

**TITLE**

**TOWARDS AN ETHICS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A  
CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEBATE ON A THEOLOGY OF ECONOMICS  
IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT.**

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Town.**

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Lukas Ilikola NANTANGA

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### **Abstract**

Chapter one introduces the debate in the Ecumenical Movement surrounding problems of poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation. In particular, the *argument* draws on the sentiment in the Ecumenical Movement that these problems are the result of "classical and neo-classical economic thinking".

Having established a global context and a theoretical framework in chapter one, chapters two and three focus on Namibia. Chapter two discusses the policies of the Namibian government in addressing the problems of poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation, and chapter three examines the responses of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) to these problems. In particular, it becomes evident that whereas the state in Namibia is attempting to address the three problems holistically - i.e., as inextricable from each other - the church shows a marked human interest at the expense of environmental concern.

Chapter four introduces the Ecumenical Movement's Theology of Sharing as a Christian imperative for addressing threefold, intrinsically related problem of poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation. Chapter five proposes several models for the realization of this theology.

## Introduction

I envision a society whose primary concern at the national and international levels is to encourage the right to life of individuals both now and in the future, a society in which the alleviation of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment are adequately addressed.

But there are critical questions to be posed here: Can an existing economic system that is destroying 17 million hectares worldwide of forest each year be sustainable? Will an economic system that is, for example, converting something like six million hectares of productive land into desert through mining, each year sustain progress?

(1) Maurice Strong puts this problem in the following perspective:-

*Our attitudes towards economic growth are at the heart of the present dilemma of industrial civilization. This is the disease which has spread through the body of modern technological societies. This "growth disease" has within it the potential for self-destruction of our society. The challenge we now face is nothing less than that of creating a whole new approach to the growth of our society, to the goals of growth, to the processes of growth, and to the systems of incentives and penalties which determine our patterns of growth.(2)*

This dissertation argues for a sustainable-development paradigm and tries to address the problems associated with it at the international and local levels. The

World Commission on Development and Environment, in *Our Common Future* (1987), argues that sustainable development involves more than growth. It requires a change in the content of growth, to make it less material- and energy-intensive and more equitable in its impact.<sup>(3)</sup> *Our Common Future* further argues that these changes are necessary for both the North and South as part of an economic agenda to maintain and improve the distribution of income, revitalize the natural environment and lessen the degree of vulnerability to economic crises.<sup>(4)</sup>

There is a general conviction, moreover, that the current measurement of growth, the Gross National Product (GNP) is a limited concept.<sup>(5)</sup> Michael Redclift argues that Gross National Product measures 'productive activity' in a very narrow way, excluding, for example, the productive activities of the household.<sup>(6)</sup> These activities are in most cases undertaken by women in the informal sector.

*Economic growth* which refers in singly economic terms to a desired high standard of living <sup>(7)</sup>, is questionable because it is inadequate to address the problems of poverty, environmental degradation and structural unemployment. *Our Common Future* (1987) further argues its position clearly as follows:-

*Our message is directed towards people, whose well-being is the ultimate goal of the environment and development policies. Unless we are able to translate our words into a language that can reach the minds and hearts of people young and old, we shall not be able to understand the extensive social changes needed to correct the course of development.*<sup>(8)</sup>

There is a need for renewal in the present economic development trends that focus on economic growth as an end in itself, without addressing the vicious cycle of poverty especially in the South. The North consumes most of the world's resources while the South experiences poverty. It is here that this research is focusing.

*(i) The Problem*

The research of this study focuses on the *international economic system* in relation to the problems of poverty, environmental degradation and structural unemployment in the South. The dissertation focuses on this problem because the current international economic system operates from a paradigm that is incompatible with a demand for *meeting basic human needs* in human society. This paradigm includes *inter alia* the following assumptions:-

- (1) Economic growth must be a prelude to social justice and not vice versa**
- (2) Economic growth in itself promotes equitable redistribution of material wealth**
- (3) Economic development in developing countries should be modelled on that of industrial countries** <sup>(9)</sup>

It will be argued in the following pages that these assumptions are part of the problem and need to be understood in terms of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment in the South.

In this dissertation, reference to the international economic system primarily signifies the global economy that is based on both classical (Adam Smith) and neoclassical (John Maynard Keynes) economic thinking. In other words, this refers

to *laissez-faire* capitalism.

Bob Goudzwaard and Harry de Lange in *Beyond Poverty and Affluence: Toward an Economy of Care*<sup>(10)</sup>, further push this discussion forward and introduce six economic paradoxes.<sup>(11)</sup> In this dissertation I will only discuss three of them. I chose these three paradoxes because they specifically deal with two of the three key themes of this dissertation: poverty and unemployment; it is unfortunate that none of the paradoxes deal with environment. In introducing these paradoxes, Goudzwaard and de Lange state the problem:-

*..our economy has reached the point where it must be fundamentally renewed, it is incapable of resolving the major economic dilemmas of our time: poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment.*<sup>(12)</sup>

#### Paradox one:

*Poverty is rising sharply in the midst of a wealthy society.*

The problem of poverty has become a worldwide phenomenon. Bob Goudzwaard and Harry de Lange record statistical data that tell us that in Canada, for instance, poverty increased from 14.2 per cent of the population in 1980 to 16 per cent in 1992, despite the substantial economic growth of the 1980s.<sup>(13)</sup> The countries of the South are more severely hit by poverty. It was reported in the 1992 World Development Report that income dropped each year between 1980 and 1990 an average of 0.9 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>(14)</sup>

#### Paradox two:

*Society's need for more labour is becoming critical even as unemployment rises.*

In spite of the fact that society urgently needs more labour, the rate of unemployment goes up. This is a frustrating phenomenon. The critical question is: Why is it, then, that even in the midst of economic growth the rate of unemployment, instead of dropping rises?

Paradox three:

*In the midst of more wealth, we have fewer opportunities to practice care than before.*

One might expect that more wealth would generate additional funds, for example, for caring for the needy, for elderly people and for those who are emotionally distressed. In our present economic system this is not the norm.

These remarkable economic paradoxes are reflections of the paradoxical nature that the dilemmas of poverty, unemployment and even the spirit of sharing have acquired today. The paradoxes of Goudzwaard and de Lange show that economic growth in itself is unable to address these problems. The international economic system causes misery, hunger, chronic diseases, high rates of illiteracy and impoverishment especially in the South.

Impacting on the lives of millions in the South, poverty is a complex, multidimensional problem often with origins in both the national and international domains. Karl Polanyi has criticized economic development:-

*At the heart of the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century there was an almost miraculous improvement in the tools of production, which was accompanied by a catastrophic dislocation and disruption of the lives of the common people.*<sup>(15)</sup>

This is the problem this study tries to address at both global and local levels in the pages that follow.

*(ii) Thesis*

Agenda 21, a programme of action for *sustainable development* worldwide drafted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development meeting (UNCED), known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3-14 June 1992, affirms the following:-

*... A specific anti-poverty strategy is one of the basic conditions for ensuring sustainable development. An effective strategy for tackling the problem of poverty, development and environment simultaneously should begin by focusing on resources, production and people and should cover demographic issues, enhance health care and education*<sup>(16)</sup>

This study argues that economic growth especially in the South should be redirected at:-

(1) the basic human needs, thus providing an alleviation of poverty

(2) addressing environmental costs

(3) reducing the current high rate of unemployment in the South.

This study further argues that economic growth should be part of a sustainable development paradigm. I am convinced that when *economic growth measurement* is revised to include basic human needs and to counteract the deterioration of the environment, then poverty and unemployment will be properly addressed.

In the current economic development of many countries, there is a tendency at planning and management levels to separate economic and social policies from environmental factors. In most cases, this has influenced our actions as groups and individuals in executing economic policies that are unsustainable. In the words of *Our Common Future*, environment and development are not separate entities, but are one single issue.<sup>(17)</sup> It is argued here that in the light of socio-economic, political and religious conditions, it is necessary for the environment and sustainable development to be put at the core of economic and political decision-making bodies. Thus, sustainable development might be seen as an alternative economic development discourse in the face of vicious cycle of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment.

The biblical theology of the *oikos* (*house*) shows that Jesus' teaching was directed at the creation of an alternative social order governed by the spirit of compassion, love, accountability and shared material wealth. Generosity in this process is a token of the presence of God's Kingdom. Jesus' parables, sermons and so forth,

focus on a new understanding of the distribution of power and material wealth. In this context, Jesus' world and ministry can be understood as an attempt to articulate new economic values, community-empowerment and a new economic behaviour that is based on reciprocity.

