand the place and role of God's people in civil society? Batista (1995:242) offers the following solution: Christian faith communities who are concerned about God's people need to “prepare for, getting consciously involved in and include the challenges of civil society in their agendas”. The increased emphasis on institutionalism

³³² August also warns that liberal democracies are sometime the cause of their own destruction, because they allow people to embrace a kind of freedom that makes them irresponsible. People should be taught that freedom carries with it the element of responsibility. In a liberal democracy people can choose not to co-operate with others and not to accept responsibility. There is a real danger in this attitude because not to be involved means to withdraw from the public sphere and to leave it empty and vulnerable for powers of chaos to take over (2005:.40).

³³³ Cf. August (2005:40);

puts the survival of church structures in the forefront of their concerns - instead of searching for comprehensive and inclusive solutions for people's daily lives. It is however interesting to note that most of the local congregations in the BMA now allow on their agendas, space for social issues. Where in the past emphasis was laid on maintenance, more emphasis is now laid on missional activities.

Batista further sees civil society as becoming a place to affirm the universal priesthood of God's people.³³⁴ God's people according to Batista (1995:243) need to be present and actively involved in responding to human needs. The Church really needs to become a space of resistance and hope for God's people in the midst of their suffering and marginalisation. The church should work towards a renewed ecumenical spirit where ideological hegemony makes way for diversity and plurality. The church should further embrace a culture of solidarity and life. This dual dimension of the presence of God's people in society is a reality. Batista (1995:244) notes that this contradictory tension is in a way unavoidable in the present circumstances. The challenge, however, is to put this tension into the framework of a dialogical and conversational context.

In its relation to people the church cannot ignore the fact that, what is at stake is the credibility and meaning of God's people in society. In addition to the above, August (2005:39-42) suggests that churches [should] realise how important civil society is and that they should promote it because it is vital for the nature and quality of life. The many institutions, in which people live, protect them from the autocracy of state and economy, but they also form and cultivate people to live with moral fibre as a responsible society.

³³⁴ It is important to note that long before Israel could refer to itself as kingdom, it was a united confederacy. The people were bound together as a religious community by a "constitution" in which God was acknowledged as King. Each member of this community shared in the principles of equality, sharing, accountability and mutual respect. We find the same "unity" in sharing and caring in Acts 2: 42ff.

The church cannot ignore that these civil institutions add value to the lives of people, and hence need to strengthen its partnership with all these civil society institutions. One cannot speak of civil society without acknowledging that people form the nucleus of such an order. In saying this, the church should see it as her calling to become a community where virtues are promoted, but it should also guard against overrating itself as an alternative society. If we suggest that people should live as a responsible society, what do we mean? What is a responsible society? The next section briefly unpacks this question.

5.3.3.1 Moving towards a Responsible Society

The Amsterdam Assembly of 1948 defined the concept “responsible society” as a society “where freedom is the freedom of [people] who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it” (Grenholm 2002:980) . This Assembly also stated that there would be no place for communism or capitalism in the responsible society. This responsible society was seen as a goal for political action by the ecumenical movement. They regarded a responsible society as *(i) a free and democratic society; (ii) a society where the individual and the state aspire to social and economic justice*. The Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches (1954) took the notion of the responsible society further by stating that [it] is not a “Christian social system”³³⁵ per se but that it rather serves as a “criterion by which we judge all existing social orders, and at the same time a standard to guide us in the specific choices we have to make” (ibid.).

³³⁵ There were those who saw the responsible society as a third alternative to communism and capitalism.

Whereas previous ecumenical pronouncements concentrated on the problems of laissez-faire capitalism, the Evanston statement warns “against the danger that the union of political and economic power may result in an all-controlling state”, and further recognises “the importance of relative freedom in enterprise and ... the regulating role of the prize system”. They maintained that for a society to be responsible it is required that “the people have freedom to control, to criticise and to transform their governments”. They also preserve that power be made responsible by law and tradition, and be distributed as widely as possible through the whole community. However, as stated by Grenholm (2002:980-981), the responsible society was regarded to be a democratic society with both private ownership and public economic initiative. From this flows the notion that the responsible society could become a social ideal for developing countries and hence the demand for the independence of developing countries and their liberation from the colonial powers.

A responsible society is in essence a democratic society, where the government is controlled by those governed. But, it is simultaneously a mixed economy where market economy is combined with both public and private ownership of the means of production. This political and economic system is desirable, since it promotes such intrinsic values as freedom, justice and welfare.

The concept of the responsible society has been based on two different theological traditions, (i) the Barthian tradition and (ii) the natural law tradition.

The Barthian tradition advocates a system of “pure theological” social ethics based on the assumption that the criterion for a right action is, not good consequences, but the will of God. Natural law tradition, on the other hand, advocates a humanly grounded

social ethics based on the assumption that an action is right if it produces better or less evil consequences than alternative actions.³³⁶

Grenholm cites Oldham (1948)³³⁷ by stating that an action is right if it is carried out as a response to the guidance of God. He maintains that human beings are “responsive persons” who act in response to the call of God in every new situation. Society, on the other hand, should be formed in such a way that every human being can be responsive in this sense.

5.4 RELATING *DEVELOPMENT* AND CHURCH

Taking the above mentioned reality of church into account, the question remains: What has this to do with development? Is there a relationship between church and development, and if so, what should the basis of such relationship be? At a first glance, the relationship between church and development is not self-evident. But we all know that first glances can be misleading.

The church’s involvement in the development process raises the question: Why does the church feel mandated and compelled to involve itself in development? Does the church really understand development?

History has shown that the church has always taken development seriously, not because of its good infra-structure to function effectively at grassroots level as a development agent, but because development is ultimately about a new vision for society; about a new humanity, about empowerment of people, to experience the full life that God is giving; to respect God’s creation. This is important for this study.

³³⁶ See Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement (2002).

³³⁷ See Oldham, “A Responsible Society”, in *The Church and the Disorder of Society: Man’s Disorder and God’s Design, Amsterdam series*, Vol. 3, (London: SCM Press, 1948).

The church according to Koegelenberg (1992:2), takes development seriously because God takes the pain, the poverty and the suffering of His people seriously. However development has –over time- become discredited and unpopular as a concept, amongst communities on the receiving end of so-called development work. The history of the concept, according to Koegelenberg (1992:3), is closely associated with Western ideas on modernisation, technological advancement, and liberal and free market economic ideologies.

Hence for many third world countries, development aid has become a tool for extending the dominance of Western culture. The other painful fact is that many Africans perceive development as being synonymous with missionary work and colonisation³³⁸. It is against this background that we shall attempt to briefly trace the meaning of development.

5.4.1 Development: a secular view

Many books have been written, many scholarly papers have been presented and many attempts have been made to figure out the origin of development in its various forms.

Development as a complex dynamic gives rise to many varying interpretations of development thought which is clearly reflected in the proliferation of development theories. Its meaning is informed by contextual issues³³⁹ such as “past and present experiences, circumstances, perceptions, values and beliefs” (Davids *et al* 2005:2).

Both Moll (1986:22) and Treurnicht (1997b:17) point out that scientific inquiry into the theory of development started shortly after World War II with the 1950s and 1960s

³³⁸ For the most part (only) European concepts are used as the norm to develop more primitive or less developed societies elsewhere in the world.

³³⁹ It is a sad fact that those less attuned to contextual reality of the developing countries generally conceptualise development as change, growth, advancement, progress or improvement as if development always relates to something good or something better than people’s current reality (Davids *et al* 2005)

being dominated by the modernisation theory. The next two decades (late 1960s and 1970) however, saw a move towards the dependency theory, while the 1980s were characterised by a move towards people and communities (cf. Davids 2005:4). A common factor of all these theories, according to Pillay (2002:14) is that they represent only “partial solutions to the problem”. Up to the 1960s development was largely oriented towards the notions of progress, evolution and economic growth in terms of Gross National Product (GNP).

Termed Modernisation Theory, it emerged out of the climate of the Cold War and post-colonialism, and saw substantial amounts of aid and the provision of technical assistance flowing into less developed countries by the newly formed International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.³⁴⁰

This dichotomous approach according to Bowers (2005:35), and others, proposed a *process* of structural change whereby the traditionally “backward” developing countries would develop towards ‘greater similarity’ with the Western or rather the Northern world.³⁴¹ There are, however, other approaches to development which attempt to correct the imbalances created by Modernisation theory by focussing on the elimination of dependency, global reformism, basic needs, capacity building within a “people first” approach and sustainable development (cf. Bragg)³⁴² However, the appearance of a new theory does not mean the discarding of previous theories, but it broadens the

³⁴⁰ The IMF, the World Bank and the International Trade organisation (ITO) were conceived and planned at a time when the political elite running the US government realised - sometime in 1941 –that the United States would emerge from WWII as the top economic and political power of the world. These three institutions had the mission to ensure the continued dominance of the U.S. economic and political system of the world (Perlas 2000: 67). We still have the same three institutions today, though the ITO’s name has changed to WTO (World Trade Organisation). Cf. Davids(2005:4); Bowers (2005:35); Haines (2000:32); August, (2010:30).

³⁴¹ Cf. Martinussen (1997:38).

³⁴² See Bragg in Samuel & Sudgen, (1987:22-39); Burkey, (1993: 27-39).

option of choice, say Bennet and Hughes (1998:13). In the social sciences for example, paradigms tend to “accumulate, rather than replace each other” (Hettne 1990:4).

As mentioned before, development was largely conceived by the notions of *progress* - but progress for whom? Pillay (2002: 15) comments that the Western world which first adopt the notion of progress, presented their own understanding as the principal attainment of progress, which, unfortunately, lent the idea its immense arrogance.

The idea of progress maintained that, “with a few temporary deviations”, all societies are advancing naturally and consistently ‘upwards’, on a route from poverty, barbarism, despotism and ignorance, to riches, civilisation, democracy and rationality (Rahnema & Bawtree 1996: 65-72; cf. Nisbet 1980). This however, has been proven to be a fallacy.

Development is also conceived as a “*process towards a goal*”; a “process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations”.³⁴³ This definition of Bonbright (1992:95) – as it stands- emphasises the fact that development is a process that is self-actualised. Samuel and Sugden (1987:22) on the other hand, though acknowledging that development is a process, also give serious attention to its moral value. They see development as a process by which people gain greater control over themselves, their environment and their future, in order to realise the full potential of life that God has made possible.

This meaning coincides with the definition of the United Nations which sees development as “...*the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united*

³⁴³ See Bonbright (1992:95); Banana (1994:55); Botman (1995:252); Schenk & Louw (1995: 175-188); Christodoulou (1992:88-89).

with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to the national progress”.

According to the UN report this complex of processes is made up of two essential elements, namely, the participation of the people themselves in an effort to improve their living, with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative; and the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help and make those more effective. As one reflects on its goals, one discovers that development, viewed as a human project, signifies total liberation.

Such liberation aims at freeing (people) from “nature’s servitude, from economic backwardness and oppressive technological institutions, from unjust class structures and political exploiters, from cultural and physic alienation, in short from life’s inhumane agencies” (Goutlet 1978:4).

Backwardness should be defined very precisely. Museveni (1989:14) sees backwardness as the antithesis of development. In his view African societies lack knowledge and the ability to make use of science and technology³⁴⁴. Backwardness in science and technology results in backwardness in economic development, which adversely affects the stability of the country.

Another secular view sees development as *growth*.³⁴⁵ Many development thinkers agree that a single comprehensive description of what development is, evades us.

³⁴⁴ Museveni (1989:14) maintains that third world countries are very “technologically backward” and that in his view generates enormous problems. The lack of technological know-how, according to Museveni, deprived ‘us’ from manufacturing cars or spare parts needed for repairing them. To become *technologically-able* is the challenge that lies before third world economies, he says.

³⁴⁵ Economic growth in apartheid South Africa meant affluence in the white enclaves and black impoverishment. Now in democratic South Africa we experience the same scenario: black empowerment

Context plays a crucial role in defining development. One attempt – amongst others – that has gained consideration over the years comes from Hettne (1995:15). He states that “there can be no fixed and final definition of development, *only suggestions of what development should imply in a particular context*”. To see development as growth is to see development *in* a particular context. Hence prior to 1970 most –if not all- development programmes and projects were directed towards the condition of people³⁴⁶ in less developed countries, which resulted in an unprecedented emphasis on economic development in these areas.³⁴⁷ Ironic that with all these developments, people still remains poor.

Development, as understood in western economic thought meant an increase in the physical quality of output as measured in GNP terms. It was generally believed that the more growth they could generate, the more development there would be, if not immediately, then in the long run.

The advocates of the growth-centred vision argued that the economic benefits of this growth-approach would *trickle down* to the poor – another proven fallacy³⁴⁸. Rostow in

turned out to be a hoax to South Africans in general. The Coloured people who, under the apartheid regime were not of the right pigmentation and were classified as black are in democratic South Africa still not black enough to benefit from black empowerment enterprise. What a shame! The lifestyle of the privileged enclave cannot be extended to the majority of South Africans (cf. Bonbright 1992:96) in EFSA.

³⁴⁶ Conditions such as hunger, disease, famine, illiteracy and a number of human ills led those in more fortunate circumstances (in the affluent countries) to a new concern about providing the basic amenities of life for the suffering multitudes in less fortunate circumstances.

³⁴⁷ The General Assembly of the United Nations (1964) which initiated the first Development decade made this stance clear. Its objective was to accelerate progress towards self-sustaining growth of the economy of the individual nations and their social advancement so as to attain in each under-developed country a substantial increase in the growth rate, with each country setting its own target, taking as the objective a minimum rate of growth of aggregate national income of 5% at the end of the decade (cf. Pillay 2002:17, Vaughan 1972:14-15). The aim of this approach was to achieve a high degree of industrialisation and a society enjoying mass consumption of material goods. Hence President Truman’s words in his inauguration speech before Congress: “Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace”

³⁴⁸ Though the economic growth theory attained resounding successes in raising the growth rates of GNP during the 1950’s and 60’s, the fallacies of these theories began to appear in the economic experience of the developing countries. It became clear that growth of GNP, conventionally measured, was

his *Stages of Economic Growth* argues that nations could reach a stage of “take-off” towards economic and social prosperity if sufficient technical skills, financial support and economic organization were made available.³⁴⁹

In his critique of economic growth as sole priority for development, Korten (1990:9) states that “this vision [of development] equates human progress in the market value of economic output and subordinates both human and environment consideration to that goal”. The result, he maintains, has been the “extravagant consumption” of the world’s resources by a favoured few with little recognition of the social and environmental costs borne by the many.³⁵⁰ The many being the impoverished multitudes of the world of which the majority reside in the less-developed countries.

Economic growth had been stimulated by providing huge loans to third world economies. This resulted in these countries becoming more dependent on first world aid, creating a so-called dependency syndrome. Economic growth is undoubtedly a significant facet of development, yet it cannot be seen as equivalent to the total development of society as a whole.

Another dimension that could be added to the sum total of development is change or transformation. Whilst Korten (ibid.) rightfully highlights the mid-80s as “the decade that experienced the crisis and denial brought about by the emphasis on economic

unsatisfactory as the main target of development strategy and as the main criterion of success or failure. The gains of high growth rates have failed to “trickle down” to the poor of the world, which resulted in an even wider gap between the rich and poor countries. The then president of the World Bank, Robert McNamara, noted in 1993: “despite a decade of unprecedented increase in the gross national product... the poorest segments of the population have received relatively little benefit”.

³⁴⁹ However there has been progressive dissatisfaction, especially among some Christian ethicists, with the assumptions implicit in this idea of development. Formative for ecumenical thinking during the early years was Indian economist Samuel Parmar, whose emphasis on economic growth, self-reliance and social justice planted the seeds for fundamental questioning of Walter Rostow’s model. This prompted the churches to measure their existing mission work against these three goals, cf. Richard Dickinson, “Development”, in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, p. 298-299.

³⁵⁰ Cited in Pillay 2002:19).

growth as the means for development”, the final years of the 1980s saw an important awakening, “a move beyond denial to a new recognition of need and opportunity and a growing commitment to action that was to *change* the meaning of development in the 1990s” (Pillay 2002:21).

The next decade (the 1990s) brought a search for alternative concepts such as *transformation*³⁵¹ which emphasises a change of attitude and perceptions in the rich as well as the poor countries. This transformation, according to Pillay (ibid.), must address the following basic needs of our global society:

To begin with, the world has need of social justice. Pillay (2002:220) cites David Korten (1990) in noting that “justice does not require equality of income”, nor does it require that the industrious be required to support the sluggish. What it does require is for all people to have the means and the opportunity to produce a minimum livelihood for themselves and their families. The researcher concurs with this statement because what is needed in the BMA is a decisive shift from hand-outs, towards creating (equal) opportunities for people to produce a minimum livelihood for themselves and those in their care. This is what people desire, as expressed by clergy and laity at a briefing session of the WIF.³⁵² This need of social justice calls for fairness which Pillay (ibid) calls the “ethical process of distributive justice”. This coincides with an observation made by Niebuhr (1960:57) on what he called a “rational ethic”. A rational ethic aims at justice, whereas a religious ethic sees love as the ideal. It seems that the world – especially the third world - is in need of a “rational ethic” which aims at justice and is more powerful (?) than the religious ethic of love.

³⁵¹ Bowers, in her doctoral dissertation, did an excellent, well researched, well documented study on Development as Transformation. For more in-depth information on this topic see Bowers (2005:33-62).

³⁵² Wednesday morning, briefing session of the Interchurch forum, on June 09, 2010, at the Evangelical Revival Mission Church.

Secondly, transformation calls for the recognition and protection of basic human rights. Human rights according to Pillay (2002:21) are ethical rights that (i) *concern the primary welfare of human beings*, (ii) *allow people to give expression to their human dignity* and (iii) *give substance to communities who honour the value of others*.

When individuals or groups cannot respect the rights of others, governments (are constitutionally bound to) “become the agents of our interest and the prime representatives of our responsibilities as a society says Pillay (2002: 22). Human beings are “interdependent parts of communities”; hence our moral responsibilities arise from being “*persons-in-communities*”. The connective tissue of rights and responsibilities is built into our being and is an essential source of our wellbeing (ibid.).

A third aspect of transformation seeks to opt for a redefinition of responsible human relationships to all forms of life with which we live in complex interdependency, and to ground these responsibilities in the demands imposed on us by their vital interest. Whatever their significance for us, other species around us are valued by the Creator.

The ethical concerns surrounding this extension of justice are indeed tedious in their novelty and complexity. Pillay (ibid.) states that “development in its everyday practice deals strictly with improvement in and for human communities, but our ecological responsibilities include the protection of the ecosystem out of respect for justice of the biota”.

Development as transformation, in the fourth instance, maintains the element of sustainability, because a concern for sustainability also forces us to think holistically. It permits us to live consistently and *ad infinitum* within the confines of the “regenerative, assimilative and carrying capacities” of the globe. Development as transformation finds in sustainability a “just distribution of well-being between present and future generations” by following policies that ensure the ecological conditions necessary for

thriving in both the present and future (Niles 1994:152ff.). Hence it is crucial that our strategy for sustainability should mirror the fact that we live in an inter-reliant and interactive ecosphere in which cumulative economic activities in the present may have harsh, even appalling consequences for the future.

Pillay cites O'Riordan (1988) in stating that "sustainability depends upon careful conservation, comprehensive recycling, maximum efficiency, restrained consumption and product durability and *reparability*" (2002:25). Hence, sustainability as a vital component of transformational development requires us to defend the future through "environmental accounting"- the practice of factoring into our economic equations the long term costs of things such as resource depletion and pollution.

Development as transformation acknowledges the need for inclusiveness.³⁵³ For many years development practice systematically deprived substantial segments of the population from making valuable contributions to the development discourse.

One such segment is women³⁵⁴. Until very recently women's [contributions] were largely private and unknown, not of particular interest to the wider intellectual male dominated community. Their contributions were considered as stories or gossip. As a result the male dominated world never listened to the stories of women contributors, as if they did not know "how to listen to them" (cf. Laird 1989:435).

³⁵³ However as Korten points out inclusiveness does not mean that everyone must enjoy equal status and power (1990:4). It does mean that everyone who chooses to be a productive contributing community member has a right to do so and to be recognised and respected for these contributions.

³⁵⁴ The exclusion of the contribution by women came out very strongly in a book written by Boserup (1970), *Women's role in economic development*. In this classic book she presented for the first time a new perspective on economic development and its relation to the real world of women. She clearly illustrated that the previous development projects had discriminated against women and children, which in turn brought failure to the whole program. Pat Simmons on the other hand points out that "to suggest that women had been previously excluded from development is a blatant lie". "They were just invisible to development planners, policy-makers, government officials and foreign 'experts'" (see the post development reader: 1977:248).

The devaluing of women's contributions has rendered women silent and marginal to many issues that make up the public agenda of both church and society³⁵⁵ This according to Levine (1992: 340-341) is the essence of powerlessness: "Being without voice makes the powerless nonparticipant" and for all practical purposes invisible when decisions are taken that affect their lives, livelihoods and self-image. The researcher concurs with Levine in this regard. The majority of women in the Baviaans have little or no schooling which make them reluctant to speak in community meetings.