### *(iii) Rationale*

I am motivated to undertake this study by the efforts of the World Council of Churches in dealing with issues pertaining to poverty, distribution of material wealth, the economic system, and the integrity of creation. Poverty especially in the South, has been on top of the agenda of the Ecumenical Movement for a long time. In the South and especially in Africa, unbalanced economic relations between the North and South, environmental degradation, depletion of natural resources and poverty are at the forefront of the socio-economic and cultural dilemmas that face us. It is in this context, I attempt to frame the title of my thesis: *TOWARDS AN ETHICS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT : A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEBATE OF THEOLOGY OF ECONOMICS IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT.*

### *(iv) Aims of the Study*

The method of this study is descriptive in its nature and takes the following forms:-

(1) An investigation into and assessment of the relevant documents of the World Council of Churches on the economic debate in the Ecumenical Movement.

(2) An investigation into and interpretation of the policy approaches of:-

(I) the Government of Namibia and;

(II) the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), as both try to alleviate the problems of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment in Namibia.

(3) To make a contribution to the debate in terms of what has been critically assessed and analyzed in points 1 and 2 above.

Accordingly, the study involves both *documentary research* as well as *interviews in the field*.

#### *(v) Structure*

The structure of this thesis is as follows:-

Chapter 1 outlines the economic debate in the Ecumenical Movement. This chapter examines how poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment are dealt with by the international economic system and the Ecumenical Movement at global level. I also try to show that the present economic practice is inadequate in addressing problems of:-

- (1) poverty
- (2) environmental degradation
- (3) unemployment at global level.

Chapters 2 and 3 continue the debate at local level. Chapter 2 looks at how the government of Namibia deals with development and environment issues. The main focus of chapter 2 is the concept of *sustainability* in economic development, in the

fashion suggested in Agenda 21. Chapter 3 focuses on the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) on the same subject.

Chapter 4 shifts the debate to a theological level. In this chapter, a theology of sharing is introduced and related to questions of economic debate in the Ecumenical Movement. This in practical terms refers to the World Council of Churches' *Ecumenical Resources Sharing* (ERS) model. This chapter prepares the way forward outlined in chapter 5.

Chapter 5 is a way forward. The problems of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment in chapter 1 are discussed at global level. Chapters two and three focus on local context in relation to poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment. Chapters four and five suggest practical models that could be used in adequately addressing poverty especially in the South and a change of life-styles in the North. Chapter 5 proposes the sustainable development paradigm and Person-in-Community as possible models.

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#### NOTES

(1) Proceedings of the World Bank Annual Conference on Development Economics, 1991, p.354.

(2) Quoted in Gerald Vandezande, Christians in Crisis, Toronto Anglican Book Centre 1984, pp.47-49.

(3) The World Commission on the Environment and Development, Our Common Future, 1987, p.52.

(4) Ibid.

(5) Bob Goudzwaard and Harry de Lange, Beyond Poverty and Affluence: Toward an Economy of Care, 1995, p.113, no.4

(6) Michael Redclift, Sustainable Development: Exploring the Contradictions, 1987, p. 15-16.

(7) Christopher McConnel and Samuel Bruce, Economics, 1990, p.7.

(8) Our Common Future, op.cit., p.3.

(9) Catherine Mulholland, Ecumenical Reflections on Political Economy, 1988, p.6.

(10) Bob Goudzwaard and Harry de Lange's Beyond Poverty and Affluence: Toward An Economy of Care, first appeared in Dutch in 1986. It was translated into English in 1995 by Mark R. Venture Venner. Goudzwaard and de Lange argue that the foundations of local national and international economy require renewal.

(11) The other three paradoxes discussed by Goudzwaard and de Lange are

(i) Despite substantially more wealth, we have less and less time in our lives

(ii) Even though our level of health care has increased, our level of disease is rising

(iii) Our society, a society of unprecedented wealth, experiences unprecedented scarcity

(12) Ibid. p.1

(13) Ibid. p.3

(14) Ibid.

(15) Karl Polanyi, Trade and Market in the Early Empires, 1957.p.33

(16) Earth Summit 21, The United Nations Programme of Action, 1992, Section

1, chapter 3

(17) Op.cit., Our Common Future, p.4

## **CHAPTER 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ETHICS IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT**

This chapter examines various issues in the debate on economic development at global level. Firstly, I examine in brief both classical and neoclassical economic thinking. I will argue that current economic practice is incapable of adequately addressing the problems of:-

- (1) - poverty
- (2) - environmental degradation and
- (3) - the problem of unemployment.

Secondly, ecumenical social thought is crucial in the debate on economic and political questions in the Ecumenical Movement. I will outline some basic assumptions that underline ecumenical social thought.

Thirdly, I will look at the responses of the Ecumenical Movement as regards the threefold issues, namely, poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment.

### **1.1 The Market Economy: classical and neoclassical economists**

The era of classical economics is generally assumed to have begun with the publication of Adam Smith's work, *Wealth of Nations* in 1776.

The reason for turning briefly to classical economic thought is that classical economic thought laid the groundwork for the current economic system on which most of our present international economic system rests. Central to classical

economic thinking is the philosophy of *utilitarianism*. According to Goudzwaard and de Lange, utilitarian philosophy was adopted as classical economics' primary objective.<sup>(1)</sup> This philosophy argues that human *happiness* as a question of adding up what was pleasurable is the paramount objective of classical economic thinking on economic life.

This *happiness* equation has had immense impact upon modern society. In short term planning, the ultimate goal of that human happiness is best served when a given input of labour produces as much output as possible. This conclusion in contemporary society has far reaching consequences. *Utilitarianism* is equated with a rise in the productivity of labour with an increase in happiness as self-evident truth. The basic premise here is that the *source* of happiness lies directly in the amount of goods and services produced and sold in the market place.

Classical economic thinking has partly had a commendable influence on the society of today. It suggests that we must follow the market whenever it leads us, because the market will act as our guide to a better future for all. This then is accompanied by the notion that in order that the market is to succeed, we must permit the market to do its work with as little disruption and political interference as possible.<sup>(2)</sup> In this context, supporters of the market economy see the market as the key to a better and more prosperous future. For classical economists, the market is an institution by which human progress in technology and economics become visible. For them, the market offers a way of measuring human progress (using prices and quantities and spreading progress around the globe). Smith

argued that the market itself, led as if by an invisible hand ensured the participation of the poor in the expanding wealth.<sup>(3)</sup> It was from this conviction that the classical economics argued for the freedom of the market from government interference.

Operating free of government interference, classical economists is argued that the task of the market economy is to produce and distribute wealth. From the market economy's point of view, this wealth is produced by selling goods and services that people want to buy. It is further stated that the market economies are based on competition between private-owned producers of which each tries to be the most efficient in production and increasing wealth in society. Thus, the main focus remains to produce what consumers want and to do so quickly and cheaply.<sup>(4)</sup>

The market economy has replaced the *informal economy* or *household economics*, especially in low income countries. Duchrow and Guck argue that the market economy "is not as old as humankind, but was assigned to the *household economics*, which were embedded in cultural and social relations."<sup>(5)</sup> The point that Duchrow and Guck want to emphasis is that the market economy has lost its original social and cultural bearings and instead becomes "unethical" in its operational features.<sup>(6)</sup>

From anthropological evidence, the informal economy is culturally embedded (Kessing 1981). Household economics in its essence is meant to meet basic human needs. In contrast, the market economy and its essential goal was not for providing

the population's basic needs (food, shelter, water, clothing, etc), but concentrating on luxury goods such as television sets, expensive cars, perfumes, etc., which in reality means meeting endless and pursuit of unlimited *wants*. So much so that basic human needs in this way are not addressed at all. Below, I briefly will look at poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment in relation to the present-day economic practice.

#### (A) POVERTY

*... the trio economic impasse: poverty, environmental degradation and structural unemployment have origin in a massive social calculation drafted by the science of economics and presented to society for implementation and when put into economic practice, the calculation appears to lead to a perpetuation of poverty, the ruin of nature, and a rise in structural unemployment <sup>(7)</sup>*

This section argues that the present classical and neoclassical economic thinking are responsible for poverty, deterioration of the natural environment, and structural unemployment. I also will look at the impact of *structural adjustment programmes* on these issues.

##### *(i) Rising production, falling income*

During the 1960's and 1970's there was significant growth in production in the developing countries, averaging 3.3 per cent per capita in the 1960's and 2.4 per

cent in the 1970's respectively. During this period, production increased both in agriculture and in the various industrial sectors.

But after 1980, a sharp *fall* in developing countries in income trend was associated with production growth drastically changed. The 1992 *World Development Report* of the World Bank, reports that income dropped each year between 1980 and 1990 an average of 0.9 per cent in sub-Sahara Africa.<sup>(8)</sup> David Reed also argues that a major reason of sharply falling income in developing countries, is attributed to high interest rates, declining commodity prices and internal and external imbalances in the industrialized countries which had created adverse economic conditions for the developing countries (by the beginning of 1980s).<sup>(9)</sup> Julio de Santa Ana gives us useful data on Africa. In Africa, the number of those who live below poverty level is constantly increasing. In 1978, nearly 70 % of Liberia 's 1.6 million people, survive on an income of \$ 70 a year.<sup>(10)</sup> About 80%, of the population are illiterate.<sup>(11)</sup> According to de Santa Ana, the poor are poor because they have a weak link with the organized marked economy. They own fewer productive assets and to make things worse, they are less educated. Thus poverty, de Santa Ana argues, seems to be the consequence of a process within the operation of an economic system in which a few economically powerful people wield political power to control institutions for their own private profit.<sup>(12)</sup> This situation is extremely complex for it involves unjust wealth distribution at both global and local levels.

At global level, unjust trade mechanisms seem to be a cause of falling income in

the countries of the South. *Unfairness* in the international trade system has been a debate in relation to international trade forums such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD I, II, III, etc). There is a serious question as to whether GATT holds any real benefit whatsoever for the South.

On the other side of the coin, there is mismanagement of national wealth. Walter Rodney, suggests that about above 60 per cent of internal revenues of countries of the South, go to paying for civil servants and government leaders. <sup>(13)</sup> This has been so because civil servants and government leaders 'imitate' their counter-parts in the North. The combination of the two factors, in strongest terms, has far reaching economic repercussions in the South.

*(ii) Production and widening income gaps*

In most developing countries, production growth has not benefitted all inhabitants: by and large the rich have become richer and the poor have become poorer. According to the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report 1992*, between 1960 and 1989 the countries with the richest 20 per cent of world population increased their share of the global gross national product from 70.2 per cent to 82.7 per cent. By 1990, the richest were getting 60 times more. While the poorest countries which comprise about 60 per cent receive only 1.4 per cent. <sup>(14)</sup> From this picture we see that the richest countries all of which are in the North and which comprises only about 20 per cent of world population receive 82.7%. <sup>(15)</sup>

Goudzwaard and de Lange argue that not only are the incomes of the inhabitants of the world's poorest nations already extremely low, but these incomes are continually decreasing while the number poor people living in these countries increases. <sup>(18)</sup> These figures help to explain the emergence of a need: the increasing transformation of our international economic system.

The above picture alone is not enough. The entire picture of *poverty* especially in the South should also be viewed in terms of the structural adjustment programme which in Africa have become a bitter pill. In broader terms, structural adjustment policies as laid down by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund represent the Western capitalist conception of how markets and African economies should work. The question here is how far are these policies relevant to Africa's current situation? These policies have not contributed to poverty alleviation, but instead have contributed to economic dependency.

There are three areas which are conspicuous in this regard: economic dependency, economic suppression and conditionality. These areas involve prescriptive policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank towards the economic systems of those countries of the South that have accepted the structural adjustment.

### *(iii) Economic dependency*

Economies of the South are heavily depended on the North as a result of many factors such as colonialism and neocolonialism. During these processes many countries of the South were deeply integrated into the world capitalist system. This

system caused the disparities in distribution of material wealth at both national and international levels. This relationship between the South and the North is neatly described by Gunder Frank in his book on Capitalism and Underdevelopment that:-

*The capitalist contradictions and histor[y] of the capitalist system have generated underdevelopment in the peripheral satellites whose economic surplus was expropriated, while generating economic development in the metropolitan centres which appropriate that surplus* (17)

According to A. M. Mwanza, in Zambia, for instance; structural adjustment has failed to address and eradicate those problems they were expected to remove, but promoted a dependency syndrome, which in the final analysis has contributed to poverty, environmental degradation and structural unemployment.<sup>(18)</sup>

#### *(iv) Economic suppression*

Through structural adjustment programmes, no serious attempt is made to stimulate the conditions necessary for internally-generated and sustaining growth and development. As a result, in a number of cases the World Bank's sponsored reforms have been the sources of destruction of domestic industrial capacity. Mwanza argues that *home-grown programmes* in Sub-Sahara Africa were suppressed in favour of the foreign one. <sup>(19)</sup>

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) observes that the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank put too much emphasis on long-term economic growth and a macro-economic restructuring; but instead they should have addressed human potential internal institutions so that these may improve economic performance.<sup>(20)</sup>

It is generally felt in Africa that these institutions do not address the vital issues of how, for instance, the poor gain access to the markets. In other words, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank do not recognize that local community-based solutions work better for the poor than imported structural adjustments.

#### *(iv) Conditionality*

The issue of conditionality has brought a number of problems in national economic planning. This normally is imposed by the lending institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Adjustment loans are given in several instances conditional upon the timely fulfilment of pre-agreed policy targets.<sup>(21)</sup>

This includes, for example, conditions for a 20% currency devaluation, the bank formulate its own policy reform packages. These reform packages are always in the interests of the bank and not for the South. Economic problems that are caused by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are not difficult to find. These include the following:-

(1) Economic dependency as Frank observed, has led the Third World Countries to severe poverty and miseries.

(2) Home-grown industries are being suppressed, for instance, in Zambia.

(3) The problem of conditionality is implicated in the balance of power between North and South.

This situation has led Michael Redclift to conclude that the poor are actively feeding the rich. The South 'paid' the North about US\$ 14 billion within only two to three years (1981-84) through structural adjustment policies and profit remittances.<sup>(22)</sup> The result of all these have contributed to the vicious cycle of poverty in the South.

#### *(B) ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION*

A critical question that could be posed to neo-classical economic thinking is: to what extent has the economic system been able to incorporate environmental considerations within its governing paradigm? This is the question that I try to wrestle with in this section.

According David Pearce (1988), the environment is discerned as a *commodity* that should be exploited for the benefit of human beings. This means that wealth is transformed or produced from nature - from tilling the land, mining, or felling trees, etc. This is done irrespective of whether the process is sustainable or not.

In neoclassical economic thinking, nature and the environment fall outside the direct concern of economics.<sup>(23)</sup> According to neoclassical thinking, economic analysis takes into account the state of the environment only after economic

agents add environmental protection to the list of economic needs and register this by spending scarce means on it.<sup>(24)</sup> The neoclassical defence of this practice is that changes in the natural environment belong to the field of biology and not economics.<sup>(25)</sup> This understanding as far as the environment is concerned puts a stress on the environment itself. For Pearce, economics is traditionally interested in values that can be expressed through consumer preferences. This in his opinion, can be expressed well in cost-benefit analysis. Pearce defines cost-benefit analysis in terms of present society's preferences.<sup>(26)</sup> These are consumers' preferences which are conditioned by endless wants. These preferences according to Pearce, do not include future generations, because, in his opinion, their preferences are not known.<sup>(27)</sup>

In this context, Pearce reiterates that the pursuit of better living standards is captured in the concept of economic growth, and that it would be unwise to fail to acknowledge this fact.<sup>(28)</sup> In other words, in neo-classical economists' point of view, environmental issues should be treated within the economic discourse. The environment is viewed as one of the commodities, therefore it needs to be integrated within the grand economic policy. For Pearce the cost-benefit analysis plays a significant role in what he call a 'consumer's preferences'<sup>(29)</sup>

Turning to the South, it can be observed that structural adjustment programme is another contributor to environmental degradation. David Reed argues strongly that:-

*one unquestionable shortcoming of policy lending sponsored by*

*multilateral financial institutions and individual governments during the 1980s is its failure to address environmental deterioration that, when coupled with burgeoning populations, threatened to erode improvements in economic performance brought about the restructuring process* <sup>(30)</sup>

A major reason for this failure is the neo-classical economic thinking of the World Bank and other multilateral financial institutions, that does not view the environment as a priority. Reed further argues, that the underlying theme of reasoning rests on the assumption that economic growth or macroeconomic policy would correct the environmental degradation.<sup>(31)</sup> But this has never happened. If cost-benefit analysis is based on what society wants, then this also may imply that vulnerable areas such the natural environment may not be accorded better treatment because in the view of neoclassical economics the natural environment is not related to economics. This is the weakness of neoclassical economic thinking in relation to the natural environment. This essentially means that in economic development practice, the natural environment is ignored.