When powerlessness and silence are considered from below, it becomes clear that more is at issue than being on the losing side of issues that come up for resolution on the public agenda. "Power is expressed not only in explicit decisions and outcomes. It also works through arrangements that keep issues from reaching the public eye in the first place. The silence that cloaks the powerless reflects internalization of those arrangements in ways that make ordinary people assume that nothing can be done". Silence thus contributes to the naturalisation of poverty by converting social arrangements into facts of life. However, more and more do we experience the "emerging women's voices unlearning to not speak".³⁵⁶ Likewise in the BMA, though not many, women at least begin to speak up on issues of concern.

The role of women in the process of development has changed considerably amongst most male development thinkers, and rightfully so. Rapley (1996:178) for example, acknowledges the contribution of women in the following way:

³⁵⁵ Psychologists, educators, literary critiques, and theologians -especially feminist theologians- have produced a burgeoning literary corpus on how the genre of story has helped women compose a life, discover or reclaim a "self," and distinguished the "true" from the "false" narratives that have been controlling their lives. See Waller (1995:255).

³⁵⁶ The researcher was inspired by the title of chapter 11 "Emerging Women's Voices: Unlearning to Not Speak" in *It comes from the people* by Hinsdale, M. Lewis, H and Waller, S (eds). However, the initial phrase "unlearning to not speak" is taken from Marge Piercy's poem "Unlearning to Not Speak", in *Circles on the Water: Selected Poems of Marge Piercy*. New York. Alfred A. Knopf. 1995:97.

These (women) thinkers have made important contributions to our (men) understanding of such factors as the different role plays in the developing economies by both men and women, or of the nature of Third World households and their position in the economy.

Hence, for women to acquire their voice and become freed from the culture of marginality and silence, a “restoring process” needs to take place. In doing so, women’s choices for self-construction will be enriched and expanded; women will begin to connect themselves with other women and discover new possibilities for their lives (Laird 1989:256). It is also true of women in rural areas. In this area for example, one woman has broadened her horizons when she registered as a paving contractor.

The transformed society must ensure that no segment of the population be discriminated against whether on the basis of gender, race³⁵⁷ or creed.

Development as transformation embraces the *human element* and realises that development is primarily about people (cf. also our discussion under section 4.9.1.1). It is directed towards people, it is participatory, self-reliant, and people are at the centre of development. This fact is affirmed by many esteemed development thinkers.³⁵⁸ This vision, according to Pillay (2002:27), upholds the concepts of justice, sustainability and inclusiveness as the “core values” of *authentic* development. This means that every conception of development assumes some standard of “the good”, which in turn means that development is essentially a moral concept and ethical problem.

³⁵⁷ In South Africa under the apartheid government the majority black population were treated as non-people: they were marginalised; they were stripped of their human dignity; they were excluded from the wealth of the country.

³⁵⁸ See Burkey (1993) and also the United Nations Report of 1982 which affirms the above-mentioned notion that development must be people-centred.

Now that we have in some way traced the secular meaning of development, we shall look at development from an ecclesiastic point of view.

5.4.2 Development: an ecclesiastic view

Ecclesiastical involvement in social action and social upliftment is no new phenomenon and has always accompanied Christian mission as either an explicit part thereof or an intended by-product of mission (Bowers 2005:36). The ecumenical movement's involvement with development did not merely represent an activity of a particular factual or quantitative status, that is, of an ecumenical church sector which has unconditionally or uncritically made development one of its major preoccupations (cf. Pillay 2002:100). As mentioned before, one of the key issues which have drawn and held the churches together in the ecumenical movement has been the need to focus their thought and action on the vast political, economic and social problems of the world. They did so by directing a large part of their energy toward seeking a common Christian way of meeting the challenge of human and social disorder. Notwithstanding these shared aims, Bosch (1991:402) states that "within the religious ideal, a mystical emphasis exists side by side with a prophetic emphasis"³⁵⁹; (there can be no doubt that social justice was at the very heart of the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament). He further maintains that the "relationship between the evangelistic and societal dimensions of the Christian mission constitutes one of the thorniest areas in the theology and practice of mission" (ibid: 401). That thorniness, according to Bosch in Bowers (2005:38) "stems from a division in the understanding of the mandate of mission which refers to the relationship between the two mandates".

³⁵⁹ The mystical dimension tends to make an individual or a group withdraw from the world, claim that one's true home is not here but in heaven, and seeks a communion with God without attending to one's neighbour says Haight (1976:623). The prophetic dimension according to Bosch (1991:402) prompts the believer to get involved in society for the sake of the neighbour.

Bosch (1991:403) refers to the first mandate as the “commission to announce the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ; the second mandate calls Christians to responsible participation in human society, including human wellbeing”.³⁶⁰

International co-operation among Christians in the field of social action began in the years before the First World War. This cooperation was stimulated by the development of Christian social movements in many countries and by the need for common Christian witness in the face of social problems.³⁶¹

As has already been shown, the term “development” gained much prominence after the Second World War and it was mostly modernist in appearance and was directed to economic and linear development and growth. The churches in the ecumenical movement became involved in this debate and at that time the focus was on the consequences of rapid social change on individuals and communities. However, a watershed in the ecumenical debate about development came with the Geneva Conference of 1966.

This Conference – influenced by leading speakers from the third world - directed the focus towards poverty and the role of the church in dealing with systemic political and cultural transformation in the developing world.³⁶² This resulted in development becoming the innermost focal point of the ecumenical movement (Uppsala Assembly 1968) which led to the founding of the Commission on the Church’s Participation in Development (CCDP in 1970).³⁶³

³⁶⁰ Cf. Bassham (1979:343).

³⁶¹See Statements of the World Council of Churches on Social Questions, (1956).

³⁶² See Bowers (2005: 40); Dickinson (2002: 299).

³⁶³ The Uppsala Assembly (1968) also approved plans for a Joint Committee on Society, Development and Peace (SODEPAX) which came into existence in 1970. The major goal of this body was to enhance

However, as pointed out by Dickinson (2002:299), the ecumenical debates were driven by an agenda of “purposes, nature and processes”, influenced by a modernist understanding of development which accentuates “technical economic awareness and the mobilisation of greater capital and human resources”. Sad to say, the Western church³⁶⁴ adopted this model of modernisation as development.

In view of this stance, the agenda of the ecumenical movement left much room for division and critique. Bowers (2005:41) cites Dickinson (2002) in pointing out the division within the ecumenical movement between those who - at that time of the debate - still maintained that the key task of the church was proclamation, those who stressed charity and relief rather than development and those who argued for development as purely economic growth.

It is not strange to note that by the mid-1970s the very idea of development was questioned by a large section of the church, and critical voices challenging the narrow definitions of development as a purely economic process, began to emerge.³⁶⁵ In view of this Dickinson (2002:300-301) highlights the following seven limitations of the ecumenical debate:

- The traditional understanding of development focused too narrowly on economic development and paid little attention to non-economic factors in social transformation, such as cultural and religious divisions.

collaboration between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Unfortunately this dream was never realised, because of differing emphases in the analysis of development (Dickinson 2002:299). Sadly, the 1980's saw the demise of this committee.

³⁶⁴ In the early phase of its existence the World Council of Churches as an ecumenical body was still very much a Western Council of Churches. It was only later when more churches from the South joined the World Council of Churches (WCC) that they realised that the agendas of the churches in the newly independent countries differed from those in the North. In the former colonies, churches had to give witness in a climate of revolutionary ferment and aspirations, whereas societies in the North experienced gradual social change and economic transformation in the direction of welfare states (Van Drimmelen 1992:31 in EFSA)

³⁶⁵ Cf. Bowers (2005:41) & Parmar (1976:267-275).

- Real social transformation was to be measured by what happens to *people, in the process of social change*, while the traditional notions of development tended to emphasise more abstract economic or political objectives. In fact, the notion of people-centred development was soon to become the distinctive feature of the ecumenical understanding of development.
- Many discussions on development assumed a too facile harmony of interests between the rich and the poor, while the real situation, at least in the short term, often was a conflict between the rich and the poor (the 'haves' and the 'have-nots').

To some extent, the structures which promoted the prosperity of the affluent simultaneously perpetuated the subservience of the poor.

- The typical measurements for development like the GNP and per capita income were increasingly attacked as inadequate because improvements in aggregate prosperity almost always obscured the real situation. Disparities between the "haves and the have-nots" became larger rather than smaller. With such injustice it became impossible to speak of development.
- Given the enormous strain on the environment which growth models of development implied, many theologians and scientists who reflected together on issues of interest, began to question whether even the ideals of development were suitable, attainable and desirable. They also questioned the authenticity of the technological and scientific values.
- There was a growing awareness of the deficiency of the traditional top-down approach in development theory; to rely heavily on trickle-down effects seemed at best inefficient, at worst a hoax upon the poor

- There was a growing conviction that, in the name of development, many national and international economic structures were perpetuating or even reinforcing structures of injustice.

On a global scale, development was used to “westernise non-Western” societies and to rob unsuspecting people of their land, culture and indigenous system (Davids 2005:2). Thus many prominent ecumenical ethicists “gradually rejected ‘development’ altogether” and chose instead to speak of “liberation” (Pillay 2002:45). That is why development thinkers such as Edwards (1989:116-135) and Sachs (1992:1) claim that, “at best, development has failed, and at worst has always been a hoax”, designed to cover up damage being done to the developing world and its people. For Sachs (ibid) the idea of development stands like a “ruin in the intellectual landscape and it is time to dismantle this mental structure”.

5.4.2.1 Development towards Liberation.³⁶⁶

At this time of the debate, when it became increasingly obvious that the poor were being exploited by unjust national and international economic structures, the voice of Third World theologians began to emerge.³⁶⁷

The voice from Latin America in the 1970s was very clear: “the *lost* decade of developmentalism is over and we are now inaugurating the decade of *liberation*. Liberation is now the new name for development” as Bruwer (1994:14) put it.

³⁶⁶ Since the 1970s no issue has had more far-reaching and profound impact on ecumenical ethics than that of liberation. It is the centrifugal force which has spun out into their own orbit numerous other ethical issues such as limits to growth, development by the people, appropriate technology, violence and non-violence, roles of women in development etc. (Dickinson 1983: 57). The word liberation assumed a special significance in ecumenical discussion, providing a touchstone for determining an authentic mode of theologizing and a fundamental guideline for ethical reflection and action. See K.C. Abraham, “Liberation”, in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, p. 683

³⁶⁷ Cf. Land (1985:40-46); Bowers (2005:41).

Suddenly the mood was changing in Third World countries. The 1950s became the decade where “socio-politically development had been replaced by revolution”; “ecclesiastically and theologically by liberation” (Bosch 1991: 434). Soon the “liberation idea” became part of the ecclesiastical vernacular.

The emphasis on liberation has spawned a whole corpus of creative biblical exegesis and has been one of the most significant, “if not *the* most significant medium” in biblical and theological scholarship of its time (Dickinson 1983:59). Nations of the Third World realised that they had to take matters in their own hands and liberate themselves through a revolution. For them revolution, rather than development, became the catalyst by which they could remove the root causes of injustice. Their thinking was fuelled by Abraham’s notion of liberation as meant to [allow] “subjugated or marginalized people taking control of their destiny and fight until overthrowing all the fetters of bondage”.³⁶⁸ Even in South Africa, the Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa (EFSA)³⁶⁹, “consciously linked itself to the national and international ecumenical liberation movement” (Swart 2004b:2).³⁷⁰ They did so to promote a perspective on the role of the church in a post-apartheid South African society. Liberation theology undoubtedly provided the theological motivation during the apartheid era.³⁷¹

The development-liberation debate has challenged many long-held assumptions about the nature of society and the “character and purposes of social change”.

³⁶⁸ Cited in Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement (2002:683-685).

³⁶⁹ In his incisive and challenging paper “Critical reflections on the pragmatic turn in the religious social development debate in South Africa” Ignatius Swart points out how EFSA as a religious institution has gone out of its way to promote the public image of the religious sector. He acknowledges the input EFSA has made in especially their first three conferences on “Church and development”.

³⁷⁰ See Swart’s article, *Networks and Partnerships for Social Justice? Critical Reflection on the Pragmatic turn in the Religious Social Development Debate in South Africa*. (2004b:2).

³⁷¹ However, de Gruchy (2003:452) remarks that in post-apartheid South Africa the church should move from a ‘theology of resistance to a theology of assistance’.

That “change” has not been globally and explicitly accepted (Dickinson 1983:58). The swing from development to liberation was not just a mere terminological shift, but was deeply rooted in some fundamental questions about the nature and significance of “development”. It also questioned the scantiness of the development paradigm for biblical faith. As was pointed out by Dickinson, “Liberation” was thought to express more adequately the following elements:

- i. That social change and justice embodied in the biblical account, came about by and not as a result of a slow evolutionary execution of natural laws innate in the universe;
- ii. That history is conflictual - a struggle among various power centres. Though a “partners in development” emphasis idealises partnership, it often disguises the reality of power struggles beneath the surface of cooperation.

There is a symbiotic relationship between over- and underdevelopment; the poverty of the masses is to some degree a product of the affluence of a few³⁷².

- iii. The problem of poverty is not only “out there” among the poor, but also among the rich who are possessed by their possessions, and slaves to their own power.
- iv. That the Western idea of development, stressing capital-intensive economic growth, competition, consumerism, industrialisation through concentration of wealth and power is called into action – especially when its linked to *laissez-faire* capitalism. Trickle-down does not work effectively
- v. That development is not simply a matter of economics, nor only a question of having more *per capita*, calories, or even education and health, important as

³⁷²The rich are called upon not only for greater charity, nor only to help the poor to develop their own self-reliance, but they are called upon to reshape their own institutions and lifestyles from a preoccupation with having and controlling (1983.58).

these are. Development is also a matter of human dignity, self-reliance and participation of the people in determining their own destiny. Development should be people-centered, “as if people matter”.³⁷³

- vi. That sin is expressed not only in one to one personal relationships but poisons, and is reinforced by, the structures of society which give the powerful a greater sense of self-righteousness as well as greater manipulative control over the weak;
- vii. That development tends to maintain the power of the elite, as gradualism serves the *status quo*.

From the above one can deduce that the transition from development to liberation was “not a simple adoption of fashionable Marxist doctrines”; it was more basically a result of the effort to “reread the biblical materials” and to see “Christian theology with new eyes”, through the eyes of the poor and oppressed. It has posed a tremendous challenge to the life of the churches at the institutional, ideational and action levels (Dickinson 1983:59).

However, despite the emergence and prominence of liberation theology, a group of theologians continued to speak about development in a predominantly positive way. Contributors to EFSA’s Conference on Church and Development speak very optimistically of the concept of development as “the new proactive social agenda in post-apartheid South Africa (Govender *et al* 1992:14). In its contribution to the development debate the ecumenical movement gained a better understanding of the intricate meaning of development and the need for a comprehensive approach.³⁷⁴

³⁷³ See also Boesak, (1995:21).

³⁷⁴ This approach was initiated in the 1920’s and focussed, in particular, on education, health ministries and agricultural training (Bosch 1991:433).

The ecumenical movement nevertheless made a remarkable contribution to the debate when it accentuated people as the nucleus of development rather than production or technological innovations. It pointed out that people are not “submissive spectators and beneficiaries of societal transformation but vigorous participants who have roles to play” and tasks to perform in bringing about the vision and hope of the reign of God (Hallman 1986:24).

The participation of the people themselves in their own development is both an “essential part of human growth and a process whereby the people themselves become aware of and understand their problems and the social reality within which they live” in order to effect lasting change at grass-roots level (August 1999:24).³⁷⁵ This people-centred process actually enables people to ascertain their own needs and priorities and act upon them.

When people become aware of their own needs they also become aware of their ability to do things for themselves. Hence they will look for projects that are self-reliant and where they can contribute “maximum human, material and financial resources” (ibid.). An interesting note to make here is this: it is gladdening to note how physically challenged people (in partnership with Department of Social Development and the local municipality) in the BMA started to embark on a project which now produces organic products. Though it is still in the beginning phase they already reap the fruit of that project. Many such projects are in place in the Baviaans. It is hoped that the people will continue with these many self-reliant projects in order to provide for themselves.

³⁷⁵ See also Bowers (2005:36).

5.5 DEVELOPMENT AND PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

According to its etymology “develop” means “to uncover, to unfold or unroll”. This sense of “develop” comes close to “transform” which seeks to reveal the enormous hidden reality and potential in all creation and especially in human beings. To ignore this potential is “to deny or withhold enormous powers of good of all humanity and all creation” (Bruwer 1994:26). Hence if development is to be directed to contribute towards the church’s service of *all*, certain pointers should be kept in mind. Two key emphases that were fundamental to ecumenical thinking on development were (i) participation and (ii) people.

In line with the ‘logic’ of the liberation argument the church argued with increasing cogency and insistence that “people should be the subjects of history” rather than the pawns moved about by others. They further argued that “justice should not merely be disruptive but participatory” (Dickinson 2002:301).³⁷⁶

Participation, as argued by Harvey, in Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement (2002:880) implies, “belonging to and involvement in an organisation, being an active member of a decision-making body, involved in policy making or participating in the procedures and programmes” of such an organisation. Dickinson (ibid.) rightfully affirms that a society cannot be considered developed unless the people share in determining where their society is headed.

The popular notion of development encouraged concentration rather than distribution of power. However, the idea of the people, dominated the ecumenical debate. The priority as argued by Dickinson (ibid) was not simply to participate in a general manner but a vivid participation by the peripheral and oppressed people. It is remarkable what people can achieve if they speak from one voice. In the Baviaans for example 60% of all

³⁷⁶ See Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement (2002).

projects initiated by the IDP forum for 2009 – 2010 were fully implemented by March 2011.

This coincides with Itty's (1977)³⁷⁷ notion of development, as “essentially a people's struggle in which the poor and oppressed should be the main protagonists, the active agents and [the] immediate beneficiaries”. Therefore the development process must be seen from the perspective of the poor and oppressed people who are the subjects of development (cf. 4.9). This notion of development, Itty noted, has direct consequences for the way churches and Christian communities should pursue development

The church according to Bruwer (1994:27) deals with the “soul of a person” which means that if development is being tackled holistically it has to touch the soul of a person; otherwise it remains incomplete and sacrificial. Good development should start in the human mind³⁷⁸ and therefore should be humane in all its aspects. Viewing participation in development in this sense is much more than the joining of people to perform an activity or to achieve something, or to work together. Participation in this sense means taking part in *someone*; it means to dwell in and be indwelt by the lives of others. It means that our reason for participation should not be of individualistic nature, but to serve the other (cf. Cunningham 1998: 165-169). The Trinity serves as perfect example as it teaches us to not understand ourselves in individualistic terms but as mutually indwelling and indwelt, echoing the mutual indwelling of the Three (cf. Pembroke 2006:13).

³⁷⁷ C. I. Itty, director of CCPD captured this shift in his 1977 report to the Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development, cited in Dickinson (2002: 301).

³⁷⁸ Development projects according to Bruwer (1994) deal with audible, visible and tangible things.

5.7 CONCLUSION

When discussing the “improvement” of people who are poor, the most common word or concept used by “highly developed” people is “development”. They seem to say: “If people could only be developed, we would certainly reach the end of all the misery in the world” (Bruwer 1994:19). This unfortunately is an ideal. Hence, as a serving community *with* the poor and of the voiceless, the church is called to protect those who are politically, socially and economically deprived.

The church has a biblical mandate to put the needs of the underprivileged first. In other words, the church is called to ‘respond’ to human need in all its facets. The church owes the world hope and love and we do this because the love of Christ leaves us no choice. Hence, having noticed the contributions made by the church with regard to the socio-political and economic situation, and how vehemently it debated these issues on the global development platform, it is clear that the church’s nature is indeed transformative and its contribution to social transformation is unique. The Hebrew word *QAHAL* and Greek word *EKKLESIA* express this uniqueness in the calling of people out from the broader community and together within the broader community of the inhabited world to become the community of God – for God’s redemptive purpose with the world (cf. August 2010: 44). What makes the church’s contribution to development distinct is that the church is ideally placed to live out the nature of Christ in the midst of broken communities. Unfortunately for the church the debate is far from over; in order for the church to do justice to the biblical understanding of development, it needs to take its place with regard to a development which transforms. The development debate in more ways than one challenges the church to rethink what it means to be church in our day and age. The next chapter is devoted to an understanding of these challenges and how these challenges impact a practical theological ecclesiology.

CHAPTER 6:
THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPMENT FOR A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL
ECCLESIOLOGY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The one fundamental reality that conditions everything that follows, and which remains a constant challenge to the *glocal* church is poverty. It may be difficult to get exact figures, but there is consensus among statisticians that there are at least one billion people in the world today who cannot meet their basic needs. This is indeed an alarming figure which speaks to the conscience of presidents and ordinary citizens, to world institutions and charity clubs, to Christians and non-Christians, to believers and non-believers.

However, though recognising the magnitude of this figure, the concern of this study lies with the nearly 0.0016% of the estimated 1bn poor people who resides in the Baviaans municipal area. It is in this small area where many of the 16000 residents struggle to make ends meet. The statistics of their poverty rate are insignificant to the power structures, just as their value as people depreciates on a daily basis. The reason for this is that the extent of the poverty crisis in small town areas is not always realised (cf. also Swanepoel 1997:8, see also 2.2.4). They are the neglected segment of the world population whose voice will never be heard by the power structures of the day, unless something is done.

What can be done we might ask? According to the South African government the answer lies in community development. It is noted how community development has become the buzz word in democratic South Africa (Ch. 2). The emphasis in community development is on improving the lives of the whole community, especially the lowest

level of the aggregation of people who, in some way or other are dependent upon each other for their existence. This is the focus of chapter 2. Building on the notion that poverty is the one 'thing' that community development strives to address, Chapter 3 noted how poverty, firstly from an academic point of view and secondly from a contextual viewpoint manifests itself in the lives of the people of the Baviaans. Following the subtheme of the title, section 3.9 attempted to show the significance of these experiences for a practical theological ecclesiology.

Eager to reduce the socio-economic backlogs inherited from the apartheid regime, the post- apartheid government started to embark on a host of programmes of which the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is the latest. This plan has been given to the government sphere closest to the people viz. local government or municipalities, with the specific mandate to accelerate service delivery to local communities in order to better the lives of the marginalised. Chapter 3 further creates a context for the implementation and critique of the IDP. This is the scope of Chapter 4. In addition this chapter recognises the presence of the church as perhaps the strongest voice when it comes to social issues in this area. The chapter discusses how the church sees its identity and role in the challenges posed by the IDP, that of becoming contextually relevant. Building on that, chapter 5 demonstrates the ceaseless involvement of the church in the development domain, through its relation to different publics. However what has been said in 3.9 and 4.9 will be taken further in chapter 6.

Community development has to do with the upliftment of people and it should never be a point-scoring game for role players on either side of the development fence. This approach is supposed to trigger a transformation process whereby people can be liberated from the trap of poverty in which they are caught. However, we reiterate that this should not be a point-scoring kind of development. Laying the theoretical

foundation for praxis of community development, chapter 2 recognise that development is not about index numbers or savings ratios, but it is *about people, for people and with people*. This is argued from a community development model which states that development should be done *in the community, to the community and with the community*. This inevitably brings the question of a practical-theological-ecclesiology to the fore.

6.2 A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL ECCLESIOLOGY

The experiences of the majority of people in the Baviaans municipal area, actually portrays the context³⁷⁹ in which the church exist and to which the church need to respond. The context being one of despair and hopelessness, viewed against the background of unemployment and vulnerability, crime and violence, alcohol and drug abuse. This context compels the church to reflect theologically on what it means to be church (a practical theological ecclesiology) in the Baviaans. How can we better understand and effectively respond to our present context? How can we become the 'best church' for the context in which we live and minister? The context requires us to explore the nature and function of the church (Cf. Van Gelder 2007:1). It brings to the fore the issue of ecclesiology, but a different kind of ecclesiology. An ecclesiology that should go beyond the history of the church to an ecclesiology that "equips us to go forward in a chosen direction" in order to "become the best church we can" for our context (cf. Bradbury 2000:179ff.). This kind of ecclesiology is contextual and practical. Instead of asking "why", it rather asks 'what is the best way of becoming involved in

³⁷⁹ The researcher is aware of the divergent definitions on the concept of context and as such how it would mean different things to different people. Context in this study would refer to the real situation (or context) in which people find themselves. He concurs with Speckman and Kaufmann's definition of contextual (theology) which is sometimes known as situational (theology) because it begins with the real situation or context (2001:4). Also Jurgens Hendricks who refers to theology as having a "contextual nature" and that Christian theology by definition is contextual (2004:27).

development’? How best can we serve God’s little flock when entering into dialogue with power structures on issues of health, education, water, employment, housing, economics, culture, poverty, and the like? How best can we use our ‘faith mandate’ to become partners in the task for development?” We cannot answer these questions, or make suggestions in isolation or from a distance, we need to recognise who owns the development task³⁸⁰ and then place this task within the biblical narrative. Given that community development is *about people, for people and with people*, and given that it may influence the type or kind of ecclesiology required for the context, it may be proper to reflect on the kind of ecclesiology suitable for the context of the Baviaans. What should be the features of a practical theological ecclesiology in the context of the Baviaans? Given the context, the researcher would like to opt for practical-theological ecclesiology that is missionary-diaconal, embracing³⁸¹, and willing to take up the development challenges.

6.2.1 Missionary-diaconal

“As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (John 20:21).

In chapter one (1.7.3) we have said that the church, as being sent into this world by the triune God, has a missionary obligation to join in God’s mission to a world in need; that is an ongoing mission, an ongoing praxis, an ongoing involvement with this world, with the poor and the sick, the homeless and the stranger, the unemployed and the despondent, with the rich and the powerful, with earth and sky. This is an inescapable truth, one in which the church is privileged to share.

³⁸⁰ This question is of epistemological significance and will be unpacked as we continue this chapter.

³⁸¹ The Encarta Dictionary defines embrace as to “accept, welcome, adopt, take up/on, support, and it is in this sense that we would like to use notion of embrace.

Partaking in a mission of this nature is to view mission in terms of the “incarnate Christ, the human Jesus of Nazareth, who wearily trod the dusty roads of Palestine where he took compassion on those who were marginalised” (Bosch 2010:512f). Who in triumphant agony, so to speak, stood before Pilate and declared, ‘My kingdom is not of this world’. The very same Jesus who today sides with the unemployed, the homeless, the disabled, the despondent, the discarded, the rape victims, the abused, the vulnerable masses in the slums of the world, the resettlement areas of our country, and the poverty stricken locations of small town areas. This is a Christ that sweats and bleeds with the victims of oppression (ibid). Just as he was sent by his father to side with those who suffer so he commissions his church to go on the same mission as he had received from his father. For the church to engage in this authentic service is to immerse itself in the need and despair and desperate plight of God’s people, in complete solidarity with them. In the words of Bosch (2010: 514) this means “the church’s mission in the world, too, is suffering...is participation in God’s existence in the world”. Exploring mission in this way is to go onto the missionary fields of our communities as a “sent people”, as “mission outposts within the mission of God”, as “communities called, gathered and sent in God’s mission, the very movement of God toward the world” (Keifert 2006:28)³⁸², in humble service to those on the periphery. To participate in God’s mission to the world is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people, (all people), and since God is a fountain of sending love says Bosch (2010:390). God is a missionary God (ibid). Thus, a missionary-diaconal ecclesiology is one which joins in the *missio Dei*, God’s mission to a world in need... proclaiming the good news that God is a God-for-people. God’s mission (*missio Dei*) affects all people in all aspects of their existence; therefore the church cannot withdraw itself from God’s outreach to the poor.

³⁸² Cited in MacMaster (2010).

We noted (1.7.2) Jesus' presence in the lives of the marginalised; how he went through all the towns and villages, preaching (Matthew 9:35; Mark 6:34), healing every kind of disease and sickness, but also how he attended to their stomachs (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14); how he brought redemption and healing to those on the underside of society. This is giving of oneself, a becoming one with the other in need. In being there for the people (a church for others), he became the hope of the people (the church of the people) as he live and worked with the people (a church with others). To heal the hurt and to care for the sick lightly is a betrayal of *diakonia*. The context of the poor which is manifested in the experiences of the poor in section 3:9 of this study creates similar opportunity for the church to emulate Jesus the Servant (Philippians 2:5-11). The "sending Trinity" is turning the church in this area into what Christ was and is: a servant of God (Nel 1996 quoted in Pieterse 2001:112). A missionary-diaconal ecclesiology stands in service of God's turning to a world in need. And as Christ incarnate, the driving force behind the church's mission to a world in need, should be its incomprehensible love for people (John 3:16). Responding in love to the needs of others; providing food and shelter for the hungry and homeless; clothing the naked; providing a safe space and place for the vulnerable; welcoming and restoring the dignity and self-respect of people is to make known the active presence of God in the lives of the poor (cf. Maluleke 1993:21). Thus for the good news to be truly liberating," it must spring from a heart of love" because, says Pieterse (2004:114) "it is love that moves the church to help the poor and liberate the oppressed". It is love that moves us to report for service in God's kingdom on earth and helping others by becoming the significant other, is kingdom work (1.7.2.1). Thus becoming partners in the upliftment of others by serving the poor (with the consent of the poor) through community development is to become missionary-diaconal. The church's sending into the world is

to make Christ real and felt in the situation of the people. The poor will interpret such behaviour from the church as coming from God who is an embracing God.

6.2.2 An embracing ecclesiology

What do we mean by an ecclesiology that is embracing? Simply, that the church must ‘welcome’ development as an opportunity, to express the presence of God in the context where people need to be uplifted. The magnitude of the situation in the Baviaans creates the opportunity for such an ecclesiology. The preceding chapters constantly remind us that the church finds itself in a transition zone of high developmental activity which calls the church to be involved in development issues. Never before did the Baviaans area experience such high developmental activity as in the last five years (2006 to date), where almost 60% of all projects were fully implemented to the satisfaction of the people (75%) of this area.³⁸³

We have also noted how the church needed to incarnate itself in the realities of the poor (4.9.ff), which is very crucial for an embracing ecclesiology. In section 2.2.7 we noted Batchelor’s remark that wherever a church exists, there “she should demonstrate her concern for the people’s social and economic needs ... in a *practical manner* at the same time as she points the way in which spiritual needs can be met” (1981:134). Maggay (1994: 48) using the biblical metaphor of salt (Mathew 5:13), speaks of “penetrating society” in order to restore whatever is good and just and lovely in the things around us. In essence, this means that the church needs to embrace (community) development as it primarily deal with the well-being and the wholeness of God’s people.

³⁸³ This was spurred by the active involvement of the religious section and many religious individuals in the IDP forum. However, it also need mention that many of the leadership of the municipality are confessing members of their different congregations, which makes it easy to engage them on morals and ethics of their decisions. It also needs to be mentioned that though they are people of faith, their agenda comes from a political (secular) desk, but this is the more reason why the church need to make God’s presence felt around the deliberation table.

Wholeness in the words of Louw (2005:9-10) implies more than a condition of well-being. “Wholeness refers to a new condition of being, to a radical transformation of our existence... to a new direction to life and defined by the justification in Christ as determined by God’s grace”. Wholeness in this sense, and from a theological point of view refers to “God’s unqualified ‘Yes’ in Christ and implies the renewal of ones relationship with God, one’s self, one’s body, with other human beings”, and equally important, with creation (ibid). An ecclesiology that embraces is indeed an indwelt ecclesiology, a giving of one-self, a becoming-one-with the *other* one in need.

People easily identifies with *people* who show ‘authentic compassion’ with them. Compassion is what we see right through the earthly ministry of Jesus till his death on the cross and beyond. Compassion is not pity or even sympathy. Compassion is what Brown (1997:67) describe as “to suffer with, to suffer alongside the other, to enter into and share the condition of the other”. To show this kind of compassion is to *be* where it matters the most; the deepest point of human need.

In the Gospels, Jesus is shown meeting people at the point of their need, taking up and taking on their plight, being open to them and responding to them on a one-to-one basis. Scripture offers various accounts where Jesus (in person) is found amongst the “social and political nobodies, the fisher folk and the farmers, local officials and teachers, soldiers of the occupying forces, village women, the sick and physically challenged, the periphery people and the prostitutes” (Pillay 2002:49).

Being church in this area means to be actively present at the deepest point of human need. To actually see Christ indwelt in the hungry person, the stranger, the homeless (cf. Matthew 5:35-36).

We need to see Christ in the form of the vulnerable who cries out to us, - the Body of Christ, the community of people called -, hoping that we will listen to their plight. (Another crucial point to which we will return is the point of listening?)

A practical theological ecclesiology which embraces is not naïve in disregarding the unsettling issues of its time. It is fully aware of, and open to engage the challenge of a stubborn human nature, ecological risks, economic pain, hunger, homelessness, disease, poverty, racism, sexism, injustice. It is aware of the messiness that surrounds these issues, but is willing to advocate the cause of those who appeal to them for help. In other words representing or intervening *on behalf of*, but also *with the consent of* the people in need. An embracing ecclesiology needs to listen to the voice of need in whatever form it comes.

6.2.1.1. In need of listening

The adage “Listening is a Skill” proves to be a valuable saying. But it is also true from a biblical point of view where we are reminded how the prophets of Israel often listened to their people before they sought to bring wisdom and prophecy to contextual situations (cf. MacMaster 2010:211). The way poverty manifests itself in the experiences of the people in the Baviaans; the development challenges brought forward by the development activities in and through the integrated development plan; the cries and the frustration of the people, actually oblige the church to become a listening church. But this is to be a listening with a difference; the difference being to listen with compassion and respect to the experiences of the people in the community.

To listen with respect is to - “hear, to absorb and to understand”, even when you do not understand (Ackermann 2006:187); it is to “listen with new eyes” (Miller-McLemore & Anderson 1995:65). To listen with respect is to “listen into speech those who cannot

even tell their own stories” (Moore 2002:17). Becoming a listening church is also Villa-Vicencio’s (1995) plea to the church of the post-apartheid era, but more so to a people who have been stigmatised as illiterate, poor, uneducated “klein-dorp, agterstraat-mense” (small-town, backstreet-people).

There are many people with little or no schooling in the Baviaans. We have noted in chapter 4 that Only 25% (4000) of the approximately 16000 people of this area do have some secondary education. This may be a contributing factor to why people are sometimes afraid to speak up, and why many stories of pain and suffering will go untold. This is (was) also the experience of the researcher in his area. There are many people who cannot (or do not want to) tell their own stories. They feel incompetent and insecure, they feel they do not have the right vocabulary; they do not want to make a fool of themselves in front of others. Many times one will hear, “Ag meneer ek weet nie eintlik wat om te sê of hoe om dit te sê nie (*Oh sir, I don’t actually know what to say or how to say it*, DEJ).³⁸⁴ A listening church will use that frustration to create an opportunity for people, to express themselves in ways that they are comfortable in. Given the reality of the human element in,- and the developmental context of - the IDP, and the fact that it wants to add value to the lives of people, in order for marginalised people to live dignified lives, it is important that there shall take place a kind of listening that will bring wholeness to the contextual situation.

Attending the many community sessions of the IDP forum, the researcher became aware of the real issues and concerns that matters to the marginalised. It is as if the poor speaks a “language of their own”, but this is a language that the church needs to learn and listen to if it wants to be contextually relevant.

³⁸⁴ The researcher was invited to a combined session of the “vroue-vereniging” (women’s committee) to speak on the theme “blowing the whistle”. It was in this session where an illiterate old female person uttered these words.

We have already noted that the gospel cannot be good news if the church is incapable of discerning the real issues and concerns that matter to the poor (4.9.2). To listen in this way is to enter into and share the conditions of the other. Many poor people live in appalling conditions, from which they need to be liberated. These conditions, (from which the poor need to be liberated), according to de Gruchy (2001)³⁸⁵ call out to the church to adopt a development spirituality which, as he put it, “arises as a response to four voices”. But there are so many voices calling out for the church’s attention, how do we know which voice we need to listen to? How do we listen with discernment? de Gruchy (2001), in his exploration for a spirituality of development (upliftment – my emphasis) says the very first voice a listening church need to listen to is the voice of the triune God.

- *In obedience to the voice of the Triune God:*

We are called by the voice of the Triune God to listen to the cries of the meek and the mild, the vulnerable, the voiceless, the homeless, the stranger, the unemployed, the rape victim, and the victim of abuse. We have a biblical mandate to demonstrate solidarity with them. There can be no doubt, says Bosch (2010:436) that both the Old Testament and in the ministry of Jesus there was a significant focus on the poor and their plight. The entire Bible, beginning with the story of Cain and Abel, mirrors God’s predilection for the weak and abused of human history. As already noted development is about the upliftment of people – a people created in the image of its creator God, and made to his

³⁸⁵ The late prof. Steve de Gruchy (an accredited minister of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa – UCCSA) was a regular columnist for the Inside Out Magazine issued by the Council for World Mission (CWM). He was also a well-respected theologian in the academic field who at the time of his death was director of the Programme on Theology and Development at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. His insightful, well-researched and to the point articles, edifies the researcher in a wonderful way. Thus the researcher is deeply indebted to de Gruchy, especially for his articles in the Inside Out Magazine. Also available: <file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/User/My%20Documents/Current%20reflection> see also: www.cwmission.org.uk. [2010 10 March]

likeness; it is about adding value to the life of people. It is about a creator God who with compassion cares for His whole creation but displays a preference for the poor. God's compassion, his nurturing character does not exclude non-poor people but his attention is focused on the *poor first* according to Bosch (ibid.). It is the poor who, according to Assmann (in Bosch 2010:436) is having an "epistemological privilege"; "they are the new interlocutors of theology, its new hermeneutical locus" (Frostin quoted in Bosch 2010:436); they are the people called "from every tribe and language and people and nations" (cf. Revelations 5:9).

This caring nature of God *inter alia*, is found in Exodus 3 where God "*listens* with his eyes": "I have indeed *seen* the misery of my people (:7); he listens empathetically: "I have heard them crying (:7b), he listens with compassion: "I am concerned about their suffering". A caring God who listens to and act on behalf of the defenceless. In Jesus we see a God (Father), sending his Son to further displays God's (the Father's) concern for humanity and especially the poor and the vulnerable. God became incarnate in Christ to share the human condition with us. In the context of the trinity God the Father is sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son is sending the Holy Spirit, but it will be in order to add, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world" (cf. Bosch 2010:390). This Godhead is not "remote and disengaged" but is the "living God who created us and who became incarnate and dwelt among us" ... and to whose voice we should listen in obedience, for it is this triune God "who dwells among us still in the communion of the church" and in whom we "live and move and have our being" (cf. Cunningham 1998:119). To listen in obedience to, - and to worship - this God, is to be open to, and engage in God's change, transformation and development of his people. To listen to the voice of the triune God in this (engaging) way compels us to live in reconciled relationship with the Godhead (the Sending Trinity, so to speak) and one

another³⁸⁶ as a new people of God. It is this new people who are moved to live in active fellowship³⁸⁷ and interdependence with others as “the chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (cf. I Peter 2:9). However this community constituted by God will also be a community consisting of people from a diverse racial, ethnic, national and political identity (Cf. Van Gelder 2000:108). It is they, who are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18). Paul notes this in Romans 9:25: “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people....’” It is this people who need to demonstrate to our fragmented world that a community of diverse people who obediently listens to the voice of the triune God can live in reconciled relationship with one another because they (the people of God) live in reconciled relationship with the Godhead (ibid.) This they aspire to do, so “that the world may believe” (John. 17:21).³⁸⁸ These reconciled relationships lead to a kind of fellowship among believers that only people of faith can experience.

³⁸⁶ God created the whole of the world in relation to himself. The most important truth built into God’s design is that humans are to understand their existence as creatures before the living God, their creator. God gave a special place to humans within the creation, making them in his image and assigning them responsibilities to exercise stewardship over the whole earth. Every dimension of human existence was covered within this stewardship. All the created powers functioned as servants for making this stewardship possible. These created powers can be seen in the variety of responsibilities Adam and Eve were given in carrying out their stewardship, writes van Gelder (2000:92).

³⁸⁷ When God created humans in his image he did so to make them capable of such relationships. Their most important relationship was to be with God himself. This fellowship was structured into creation both in the Sabbath principle of the seventh day of rest (Genesis 2:2 “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work”) and in the daily communion God had with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8 “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden”).

³⁸⁸ That the world may believe depends entirely upon whether the church presents her unity *credibly* in accordance with this prayer of our Lord. “Credibly” in this sense, does not mean without any shadow because this is impossible in a church composed of human beings and, indeed sinful human beings, says Küng (1965).

- *To listen to the voice from below – the people*

We reiterate that development is about liberating people from the trap of poverty. It is people in the poverty trap that best understands their context, their situation. It is them who better comprehends what it means to be homeless, to have little or no education (13%, see graph 5 of chapter 4), to have no access to health care because of inaccessible roads, to not know where their next meal will come from (cf. 3.4). It is the unemployed (75% - unemployed and economically inactive section) who better comprehends the effect of unemployment in their lives.

It is the abused women and children who can best tell their story of fear when the weekend dawns. It is the frustrated youth who can best tell the story of frustration and boredom (cf. 3.8.2). Whilst listening to the voice from above (God) we are also called to listen to what de Gruchy (2001) calls, the “voice from below”. The multitudes who are struggling to achieve a basic sustainable livelihood, who struggle with issues of development, are “the people whom we see in our pews”, and in everyday life. Thus a listening church needs to listen to and hear how poor people deal with these concerns. The church needs to hear the cries from below. Something must be wrong with the economic system of a town if only 19% of the employable residents find themselves in permanent employment. When the (elderly) parents and grandparents who has children in grade 12 (1.25% - 200 matriculants,) sees no hope of their children ever finding a job in the Baviaans or in other parts of the country. When young people find solace in social ills such as drugs and alcohol which in the end result in moral decay (cf. 3.8.3). The voice from below seems to speak louder in small town areas where unemployment almost seems endemic. What hope can the church bring when the voice from below see no justice in their situation? How should we listen to them? Thornton

(2000:70) suggests that the church move from just *listening*, to *just listening* – a listening that participates in justice. South Africa has seen many “peace-loving” residents taking to the streets because of the injustices they suffered. Thus the church is called to listen to the voice of truth and justice.