### ***(C) UNEMPLOYMENT***

In this section we are concerned with one of those prime symptoms of the present economic failure, namely *unemployment*. Klaus Nürnberger defines unemployment such that it means that there are people whose initiative, expertise, experience and labour cannot be accommodated anywhere along the line from the resource base to consumption.<sup>(32)</sup> The root-cause of unemployment, especially in the South, lies

in a problem that Nurnberger neatly formulates as follows:-

*The industrial and commercial potency of the centre grows exponentially while its population remains constant or declines. In contrast, the population of the periphery grows exponentially while its industrial and commercial potential stagnates or declines* <sup>(33)</sup>

With the exception of high demographic rates in the South, the stagnation and decline of economies of the South are part of the economic relationships between the North and South. One of the effects of this relationship is the high rate of unemployment in the periphery, the South.

Current economic practice tends to push human labour from the centre to the periphery. Labour is seen as nothing more than one of several productive factors. It is argued that without a market value, work means nothing.<sup>(34)</sup> According to this view labour in the full sense of the word, must be registered in a market. The labour outside the market is nothing, but real work is therefore paid work. Without a price tag, neo-classical economic thinking cannot distinguish labour from activities done in one's leisure time. In previous sections, I have tried to assemble the basic elements and ingredients - on the economic reality that neo-classical economic thinking cannot actually help us with these economic dilemmas without being renewed. Neo-classical economic practice that operates in terms of the market which is conditioned by consumers' preferences by and large misses the point that would effectively address the problems of poverty, environmental

degradation and unemployment in the South. It is within this context that I wish to proceed with the social thought of the Ecumenical Movement and to assess its contribution to the conceptual framework of this debate.

## 1.2 ECUMENICAL SOCIAL THOUGHT: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

*A responsible society is where freedom is the freedom of men and women 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* <sup>(35)</sup>

The ecumenical debate on economic life entered a new phase when the World Council of Churches embarked on the debate in 1948. The debate mainly concentrated on the central ethical issues in defence of human freedom against the domination of the State and the vast concentrations of power in both capitalist and communist systems. The WCC Amsterdam assembly in 1948, following the Oxford Conference in 1937, was vocal in rejecting the ideologies of both communism and laissez-faire capitalism. Churches were advised to seek to draw people away from the false assumptions in these ideologies. The World Council of Churches made its point clear by saying that:-

*Each [ideology] has made promises that it could not redeem. Communist ideology puts emphasis upon economic justice and promises that freedom will come automatically after the completion of the revolution. Capitalism puts the emphasis upon freedom, and promises that justice will follow as a by-product of the free enterprise: that too, is an ideology which has proved false.* <sup>(36)</sup>

It is the responsibility of Christians to seek new, creative solutions which forestall the destructivity of injustice.

In response to the disorder of the world, the Amsterdam Assembly coined the concept *responsible society* which according to Raiser Konrad, 'served as the basic framework for ecumenical social thought for almost two decades.'<sup>(37)</sup> This concept refers to the idea that all who hold political authority and economic power should be responsible to God and to the people whose welfare is affected by it as it was indicated above.<sup>(38)</sup> In his essay entitled: *The Church and Disorder of Society 1948*, Joseph Holdsworth Oldham, arrived at three principles that in his views were important in the application of the *responsible society* concept as follows:-

- (1) to discover men and women who can best help the churches understand the nature of the crisis of society
- (2) to arrive, with the help of these men and women, at a definition of the fundamental issues with which the churches should be concerned in order to render their witness to society and;
- (3) to promote an interdisciplinary approach to these issues and particularly a dialogue on regular basis between theologians and lay people.<sup>(39)</sup>

What does the World Council of Churches want to achieve by the concept of a *responsible society*? According to Raiser, *responsible society* becomes significant on three distinct levels. Firstly, it presents a methodological approach to the issues of social ethics of means between natural law stance and a biblical christological approach. For Raiser, Willem Visser't Hooft, who introduced the concept of

christocentricism in the concept of responsible society was deeply aware of the christocentric implications of the world-embracing nature of the Christian faith.<sup>(40)</sup> Christocentricism provided guidance in matters such as the unity of the church, economic and political questions. Secondly, the concept of the *responsible society* reflects the changes which have taken place in social and economic life and which have rendered the choice between *laissez-faire* and communism unacceptable. Both were seen as challenging basic responsible freedom and a just distribution of wealth. Thirdly, *responsible society* was an attempt to keep in balance the demands for freedom and justice within the framework of democratic order, based on the recognition of essential human rights.<sup>(41)</sup>

The World Council of Churches' Assembly in Nairobi in 1975 asked for a search for a *Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society (JPSS)*. In a sense the concept of a *Just, Participatory Sustainable Society* was the successor to the concept of responsible society. The concept of sustainability was new to the concerns of the Ecumenical Movement. It directed the ecumenical debate on economic questions in their political and cultural contexts.

The central committee of the World Council of Churches appointed an advisory committee on the search for a just, participatory and sustainable society in 1977. In wrestling with issues of freedom and justice in society, the central question was: how can the churches arrive at a common understanding of historical reality and become significantly involved in this struggle through their lives and action, their witness, worship and service? It was recognized that the concept of *Just,*

*Participatory, Sustainable Society* was not sharpened enough to equip churches around the globe to cope with economic and political questions. The World Council of Churches' Assembly in Vancouver in 1983 introduced another paradigm-shift. It was stated that:-

*we need ethical guidelines for a participatory society which will be both ecologically responsible and economically just and can effectively struggle with powers which threaten life and endanger our future* .(42)

Based on this conviction, the Assembly asked the World Council of Churches to engage its member churches in a conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant) to *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC)*. Issues related to economics and ecology were high on the agenda of the World Convocation in Seoul in 1990. One of the adopted covenants was a call for a just economic order on local, national, regional and international levels, for all people, and for liberation from the bondage of foreign debt that affects the lives of hundreds of millions of people. This includes the realization that an economic system should exist for humankind and not the other way around.

The implications of the three perspectives are as follows: *Responsible Society* demanded responsibility from men and women to God and to the people they serve in political and economic life; *Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society* also introduced questions of sustainability on economic and political life and thirdly, *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* married the concerns of ecology,

development and the need for economic justice for all.

These three theological perspectives impacted on economic debate in the Ecumenical Movement. In the next section I try to outline some basic problems of the social thought of the Ecumenical Movement.

*(i) The Social Thought of the Ecumenical Movement: The Current Predicament*

Today, the Christian social responsibility which served the Ecumenical Movement in the 1970's and 1980's appears less and less relevant in the present world situation. Up to the present time attempts to identify with the poor for economic justice, especially in the Third World countries have not produced the hoped-for results. Three major concerns exist in the pursuit of an ecumenical theology for a just economy. The first is that *ecumenical thinking* about economic life that emphasized building a 'new world economic order' based on the above three theological perspectives has failed. This impasse has been observed by Paul Abercht, et.al., when they says that:-

*We are convinced that ecumenical social thought is at a moment of great challenge and opportunity. It is also, we believe, in a state of some confusion and disarray.*<sup>(43)</sup>

According to Abercht et.al ., this impasse is only addressed properly if the churches in the World Council of Churches review their methods in which they respond to economic questions in their social and political contexts.

The second is the *ideological foundations* of the social thought of the Ecumenical Movement. Ecumenical social thought was defined in terms of two ideologies: capitalism and communism. Some thought that the concept of *responsible society* meant the destruction of either capitalism or communism. Others thought the concept signified a middle axiom, a third road between the two major economic systems. This ideological conflict has thrown the social thought of the Ecumenical Movement into confusion. The third impasse is about the *theological insight* of the concept. In recent years, the World Council of Churches was not able to articulate a theological foundation that would enrich ecumenical social thought. This lack of a theological foundation was recognized at Canberra in 1991.