- *To listen the voice of truth and justice*

South African history under apartheid is a history of lies and deception and injustice.³⁸⁹ It is history where Black people were made to believe that everything that happens to them is for their own good because it is the *will of God*. Apartheid left many Black³⁹⁰ people wounded and scared. Black people were seen as inferior and treated as such. What is disturbing even till this day is how the word *baas* and *miesies* are still operative in the farms of the Baviaans area; and how grown black men and women dare not speak against any form of superiority. Even till this day in the Baviaans, people with status are treated like royalty. Smit’s words ring true in this context: “they have been made to feel insecure and afraid”³⁹¹ (quoted in August 2005:291). These scars run so deep that it will take a very long time to heal as Ramphele (2008:15) also attests.

Somehow we need to allow the voice of truth and justice to come up more strongly. Smit (1993:18) in August (2005:291) says we are “in need of the truth”. Truth and justice are not only part of, but transcends, the Christian tradition, and are shared by many other traditions and worldviews as pointed out by Hughes & Bennet (1998: 2).

³⁸⁹ Sadly, under the new dispensation we still experience a hive of lies (empty promises) and deception.

³⁹⁰ We are referring to politically black people under the old apartheid system. Coloureds and Indians were also classified as black by the apartheid government and were treated as such. However we need to stress that coloureds (kleurlinge) had it a little better than their black brothers and sisters.

³⁹¹ Whilst visiting one of the farms in the area the researcher experienced mixed emotions when he noticed how an elder in one of the Pentecostal churches was treated by the son of a farmer who was young enough to be the grandson of this elder. Fear of getting spanked by this young lad stripped this respected elder from his dignity; it rendered him powerless to act, and with his hat in his hand he was forced to become less than what he was worth.

When we set out to bless the poor, we will find ourselves shoulder to shoulder (partnering) with those who also care but who do not share our faith. We will also find that they have thought very deeply about what they are doing and that we can learn much from their wisdom. It is so, even if we have to reject their overall theory of development (*or their understanding of truth and justice – my italics*) as inadequate, the reason being, that “no theory or practise that ignores our relationship with God can give us a true picture of what a meaningful human life is.

This calling, says de Gruchy (2001), “arises through our participation in life for the common good – for transparency, accountability, honesty and integrity”. He says, “Because it transcends our particular faith, this calling also provides *the church* with a way in which we can talk and act with many people of other faiths, and no faith” (*my italics*). This, de Gruchy (ibid) calls “a dialogical frontier” which can open up possibilities for Christian witness and the gospel. When we make people the focus of development, then it goes without saying that development should be devoid of hypocrisy and ideological priorities and instead be undergirded by truth and justice. This places the church in a favourable position because:

Christians are in a unique position to *speak truth and justice* to poverty related issues in every corner of the globe (*my italics*). They have been given a message that has to do with the transformation of the totality of life through God’s dynamic power, active in history – the gospel of the kingdom (which includes truth and justice). They have been called to form churches that live out the whole of that gospel (of truth and justice) and, as such become agents of change in society (Hughes & Bennet 1998: x).

As custodian of kingdom values such as truth and justice the church has the responsibility to “be concerned with the (truth and justice) debate so as to help clarify a

truthful agenda” (de Gruchy 2001: 5). A truthful agenda, says de Gruchy “will also be a just agenda”. It is however, the “prophetic nature” of the church to have a “prophetic concern” about justice, economic and political life of all the people of the earth (ibid.).

In the words of August (2010:292): “The church, who is entrusted with the truth of God, has to help the nation in dealing honestly with the realities of the present, politically, economically and socially”.

- *Listen to the earth*

We have noted the importance of listening for a practical-theological ecclesiology; we have established the importance of listening to the voice of the triune God, but we also saw the need of listening to the people. We have listened to the voice of truth and justice, but we also need to listen to the voice of the earth.

There is a good reason why the church needs to be concerned about the cries of the earth. The prophet Isaiah 24:19-20 warns that “the earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken: The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls – never to rise again”. For the people of the Baviaans this is a serious indictment. Where in the past we could listen to these words without much feeling and understanding, we now have to listen to these words because it has serious implications for our livelihood. It describe with visionary power what the majority of human beings in our time have experienced and what perhaps, in a not too distant future, all mankind will experience again (cf. Tillich 1948:2-3). The visions of the prophets have become an actual, physical possibility, and might become an historical reality. The phrase, “The earth is broken up” is not just a poetic metaphor for us in the 21st century, but a hard reality.

Climate changing; drought, cyclones, floods, deforestation, uncontrolled fires, and famines have become part of our daily experience.³⁹²

The sad part is that almost all of these things are the direct result of human activity³⁹³, much of it in the name of growth, progress³⁹⁴ and even development, as de Gruchy (2001:3) points out. The area under study already experiences these harsh climatic conditions, not only because it is located in the Karoo but because of these ecological changes. Given the context (high unemployment rate) many households are dependent on vegetable gardens and if the land is barren, people depending on the earth will not be able to make a living. Already people can tell that the climate is changing. Though they do not understand these loaded educated terms expressions such as “ons kan nie nou plant nie want die maan is nie op koers nie” (*we cannot plant now because the moon is not on course*, DEJ), show how in touch they are with nature. Many still believe that one must plant when it is full moon. These people have no degrees in agriculture but they can tell with almost scientific precision when to plant and whether there will be a harvest or not. To listen to the earth is important to the people of this area. We need to live within the confines of the carrying capacity of this area, by following policies that

³⁹² That is the religious meaning of the age into which we have entered. The Bible has always told us of the beginning and the end of the world. It speaks of eternity before the world was founded; it speaks of the time when God laid the foundations of the earth; it speaks of the shaking of these foundations and of the crumbling of this world. Cf. Tillich (1948:3).

³⁹³ “In the language of the prophets it is the Lord who shakes the mountains and melts the rocks. Sadly, this is a language that we cannot understand, and so God, who is not bound to any special language, not even to that of the prophets, spoke to us today through the mouths of the greatest scientist, and this is what He says: You yourselves can bring about the end upon yourselves. I give the power to shake the foundations of your earth into your hands. You can use this power for creation or for destruction. How will you use it? This is what God said to mankind through the work of scientists. He forced His word upon them as He had forced it upon the prophets, in spite of their attempt to resist it. Just like the prophets, so too scientists must raise their voice to tell this generation what the prophets told their generations: that global warming is a reality; that earth and mankind, trees and animals, are threatened by a catastrophe which they cannot escape” cf. Tillich (1948:4).

³⁹⁴ In the book of Jeremiah we read about false prophets, who cried, “Progress, infinite progress! Peace, universal peace! Happiness, happiness for everyone! Sad to say, that was mere wishful thinking. The greatest triumph of science, according to Tillich (1948:5), was the power it gave to man to annihilate himself and his world.

ensure the ecological conditions necessary for thriving in both the present and the future. It is the responsibility of a listening church to defend the future through what Pillay (2002: 25) calls “environmental accounting” – the practice of factoring into our economic equations the long term costs of things such as resource depletion and pollution. We live in an inter-reliant and interactive ecosphere in which cumulative economic activities in the present may have harsh and even appalling consequences for the future.

We have said that for our context we need a practical ecclesiology that can embrace development as an opportunity to express the presence of God in their situation. However it is no easy task for the church to engage development, because as Bosch (2010:402) attests:

The church’s ministry – outside its walls – was by and large limited to charity...To challenge unjust societal structures fell outside of its purview and would also have been totally unacceptable to the political rulers”

Challenging the power structures on issues of culture, health, gender, education is seen as not belonging to the domain of the church. The next section will briefly discuss these issues as challenges for a practical ecclesiology in the BMA.

6.3 Development challenges³⁹⁵

In order to appreciate the issues involved and how it manifests in the Baviaans municipal area, it may help to highlight some of these challenges the church need to deal with.

6.3.1 Health³⁹⁶

When we talk about health issues, people tend to think of AIDS, and rightfully so, because it has a serious socio-economic impact on development work. Here in South Africa it is beginning to devastate communities, and it impacts heavily on the Church. Statistics show that nearly 34 million people worldwide are currently living with HIV/AIDS, and it is spreading with ferocious speed. In the Baviaans municipal area the statistics are no better. According to statistics³⁹⁷ provided by the hospital and two clinics, 15% (2009) of the patients tested for HIV/AIDS, tested positively. Of these, 24% were men and 8% women. However, the aim of this section is not to join the already exhausted debate on AIDS but to comment on health in general. The magnitude and impact of health is everybody's business so we should promote it everywhere. The Charter of the Public and Private Health Sectors of the Republic of South Africa (2005) recognised some time ago that

³⁹⁵ The researcher is aware of the many challenges that exist within the development domain, but because of the limitation of this research we deemed it necessary to only mention some challenges (amongst others) relevant to the area of study. This might look like a "preferential bias" towards a particular direction, and rightly so; hence the researcher's acknowledgement of this inclination towards the challenges prevalent in the area of study (BMA).

³⁹⁶ See *"The Charter of the Public and Private Health Sectors of The Republic of South Africa"*, August 2005, 1-33.

³⁹⁷ Statistics obtained from the hospital and clinic during March 2010. According to the sister who is working at the ARV site the figure could be higher. "These are only the ones we have tested" she said.

...there is a legacy of apartheid in terms of which access³⁹⁸ to and distribution of health care and ownership of health care establishments was grossly inequitable, and disadvantaged the vast majority of South Africans on the basis of their race, gender and economic status.

This resulted in government noting the need to achieve the most effective, economic and efficient utilisation of resources within the health sector, including human resources, so as to adequately address the health needs of the greatest possible number of people in South Africa. Hence they agreed to create for South Africa a health system that is coherent, efficient, cost-effective, and quality-driven, and which optimises the utilisation of public and private sector resources within the health system for the benefit of the entire population. Unfortunately the people in rural areas still do not benefit from this project.

Nevertheless, access to health care remains a complex issue of constitutional significance. Statics in the IDP reveal that only 24.6% of the households have access to a hospital while 84.6% have access to clinics. There are significant numbers of people in South Africa who do not have adequate access to health services due to geographical³⁹⁹, financial⁴⁰⁰, physical, communication, sociological (such as unfair discrimination and stigmatisation) and other barriers.⁴⁰¹ The challenge is to identify such barriers as and

³⁹⁸ Access in this regard means having the capacity and means to obtain and use an affordable package of health care services in a manner that is equitable.

³⁹⁹ The Baviaans Municipal Area only has one hospital and because of inaccessible roads it is difficult to get to Willowmore where the hospital is located.

⁴⁰⁰ It is so that people in rural areas will never escape the poverty trap. It is very difficult to make a living in these remote areas. See footnote 48 for more reasons. Finances on the other need not be a stumbling block to achieve results. The Congregational Church successfully engaged primary health care to avail the funds whilst the church availed the physical resources (the site to build the clinic).

⁴⁰¹ The South African government spends R33.2 billion on healthcare for 38 million people, while the country's private sector spends some R43 billion servicing about 7 million people. This means that 15-

where they occur in our communities and to implement interventions that are explicitly designed to overcome those barriers.

Healthcare is an emotional issue and it is thus all the more important for all role players to focus collectively on concrete solutions, not the problems. This is where the church can play a pivotal role. It is already noted (3.9.1, see also footnote 202) how one of the local congregations identified a need for primary healthcare in the remotest area of the BMA, and how the Congregational Church in partnership with the Department of Primary Healthcare, built a fully equipped clinic to better serves the people of the most rural areas of the Baviaans.

Though this facility is the property of the Congregational Church it provides service to all the people of the Baviaanskloof which happens to be the third biggest settlement in the Baviaans Municipal area. There is no need for people to travel the nearly 100km gravel to see a doctor in Willowmore. Three other smaller settlements enjoy the same health care facilities right on their doorstep.⁴⁰²

In addition the church community (local congregations) uses its midweek meetings, Sunday service and newsletters to make available information relating to health services options to all patients, vulnerable groups, including people living in rural and under-serviced areas, and the illiterate.⁴⁰³

20% of the population have excellent access to health services while the majority (75 – 80%) of South Africans have limited or no access, owing to reasons given above.

⁴⁰² Though these settlements (Fullarton, Miller and Vondeling) are located in the geographical boundaries of the BMA, it was serviced by the Cacadu District Municipality. These settlements are outstations of the Congregational Church and the buildings of the church are utilised for medical care.

⁴⁰³ This is currently the understanding between the primary healthcare and the churches within the geographical boundaries of the BMA. The most efficient way primary health care uses to get the message to the people is via the church.

The church in this area has had a rich tradition of active involvement in health care⁴⁰⁴, as stated above. Church-based medical care developed as part of the Christian mission to “proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal” (Luke 9:2) and the traditional mission station (almost always) included a church, a school and a hospital. But there were other motivations too as stated by Schulpen (1975:75):

- Compassion for people in need, out of pure Christian charity;
- Contact with the people, especially where verbal communication was difficult;
- To look after the health of their own missionaries;
- As a prestige object of the church;
- To help build the Kingdom of God and to establish visible signs of God’s presence;
- As a source of income to finance other missionary activities.

We see this in the earthly ministry of Jesus. During His three years of ministry, Jesus was actively involved in health and healing. He loved everybody but demonstrated a special interest in caring for the poor and the oppressed. If the church is to be an authentic body of Christ in this world, at this time, too, it must concern itself with health and healing. It, too, must have a special interest in caring for the poor and the oppressed.⁴⁰⁵ “Although there are exceptions”, writes Augustson (1999), “...the current health care scene shows today’s church in a much more limited role.

⁴⁰⁴ Early physicians were also men of God or at least they had a significant professional relationship with the church. Because of this relationship they were often described as medical missionaries, having prepared themselves to serve both bodily and spiritual needs. A very familiar occurrence in the previous century was, that when a physician was called out at night, a priest or preacher was notified as well. Often the two would set out together through impassable roads and biting weather, knowing very well they would receive no monetary compensation for their efforts to alleviate spiritual and bodily ills.

⁴⁰⁵ Cf. Augustson, “What can We in the Church offer Health Care?” (December 1999).

Clergy are called to the bedside by hospital staff when the patient is either dead or near dead. Earnest prayers for health are offered when science either fails or offers little hope. People view science through medical technology, not God as the source of the real healing power". As recently as 1994, Everett Koop (former United States Surgeon General) in Augustson (1999), in acknowledging the role of the church, had the following to say:

Throughout much of modern history... the church was the primary institution of health care. It was church hospitals, orphanages, hospices and its other institutions that led the way into the modern world of institutionalized health care delivery systems. Then for a while, the greater resources of the state and the profit incentive of the private sector eclipsed the institutional role of the church. But now, as taxpayers are calling for a halt in the growth of state expenditure, and regulations restrict private ventures, the public feels underserved by both the state and private medicine. And there is now a new readiness to welcome the church back as a major role player.

This is indeed a very encouraging statement, but one has to wonder about the readiness of the church to return as a major role player. If the church is to have a significant impact on development challenges such as our health system and a broken world and basic needs issues, then the church must not only awaken but also act. The church then needs to become sensitive to the substantial and complex development issues of especially the poor and vulnerable. The church needs to realise that God has called *His church* to care for the poor and the sick.

Many people, especially the poor, are frustrated with the seemingly insurmountable struggles of life, and they are looking for new answers and new strategies.⁴⁰⁶

To put it bluntly, they are looking at the church for direction and guidance. To be contextually relevant the church need to continue to engage the power structures on health issues and educating the poor on these issues of concern. Another challenge for the church is on the educational front.

6.3.2 Education⁴⁰⁷

It is common knowledge that black schooling was brutally neglected in apartheid South Africa, which resulted in the majority of black people being illiterate. It is estimated that at least 3.3 million adults are considered illiterate of which the majority are black. Currently the democratic government tries to rectify these imbalances through various programmes and projects. One such program, which at present proves to be successful, especially in the Baviaans area, is the Adult Basic Education and Training programme (ABET).⁴⁰⁸ Though their enrolment figure is moderate, the Abet is indeed adding value to the lives of people. The oldest person in the BMA who received a level two Abet certificate from Umalusi⁴⁰⁹ was 79 years old.

⁴⁰⁶See Appendix C for questions on primary healthcare. The researcher visited the local clinic in Willowmore to interact with patients and to find out how they experienced the service of the department of primary healthcare. Though some were despondent, they were afraid to say much, because they were waiting in a long queue. Be that as it may, the researcher knows from experience that the clinic personnel are highly professional in performing their duties though they are understaffed.

⁴⁰⁷ It is not the intention of this section to give a full description of formal schooling in South Africa, but rather to focus on adult illiteracy, because it is universally accepted that children of a schooling age need to be in the classroom.

⁴⁰⁸ Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is available to adults who want to finish their basic education. An outcomes-based programme, (ABET) aims to provide basic learning tools, knowledge and skills, and provides participants with nationally recognised qualifications. The four levels of ABET training are equivalent to Grades R to 9 and include training in language literacy and communication; mathematical literacy, mathematics and mathematical sciences, natural sciences, arts and culture, life orientation, technology, human and social science, economic and management science: online available: [file:///C:/Documents and Settings/XP User/desktop/Education and Training \[2010 12 June\]](file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/XP%20User/desktop/Education%20and%20Training%20[2010%2012%20June].).

⁴⁰⁹ Umalusi is the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training in South Africa.

The government embarked on this programme because illiteracy seems to be a major concern for them as well as other role-players involved in education development.

Illiteracy is indeed hampering the self-worth of people. Although political democracy has brought people freedom, literacy will free them from shame and exploitation in the labour and commercial markets (see our discussion 6.2.1.1.). This, however, is an enormous task which needs the help of all South Africans who want to make a difference.

As education is one of the key responsibilities of the church, this institution may have a role to play in eradicating illiteracy. When one considers how the church functions, it appears that it may have great (educational) resources at its command.⁴¹⁰ The church has the infrastructure and capacity in terms of buildings and tutors. What was mentioned earlier under 6.2.2.1 is also true of this church's involvement with education.

The Congregational Church has five vibrant church schools of which the largest is situated in Zaaimeanshoek in the Baviaanskloof. This school also have a fully equipped computer centre and a mobile library. This is how the church incarnates itself in the realities of the marginalised. Though this is the initiative of one local congregation it represents the involvement and commitment of the whole religious fraternal of the BMA. The buildings are not use only for primary education but also to accommodate the programmes of different government departments

This is not to say that the church has all the answers to all the development challenges, but this is an attempt to use the resources (human, physical, natural, social) to their disposal to turn people into "better and more able people" – for the glory of God, but

⁴¹⁰ The researcher is convinced that local congregations do have various kinds of assets to their disposal that could be used to better the lives of not only their members but all those in need. Most churches possess one or more kind of asset/capital, whether it is physical assets/capital (buildings), social capital (networks and connectedness, social claims, social relations, affiliations etc.) human capital (skills, knowledge, good health of members), or a combination of capital/assets/resources.

also to allow people to use whatever resources they have to better their own situation. Incidentally this is what development (upliftment) is all about; it starts from the other end; from the power in the powerless, from the literacy in the illiteracy, from the ability in disability (August 2010:72). In other words it sets out from where people are and what they have.

Becoming actively involved in education is not new to the church, because it is a well-known fact that churches established the first schools and hospitals in this country. It is no different in this area where the first school that was ever erected was built by the church. Hence, the church should make it her business to encourage people to educate themselves. So what seems to be a challenge should actually become an opportunity for the church to provide guidance, spiritual renewal, discipline, wisdom, and obedience to God's people. Thus, if education is a development challenge, then the church should be able to transcend that obstacle because it has the capacity as this section attempted to show.

6.3.3 Gender⁴¹¹

The first thing that comes to mind when mentioning gender is the interplay between the sexes, of how women are treated by men, but there is far more to it than that. Gender has often been misunderstood as being about the promotion of women only. However, gender, as Sampa in Dreyer (2004:37) observes, is an analytical concept, which not only looks at women's concerns but also focuses on the roles and responsibilities of men. It is also the educated opinion of Kirsten *et al* (2002:32) that gender is seen as "socially

⁴¹¹ It is not in the scope of this research to give detailed attention to gender issues per se but only to highlight gender as a *glocal* development challenge. However, it needs to be said that gender issues are highly contentious in the world today. Many books have been written, many scholarly papers have been presented and many academic articles have been published on gender issues. It is a highly debated issue, and not only among women: lately men have also raised their opinion in this regard.

constructed power relations between men and women characterised by a set of arrangements of culturally variable attributes and roles that men and women play in their daily lives.⁴¹² It often refers to a structural relationship of inequality between men and women”. From this definition one can deduce that culture plays a pivotal role in gender issues. As they are culturally determined, gender ideologies define rights and responsibilities and what is “appropriate” behaviour for women and men. These gender ideologies often reinforce male power (where it is narrowly interpreted as “custom” or “tradition”) and the idea of women’s inferiority.⁴¹³ It is an undeniable fact that most communities function according to patriarchal customs. In this area (BMA) where the dominant ethnic group is coloured and female, this scenario is often experienced. How often do we hear this phrase?

Ek is die man in die huis en wat ek sê is wet. My woord is finaal. (*I’m the man of the house, and what I say, goes. My word is final, DEJ*).⁴¹⁴

Scenarios like the above make women invisible as human beings. It allows men to abuse women in the name of culture or tradition. This is evident from the rape statistics (1.6%) issued by the South African Police services in Willowmore. “These are only the reported cases” according to the officer in charge of crime statistics.