The World Council of Churches' Assembly at Canberra in 1991 recognized a lack of substantial theological input coupled with a shortage of experienced leadership. The death of ecumenical memory, and the tyranny of time-meant that the documents commended to the churches for study and appropriate action are of less than the highest quality expected.<sup>(44)</sup>

This problem could be attributed to a lack of theological insight especially at local levels. Ecumenical social thought is differently understood in different social, theological and cultural contexts around the globe. Thus, through dialogue, diverse approaches to economic questions are suggested by the World Council of Churches. These approaches range from *the natural laws* of God's creation as criteria for human responsibility, to a *sacramental* approach to God's creation and human treatment of natural world; others emphasise an *incarnational* model,

especially the death of Jesus as a centre of critical reflection between the will of God and the wills of fallible human beings.<sup>(45)</sup>

Despite the fact that churches are confronted by ecumenical social thought, there is an urgent need that Christians should work for a better human society.

Dialogue should be promoted further because it is an effective method in the engagement in the economic debate in the Ecumenical Movement. I therefore in brief examine its major theological and social importance.

*(ii) The Social Thought of the Ecumenical Movement: The Imperative of Dialogue*

*The oldest and most widespread ecumenical method is dialogue...the goal of this method was to take stock, soberly and honestly in the hope that the area of common ground gradually increases* <sup>(46)</sup>

In this method, de Santa Ana argues, nobody is left out: participation is by dialogue, documents of the ecumenical meetings express a collection of different view points which cannot clearly be reduced to one single view point. It is argued that this approach provides a basis for a wider dialogue with church representatives. This working dialogue, believes de Santa Ana states that it:-

*ensures in interdisciplinary and intercultural focus, permitting*

*an alternative between various perspectives without favouring any one in particular* <sup>(47)</sup>

It is generally agreed that the ecumenical tradition in social ethics has in the past emphasised open dialogue, study and encounter between different theological and sociological perspectives.

*The Comparative method* is seen as the instrumental understanding of dialogue. The effectiveness of this method was questioned. Raiser argues that this method offers no adequate basis for the hoped-for communion, for there are limitations which hamper this method and prevent it reaching its hoped-for results.<sup>(48)</sup> *The Christological method* was seen as a determinative reality of all theological and social goals. In the light of the gospel of Jesus, dialogue by the churches with one another was understood to be an essential feature of their common journey. This method, too, to a great extent was successful, though doctrinal issues hampered a proper dialogue.

In order that the impasse be properly addressed, Abrecht et al. proposed that the WCC should embark on the agenda of involving its member churches in counsel, dialogue and deliberations for the sake of more faithful witness and service to the whole world.<sup>(49)</sup>

In the view of Abrecht et al. *mutual respect* should be a basis for such dialogue. The christological method is further endorsed here as part of the dialogue on the

basis of *inter alia*:-

*Willingness* to listen to one another, seeking an understanding about others's beliefs, in different cultural and social contexts.

*Earnest* effort to deliberate about and to test differences in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ until they are resolved or until they are seen as different aspects or views of the same truth.<sup>(50)</sup>

The main issue here is to see that churches should respond to the challenges of the modern world including economic questions. In this light Abrecht et al. argue that honesty and modesty are important in the churches' relations to the world as in their relations with one another.<sup>(51)</sup> Dialogue therefore is seen here as an effective method for the churches to find diverse approaches to tackle poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment. In the next section an attempt is made to assess the responses of the Ecumenical Movement to the particular threefold problems, poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment.

### 1.3 ECUMENICAL RESPONSES

#### *(i) Poverty*

The Ecumenical Movement argues that *poverty* is a result of what it calls a systematic, negative phenomenon that is the result of bad administration of the economic system. An ecumenical perspective on poverty is not limited to an exclusively economic understanding, but on a holistic understanding of the entire human life. Marginalization from the political process, denial of opportunities for education and for employment, denial of freedom of speech and assembly, etc., are seen as an integral part of poverty.

In this view, Julio de Santa Ana's influential book, Towards a Church of the Poor (1979) defines poverty as "unfulfillment of basic human needs required to adequately sustain life free of disease, misery, hunger, pain, suffering, hopelessness and fear, on the one hand, and the condition of defenceless people suffering from structural injustices on the other hand."<sup>(52)</sup> Thus, poverty in the Ecumenical Movement is understood as primarily systemic, produced by inadequate political, economic and social organization. Today's global interdependence of these systems makes poverty dependent upon a constellation of forces which transcend national boundaries and policies.<sup>(53)</sup> Poverty is therefore perceived as both *absolute* and *relative*. In the ecumenical context poverty is *absolute* because there are minimum conditions essential for sustaining life itself. It is also *relative* because poverty is partially defined by what levels of existence are possible in a particular society. The ecumenical vision of the roots and

character of poverty has led to significant alternation in understanding the role of the churches in overcoming poverty. There are three areas that are proposed.

Firstly, poverty comes into being as a negative consequence of a humanly divided social system which needs improvement. The Church's task is to bring a *prophetic judgement* and constructive presence to the reform of social structures. The Church's task is to respond to the most egregious and destructive consequences of this poverty through the model of resource sharing.

Secondly, poverty comes into being as a result of unpredictable and unfortunate forces in one's environment. A dialectical relationship exists between poverty and environmental degradation, suggesting that there are unsustainable economic projects that in most cases lead to the deterioration of the environment. Sustainable political and economic forces at local level are suggested.

Thirdly, it is the bankruptcy of moral character that failed to recognize the presence of the poor. The natural human desire for more material wealth blinds us to recognize the poor in our midst. There should be renewed societal and economic order so that each person feels he/she has the right to full life and freedom in her/his community.

*(ii) Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC)*

The World Council of Churches in 1981, in its report, *Before It's Too Late*, was not only concerned with global security matters, but also concerned with the

destruction of human life, the destruction of vast resources, both of wealth and scientific effort, which are being diverted from basic human needs to armaments.<sup>(54)</sup> The World Council of Churches' General Assembly in 1983 urged churches to respond to forces that threaten peace and justice in their constituencies. The statement on peace and justice described succinctly the situation to which the churches are being called to respond:-

*Humanity is now living in dark shadows of an arms race more intense and a system of injustice more widespread, more dangerous and more costly than the world ever known. Never before has the human race been as close as it is now to total self-destruction. Never before have so many lived in the grip of deprivation and oppression.* <sup>(55)</sup>

The Ecumenical Movement has realized that there is a danger if the Christian community does not respond to the threat to life on earth. But how should it respond to the sophisticated issues involved in the debate on environmental and ecological questions? It is motivated by this concern that the World Council of Churches has embarked on the programme of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation in order to respond to the ecological crisis. The general assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver in 1983, invited the Ecumenical Movement to:-

*engage its member churches in a conciliar process of*

*mutual commitment (covenant) to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of creation to be a priority in the World Council Programmes.* <sup>(56)</sup>

It is argued here that development and environment are not separate entities, but are interrelated and interdependent facets of a complex and comprehensive crisis that society is now facing. It is equally important to emphasise the fact that Justice and Peace programmes should represent this reality. It was clearly stated at Vancouver that:-

*On the one hand, as a vision towards which we work and on the other, as three entry points into a common struggle in these areas. The addition of the term "integrity of creation" for an understanding of the biblical vision of peace with justice was particularly useful, the term gave a new prominence to the doctrine of creation in ecumenical discussions and the need to re-affirm our Trinitarian faith, beginning with God as Creator and therefore as Liberator and Sustainer.* <sup>(57)</sup>

Central to this process, is an insistence on the inter-relationship between the integrity of creation and issues of justice and peace. The World Council of Churches participated in the commission on Sustainable Development, as a continuation of the World Council of Churches' efforts and commitment to the conciliar process of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. The Canberra Assembly in 1991, with its theme: Come Holy Spirit - Renew the Whole Creation,

called for a change from the political economy of death to a political economy of life, a change from anthropocentrism to life-centredness. One of the most crucial agendas for our generation is to learn how to live with the earth, promoting harmony, sustainability and diversity.

The World Council of Churches' General Assembly in Canberra, in 1991, called for Christians to seek a sustainable future in the midst of ecological destruction and economic injustice. Therefore, the WCC is fully engaged in responding to issues raised by the Earth Summit. Together with governments and non-governmental groups around the globe, the WCC now takes this 'next step' to monitor and address issues raised in the United Nations Commission on a Sustainable Society.

At the Earth Summit at Rio, in June 1992, a major ecumenical gathering convened by the WCC issued a letter to the churches which underscored the urgency of the situation posed by the deterioration of earth's capacity to sustain life. At this occasion an attempt was made to deepen commitments by member churches and ecumenical organizations to address in their own context the challenges of building a sustainable future.

### *(iii) Unemployment*

The history of the churches's concern with *unemployment* is long one. It was at this stage that the Ecumenical Movement criticized the neoclassical political economic practice. This critique could well be discerned for instance in the report of the first Universal Christian Conference on life and work, held in Stockholm in

1925. We find sentences as follow:-

*Labour is not a commodity, but the contribution of person to the economic process. The church must labour for and forward all measures which are clearly productive of personal value. The test which it should apply to policies and programmes is not that of economic efficiency but of personal welfare.* <sup>(58)</sup>

According to the Ecumenical Movement's thinking, labour, employment and unemployment are of concern for Christians. Work and employment are for meeting basic human needs for a household. Therefore the increasing denial of all of these by unemployment and pauperization is a threat to the fullness of life. This concern is an integral part of the growing importance that churches attach to the world of labour and socio-economic development.

In many countries economic planning does little to reduce this uncertainty about the future of employment because it has very short-run objectives, especially when it is governed by *laissez-faire*, liberal market doctrines. The issue of unemployment has been on the agenda of the modern Ecumenical Movement since its inception. The Anglican Conference on Christian Politics, Economic and Citizenship (COPEC), which was held in England in 1924, argued that *inter alia*:-

(1) Unemployment is morally unacceptable and said that the cause should be removed.

(2) Extreme poverty and richness are unacceptable and a Christian social order requires a just division of income

This message of the conference was sent to the workers in the world in the name of the *Son of Man*, the carpenter of Nazareth.

For the Ecumenical Movement poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment are only properly addressed when the international economic system is renewed. Churches should prepare Christians to respond effectively on these issues.

## 1.4 THE ECUMENICAL AGENDA FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC LIFE

### *(i) Sustainability*

The Ecumenical Movement promotes sustainability, a new value system and self-reliance on its agenda for future economic life.

The definition of *sustainability* is elusive. Some take it to mean old-fashioned economic growth, qualified by a new environmental cautions. Others understand it to require a radical redirection of the world's economic process. In the understanding of the World Council of Churches, *a sustainable society leaves the world as rich in resources and opportunities as was the world inherited from the past.*<sup>(59)</sup> This calls for sustainable consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources on the basis of sustainability. There is a need for corrective processes, provided in models such as *Our Common Future 1987 and Earth Summit: Agenda 21*, 1992. To a great extent these models have great impact on ecumenical thinking about development and the environment. They recognize that the value of elements such as love, caring, sharing, are part of *culture* and should contribute to the idea of sustainability.

### *(ii) A new concept of value*

The World Council of Churches is questioning how economics is run on the basis of classical and neoclassical economic thinking. What is needed in its understanding is a new concept of value that is based not on money and exchange but rather on a new value system and proper use of resources. Points of critique

include a lack of economic democracy, social injustice and the stimulation of human greed.<sup>(60)</sup> It is proposed here that *price* is only one specific way of looking at value that is the value in exchange. As we have seen earlier on, on discussions on the market economy, price generally is based on *demand* and *supply* <sup>(61)</sup> which are being calculated on a very narrow short-term basis. It was observed at Canberra 1991 that *economic growth* for growth's sake is the strategy of the cancer cell. <sup>(62)</sup>

When Jesus said he came that we might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10), he was not speaking of economic growth. He was referring to a new concept of value system that focuses on *meeting basic needs* requirements such as food, clean water, shelter, energy, the absence of which millions of people around the globe presently endure.

### *(iii) Self-Reliance*

In response to the structural adjustment programmes, the World Council of Churches proposes the following:-

Firstly, effective mobilization of domestic resources to reduce the required levels of imports should be introduced.

Secondly, domestic consumption and production techniques must be made less imports-intensive and export earnings must be maximized through self-reliant policies. In the view of the World Council of Churches, self-reliant programmes should be based on effective control by people over their country's natural resources. Production should be increased. The World Council of Churches

proposes that self-reliance should not focus in response to external demand but identify and act on internal potentialities to fulfil people's most urgent basic needs.<sup>(63)</sup> The international economic system should be guided by a moral and ethical order so that this would address the fulfilment of basic human and spiritual needs, justice and sustainability. This should include a vision of a *Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society*.

This vision should start with the gospel message in which Christians are commanded to work in the light of the assumption that human beings, both individually and corporately, are capable to act as stewards of creation, have responsibility to God to contribute to the struggle for more justice in society; for naming and struggling against the principalities and powers which in varying institutional manifestations confront every human society.<sup>(64)</sup>

This assumption in the view of the World Council of Churches puts people first, for people should be at the centre of all economic efforts. It is the task of the ecumenical community to work for the creation of *Just, Participatory and Sustainable* future.

#### *(iv) Conclusions*

This chapter argued that unless neoclassical economic thinking is drastically changed, poverty, environmental deterioration and unemployment will continue unabated at both global and local levels. In order that there is a balance between

the global and local levels, a critical question should be posed: how can one at the global and local levels, plan and implement economic policies which are genuinely contributing to alleviating poverty at local levels when the effects of international development systematically marginalize them? The point is that there are contradictions between local and international development interests. These contradictions need to be addressed in terms of the sustainability of international political economy.

These are difficult issues. The Ecumenical Movement both at international and local levels can only succeed when it joins those who possess power in society. Above all, one needs to recognize the fact that these dilemmas are political issues which require a political will and action to correct them. A detailed analysis of a "new economic paradigm" is discussed in chapter 5.

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NOTES

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(5) Ulrich Duchrow and Martin Guck. Economic Alternatives: Responding to Fifty Years of the Dominant Financial Systems Established at Bretton Woods, 1995, p.3

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- (9) David Reed (ed) Structural Adjustment and the Environment, 1992, p.2
- (10) Julio de Santa Ana (ed) Towards a Church of the Poor, 1979, p.24
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- (23) Ibid. p. 37
- (24) Ibid.
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- (26) David Pearce, Cost-Benefit Analysis. 1988, p.9-10
- (27) Ibid.
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- (48) Raiser, op.cit.p.14
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- (50) Ibid.
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- (52) Julio de Santa Ana. Towards a Church of the Poor, 1979, p.24)
- (53) Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, 1991, p.807
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- (60) WCC: Signs of the Spirit 1991. p.62-3
- (61) Bruce S. defines supply and demand as follows: demand is defined as a scheduled which shows the varies amounts of a product which consumers are willing and able to purchase at each specified price in a series of possible prince during some specified of time. Supply is defined as a schedule which shows the various amounts of a product which a producer is willing and able to produce and make available for sale in the market place, Economics 1990. pp.49-58.

(62) Signs of the Spirit, op.cit p.62.

(63) Ibid.

(64) Ibid.

## CHAPTER 2: ENVIRONMENTALISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NAMIBIA

### *Introduction*

Chapter 1 focused on classical and neoclassical economic thinking. It was argued that the current economic system is responsible for poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment in our contemporary society. Chapters 2 and 3 comprise case studies focusing on Namibia. My methodological assumption in presenting the case studies is that the cases represent general categories of the social world; this claim implies that any identified case comes from a knowable universe from which a sample might be drawn.<sup>(1)</sup> This means that, for instance, the problems of poverty, environmental degradation or unemployment in Namibia might be similar in other neighbouring countries. What I try to do in these two chapters, therefore, is to:-

- (1) Assess the Namibian government's general approach to problems of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment (chapter 2)
- (2) Investigate the development policy of the Council of Churches in Namibia (chapter 3).

One could further argue that this is a 'contrast exercise' between the State of Namibia and a religious institution, but my emphasis is not on comparisons. I personally have an interest in both institutions, being a pastor in the church I need to understand development approaches pursued by all such institutions.

It is in this context that I have tried to assess relevant empirical data from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. These are policy documents that deal with development and environmental questions. Among the documents used are:-

(1) Land-Use Planning: Towards Sustainable Development. This document deals with policy matters on (a) communal State land (b) Private by owned communal farmland (c) Proclaimed State Land.

(2) Wildlife Management, Utilization and Tourism in Communal Areas.

(3) Namibia's Green Plan. It basically deals with Environment and Development.