⁴¹² See also Meena (1992)

⁴¹³ This could be seen as discrimination against women. Kabeer *et al* (1996:20) observe: “Not all women are poor, and not all poor people are women, but all women suffer from discrimination”. Oxfam (1995:181) agrees with this by giving the following facts: women work 67% of the world’s working hours; 2 out of 3 of the world’s illiterate people are women; women’s earnings range from 50-85% of men’s earnings; globally women make up just over 10% of representatives in national governments (adapted from Oxfam, ‘Women and Culture’, Gender and Development, in Oxfam Journal, 3 (1), ‘Facts and Figure’ section. From the perspective of the church one notes that the majority of people who are actively involved in and attending church are women but the majority of leading positions are allocated to men. Ordination of women in some denominations is taboo.

⁴¹⁴ This is a familiar phrase in marriage counselling sessions. This is a scenario that the researcher often encounters in his pre-marital sessions with prospective couples.

It is common face in South Africa for men to rape gay women, all in the name of tradition. It is for this reason that the Interchurch forum launched a campaign against women and child abuse under the theme “Real men don’t abuse” following the national slogan “Real men don’t rape”.

The defence of ‘culture’ and ‘tradition’ is often used by men to justify practices that constrain women’s life chances and outcomes.⁴¹⁵ Many development initiatives proceed as if women are invisible, thus assuming that what is good for men or ‘the household’ is good for women. In almost all cultures the relationship between men and women is characterised by an imbalance of power. Hence de Gruchy’s (2002:12) remark: “development that does not address the balance of power between women and men, and therefore gender relations⁴¹⁶, will always fail to address the real life situation of women... (2001)”. It is noted that women constitutes the majority of residents in the Baviaans area and therefore it would not be improper to suggest that this should be considered when people are getting employed. Apparently this is what the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) espouses.

Ons strewe daarna om gelyke geleenthede te gee vir mans en vroue. Huidiglik neem ons baie meer vroue in diens as mans. (*We strive to give equal opportunities for men and women. Currently we employ more women than men, DEJ*).⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ This is where gender equality and gender equity find its niche. Gender equality denotes women having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere. Gender equity, on the other hand denotes the equivalence in outcomes for women and men, recognising their different needs and interests, and requiring a redistribution of power and resources.

⁴¹⁶ See his article “Unfair Development in the Inside Out Magazine, Issue 26 (2002:12). Gender relations according to Reeves and Baden (2000:18) refer to hierarchical relations between women and men that tend to disadvantage women. These gender hierarchies, they say, are often accepted as ‘natural’ but are socially determined.

⁴¹⁷ Conversation with EPWP shift leader (skofleier), M.M, on Sunday 06 March 2011, at Zaaimanshoek.

A nation's GDP may rise, a society may generate wealth, and a community may see a rise in income, whilst at the same time women may experience very little actual change in their lives because all of this wealth and income moves into the community through existing power relations, and may in fact serve to exacerbate the imbalance.⁴¹⁸

In the light of the above, how then is the church to respond to these issues? Does the church know what her role in the gender debate entails? The first misconception the church needs to correct is that gender is not a matter of sex, but of the social and cultural (traditional) roles played out in the community.

Sex refers to the “biological characteristics that categorise someone as either female or male”; whereas gender refers to the “socially determined ideas and practices associated with what it is to be female or male” (Reeves & Baden 2000:3).

Gender issues place constraints and expectations on both women and men. Thus it seems crucial that a practical-theological ecclesiology, inspired by a vision of justice and equality for both men and women, must promote a vision for development that takes gender issues seriously. The church must ensure that attention is given specifically to the power relations between women and men.

Wherever there is discrimination and injustice against any person or group, the church must execute its mandate to bring about the correction of such a situation. The church can, through correct teaching and example, contribute much to bring about gender equality. From a biblical point of view (Genesis 2:23) we noted cf. (1.7.1.1.) Adam's reaction when he saw Eve. He called her “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” signalling their *one-ness*, *their sameness*. His admiration for the woman is recognition of their likeness, and it is this likeness – not their difference - that he found so striking

⁴¹⁸ See also CWM website: www.cwmission.org.uk [2010 10 March]

(cf. Tucker 1992:40). The context of the Baviaans compels a practical ecclesiology that promotes the likeness/sameness of men and women. Acknowledging their likeness is recognising that they are equal in status – though with different roles. The church should promote a culture of equality.

6.3.4 Culture

Very much related to the issue of gender is the issue of culture. Culture has always been a highly contested area in the development debate. History has shown how the agents of development (the so called developed countries) gravely neglected and ignored the culture of the indigenous people in developing countries. Further, how, through their modernisation theory they attempted to “westernise” non-western societies, as if everything that comes from the West should be hailed as good. To replicate the Western process of industrialization and technological growth in developing countries was their aim. Dreyer (2004:17) puts it this way: “Westerners tend to think that Black Africa is ready to embrace everything Western as good and beautiful. This is simply not true”. Western cultures assume that their idea of development is an “inevitable, unilinear process that operates naturally in every culture”, and if cultures in developing countries decline to accept it they were labelled as backward and ignorant. (cf. August 2010:61; see also our discussion 5.4.1).

What the “developed world” conveniently tend to forget is that it is “demeaning, dehumanizing and therefore anti-development to define people by what they are not: *backwards, back-street, ignorant, illiterate* (noted in 6.2.1.1), *poor, powerless...*” (August 2010:72, *my italics*). This is why their development efforts failed (cf. also Dreyer: 2004:14-17) because it did not recognise the worth and dignity of other human beings as also created in the image and likeness of God. The intellectual capacity of

people in the developing countries was undermined as inferior, as if they have *unlearned* how to think. Instead of building on existing traditions and cultures, they preferred the so called top down approaches which assume that we can know enough in advance to design a course of action in detail, one that only needs to be implemented as planned when the project is launched. ⁴¹⁹

A top-down approach is totally inappropriate and does not accommodate culture, and without cultural recognition, development (e.g. in Africa), runs the danger of becoming a fabricated Western veneer. What must also be understood is that “Africa was introduced to Western culture, mostly in a negative manner through slavery, annexation, colonialisation” and apartheid politics (in South Africa) (cf. Van Niekerk 1982:15). When the missionaries came to Africa they were already “heavily influenced by their European cultural traditions” (Hendriks 2004:70). This was not a good experience for black people because, as Van Niekerk (1982:15) attests:

It becomes clear that the experience of colonialism, [apartheid], the presence of white missionaries, administrators, soldiers and traders has had a shattering impact on (South) Africa. This resulted in emotions of anger, of protest, feelings of inferiority, efforts to restore the past and, at the same time, a longing for those things which western technology provides: consumer goods, city life and greater mobility”.

What we are dealing with is a dichotomy of two cultures. However, what must be noted according to Dreyer (2004:14f), is that “one culture is not better than the other” “...it cannot be placed one ‘beneath’ the other, but should rather be judged ‘next’ to each

⁴¹⁹ The West always had this notion that they alone had the key to success in social change and would use it to help the world ‘develop’. But, says August, they have forgotten that they too can learn from the poorer countries, especially in the area of cultural identity (2010: 62-3).

other"... different cultures "merely display differences in the contextual aspects of a universally similar cultural structure".⁴²⁰

For many years we only had two cultures in South Africa; a dominant, superior (white) culture and a minor or inferior (black) culture. The black culture was further divided into Black, Coloured and Asian. The only thing that changed in post-apartheid South Africa is, when the government talk of nation building, they actually mean a post-apartheid dominant black culture (cf. August 2010: 66). Where in the past it was difficult for the West to understand practices and concepts such as "Ubuntu" and "indaba", many minority cultures today, struggle to embrace these concepts in democratic South Africa.⁴²¹ Can there be a culture of national unity within a multi-cultural society where so many ethnic traditions exist? What say the church when there seems to be tension between the politically Black cultures, viz. African and Coloured? Where in the past, politically black people shared the practices of Ubuntu; and where no racial boundaries could separate them, (they adopted each other's culture and learn each other's language⁴²²) there seem to be intolerance amongst these cultures.

⁴²⁰ Cf. Els (2002: 42). However it remains a risky exercise for "white culture" to try and explain aspects of life as expressed in "black culture", and vice versa. The reason for this is that European culture was always structured on individualistic lives, while in a traditional African context, society, and not the individual was the fibre, the core of the community, with individuals making up an integrated whole. It is also evident in the way how their families are constructed. Very seldom will one find more than four people in a white household over and against the eight or ten people in a black household. Adding to, is the presence of an extended family. Further in Western society for example, children are taught individuality and independent thinking. They are taught rights and how to fend for themselves while in democratic South Africa, the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) entrenches such rights through the Bill of Rights and provides for their proper enforcement as stated in section 38. However in traditional black communities, children are taught that they belong to an extended family, a village, and this is often enhanced when they have one father, but two "mothers". In traditional black communities the community is regarded as more important than the individual, so that all is shared and even opinions are formed in such a way as to serve the interest of the community and/or the family first (Dreyer, 2004:22).

⁴²¹ *Ubuntu* is an African concept embracing values such as solidarity, compassion, respect and collective unity. *Indaba* is a concept of collective deliberation to find agreement and consensus.

⁴²² The researcher grew up in what was called a location (lokasie) with ethnically black neighbours. The researcher recall the many times that he and his late friend Lumkile ate "umngqusho" (mealies) from the same bowl and drank "umdoko - irhewu" from the same cup, and how they shared the same bed, even

Politically Black people, just like the early Christian community in Acts 2 & 4, use to share everything, from food to clothes. They shared the little they have so that no one needs to go hungry. They even exchanged food as is still the practise between some neighbouring households. They understood the principle of hospitality and generosity. People in small town areas have a strong sense of caring for one another. This has been the researcher's experience over the many years as a minister in the Baviaans. Where did it go wrong? What does our faith teaches us about culture? It is precisely in this realm says August (2010:62) where the church can embrace "the new insights that interculturality brings to the development debate". We have already established that development has to do with the wholeness (6.2.1) of people and says August (2010:64) when elements such as "life sustenance, equity, justice, dignity and self-worth, freedom, participation, reciprocity, cultural fit, ecological soundness, hope and spiritual transformation, *Ubuntu and indaba, hospitality and generosity (my italics)* are present, development becomes transformation". This is the fuel that interculturality needs to establish genuine relationships within and amongst the cultures. With its innate sense of justice, truth and reconciliation, the Church can use these precious values as stepping stones to reach an understanding between, but also create sensitivity towards diverse cultures.

The church can evade the challenge and continue with *business as usual*, or the church can embrace the opportunity to face the challenge of the cultural divide. For the people of the Baviaans who work and live together this comes naturally. They have been living together for as long as the town exists. They had no choice but to depend on each other for survival because apartheid only had two faces, white and black.

when they were roommates at the University of Fort Hare. In Langa (a township in Uitenhage) he was seen as part of an extended (Grootboom) family. Having lost his father at an early age Tata Grootboom became his father. He never saw himself as other than black.

In a way their intercultural contact seemed to have strengthened their faith as a worshipping community. This is why even till this day they sometimes worship together as people of “one faith”. The apartheid situation forced them to understand and merge the different cultures.

The church should continue enhance interaction between cultures in a just and honest way and see to it that intrinsic values and traditions are recognised.⁴²³ Culture should not become a hindrance but an opportunity for the church to make a difference. The church, as the community of believers, the people called out, is believe to be best positioned to transcend the obstacle of culture, particularly because cultures are by extension a part of God’s creation and He respects them all. “*Thou art worthy because thou didst create all things... thou ... didst purchase for God men of every tribe and language, people and nation ...*” (Revelations 4:11, 5:9 *adapted*). Christ honoured all cultures by becoming part of the Jewish culture with all its traditions (some gone bad). To this end Hendriks (2004:70) remark:

When John said the Word become flesh (Jn. 1.1), this meant that Christ was born in Palestine as a Jew. The history of Jesus Christ has the cultural setting of the Jewish nation during the Roman occupation.

As we have already said, no culture is pure and holy, but all have intrinsic value that can be redeemed and used for social transformation. We need to drink from the richness of each other’s well. When a culture is destroyed, a part of creation and a part of all humanity dies. If that happens, then we are all impoverished. A practical-theological ecclesiology should be aware thereof that the “relationship between the Gospel message, the person of Jesus Christ and a given people will always be influenced by the local

⁴²³ In South Africa the old concept of higher status cultures is slowly disappearing and one experiences a more creative, vibrant interaction between cultures.

culture” (Hendriks 2004: 70). Saying this, we do not suggest that” the gospel should be manipulated by cultural demands”, but rather that “it should witness about the way the truth and the life” (ibid). Cultural heritage and the creativity of the men and women who constitute it, is strongly biblical in tone.⁴²⁴

6.4 SYSTEMS THINKING⁴²⁵: IT’S SIGNIFICANCE FOR A PRACTICAL-THEOLOGICAL ECCLESIOLOGY

In explaining systems thinking, Hendriks (2004:55) has this to say:

Every person has a system of thinking, a worldview, and a set of ideas that form the frame of reference with which he or she interprets life and makes decisions ... based on profound fundamental assumptions or basic ideas in which the person believes.

This is also true of communities as Hendricks (ibid) further points out. People who live in communities, share a complex pattern of human relationships and the fact that they interacts with one another creates or “provides the necessary cohesiveness, trust”, and interdependence that is needed for the so called “corporate culture”. The same is true of faith communities. “There were times” says Hendriks (2004) “when faith communities all shared the same values and lived within the same system”. These are all interesting observations that we deem important for this study.

What we need to stress here is that communities are made up of people; individual people as chapter 2 explains. It is made up of individuals (or groups) living in the same geographical area with different and opposing interests. All definitions on community have people as the nucleus which implies that no community can exist without people.

⁴²⁴ Cf. Bragg (1984: 153-165).

⁴²⁵ System thinking is often regarded as problematic, however, as with many other theories it also has its positive elements. This study wants to draw on the positive attributes of this theory.

Each of these individual persons interprets life situations from their own personal situation. This however may have serious implications for the community in which people live. The challenge we believe, will be in the integration of all these individual interpretations. Realising that we share the space with other individuals makes one aware of the needs and feelings and worldviews of other people in the community. This awareness helps one to deal with the complexities of life and by so doing creates a communal culture. It is (only) in our interaction with other individuals that our own identity may grow. Realising this is breaking down the walls of individualism, and autonomy, and island personalities. It is a move from self-centeredness to integration. This is what gives substance to phrases such as “Unity in diversity” and “Umntu ngumuntu, ngabantu” (a person is a person through other persons).

Systems thinking, according to Louw (2005:23) “focuses more on the interrelatedness and interconnectedness, than on separateness”. Interrelatedness and interconnectedness are “Trinitarian virtues” so to speak. “At the heart ... of the triune God” writes Pembroke (2006:1), “is the fact the Three indwell each other in love and reach out to humankind, calling us to share in their loving community”. We are made then for communal life; a life of interrelatedness and interconnectedness. Our life together signals “a reflection of the mutual indwelling in love that is the Trinity” (Pembroke 2006: 43), Stressing further the importance of interrelatedness and interconnectedness, rather than separateness, Cunningham (1998:169) writes: “In God there are no individuals, the Three dwell in each other so completely that we cannot divide them, one from another”.

All this comes as a valuable contributing factor for our understanding of a practical theological ecclesiology in the context of the Baviaans. How do we integrate the different worldviews, the system of thinking of individuals to serve a communal

purpose? How do we get the different systems to work as an integrated whole? Will it not create unnecessary tension? How best can we utilise “diversity to work as a unit(y)? How can many work as one? Is this even possible? How one answers these questions are heavily influenced by ones context. However there are two suggestions on offer to answer these questions.

A less desirable way is to blame diversity⁴²⁶ for this tension. Many community meetings end in total chaos because of diversity. Too many people have too many different ideas about how things ought to be done, they say. However, diversity is not the problem, it is rather a lack of understanding (and acknowledging) thereof what seems to cause the conflicts between people in community meetings.

The researcher concurs with Koopman’s statement (2010:29, “Diversiteit is nie ‘n probleem wat bestry moet word nie, maar ‘n geskenk om te geniet” (Diversity is not a problem to be fought, but a gift to enjoy). However, to applaud diversity is one thing, but understanding it and knowing how to work with it (seeing it holistically) is quite another.

More often than once did the researcher experience these conflicting worldviews in IDP meetings. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but what people sometimes propose in the name of development is in many instances proposals for personal gain. This is quite evident in political and community meetings, but it is equally true of church meetings.

The other more desirable way is to embrace diversity (different worldviews) as a gift.

The South African practical theologian Jurgen Hendriks (2004:57) writes:

⁴²⁶ According to Armour and Browning (2000:16) diversity is rooted in the very nature of creation. It is “wired” into us, they say, meaning that God created us that way and since His gifts are always good, we need to see diversity as a blessing, not a curse.

The world in which you live, the complexities that you deal with and adapt to those around you who face the same realities eventually shape your worldview...

Embracing diversity as a gift, enhances the vision of a practical theological ecclesiology; that of seeing wholes. To this end Senge (1990:68-69), writes:

There is something in all of us that loves to put together a puzzle; that loves to see the image of the whole emerge. The beauty of a person, or a flower, or a poem lies in seeing all of it .Hence the 'unhealthiness' of our world today is in direct proportion to our inability to see it as whole.

This is where systems thinking have much to offer a practical-theological ecclesiology, because it "is a discipline for seeing wholes". It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static "snapshots". Seeing wholes is to see the bigger picture; it is to see that the parts are not greater than the whole; it is recognising the many different worldviews and thinking systems operative in one community. If all role players (local government, local congregations and beneficiaries) can see this it may greatly aid our understanding of the beauty of diversity. A small community such as the Baviaans, who, in many ways than one, share the same realities (poverty, unemployment, violent crimes, alcohol and drug abuse etc.) will greatly benefit from this viewpoint. We have for example noted the importance of a listening church (6.2.1.1) for the local context, and applying that "skill" may lead to a greater understanding of the thinking system of individuals within communities. To listen does not necessarily mean to adopt but it may lead the different thinking systems to adapt in order to achieve greater "wholes". This view helps communities and individuals to realise the importance of working together to serve the bigger picture.

The one “crucial truth” to remember for these diverse systems within the (church) community, is that we need each other; we exist for one another, and that we stand in relationship with one the other. Therefore interrelated and interconnectedness speak volumes to the context of the Baviaans. Here one can draw from the richness of which the Bible offers, to further aid our understanding. Paul in I Corinthians 12 alludes to the “interrelatedness and interconnectedness by using the body analogy. “Though we are one body, we are made up of different parts. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body’, it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body (I Corinthians 12:15)”. If we look at these different parts (from the whole) we see that no one does more than a small part. And each part can do that only because of the small parts of many others, each of which possesses a gift (charismata) which others do not have e.g. the main function of the eye is to see, not to smell, while the nose was put there to smell and not to see.

Just as together we are dependent on Christ as the head, so together we are dependent on each other as members (cf. Berkhof 1979:400)⁴²⁷). The different parts relate to each other and this is necessary to make the body “fully” functional. Any other way would render the body dysfunctional (Vosloo & Van Rensburg 1999: 1517). This brings out stronger Louw’s (2005:23) description of interrelatedness and interconnectedness. McLaren (2004:45f), something that the “local ecumenical” church may need.

6.4.1 How systems-thinking may help local congregations

McLaren (2000:45-47) offers some basic observations that seem to have *some* relevance to the church. Firstly, systems are *interactive* in an organism. Paul offers a biblical

⁴²⁷ See also Wil Vosloo and Fika J Van Rensburg , (eds),(1999:1517) “Die Bybellennium Eenvolumekommentaar: Die Bybel uithelê vir eietydse toepassing.

analogy when he says “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ and the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ God has combined the members of the body, and has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other” (ICorinthians 12:21-24). Whether as individuals in the community or as members of a local congregation, we need each other. We may use our different worldviews or thinking patterns and our human assets (in this instance people’s strengths) to constructively contribute to the wholeness and well-being of the people. The obvious lesson here is that systems should be synchronized. Two systems can be complementary, devastating, symbiotic, or competitive, but this tension need not be destructive, rather it takes careful design and leadership from the church to keep them coordinated (cf. McLaren 2000:46), so that it become creative. This line of thinking is conducive for both the church and the community in which it find itself.

Secondly, vigorous systems reproduce in various ways. Some reproduction comes by division, as in cell mitosis or in the budding of plants. Other organisms have complex reproductive strategies involving gene pools, diversity with unity, stimulation, excitement, attraction etc. In these cases, systems tend to reproduce after their kind; the new generation resembles the old (whether good or bad). However, a system can sometimes reproduce in reaction against the parent system. For example, some churches (and denominations) display an amazing, energetic, enthusiastic, resilient, confident, and smothering rigidity. In these churches there are no room for creativity and innovation, causing the young and bright minds to leave and explore other avenues. In many instances these mundane churches unintentionally become the parents of the most creative new churches, which in return, display reproduction against their kind.

So, whether after their kind or in reaction to their kind, vigorous systems reproduce (ibid.). In the third instance systems must eliminate waste and fight disease.

Many congregations crumble or perish because they have no way to free themselves of destructive elements that have infected or developed in the body (ibid.). Such congregations make no impact in the society. They are too busy fighting these destructive systems in their congregations that they find no time to contribute to the well-being of the society. What needs to be said is this: All persons (systems) are welcome to join and share in the community of God, but not all *behavioural patterns* are welcome. This is also true of individual voices in the community. In many communities these individuals become the “waste” and “disease” who reproduce against their own kind. They not only endanger the health of the general society, but causes unrest, crime and violence. This is evident in many communities all over South Africa. This is also evident in the Baviaans,

Fourthly, systems require infusion or energy. Each system needs some form of nourishment, be it learning, encouragement, correction, guidance, attention, finances, voluntarism, recognition, fun or celebration. Many congregations have not learned what energises them, so they function with chronic fatigue (ibid.) which makes them contextually irrelevant. They have lost its saltiness and they have become like a “hidden city”. They cannot give light because it is hidden under a bowl (cf. Matt. 5:13-15). These congregations are at best tolerated by the community only because of the innate, profound respect for the church as a sacred place. In many small town areas, the church

is held in high esteem. For them the Lord *lives* in His holy temple. Sad to say that even in the Baviaans there are churches who suffers from chronic fatigue⁴²⁸.

Systems are often under external attack (of the community). More often than once did people display their dismay with contextual irrelevant congregations, particularly in community meetings. In many IDP meetings the question “what can the church do/offer” is often asked. Many churches have not learned how to react to criticism. In most instances they react in ways that become self-destructive over time [an eye for an eye, and tooth for a tooth]. These churches need to be reminded that a reaction to an attack could be more destructive than the attack itself (ibid.). The community expect the church to react with dignity, wisdom and love.

Systems often perform recycling and multiple functions. Many churches do very well when it comes to this, because of the influence of the Interchurch Forum (which is a welcoming sign). On a weekly basis local leadership are encouraged to use the human capital in their congregations. Most of the congregations in the BMA now use the different departments (organisations) and professional expertise in the churches to train their members (children and youth included); provide leadership experience, creating many roles for the use of spiritual gifts, promoting social interaction, encouraging mutual care and creating affinity subgroups to promote diversity in the congregation at large. This proves valuable as it enriches the whole community.

In the next instance, systems often (but not always) benefit from diversity. The body analogy mentioned earlier (Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12) explores one dimension of

⁴²⁸ Ten years ago at an IDP community meeting, the issue of church involvement in community affairs was discussed. On a scale of 1-10 only three congregations scored a rating of 6 and above. They also rated the community involvement of ministers or leaders of the different churches and again only three scored above seven. However in defence of the other congregations is that many of them are served by lay preachers.

this diversity. Variety within the Church is not an unavoidable evil. God Himself is not an inflexible monotone unit, but the living Trinity. Further, He did not will to create one creature, but a wonderful variety of created beings that are held together in Christ: “For by Him all things were created ... all things were created by him and for him” (Colossians 1:16).

Lastly, systems must be seen as part of the larger wholes in which they function. McLaren (2000:49) makes a very appropriate observation. He says: “To understand an organism’s digestive system properly, we must consider ... its relation to the body as a whole, [because] the body that it serves is part of larger family, economic, ecological systems, that have various interactions with (and affect) the digestive system under consideration”. Similarly, to understand the church properly, says McLaren (ibid), we need to think of the many wholes the church participates in i.e. historic, cultural, economic, political, social and educational. It is insights like these, arising from systems thinking, that will go a long way toward helping the church.⁴²⁹

One must also understand that each system has its own unique characteristics, its own beauty and dangers, strengths and weaknesses and the church must draw on those strengths appropriately.

⁴²⁹ Fifty years ago when our world was considerably less complex, most churches had only one or two dominant systems in the pew. Today, on the other hand, four or five dominant systems commonly sit side by side in Sunday services. When a congregational mix or includes three or four dominant systems, the risk of conflict grow rapidly e.g. one system will call for traditional music in worship, another for contemporary music. One system will demand centralised, ‘top-down’ leadership while another will press for minimal hierarchy, with widely dispersed decision making (like in the Congregational Church). Some will lobby for greater societal involvement while others will openly be against such involvement. On another front, one system will insist on tough, no-nonsense sermons, another on sermons that nurture and affirm. Still another will view the sermon as a time to explain scripture and doctrine, while another will lobby for sermons brimming with practical guidance and examples, perhaps with heavy technical support as is seen in many congregations. Using data projectors and flat screens are common in many congregations because of the different interactive systems. It is not only in this modern time that we experience such complexities. Ethnic differences in the early church were as troublesome as systems differences today. That is why Scripture challenged the church to surpass the clash of views between Greek and Jewish outlooks. This is what we should do with systems diversity in the modern church (cf. Armour & 2000:28).

When the systems each contribute their unique strengths, life enjoys peak moments. System thinking further creates an opportunity for the church to recognise the different competing systems within the church and to find ways to deal with these apparently incompatible perspectives. It is precisely for this reason that the church needs to learn to accommodate different systems, because, with Hendriks (2004:66) the researcher concurs that, “to accommodate systems is not an option; it is a Scriptural imperative”.

6.4.1.1. Essential elements for a practical ecclesiology to consider

Following Armour and Browning (2000), Hendricks (2004:66) highlight some essential elements that could benefit both the church and the community.

Firstly we should never regard one system as better as or more important than another.⁴³⁰ This is illustrated by Jesus in the Gospels (Matt. 18:1-5; Mk. 9:33-37; Lk. 9:46-48.) on who is the greatest. We sometimes overlook those in the (church) community who are not of equal standing as us. This is also true of small town areas such as the Baviaans. Teachers for example are held in high esteem in the “platteland”. They sometimes have an uncontested say in the community. In most small town areas a higher premium is placed on the contribution of educated people, but “the system where you are does not *necessarily (my italics)* reflect your intelligence, spiritual maturity or personality and temperament” (Hendriks 2004:57). This is essential to both church and community.

Secondly, when accommodating diverse systems the church needs to develop “an atmosphere of *forbearance*”. In doing so, the church will maintain the ideal of unity

⁴³⁰ It is so that people will ask which system is best. The counter question to this would be “best for what?” We have said that each system has its strengths and weaknesses. Thus before we can know which system is “best” we must identify the immediate and long-range objectives to be served. At one time or another every system is best. That is why a healthy church needs systems diversity.

and building a heritage of peace, by fostering an environment in which tolerance prevails. The church has a biblical mandate to uphold unity and to preserve cohesiveness despite the tension. (cf. Armour & Browning 2000:29).

Thirdly, the church can *create feedback loops* in the form of surveys, questionnaires or by consulting small group. By exploring these avenues, church leaders will be well positioned to know the pulse of all systems in their congregations and within the community. This will help them stay contextually relevant because church members are a valuable source of information.

Fourthly, many congregations would do well to recognise and appreciate that all systems *can and must* complement each other. As the Body of Christ the church should lead the community on how to be accommodative of the diverse ideas in the (church) community (the Body of Christ concept). To this end the Interchurch Forum has done exceptionally well because they adopted a-lead-by-example approach. Many organisations call on the presence of the church in order to create an atmosphere of tranquillity. To know the pulse of the community is to know their “language” (cf. 6.2.1.1.). Speaking the “language” of the people makes them responsive and appreciative to inputs. Clergymen should therefore refrain from theological jargon because most people do not appreciate it. They should learn to limit “systems talk” to private conversation and leadership. Hendricks (2004:66) alluded to this aspect as “Do it, don’t talk it”.

Vision casting is the other crucial element because it has the tendency of drawing people together by creating a sense of direction. It also has the ability to penetrate all systems and unite everybody.⁴³¹ These were one of the strengths of the church during the

apartheid era. It is just as important today to give direction as it was in the dark days of apartheid.

The last vital element to consider is worship. In a world that has become increasingly secular, a responsibility rests on the Christian worshipper not to withdraw from the secular ... but to engage with the secular. The church is in need of worship that would connect with this world... that can be experienced outside the church buildings (Bezuidenhout 2010:195). With these words Bezuidenhout affirms that worship should be extremely sensitive to the reality of different systems.⁴³² An Indian woman once said: "I find it painful to attend services at my local church [because] the worship is so isolated from our actual context".⁴³³ This speaks volumes of a church that has become ingrown, exhausted, irrelevant, and out of touch with reality.

In accommodating the different systems there are two suggestions on offer. Firstly, the church needs to work towards systems synergism, i.e. getting systems to work together. Secondly the church needs to acknowledge that systems conflict is a reality because of systems differs.⁴³⁴ Because of its reconciliatory essence the church may appeal to all systems to be lenient and devoted "to the vision that keeps everybody focussed".⁴³⁵

⁴³¹ It is sad to see how many church leaders lack vision. For them it is "business as usual". They continue with the same worn-out programmes for many years. They "do" church as they did twenty years ago. They are happy with what they do as long as they get a stipend. On the educational front it is even worse. Many ministers bluntly refuse to equip themselves with the necessary skills. They are ill prepared for the challenges of life. They feel threatened by dominant systems in their churches. They simply do not have (or want to acquire) the ability to anticipate possible future events and developments. A visionary leader sees the church programme in terms of interrelated systems rather than quick fixes.

⁴³² See also Hendricks (2004:67).

⁴³³ Cited in Cashmore and Puls, (1990),p. 1.

⁴³⁴ Hendricks (2004:64) explains: "In a globalised world, diversity and pluralism are realities that no longer can be avoided. Homogeneous churches usually are single-system churches. To exist in such a church may be most peaceful but it does not prepare one to live and worship in a world teeming with diversity, because the way people learn, organise, worship, are led (or want to be led), need and expect etc.

Understanding the context of individual people within communities (knowing where they come, and why they interpret life issues the way they do, why they behave in a certain way,) makes one appreciate the other. God did not genetically program us to think alike. That compels us to actually celebrate diversity as a divine gift,⁴³⁶ because “If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If we were all one part, where would the body be? (I Corinthians 12:17-19).

6.4 ON BEING CHURCH IN THE BAVIAANS MUNICIPAL AREA

Hendriks (2004:55) correctly asserts that the world is changing. Everything around us is changing. Global trends are influencing even the remotest areas of our country which makes life more complex than before and which in some way change (or disrupt) the way we previously thought and acted (cf. Hendriks *ibid*). The way people live, their lifestyles, their routines, their work, everything, in some way or another has changed. In the middle of all these changes (whether good or bad), and from which it cannot escape, is the church. These changes are not just evident in mega towns, but also in small towns

begins to differ. Many congregations, who were born and bred in a one-system environment, are now confronted with both the reality of a growing generation gap, as well as a multiplication of systems”.

⁴³⁵ See also O’Conner and McDermott (1997).

⁴³⁶ In fact it is God Himself who endowed His people – along with their personal faith – with those gifts (charismata) which enable the members individually to make their contribution to the building of the community. Berkhof (1979) make this very apt statement: “Many people render unassuming and unselfish service in all kinds of seemingly insignificant yet highly necessary tasks (see body analogy); some possess gifts of administration, of management, of planning; others have the ability to detect and to relieve hidden needs or to point out and to fight outrageous injustice; still others have the gift of admonition and counselling, or of visiting the lonely and shut-ins; some are good at defending traditional beliefs that must be maintained, others in dealing with pertinent questions concerning the future; the one has the gift of making the gospel understandable to outsiders, another can do that for small children, and yet another can do that for teen-age youth; the one has a sharp eye for tasks right on the church’s doorstep, the other for global challenges; to the one has especially been given the hidden communion with God, to the other obedience in social affairs, etc. So working together, each does his or her part toward filling the church with all the fullness of God, as Ephesians 3:19 put it”.

(platteland) such as the Baviaans. How then does one explain the almost fifty congregations operating in the Baviaans area? The researcher is convinced that today more than ever, people are searching for contextually relevant congregations. Congregations that can respond to their needs in the best possible way; congregations that is innovative, bold and creative in their thinking; a church that can read ‘the signs of the times’⁴³⁷; and does things differently; a church that can take on the challenge of development for being church; a church that can bring change into this new postmodern world and transition old churches of yesterday into new⁴³⁸ churches. We have seen how over the years, attempts have been made to bring us closer to a church that can offer the said opportunities. We have heard about the *rediscovered, seeker-driven church* of Bill Hybels, the renowned *purpose-driven church* of Rick Warren, the *permission-giving church* of William Easum, the *resurrected church* of Mike Regele, the *twenty-first (21st) century church* of Leith Anderson, the *metamorphosed church* of Carl George, the *new apostolic church* of George Hunter, the *missional church* of Alan Roxburgh, the *pillar, prophetic, pilgrim, survivor, servant churches* of Carl Dudley and Sally Johnson, and many more. The one thing that all these writers more-or-less seem to agree on is that the “future belongs to those who are willing to let go and stop trying to minimise the change we face” (McLaren 2000:20). Change is inevitable. Bosch (2010:509) writes:

The world is no longer viewed as a hindrance but as a challenge. Christ has risen, and nothing can remain the way it used to be. It was a stupendous victory of the evil one to have made us believe that structures and conditions in this world will not or need not

⁴³⁷ The term “signs of the times” is derived from the biblical experience of history and from the language of the bible; but it propagated itself by way of the apocalyptic traditions, and continually cropped up in Christian history whenever world history was going through periods and moments of crisis. The modern expression “the signs of the times” is in this way a form of the apocalyptic theme of “the signs of the end”, says Moltmann, (1993:38-39).

⁴³⁸ “New” means new in kind and not in age, because it is possible to have a new church that is *not* a “new” church and an old church that *is* a “new” church according to McLaren (p.21).

really change, to have considered political and social powers and other vested interests inviolable, to have acquiesced in conditions of injustice and oppression, to have tempered our expectation to the point of compromise, to have given up the hope for a wholesale transformation of the status quo, to have been blind to our own responsibility for and involvement in a world en route to its fulfilment.

In recent years there has been an exodus of members from the so called mainline churches to these 'different types' of churches. People are just not comfortable any more with how their churches operate, and because it is in our human nature, we start to compare what we have and what we could have. Hence, they constantly look for the so-called "different way" of doing church; a church who can "replenish the spiritually hungry and thirsty, and at the same time understand the fears and needs of people and connects them with the mysteries they seek; churches that promote a healthful whole, hearty spirituality, rather than an ugly, thin, hateful, insipid or anaemic religion" (ibid.). In a way one can refer to these churches as renewed or restored or even reinvented congregations. McLaren (2002:20f) explains:

- The Re(new)ed Church

A renewed church is not a new church per se, though it may sometimes resemble a new church. A renewed church, according to McLaren, is an old church that, after having lost touch with its congregants, goes through a process of change in order to relate to them and better meet their needs, be they physical, spiritual or emotional. This is applaudable, but as McLaren (ibid.) aptly points out, renewal tends to be a temporary, or stopgap measure. Very soon the renewed church will be in trouble again, because, though they have changed its style, it has not learned to change its attitude toward change. "Attitude, with its emotional component, is much tougher to deal with", as

Blanchard (cited in McLaren 2000:16) appropriately points out.⁴³⁹ In contrast to this, the new church not only changes its style, but it alters its mind-set and accepts change as an unchanging fact of life and as an inevitable reality. It realises it is not only things that are changing. “Change itself has changed; thereby changing the rules by which we live there is more to this change than simply a linear extrapolation of rapid change and complexity” (McLaren 2000:21). Life is becoming more complex and calls for new and difficult decisions that change or disrupt the way we previously thought and acted (cf. Hendriks 2004:55). The new church keeps up with reality and rectifies those propensities that make it keep falling behind.

- The Restored church

The restored church values the idea of introspection. It will look at itself in a critical way and acknowledge its limitations. The restored church will keep looking for that missing link in the puzzle.

Put another way, the restored church will want to re-establish something that was once there, but is no longer there. This could be anything from speaking in tongues to the five-fold ministry of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers; from love feasts and foot-washing to spontaneous non-planned meetings. The list could be infinite. The sad part is, when they find this “missing feature”, the restored church will celebrate it as the one thing that sets them apart, that makes them special. They will build it into their vision and mission statements. This is not necessarily a bad thing but

⁴³⁹ Blanchard in McLaren (2000:16), writes: “The easiest change to effect is growth in knowledge. We teach others, they gain knowledge and change has occurred. The second change, attitude, with its emotional component is much tougher to deal with. Third and still more difficult is behavioural change – overcoming habits and replacing old patterns with new. Fourth and most difficult of all is organisational change, a process that takes time, energy, sweat, and often blood and tears too.

if this newly found “secret” becomes the church’s reason for existence, then they need to rethink their understanding of church.

The alternative to the restored church, according to McLaren, is the *new* church that has little in common with all this. Unlike the restored church, the new church has no place for a rigid, one-size-fits-all structure that is to be applied to all churches in all cultures across time.

On the contrary, the new church favours a flexible, adaptable, evolving structure that is designed to meet current needs. As a result it never expects to “get it right”, writes McLaren (2000:23). “The new church assumes that as long as the church grows, it will have to adapt and change and learn; as long as there are people in this world, there will be problems and complaints [because people are chronic complainers]; as long as there is history, there will be struggle; as long as the church exists in this troubled world, it will compete neck and neck against evil...”. The Biblical history is an example of how the early church adapted and evolved and coped with rapid change and new challenges. Apparently the renewed and the restored church will not be able to fully address the challenge of a “new world” development. McLaren draws our attention to a third option: that of a reinvented church.

- The Reinvented Church

A Reinvented church is a church that has changed its attitude towards change. In other words, it thinks in a new way about things.⁴⁴⁰ It can be of any age and any denomination. In fact when an old church reinvents itself, it is “born again” as a new church. It also goes through a process of marginal change similar to that of the renewed

⁴⁴⁰ Nolan (1986:16) writes: “The great distinguishing feature of the God of the Bible is newness. Yahweh is an historical God, which means a God who remains the same precisely by always doing *new things* in every new set of circumstances”.

and restored churches, a process of critical appraisal, of going back to roots, sources and first things. But it refrains from designing a new plan.

Instead it comes up with a new philosophy of ministry that prepares it to meet whatever unforeseen changes are to come. It discovers “new paradigms” (McLaren 2000:25).

[It is interesting to notice how often the word “new” is used in the Bible: a new song, a new heart, a new spirit, a new man (person), a new life, a new creation, a new covenant, a new age, new wine in new wineskins, a new heaven and a new earth, a new Jerusalem. “Remember not the past... I am going to do a new thing” (Isaiah 43:18-19). “(Behold) I am making everything new” (Revelation 21:5)]. However, whatever terminology we use, we will have to accept that no single “new name or church or program” will serve and satisfy us forever.

6.6 REFLECTION

What we have discussed above might have its advantages but these kinds of ecclesiologies might not be able to fully address the challenges of the Baviaans context. At best it could be seen as a set of markers or beacons for orientation to fix the position and course, as Hendriks (2004:24) points out, in order to become contextual relevant. The danger in all this is that the church can easily fall into the trap of becoming “the church *for* others” instead of “the church *with* others”, “the church *for* the poor” instead of “the church *of* the poor”. Naturally there is merit in being the church *for* others (its architect was Dietrich Bonhoeffer) and the church *for* the poor, in as far as dignity and self-respect is restored and people is awoken to their worth as a people created in His image and likeness, and their value as dignified members of the Body of Christ and therefore as members of their community is enhanced. Viewing these phrases through Western lenses though, and in particular through the euro-centric lenses of the

apartheid past, has a nasty ring to it, because, it affirms the notion that “Western Christians know(s) what is best for others and hence, that they tend to proclaim themselves the guardians of others” (Bosch 2010:375). This created a dependency syndrome, which up and till this day is ‘actively evident’ in our communities. The idea that “others must help” is so engrained in our communities that it blurred their creativity to become “creative in their poverty”. The scars left by the dependency syndrome will take a long time to heal. However, putting this phrase in a New Testament frame of a Servant Jesus, washing the feet of his disciples (John 13:1-17), creates an acceptable ringtone, and makes it missionary-diaconal. This is word and deed, it is leading by example, it is “showing how to catch a fish”, so to speak. In this sense “imitating its Lord, it is a church *for* the poor and *of* the poor”⁴⁴¹, say Hendricks (2004:114).

The context of the Baviaans area creates space for the church to become both church *for* others (in a positive sense) – by showing a Christ-like concern and a diaconal attitude towards others,- and also a church *of* and *with* others. To be a church of the poor is to be actively present in the lives of the people within the community where the church resides, living alongside (with) the poor, welcoming and embracing one another as Christ has welcomed us for the glory of God (Rom. 15:7). To embrace in this way is to embrace “our different other” in obedience to the great command to love “others” as ourselves, and to never forget the teaching of Jesus that “our neighbour is the radically other who is radically related ...and who has inviolable claims on us (the church) to be welcomed as Christ has welcomed us” (Ackermann 1998: 22f).

⁴⁴¹ The sequence has been altered to fit the context.