I also have conducted semi-structured interviews. I am particularly interested in the reintegration of former combatants and returnees in the Namibian society. I have therefore conducted fieldwork on the matter to measure qualitatively how issues such as poverty and unemployment are perceived by disadvantaged social groups such as former combatants and returnees. The purpose of the interviews is to gain some additional insight as to how local people view the issues at stake: poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment.

It was earlier on argued that development and environment should be treated as one single entity. We proceed with this understanding that development and environment should not be separated in any economic development. With this understanding, one could acknowledge that *sustainable development* would be a viable presuppositional paradigm for holistic development. This argument is closely related to the idea that the environmental crisis needs to be addressed both at

international and national levels.

## 2.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: PARADIGM-SHIFT

If one talks of sustainable development then it implies that there is also unsustainable development. *Development* is a term full of different meanings. There is no consensus as to its meaning. Therefore, what constitutes this term depends on what social goals are being propagated by the influence of development agency in government. For David Pearce et.al., development include the following assumptions:-

- increase in economic growth
- access to resources
- a 'fairer' distribution of income <sup>(2)</sup>

*Sustainable* development (a full treatment of the model is discussed in chapter 5) refers to a set of minimum conditions for development to be sustainable, the conditions based on the requirement that the natural capital stock should not decrease over time.<sup>(3)</sup> The natural capital stock refers to all environmental and natural resource assets, for example, wild animals, quality of soil, natural vegetation, ground-water, etc. Once capital stock decreases, economic development is no longer sustainable. This chapter tries to show this general understanding with reference to the local context of Namibia.

In the first part, I will try to give background data (population, income distribution, economic policy) of the political and economic life in Namibia. This data is useful when poverty, environmentalism and unemployment in Namibia are discussed.

*(i) Population*

Namibia's 1.4 million people live in a vast land of 822.144 km<sup>2</sup>. It is generally felt that Namibia is at the brink of population explosion.<sup>(4)</sup> The population rate in Namibia is increasing by 3 per cent per annum. The impact of potential growth strategies on the environment and development is surely an issue for research and concern. But this point is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Real GDP is estimated to have increased by 0.4 per cent in 1990, 3.8 per cent in 1991 and 3.5 per cent in 1992, which is slightly above the population growth. The strongest production increase has taken place in fishing and fish processing as a result of gradually increasing fish quotas.<sup>(5)</sup> But the population is also growing, Windhoek's population alone has grown from 147, 056 in 1991, was expected to reach 200,070 by the end of 1994.<sup>(6)</sup> This high rate in population growth in Namibia is mostly attributed to high rates of teenage pregnancies especially after independence. This indicates to us that the resource-demand ratio in the next five years will be higher than that sustainable resources can supply.

*(ii) Income Distribution*

Income distribution in Namibia reflects the history of inequality in the country. There are extreme differences in living conditions among the Namibian people. According to the 1990 statistics, it was reported that 5 per cent of the population earns more than 70 per cent of the country's national income.<sup>(7)</sup> An example is Mr Francois Uys, the managing director of TransNamib, who is said to earn approximately N\$ 26 000 per month. He represents the privileged social group that

benefitted from the apartheid legacy in Namibia.

On the other hand the poorest 55 per cent earns only 3 per cent <sup>(8)</sup> There are clear-cut differences in income distribution between the whites who are less than 5 per cent of population and the over 95 per cent of blacks. Blacks are relatively poor while the whites continue to enjoy the affluence of the country. After independence in 1990, some black elites joined the system. This elite comprises about 1 per cent of the population.

In 1991, the World Bank estimated per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP., a measurement that is used to measure the quantity of total output produced by a nation's economy over a period of one year) of Namibia as being some US\$ 1200. The top 5 per cent of the population has a per capita GDP of US\$ 16, 500, while the remaining 95 per cent of the population has an estimated per capita GDP less than US\$ 365. This marks considerable inequality in distribution of wealth in Namibia. The majority of the population lives in conditions barely above subsistence levels.<sup>(9)</sup>

### *(iii) Economic Policy*

Namibia pursues a mixed economic policy. This means that the government has a share in the economic planning and distribution of national wealth on an equitable basis. The private sector has its share in production and pursues a competitive free-market economy.

The broader nation of development objectives are set out in a general development policy, the *National Development Planning (NDP1)*, which was prepared for a donors' conference in November 1995, in Geneva.

The general perspective of this development policy document, one could argue, is *top-bottom approach*: the entire exercise was prepared from Windhoek and at a later stage was transmitted to the 13 regions of Namibia for comment. There was no full participation by and input from local communities in the National Development Planning (NDP1). The general purpose, however, is that the policy makes an initial contribution towards the long term objectives of creating an effective system of national development planning which fully involves both regional and local governments.<sup>(10)</sup> The *National Development Plan (NDP1)* focuses on the following four areas:-

(1) Reviving and sustaining economic growth. Under this priority, economic interventions are proposed in terms of broader macroeconomic approaches on, for instance, labour-intensive growth and investment in the human capital of the poor. This practice focuses on identifying and designing policies that encourage income-earning opportunities. These include the promotion of the *informal sector*.<sup>(11)</sup> The most remarkable feature of Namibia's small business sector is its exceptionally small size in comparison to other African Countries.

*The typical 'African market place' does not exist in Namibia.*

*The weakness of the informal sector in Namibia can be partly contributed to the low population density in most areas, to a*

*significant extent, however, it has its origin also in the previous apartheid policies aimed at securing the supply of cheap labour for the white-dominated formal sector. The then policies also prohibited blacks from pursuing other employment and entrepreneurship* <sup>(12)</sup>

The informal sector in Namibia is very small in comparison with other African countries. It is supposed to involve somewhere between 30 000 and 60.000 people. But this is not the case. The total non-agricultural employment is estimated at 315 000 in Namibia.<sup>(13)</sup> Persons who are self-employed and workers in the informal sector lead to an informal sector share in formal sector between 10-20 per cent. In comparisons, shares in countries such as Kenya and Senegal are 48 and 40 per cent respectively.<sup>(14)</sup>

(2) Alleviating poverty within the agricultural sector is emphasised, especially in the rural areas. Under this objective the government intends to integrate the former People's Liberation Army (PLAN) into society.

(3) Reducing inequalities in income distribution. Inequalities in income distribution in Namibia are indeed skewed so that the upper class receives far more wealth than the lower classes as I tried to show above.

(4) Creating employment opportunities. Job opportunities in Namibia are scarce and if the *National Development Planning* (NDP1) focuses on this area, this exercise will

help alleviate poverty in Namibia on a long term basis.

These are broad objectives and are meant to be achieved within a framework of macroeconomic stability and sound environmental management. In Namibia, the government is the major employer. The government has adopted a strategy to encourage labour intensive economic growth so that it can absorb large number of workers and invest in the development of human resources amongst the poor, which is a step in the right direction. In turn I examine the issues of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment in Namibia. The purpose is to see how these burning issues are dealt with by the government. In chapter 3, I will discuss them in relationship with the Council of Churches in Namibia.

## 2.2 POVERTY

### *(i) Causes and Effects*

Namibia faces a serious problem of both relative poverty which, by definition, measures the standards of living of a particular society at a particular time (in Namibia there is a highly skewed distribution of income) and absolute poverty which, by definition, refers to people who do not have resources to physically maintain human life.<sup>(15)</sup>

Poverty in Namibia is usually explained in terms of political and socio-economic factors. The historical and political set-up of Namibia should be viewed as being inextricably linked to the South African political economy. One cannot talk of the present Namibian socio-economic system without a reference to the former apartheid rule in Namibia.

There are *apartheid policies* which were directly responsible for many of the present economic and social ills. Effects of such policies are today felt in Namibia. A good example in this regard is the 1964 *Odendaal Plan* that robbed the indigenous inhabitants of Namibia of their arable land. This commission assigned about 33.5 million hectares to 10 former Bantustans and 34,9 million hectares to whites.

The legacy of unfair distribution of land still occurs today in the form of what is called 'communal state land (former homelands) and private owned farmland

(former commercial farms). There is a need to correct this perspective.

*(ii) Land Redistribution*

Land redistribution in Namibia operates from the *willing-seller-willing buyer principle*. The advantaged white social group own from one to four commercial farms. The Land Act of 1991 demands that any farmer who is willing to sell his farm should do so. But there are few individual farmers who are willing to sell their additional farms to the government. This state of affairs suggests that it does not work in the interests of the disadvantaged social groups in Namibia but in the interests of the privileged commercial farmers.