In this sense the church also becomes the church *with* others, who does kingdom work⁴⁴² *in* the community, *to* the community, but in a practical way *with* the community as “kingdom people” not mere “church people” says Snyders (1998) (quoted in Bosch 2010:378). He continues:

Kingdom people seek first the kingdom of God and its justice: church people often put church work above concerns of justice, mercy and truth. Church people think about how to get people into the church; Kingdom people think about how to get the church into the world (missionary diaconal – my emphasis). Church people worry that the world might change the church; Kingdom people work to see the church change the world.

A church *with* others, (i) acknowledge the “different other” in our communities, who might have different worldviews (cf. also 6.4.1), (ii) it constantly re-evaluate and review its context in order to remain contextually relevant, (iii) its service to those in need is not from an authoritarian platform (as rulers – Matthew 20:26), but it is a service in partnership (cf 1.7) with those in need and which is to be rooted in a trusting relationship (cf. 1.7.1.2). It is futile to impart a message of hope and love, of faith, justice and peace without these elements being present in the church in a visible, audible and tangible way. Trust is a crucial element in relationships. The poor need to trust the church so that their faith and hope in God could be restored; the same God who proved in history that he is true to his promises, and that he keeps his word, and that he is worthy of confidence; that he can be trusted (cf. Koopman 2006:39).

⁴⁴² See 1.7.2.1 in this study.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Synopsis

After five decades of development efforts, many countries of the developing world have experienced little or no prosperity. Today, after several decades of unparalleled increases in global wealth combined with continued international monetary injection, Africa is still experiencing high levels of poverty, high child and adult mortality rates, and extreme inequalities.⁴⁴³ Entrenched poverty, inequality and political strife in many parts of the developing world have persuaded many people to seek employment in affluent countries, either temporarily or permanently. As a result, many development agencies, NGOs and even some governments attempted to find reasons for why this is happening and they have come up with an array of intertwined political, economical and geographical explanations. Despite all these explanations, many countries in the developing world still have no say in global governance, which results in rules that are unfair and costly to them.

Since time immemorial people have sought new life chances in other countries, when opportunities at home were scarce. South Africa, as one of the countries of the developing world, is no exception. Mounting unemployment, poverty, violence, crime, corruption and lack of moral fibre still dominate the socio-economic and political context. Being a minister in a small town, the researcher was deeply moved by how these macro-level realities manifested itself in the lives of the poor on a micro-level. The hope of a better life for all has not fully materialised where it matters the most - on grass root

⁴⁴³ This is not just a scenario in the developing world; it needs to be said that even the rich countries – despite the abundance of means at their disposal – have failed to eradicate chronic poverty within their own backyards.

level). Rural areas are still neglected and little or no effort is made to deliver on basic development needs. This is the reality in small town areas where the situation remains virtually unchanged. These realities opened his eyes and shaped his convictions that the church cannot afford to ignore the plight of the community within which it resides. Troubled by the plight of the poor (particularly where the researcher resides), the researcher got a glimpse of what it means to preach in a context of poverty. Using the community development paradigm as challenge for a practical theological ecclesiology, the researcher embarked on this study.

7.1.1 REFLECTING ON CHAPTERS

Chapter one served as an introduction to the study, with reference to its design and methodology, and also examined the motivation for choosing this topic. In a study of this magnitude one cannot, but formulate and ask critical questions. Hence, many questions were asked. In asking these questions the chapter wanted to find meaning in community development as a challenge to a practical theological ecclesiology. As this study is done in the disciplinary group Practical Theology and Missiology, and since the title requires a shift towards a practical-theological orientation, a theological conceptualisation is added to lay the foundation for further discussions, i.e. (i) the importance of partnership for community development and therefore the church, (ii) community development as a missional task, as kingdom work, and as missional challenge.

Chapter two extensively deals with the praxis of community development within the development paradigm. Although the aim of this chapter was not to engage in an analysis of the divergent definitions of community development, it nevertheless

attempted to show firstly that a variety of definitions do exist which describe community development as a “process, a method, a program of movement in development tradition”; secondly, to allow essential characteristics of community development to inform our understanding of development (cf. 2:2.2.1). It is further argued in this chapter that (community) development is not something that can be done *for* or *to* people, but in cooperation *with* people, a notion that is carried right through the study. Community (or people’s participation) is crucial if success is to be achieved. This is a basic principle of a people-centred approach. Yen⁴⁴⁴ sums it up very aptly:

Go to the people, live among the people, learn from the people, plan with the people, work with the people, start with what the people know, build on what the people have, teach by showing: learn by doing, not a showcase but a pattern, not odds and ends but a system, not a piecemeal but an integrated approach, not to conform but to transform, not relief but release.

This is the kind of community development that’s been suggested throughout this thesis. Many projects (and partnerships) will be successful if followed this approach. In partnering with the people in their own development process by following the mentioned principles, success of projects and plans might prove sustainable. But, as Myers (2003:128) rightfully cautions, “physical” sustainability (food, water, health and a sustainable environment) is not enough, particularly if “sustainable means things are being maintained or that the project activities and impacts continue after development agencies or donors have left”. If so then we need to rethink our understanding of sustainability.

⁴⁴⁴ Yen in Swanepoel, 1992:23.

Chapter 3: In the spirit of community development, this chapter acknowledges the multifaceted phenomenon of poverty and how it manifests itself in the Baviaans Municipal area. It also allows contemporary poverty literature to edify us on the reality of poverty in our country, and shows how national effects of poverty cripple day-to-day life at local level. While acknowledging that poverty is a contested concept (cf. 3.2), it also conceptualises poverty (cf. 3:3.3) and explores the different interchangeable terms that exist in poverty literature. It is the understanding of the researcher that people (in) development work do not always use the terms correctly which then can easily lead to confusion. Government officials are just as guilty of this as ordinary citizens. For this reason it was important to explore interchangeable terms that exist in development literature (cf. 3:3.3). As it is not good practice to deal with concepts, definitions and results of poverty alone, the chapter also endeavours to spell out the causes (3:3.6), the meaning and importance of measuring poverty (3.7). As this chapter is primarily concerned with poverty, and how it impacts the lives of a demarcated area, a section (3.8) is devoted on how poverty is manifested in the experiences of the people in the Baviaans municipal area. Furthermore, that a practical-theological ecclesiology need to reflect on these experiences if it wants to be contextually relevant and make a difference (3.9).

Chapter four: we have said that this section comprises two sections. The first section informs the study of how crucial integrated development planning is to development. It attempts to show that the integrated development plan (the result of the integrated planning process) has enough potential to become a yardstick for political accountability and continuity; a means to facilitate communication; an agent for transformation; a vehicle for socio-economic development; a weapon against poverty; and a mechanism to fast-track service delivery. It also sought to demonstrate the importance of public

participation in their own development. Participation is an essential part of human growth and it encourages “the development of self-confidence, pride, initiative, creativity, responsibility and cooperation” August (2010:23) Many researchers agree that the essence of development is the actual process whereby people take charge of their own lives. Empirical research in the area under study shows a greater success rate of projects where the poor are instrumental in their own development initiatives (60% success rate in the Baviaans). It is ultimately the responsibility of the people themselves to become self-reliant, as many researchers attempted to show over the years.

Building on the conceptualisation in Chapter one and two, Chapter four further argued for a holistic approach to development by inviting all the role-players to become partners (cf. 1.7) in the upliftment of all people through the integrated development planning process. The current IDP reality, as pointed out by Theron (2005:133f), is founded on a consultation and involvement approach. This in no way implies authentic participation. The local municipal leadership need to do more in this regard. The chapter allowed enough space for the different acts to inform our understanding of the importance of such a strategy. As this study is also about community development at a micro-level, much emphasis is placed on the role of local government (in this case the Baviaans Municipality) in the upliftment of its people. It is further established in this chapter that the IDP as “the single most important strategic and policy intervention to make government work at grassroots”. It is an exciting vehicle for intervention and engagement at grassroots and should therefore be grasped with both hands by local government and the community.

Section two of this chapter acknowledges the church as a valued partner in the IDP process. It has been established that the IDP was implemented to better the lives of people and that the church deemed it necessary to join this process for the following

reasons, viz. the human element contained in the IDP (4.9.1.1); to be its conscience (4.9.1.2) and; to restore hope (4.9.1.3). If the IDP is about the well-being of people, then the church should demonstrate this concern in a practical manner. Currently the IDP creates the platform for the church to engage the power structures when it comes to the well-being of people. The plight of the poor will remain unchanged if role-players fail to create jobs; hence the best way to ensure that a person can obtain food shelter and clothes (and become dignified); the best way to release a person from the jaws of poverty is to create jobs. The researcher concluded that the church is a worthy and valued catalyst in community development.

Chapter five: As this study is also concerned with the well-being and “wholeness” of people, **Chapter five** allows the voice of the church to be heard in the development debate by exploring its relationship against a variety of settings (5:4.3). (When we talk about wholeness, in this sense, we are thinking of wholeness as the fulfilment and recognition of our human *being-ness*). It was noted that the church is ideally placed to engage the different specialities (politics, economics, etc.) of society. It is the understanding of this chapter that as God’s people the church needs to prepare for, get consciously involved in and include the development challenges in their agendas – in the same way they did in apartheid South Africa when they passionately fought for a new dispensation. Prior to 1994 the church was a force to reckon with in the sense that they “called a spade a spade”. This chapter argues that the church, as the voice of the voiceless, should again become a pillar of resistance⁴⁴⁵ and hope for the poor in the midst of their suffering and marginalisation (5:3.3). This chapter further addresses the

⁴⁴⁵ We use the term resistance in a positive sense, meaning a refusal to accept or comply with something that is not conducive to the well-being of God’s people. In doing so the church also assists the poor in “taking charge of their own destiny”.

fact that development remains a challenge for the church, government and other actors of civil society. The question of how it relates to the development debate is critically dealt with.

Chapter six critically analyses the challenge of development *for being church (a practical-theological ecclesiology)*. In this chapter the tenets of ecclesiology unfold, not as a systematic ecclesiology but rather as set of interwoven markers or beacons to fix the course. Thus, it is argued in this chapter for an ecclesiology that should go beyond the history of the church to an ecclesiology that equips us to go forward in a chosen direction in order to become the best church we can for our context (cf. Bradbury 2000:179). Becoming missionary-diaconal (6.2.1) creates an opportunity for the church to go onto the missionary fields of our communities, as a sent people, in humble service to those on the periphery (cf. Keifert 2006:28); embracing the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the unemployed (6.2.2). This we do obediently as we listen to the voice of the triune God, the voice of the vulnerable, the voice of truth and justice, the voice of the earth (6.2.2.1). It is further argued that systems thinking are relevant for our context as it may help local congregations' understanding of diversity and variety. Understanding the context of others – why they interpret life issues the way they – makes one more appreciative of the other.

This chapter attempted to show that a practical theological ecclesiology focuses on real congregations; that it wants to have a better understanding of congregations; that it does not only want to think critically about congregations, but also concretely; that it wants to understand the congregation in all its complexity, as a unitary system; that it should be formulated in terms of possible points of intervention; that it wants to learn as much as possible from the social sciences, within a biblical-theological framework

(Burger 1999:19-22).⁴⁴⁶ This is the essence of practical-theological ecclesiology: “it seeks a faithful, credible, contextual, effective and concrete form of being church.”⁴⁴⁷

7.2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: THE DEBATE CONTINUES

We have said (2.2.7), where a church exists, she should demonstrate her concern for the people’s social and economic needs in a practical manner at the same time as she points the way in which spiritual needs can be met. This, in the first instance, would suggest that, as followers of Christ who engage in social action, the Church should never have to choose between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger or between healing bodies or saving souls. In other words, “there should be no room for a dichotomised perspective as was the case in the history of the Church under the influence of the Enlightenment. This separation of the physical and social from spiritual development was and is Christian heresy ... because it creates and supports an unbiblical dichotomy (August 2010:46).

When Christ quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, (to insist that ‘one does not live by bread alone’), he was reaffirming the link between the spiritual duty of the Church community, and the socio-economic needs of the poor. After all, as van Drimmelen (1998:xi) so aptly points out, “economics⁴⁴⁸ is about people’s daily life: procuring food, shelter and clothes, performing meaningful work”, and the best way to ensure that a person can obtain food,

⁴⁴⁶ Burger(1999:19-22), cited in MacMaster, *In Search of a Family: The Challenge of Gangsterism to Faith Communities on the Cape Flats*, Unpublished doctoral thesis, (Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch, 2010), p105.

⁴⁴⁷ Jurgens Hendriks, *Navorsingsterminologie in die (Praktiese) Teologie*, Class Notes, University of Stellenbosch, March, 2004.

⁴⁴⁸ The word economy comes from the Greek words *oikos* (house or household) and *nomos* (law or rules) Thus it is safe to say that economics, literally refers to applying household rules, and in this sense economics is as old as humanity, because people have always had household rules. See Van Drimmelen (1998).

shelter and clothes, (and become dignified) is through job creation. Decent and permanent job opportunities are what community development and the IDP aspire to. If the objective of the IDP is to alleviate poverty through job creation, then the objective of the church should be (i) to give voice to the people who are exposed to poverty and not only accept political action programmes as best practice, but constantly evaluate and re-evaluate those programmes and projects that add value to the lives of the poor; (ii) see to it that the jobs affirm the humanity of the people instead of degrading them. Being needy does not mean that people should work in appalling conditions which violate labour laws. Access to jobs that are appropriately remunerated creates self-respect, dignity and empowerment (4.8.2).

By constantly re-evaluating the IDP development programmes the Church will contribute to enabling employment, income and a decent human life. There is consensus amongst change agents that the IDP is a proactive document and that its principles could exert a meaningful influence on the daily church-in-practice, but only in so far as the church endorses its validity. As a church our concern should centre on a just household – a just economy. This means that the church not only should add to the plethora of academic research publications (issued statements, declarations, pastoral messages on serving the poor) but should put into practice its demand for a better life for all. The old adage “Action Speak louder than words” is very true in this regard. Thus, for the church to remain contextually relevant, it needs to stay present in the neediest areas and continue to ... serve people where they are... and increase its involvement with the poor (Sheppard quoted in August 2010:47)⁴⁴⁹

It has been established throughout the chapters of this thesis that community development can no longer be an option for the church. The theological mandate given for development means that development is an integral part of Christian ministry. God's concern for the poor and the vulnerable is real and, '*as the people called*', the church has to follow suit. Unemployment, hunger, crime and violence, are real. Poverty, the number one problem of the rainbow nation, is real. In the face of these realities the church cannot be silent. We need to remind the decision-makers of their promises to create jobs in order to create a better life for all. The church needs to be the conscience of the policy-makers when it comes to service delivery, i.e. providing better living conditions and houses, and attending to basic human needs. These are development issues that may contribute to the wholeness of a people. If they are not addressed, these "issues" make us want to weep like the Jews in Ps.137:1, when they were exiles in a strange land; exiles who had lost their land to foreign power. Many poor people, especially "small town people", sometimes feel like weeping because they have to "grapple with the dilemma of living in a world where they, too, feel like aliens"⁴⁵⁰ They look at the devastating statistics of the past while they experience the discouraging actualities of the present; and the bitterness of past and present make them lose all hope for the future. It is here where the church needs to step up and gently lead people to look beyond devastation and discover that there is a way out.

⁴⁴⁹ A watershed in the ecumenical debate about development occurred at the 1966 Geneva Conference on the churches' relationship to the "social and technological revolutions". The nature of the church's role was vigorously debated. Some contended that mission in the sense of proclaiming the gospel, was the primary task of the churches, with service a strictly ancillary function. Some stressed charity and relief rather than systemic development, either because the churches were perceived to be ill-equipped to engage in systemic transformation, or because systemic development required a kind of political or economic ideological commitment in which churches should not engage. However, although this debate was not completely resolved, by the 1968 Uppsala assembly of the WCC it was clear that for most people the issue was not *whether* the churches should be involved in socio-economic development but *how* (Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, Geneva: WCC, 2002), p. 299.

⁴⁵⁰ Unknown author.

Thus, as long as there is suffering in this world, as long as there is injustice, the voice of the church will have to be heard particularly in light of its claim to be God's representative.⁴⁵¹ .

It befits us to conclude with the apt words of Berkhoff (1979:406):

To be a church means to be ahead of and to reach beyond one self, to be restlessly on the move, never satisfied with the present, forever searching for new challenges and tasks; for, in the course of history new bricks must be added all the time, new challenges taken up...

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This final section puts forward some recommendations that might prove to be successful for both the Baviaans Municipality and the church in their task to be agents of change.

7.3.1 Recommendations to the Baviaans Municipality

- Let the people participate in their own development. Though it is good to consider the opinion of the people (consultation), and involve them in the process, it is not enough. Consultation and involvement (via public hearings and consultation with community leaders) does not mean that people are actively engaged in the decision-making process. It is proposed that, while the Baviaans

⁴⁵¹ Küng has this to say about the principle of representation: "In creation man already appears as representative of all creation, then the people of Israel as representatives of the whole of mankind; further the remnant of Israel appears as representatives of the whole people of Israel; and finally Christ appears as representative of the remnant". Thus in the Old Testament representation develops in the form of a progressive reduction towards Christ, from the manifold to the One, he says. Conversely, in the New Testament representation broadens progressively from the One to the manifold. By virtue of the fact that Christ as the One suffers death for the many, and that He arose from the dead, the many are now to represent the One: the apostles are to represent Christ for the Church; the church is to represent Christ for mankind in the eschatological perspective of the future kingdom of God and a redeemed creation of the new heaven and the new earth (p.17).

Municipality has done quite a lot in consulting and involving people, they should enable the community to set and pursue their own agenda.

- Facilitate workshops where the community could be introduced to techniques of planning, implementation and maintenance. But guard against the “learning is done by the poor and teaching is done by the development institution” notion.
- Make use of the indigenous knowledge system (IKS), not as a way of assisting local government in their (the government’s) planning process but for the very human process of empowerment.
- Though we applaud the initiatives taken by the Baviaans municipality to alleviate poverty through (temporary) job creation, it is proposed that the Baviaans municipality should make an effort to attract “outside” investment. This could result in permanent employment for the many temporary and unemployed people of the Baviaans. It may further curb the exodus of young minds in search of a better future elsewhere.

7.3.2 Recommendations to the “Church”

- We have noted that the church is regarded as one of the major role-players in the Baviaans Municipal area. The church is therefore urged to fully utilise this platform to address human needs and to resist all structures and systems that prevent people from being human, as created in the image and likeness of their Creator. This is what Jesus would do. The church follows the example of Jesus in its quest to alleviate the condition of the poor and needy. Thus the church should never forfeit this Christological basis for being involved in the transformation of the community.

- It is proposed that the church become more visible in the Baviaans Municipal area, in the sense of becoming the loving and transforming presence of Christ. This essentially means to “show our faith by what we do” (James 2: 14ff). The mission we engage in is not ours but is God’s continuing mission of love to a broken world. The church in the Baviaans area needs to demonstrate her faith in practical terms, by pulling resources in order to overcome the scourges of poverty, violence, crime, injustice, racism, sexism, HIV/AIDS and other social ills. [It is noted that, though there is no formal minister’s fraternal in this area; ministers do interact via the Willowmore Inter-church Forum. This forum was initiated by a group of religious leaders who meet on a weekly basis to discuss some socio-religious challenges that the community faces. This forum is held in high esteem by the municipal leadership and other community structures. More than fifteen congregations across the confessional spectrum participate in this forum]. During interviews with various role-players it was gladdening to note that all community role-players were unanimous in their belief that the church did have a role to play in addressing the socio-economic challenges of the Baviaans Municipal area.
- It is proposed that the church in the Baviaans municipal avail itself of opportunities to “infiltrate” all structures (politically, economically, and otherwise) where the well-being of God’s people is at stake - not as a silent partner, but as a significant contributor. The sign of significance, however, should be clear: it must symbolise God’s care and concern for God’s people, in God’s world.

- Though we would recommend that the church should become an active partner in all structures, it is also our plea that the church should not become a “bed-mate” of these structures. There should be some distance, as Tokyo Sexwale put it:

The distance between ourselves and yourselves must be identifiable and you must be far enough from us to be able to see us clearly...You must be able to see us in our full glory and also in our dishonour, should dishonour occur. That is the challenge to the church today”.⁴⁵²

- Lastly we propose that the church in its attempts to transform individuals and the community should access its practical involvement from its theological and biblical mandate.

7.4 CONCLUSION

From our discussion it is clear that the responsibility that rests on the shoulders of the church is a daunting one. As the people called the church has been mandated to show preference for the poor (the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the unemployed etc.). Taking up the plight of the poor, speaking and intervening on behalf of the poor, engaging government on development issues such as housing, health and education, have become regular items on church agendas. From where the church stands, it has no option but to become actively involved in the issues of the day, particularly where it concerns the well-being of people. This they do because of its relationship with God and its calling. We do so because we are a distinct community, a *koinonia*, a fellowship which stands in service of God and the world. God’s preference for the poor which has been continued in Jesus is taken further by his church.

⁴⁵² Tokyo Sexwale, Church and State, in *Being the Church in a New Land*, (Johannesburg: SACC, 1995), p. 9, cited in Pillay (2002: 289).

Unlike many secular agencies, the church does development out of its sense of God's concern for humanity and in obedience to God's plan (August 2010:48). It is a trusted and accepted institution in the Baviaans area and especially among the poor. It has a "unique nature that makes it different" (Van Gelder 2000:104). This is what makes the church different from any other institution. This also affirms the hypothesis of this study. The researcher is convinced that the chapters of this study have proven that the church can be a reliable, worthy and valued catalyst for community development within the social paradigm.

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Appendix A:

Guideline questions for community role-players

Questionnaire: Municipal Manager / Mayor

Aim: (i) to view Poverty through the eyes of local government,
(11) to determine how serious they are in eradicating poverty
(111) to determine how effective the IDP is as a tool for community development.

1. Poverty is very much part of your constituency. What does poverty mean to you?
2. What % of the people in the BMA is affected by poverty?
3. How do you measure poverty in your area? (indicators)
4. Do you have plans / projects / programs in place to assist the poor?
5. What are these plans if I may ask? Is it short term, long term or both?
6. In your opinion are these plans sustainable?
7. Can you tell me, what are the objectives of those plans / projects / programmes?
8. Since when were these programs / projects / plans initiated?
9. Are there time frames for them?
10. Who do you want to target with these programs?
11. Mr Mayor/MM, what in your opinion could be the causes of poverty in your area.
12. Does the BMA attract any business (If yes what is the nature of these businesses / if no, what plans do you have in place to address the situation?)
13. What percentage of people is unemployed?
14. Could you perhaps give us an idea of how many are youngsters, married, women etc.
15. Mr Mayor/ MM, housing is a headache for many municipalities. How is the situation in the BMA?
16. How many people benefitted from low cost housing during your term in office?
17. Do you make use of local contractors or are they from out of town?
18. Are you satisfied with their work? Are the people happy with the type of housing they get from the municipality?

19. Would you say that the houses comply with SABS standards?
20. How serious is the municipality in eradicating poverty? Please elaborate.
21. In your opinion did poverty went up or down during your term in office?
22. How do you measure that?
23. What other pressing problems are there in your area and how do you plan to tackle them?
24. In your opinion, is the IDP –as a strategy – doing what it is intended for? In what way?

Appendix B:

Guideline questions for the community

Questionnaire: Community

1. How long are you living in this area?.....
2. Is this your house or is it rented?.....
3. If I may ask, what is the rental per month/week?.....
4. Does this house satisfy your needs? Are you happy with this house? If no Explain? (use separate page)
5. What number of rooms is used for sleeping?.....
6. Do you think housing is a problem in the Baviaans? Why?
.....
.....
7. In your opinion, what are the most pressing problems facing the community?
.....
.....
.....
8. What, in your opinion should be done to rectify the situation?
.....
.....
.....
9. How many people in your household are employed?.....
10. Did any of the young people in your household leave school earlier than they should have? Why?
.....
.....
.....
11. Are there any recreational facilities for children and youth in your area?.....
12. If yes, is it sustainable and safe? If no how does this affect the youngsters?
.....
.....
.....

13. Is Substance abuse a problem in your area?.....

14. What are the causes of such abuse?

.....
.....
.....

15. How does substance abuse impact on the community?

.....
.....
.....

16. Are the police visible in your area?.....

17. Is the church visible in your area, and in what way?

.....
.....
.....

18. Do you think the church can do more? In what way

.....
.....
.....

19. Are you familiar with the IDP? Have you ever attended an IDP gathering?

.....
.....

20. What do you think IDP stands for?

.....
.....

21. Have you, or your family (in some way) benefitted from the projects of the IDP?

.....
.....

22. Do you think your municipality has done enough to educate its constituency on the matters of the IDP? If not, what more can the municipal leadership do?

.....
.....
.....

23. How are you represented on the IDP Forum?

.....
.....

Appendix C: Guideline Questions: Health

Questionnaire: Health Department:

1. How many patients visit the clinic daily? (Willowmore & Steytlerville)
2. How many are children / women / men etc.
3. I see that the clinic is always very busy, especially on Mondays. What do you think is the reason for that?
4. What in your opinion are the most common reasons for people coming to the clinic?
5. What is the most common disease in the Baviaans and why do you say so?
6. I know housing is a big problem in the BMA, do you think that the “housing problem” has anything to do with the spreading of the disease.
7. Would you say that there is a relationship between health and poverty, and if yes could you perhaps tell me about this relationship?
8. I see you always have TB and HIV/Aids awareness campaigns. Is there any reason for that?
9. Have you noted any relationship between TB and HIV/Aids in the Baviaans?
10. What role do you think the community / government / church should / could play in health problems?
11. What role, if any should/could the church in partnership with primary healthcare play in addressing some of these issues?

Appendix D: Guideline questions: Safety**Questionnaire: Schedule: Police**

1. What are the main challenges faced by your community? (Prioritise)

1	
2	

2. What is the one most common crime that people are committing?

--

3. What is the main cause of it?

--

4. Do you believe there is a relationship between crime and poverty?

--

5. The crimes that you are dealing with, is it perhaps alcohol / drug related?

--

6. Can you perhaps give figures?

--

7. How many rape cases do you record over a given month?

--

8. How many murders do you record over a given month?

--

9. How many of these perpetrators have been brought to book?

--

10. Do you have petty crime in this area?

11. When you are called out by the community, what is your reaction time? How do you fare in this regard?

12. What role do you think the church should play in preventing crime?

13. To your knowledge has the church been visible in the community?

14. Would you say that the church is / could be a valuable partner in preventing crime?

Appendix E:**Guideline questions: Clergy****A: Understanding of the social context**

1. What does poverty mean to you?
2. What does human need mean to you?
3. How do you personally / or congregation respond to human need?
4. Do you have economically poor people in your congregation?
5. In your opinion what percentage of your membership is affected by poverty?
6. Could you perhaps name the key problems/challenges faced by this community?

B: Theological foundation

1. In your opinion what are the most important task(s) of the church?
2. Do you believe that poverty should be on the agenda of the church?
3. What in your opinion should the church's role be in addressing poverty?
4. What is your understanding of concepts such as social justice, kingdom of God, and justice church?
5. What is your understanding of good news, sin?
6. In what way is your church involved in the community?
7. Does your church partner with other congregations, organisations in addressing social challenges in the Baviaans? If no, why? If yes, why do you deem it important?
8. Do you think the church is doing enough to address the socio-economic challenges facing the community?
9. What more do you think the church can do to address poverty in the community?
10. Do you think that the church should be involved in community development?
11. What is your understanding of a contextual church?

Interview with Rev, B. O (18 September 2009)

Q: Ds. Wat would you say is the single most biggest problem in the Baviaans?

A: Most definitely the use and abuse of alcohol. There are many other problems such as teenage pregnancies, crime and violence, but I think alcohol has a finger in all these other problems.

Q: Ds. I know that you've been here for quite some time now. What do you think is the cause of these ills?

A: People are very poor in this area. We have very few job opportunities here. You know long before you came here we had a woodwork factory and the railway station was operational, which gave work to our people. When that factory closed down in the early ninety's the Baviaans became a ghost town. You know what a ghost town is?

Q: I have a pretty good idea but am I hearing you correct. Are you blaming it on poverty?

A: You right, I couldn't have put it better myself, I'm blaming all these problems on poverty.

Q: Does it influence your congregation in any way?

A: (Here he responded in Afrikaans) My vriend, kom ek verduidelik dit vir jou so. Die laaste twaalf jaar betaal mense nie meer hulle dankoffers nie. Ons is finansiëel afhanklik van gemeentes in Pretoria. Dan stuur 'n gemeente uit Holland ook vir ons geld. Hierdie kerk terloops is gebou met skenkings uit Holland. Hierdie is nie 'n groot gemeente nie en die werkloosheid maak dit nie makliker vir ons nie. Intendeel alle gemeentes trek maar noustrop soos jy self sal weet. Dan het jy nog die smokkelhuise wat 'n groot deel van mense se geld neem. Om jou vraag te beantwoord, ja armoede raak ons gemeente nadelig.

Q: Do you think that poverty should be on the agenda of the church?

A: Of course, because it touches the lives of all the people in this area. I think... no I believe it is important to address poverty issues in our community.

Q: While we're on the subject, how you suggest the church do that?

A: The best way I can think of is through preaching. You know when we pray give us today our daily bread ... this is a big thing for poor people you know. How many people come to church on an empty stomach. We should not only preach about bread, we should share our bread with them.

Q: You touch on an important subject. We also pray "Thy kingdom come". How do you understand it in light of what you said?

A: This is not easy to explain, but let me put it this way. God or Jesus is not on this earth anymore, but we are. As his church we are ... and also through the holy Spirit... we must be His (pointing to the sky) arms, his feet, his eyes and his ears. We should see the need of others and we should do something about it. I think we when we pray thy kingdom come we also say thy will be done. I don't think it is God's will that people must suffer because ... I think has put us on this earth to become each other's keeper. I think we can have already here and now have heaven on earth, if we obey God's commands.

Q: So you would think that the church should be involved in poverty and poverty-related issues. If so, in what way?

A: Yes I believe so. I think we need to be more visible in the community... more than what we are now. You know I'm just thinking about it now... actually we need to use our platform ... that's the church to make our presence felt in the community and everywhere where people are discussed... and I mean everywhere, in government, in public meetings, and in these different social structures, during house visitations everywhere. People need to take note of our presence. You know if we have to go to the Shebeens to educate people, we need to do that. (Respondent laugh out loud. Wow ds. What would the congregants say). Responding in Afrikaans. Dis dan juis hulle wat daar kuier.

Q: This brings me to the question of involvement. How involved is your congregation in the community, and does your congregation perhaps partner with other role-players?

A: As a congregation we are not actually involved, but we are involved through the Interchurch Forum. Whenever there is something the Interchurch do we participate, like for example we had marches against many social ills in this community, en o ja, we

have an ecumenical soup kitchen. Through the Interchurch Forum we have initiated many projects and programs like for example the Victim empowerment programme that you know of. We are for example using our building as the centre for the soup kitchen, basically because our church is located central. *[At this point his cell phone rang and he went out quickly. When he returned he asked to be recused, as he had to attend something. The respondent asked his permission to ask one (but got in two questions) last question to which permission was granted]*

Q: What in your view is a contextually relevant church?

A: Everything we have said thus far makes the church relevant in its context. But to put more flesh to the bone I would say a contextual relevant church is a church that is where the people are. It think it is a church that cares for its people, in a way that no one else can do.

Q: And you think the church in this area can do that?

A: I am certain about it.

Respondent: Thank you for your time dominee.

Appendix F: Interview with Municipal Manager: Mr J.V.

Q: Mr. M.M (Municipal Manager), since poverty is such a thorny issue, and very much part of your constituency, what is your take on poverty?

A: Well, thank you mfundisi. Poverty, in my view is, like you say, a thorny issue. It could mean a lot of things, but for me and especially in my constituency poverty is people not having money to buy basic stuff to make a decent living. It's people not being able to sustain their lifestyle. People are falling into that poverty trap for many reasons, one being not having a job. If we can provide jobs for people than we could lessen the poverty devil in our area.

Q: I wanted to ask this question later, but since you've touched on one of the reasons why poverty is so rampant in this area, allow me to ask it now? I take it that job is scarce in your area. What does the municipality do to create job opportunities for the people?

A: Presently the municipality is the biggest provider of jobs. This however is of a temporary nature. We employ people to help with the upgrading of infrastructural IDP plans, also through the EPWP projects. I'm sure you have noticed that. But it would be great if we could attract outside business... I can see you want to ask a follow up question mfundisi?

Q: Yes, I would love to ask a follow up question: Does the BM attract any business from outside, and if so, what is the nature of this type of business. And if no what plans do you have in place to address the situation?

A: You're well aware of the fact that tourism is our biggest attractor of business, but that's a drop in the ocean. It is not that easy to draw business from outside as there are many issues to deal with. For example, infrastructure, water, electricity. Currently our town cannot provide the services for big business. We are a water scarce municipality. So we will have to think very carefully who we want to attract to invest in our town.

Q: Sir I would like to ask more questions in this regard, but let me proceed. Let me ask another question on poverty. What % people in the BMA is affected by poverty... could you also tell me what indicators do you use to measure this thorny issue, and do you have plans / projects / programs in place to assist those in needy?

A: On your first question, I would say about 59%. On your second question ... we take it by households and also the unemployment rate and thirdly, yes we have plans in plans. I've explained about our IDP projects, but more... because we're so passionate about the youth, we have revamped the abattoir into a youth centre, specifically to train the youth through upliftment programmes. We also have a resource centre where they can become computer literate. We have employed many of these youngsters, either temporary or fulltime.

Q: Mr MM, housing is a big problem for the whole country, how is the situation in Baviaans?

A: Let me answer in this way. Have you ever seen a shack or informal settlement in our area? I think that should give you an indication of whether we have a problem with housing. This does not mean we should rest on our laurels. Since 2001 we have erect nearly 400 low cost houses. We've made plans for people coming from the nearby farms and other places. But for now we are happy.

Q: Mr MM many residents complain about the quality of these low-cost houses. They say it's very cold in the winter and very hot during summer. In other words the houses are not suitable for living conditions. A further complaint is that it is "outside contractors who are in it for the money. I guess my question is three-fold; firstly your take on the quality of housing? Are these local or 'outside' contractors and lastly; are you happy with their work and has it been SABS approved?

A: All I can say is that these houses were approved by the SABS, meaning that it was built according to specifications. And yes we have used contractors from outside but we also made use of locals.

Q: Once again MM, if we had time I would have engage you on that, but let me proceed. Most if not all your projects are contained in the IDP. You've done extremely when it comes to the IDP and the implementing thereof, but in your opinion, is the IDP doing what it is intended for, and in what way?

A: Just this morning I received an e-mail from the District, congratulating us on the way we implement and execute the projects contained in the IDP. We are one of the few municipalities in the country who can boast with positive results when it comes to the IDP. You know, there are municipalities who are still struggling with implementing the IDP, but this e-mail is proof that we're on the right track. Let me say something more, you know, as a municipality we take people seriously. We journey with people. We listen to them and together we make decisions. You are part of the IDP forum, and have you noticed how positive people are when it comes to the sharing of ideas. To answer your question, yes I think the IDP is the one thing that has brought people and government together.

Q: Mr MM what other pressing problems are there in your area?

A: You know, we have too many loan sharks, and micro-lenders who do not add value to the town. Most of the people in this area are dependent on some form of grant. The tragedy is that most of these people are trapped in this vicious circle run by loan sharks. This add to the moral decay of our town, but you know that, as this is more your line of duty. These are all worrying factors to me.

Q: Sir I know this question might come as a surprise to you, but let me ask it anyway. In your observation how visible is the church in the Baviaans area? What can the church do to become more visible? Do you think the church is doing enough to ease the plight of the poor?

A: (LOL – laugh out loud), you right this is unfair, but being in this area for about three years now, I cannot say that the church is not visible... however the church can do much more than what they are doing now. You cannot leave the IDP in the hands of the municipality alone. You need to be part and parcel of the whole process. We need to be

partners, with one goal in mind... to serve the poorest of the poor. I know you are very busy in the area, but there's always room for improvement. I hope I have answered your question.

Q: *In a sense yes, but I know you have another meeting, so thank you for your time sir.*

Appendix H: Community Survey: 2007 (Race – Gender – Social Grants)

Type of Grant	Black		Coloured		White		Total	Grant amount	Total R
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female			
Care Dep.	0	0	16	79	0	0	95	R1,080	R102,600
Disability	74	108	380	421	0	0	983	R1,080	R102,600
Grant in Aid	0	12	100	150	72	0	334	R 250	R 83,500
Child Support	108	45	1231	1334	0	0	2718	R 250	R679,500
Old Age	50	104	125	453	21	61	814	R1,080	R102,600
Institutions	17	5	158	170	15	24	389	R 270	R105,030
Total amount of beneficiaries who receive a grant							5333		R2,911.390
Total population			13931 (approximately)						
% of population dependent on grants				38, 28%					

(Source: Baviaans Municipality)

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Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
MEC LOCAL GOVERNMENT
& TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

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Honourable Mayor
Baviaans Municipality
P. O. Box 15
Willowmore
6445

Dear Colleague

MEC COMMENTS ON THE ANALYSED FINAL INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN(IDP) -2010/11

This is to acknowledge receipt of your municipality's final adopted Integrated Development Plan which has since been analyzed by Sector Departments according to their departmental specific expertise from both Provincial and National Departments as well as State Owned Enterprises.

This correspondence seeks to communicate findings on the analysis of your final 2010/11 IDP.

IDP Analysis Rationale

In compliance with Section 32(2) of the Municipal Systems Act, No. 32 of 2000 as amended, the MEC for Local Government may within 30 days after receipt of a copy of the IDP or an amendment to the plan make some adjustment proposals to the Municipal Council. In this regard, I hereby submit some suggestions and advice based on the findings of the analysis.

The MEC comments are basically meant to ensure that priorities of government spheres are clearly articulated and aligned by all spheres to ensure the optimal utilization of government resources to accelerate service delivery. This could only be achieved through the crafting of credible IDPs.

IDP Analysis Methodology

The IDP Assessment process was once again provincially centralised and municipal delegates participated in the analysis process and this interactive engagement approach has enabled collective agreement on scores and pollination of information at a peer level and from specialists in various disciplines for improved and accelerated service delivery.

Six commissions composed of delegates from district and local municipalities, Provincial and National sector departments and state owned entities were established in line with the following Key Performance Areas as contained in the IDP Analysis Tool.



Isamva elisoqambileyo!



08-OCT-2010 14:14 FROM CACADU DISTRICT MUNICIPAL

TO 00865227245

P.002

Commission No's.	Key Performance Areas
1	KPA 1-Spatial Development Framework
2	KPA 2-Service Delivery
3	KPA 3 -Financial Viability
4	KPA 4 -Local Economic Development
5	KPA 5- Good Governance
6	KPA 6- Institutional Arrangements

Based on their findings, each Commission was requested to allocate an objective overall rating per Key Performance Area. The ratings ranged from low, medium to high within the following context:

Score/ Rating	Performance Description	Action Required
Low	Poor	Immediate intervention
Medium	Satisfactory(credible)	Support required
High	Excellent(credible)	Benchmarking

Quality assurance was facilitated through designated KPA Leaders.

KPA Ratings as per your municipality

Your municipality has been rated as follows:

KPA	RATING 2008/09	RATING 2009/10	RATING 2010/11
Spatial Development Framework	Low	High	High
Service Delivery	Low	Medium	Medium
Financial Viability	High	High	High
Local Economic Development	Low	High	High
Good Governance & Public Participation	Low	Low	High
Institutional Arrangements	Low	Low	Medium
Overall Rating	Low	Medium	High

Apart from the detailed findings illustrated in the individual IDP Analysis Report, there are issues relating to the process that affect many of our local municipalities, especially the category B4 municipalities. These could be summed up as follows:

1. Some municipalities continue to have the same shortcomings which have been identified during the previous years and for which advice has been provided. I suggest that the ownership of integrated



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- development planning by the heads of departments in municipalities not be left as optional to enhance the quality of the end product.
2. The IDP Managers or officers must report directly to the Municipal Manager in local municipalities where there are no Strategic Managers to enable the effective coordination of s57 Managers' participation in the IDP processes. Managers must be held accountable for the quality of information in their respective Key Performance Areas. Likewise, the oversight responsibility by our colleagues serving in portfolio committees MUST include IDP Progress Monitoring per IDP Phase as well as the quality of information put forward in line with what is entailed in the IDP Analysis Report.
 3. A brief overview of what has been achieved in the implementation of the previous IDP, challenges and suggested remedial measures need to be provided in the situational analysis report.
 4. Municipalities must clearly state what their requirements are from each department in order to enable departments to prepare themselves for meaningful participation in IDP processes via the established forums. It is clear to us colleagues, that out of frustration, some municipalities tend to opt for one on one engagement with Sector Departments but the danger to that approach is that no single department can succeed on matters of service delivery without the participation of others in an integrated approach. We must promote a complementary approach in order to make the necessary impact on our communities.
 5. It has also been observed that many petitions forwarded to municipalities as well as letters of complaints from communities revolve around service delivery issues and the non- participation of certain groupings in IDP processes. This is against the provisions of our Constitution and Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 as amended. It is on this basis that I want us to focus on Ward Based Planning as the building block towards the development of a credible and legitimate municipal Integrated Development Plan.
 6. In the next IDP process, government instruments like The State of Local Government, Local Government Turn Around Strategy, Outcome Number Nine and Service Delivery Agreements must be taken into consideration and Municipal Turn Around Strategies mainstreamed in IDPs.
 7. It is also equally important colleagues, to provide an attachment containing all powers and functions that are performed by your municipality as well as any Service Level Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding that exist. This assists to ensure that your municipality does not plan for functions that do not belong to it. It also assists IDP Assessors avoid assessing your municipality on functions that are not yours.
 8. Finally, It is also of great importance to indicate what the nature of the Audit opinion your municipality received and what plans have been developed to address the situation.

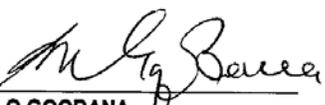


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The detailed IDP Analysis comments are contained in the attached completed Assessment Tool format for consideration by Council and to guide the planning process for the next financial year.

I trust that these suggestions would go a long way to assist in the attainment of a very credible IDP by your municipality.

Yours faithfully



SICELO GQOBANA
MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

DATE: 07/10/10