The recommendations of the land conference in 1991 have not yet been finalized. People who need land are still waiting for land re-distribution to take place. If land cannot be re-distributed within the next two years, poverty and degradation of the environment are likely to reach a high peak, especially in the communal areas. The concentration of the population in former ethnic regions further poses a serious threat to the integrity of the environment and survival of the majority of the people.

The population pressure in communal areas has led to the following phenomena: overpopulation, over-grazing and depletion of natural resources. The majority of rural households are no longer able to sustain themselves purely on a subsistence economy. An additional source of income is urgently required. In this case, employment is seen as a key to success living.

*(iii) Land Reparation*

The Land Conference did recognize the fact that past injustices on the acquisition of land should be rectified. The text of the conference states that:-

*Before Namibia was colonized at the end of the nineteenth century, the land boundaries between Namibia communities were not precisely demarcated and shifted frequently. The claims of different communities will inevitably overlap. Thus the conference resolved: there was injustice concerning the acquisition of land in the past and something must be done about it as swiftly as practically possible.*

A resolution was adopted concerning the question of *ancestral rights* to land. These rights were taken away at this conference. This resolution is not in the interests of the victims of the past injustices. The text, thus, further states that:-

*given complexities in redressing ancestral land claims, restitution of such claims in full is impossible.*

Scrapping or taking away *ancestral rights* from local communities and individuals will have dangerous consequences as far as just land distribution is concerned. The conference has broken down the bargaining power of local communities.

The principal questions: if restitution is thrown away as impossible, what are the implications of the *willing-seller, willing-buyer principle*? Where does this principle lead us? We understand that reparation implies that:-

*The wrong deserving reparation could also those who have suffered indirectly, for example by the descendants of those originally dispossessed or by individual members of the community which no longer exists.*<sup>(16)</sup>

If we have this understanding, then, justice *ought* to be done in this respect. One would strongly argue that land ownership is culturally embedded. Normatively, no one has the right to take away one's cultural and social attachment to land. Those who are empowered to implement the Land Act of 1991, should work hard before victims of former apartheid laws suffer further.

Land provides the basis of existence for about 80 per cent in Namibia. It is only about 20 per cent that derive a living from working in the commercial sector. More than 60 per cent engage in subsistence farming.<sup>(17)</sup>

Most of the returnees (19 or 20) found access to land a problem. 8 of these thought that the land problem should be resolved jointly by the government and community leaders. 5 thought that it should be resolved by community leaders and 7 thought that it is a government's prerogative alone to address the problem. What is clear from this evidence is that access to land in Namibia is a problem especially for the disadvantaged social groups.

*Evi Omwenyo!* (land is life). *There can be no political, and economic solution to poverty if the land problem in Namibia is not tackled.* Land is particularly important

for those who have either lost it or were denied access to it through colonialism and resettlement.

### 2.3 ENVIRONMENTALISM IN NAMIBIA? A SOCIO-ECONOMIC ETHIC

Environment and Development are one entity, it was earlier on pointed out. Thus, mis-management of or violence against one aspect is harmful to the entire process. It is mistakenly taken for granted that the natural world out there is to be exploited. For many people, there is no apology for violence committed against the natural world. This anthropocentric attitude towards the environment has contributed to the environmental degradation at local level. This fact was recognized at the *Earth Summit* at Rio in 1992, when it was stated that:-

*Prevailing systems for decision-making in many countries tend to separate economic, social and environmental factors at the policy, planning and management levels, this influences the actions of all groups in society, [as well as] individuals and this has important implications for the efficiency and sustainability of development.*<sup>(18)</sup>

The concept of *environmentalism* is defined in the Dictionary of Human Geography (Johnson 1981) as "ideologies and practices which inform and flow from a concern with the environment". In other words, these ideas are constructed from the different opinions of many individuals. Political environmentalism perhaps stemmed from the works of Paul and Anne Ehrlich, who published their book on *Population, Resources and Environment* in 1970. This book was concerned with resource limitations, pollution of the air as well as economic and social issues that arise as a result of the depletion of natural resources. In this work economic growth was

severely criticized and Paul and Anne proposed a redistribution of resources from what they call the overdeveloped to the underdeveloped nations.<sup>(19)</sup>

There is a need for an ethic that restricts not only the behaviour of human beings among themselves but also their relationship with the environment: land, animals, trees and plants, air, water, etc.

*Environmentalism* in Namibia is limited. One could argue that there is not yet much discourse that one could term 'environmentalism' in Namibia. There is not yet that coherent and systematic set of ideas on the environment at an intellectual level. But the idea about protection and conservation of the natural world is building momentum. The state in particular is in the process of promoting an environmental awareness. Namibia is one of the few countries that has enshrined in its constitution a concern for the environment. Article 95 of the Namibia constitution specifically provides that:-

*The State shall promote and maintain the welfare of the people by adopting policies aimed at the maintenance of ecosystems, essential ecological progress and biological diversity of Namibia and utilization of living natural resources on a sustainable basis for the benefit of all Namibians, both present and future, in particular the government shall provide measure against the dumping of foreign and nuclear and toxic waste on the Namibian territory.*

The State on the basis of article 95 of the Namibian constitution, tries to formulate a number of 'perspectives' on environmental issues. The Namibia's *Environmental Assessment Policy* (a policy document) is one of the moves towards a Namibian environmentalism. The State promotes the idea of environmental awareness that is rooted in the ideology of the 'new' concept of sustainable development. This approach probably was influenced by the constitution of Namibia.

*(i) Natural Environment and Culture*

Many parts of Namibia, particularly the rural areas are faced with deforestation. This phenomenon has resulted from heavy pressure on the natural resources, especially from overgrazing and the over-exploitation of natural resources such as trees. Thus the government sees deforestation as one of Namibia's most critical environmental challenges.<sup>(20)</sup>

Looking at Namibia's natural environment, one immediately discerns that the process of degradation is indeed on the increase. One would argue that two basic factors were consciously or unconsciously responsible for this environmental degradation in Namibia. Firstly, the pressure of poverty on local people is heavy as a result of the over-exploitation of both renewable and non-renewable natural resources which takes place rapidly. Secondly, the Judeo-Christian tradition has had a tendency of elevating humankind and denigrating the natural environment contribute to the process of degradation of the environment <sup>(21)</sup>.

The question of the relationship between the natural environment and culture

comes to the surface here. The *Oshiwambo* (an ethnic language in Northern Namibia) word for natural environment is *omudhingoloko*, which literally means: surrounding. It denotes a meaning of the exclusion of the homestead. A homestead is viewed as sacred space while *omudhingoloko* is a defiled, wild and evil space. There are also other specific words such as *miihwa*, *mombuga*, which refer to bushes, forest, wilderness, etc. In the wilderness, and there are wild animals which are dangerous, evil spirits, etc. From this analogy, the whole relationship between the *Ovambo* culture and natural environment in recent years is understood anthropocentrically. This world view was confirmed by the interviews that I conducted on the relationships between nature and human beings.

I moreover asked questions such as: do you think that human beings can survive without the environment? The answer is adamant: impossible. This question begs further another question: if that is the case, what about the destruction and violence the natural world has sustained? To this question, there was no immediate answer. For some local people there is no other option but to over-utilize available natural resources. For others, no answer. In the end, this question becomes a dilemma that faces local people. The wish to conserve and protect the natural environment, but there are no other open options for survival. As a result, environmental degradation takes place in terms forms of energy such as (firewood), building material (cutting of tree, etc), over-hunting wild animals, etc.

Wildlife, especially in the former Ovamboland, in Northern Namibia, was completely wiped out in the 1960s. The government intends to enter into partnership with

local people in communal areas (as we shall see below) so that local communities also benefit from the wildlife in the country. In this context, in the questionnaires, I asked the following question: if the government organises that you (as a community) were to take care of the wildlife would you accept it? 20 per cent (6/20) said, they would not accept it. They felt that nobody would respect the wildlife. 40 per cent (8/20) said yes, they would accept a joint venture with the government. 40 per cent, were not sure. One could conclude that a fear exists that the wildlife would be endangered, for there is no harmony between the wildlife and local culture.

This fear of over-exploitation of natural resources at a conceptual level may be understood in terms of a general theory, known as the *common tragedy doctrine*. This theory was first expounded by Garret Hardin. Hardin argues that the natural environment is commonly owned, thus everybody has a share, small or big.<sup>(22)</sup>

According to Hardin there is a lack of understanding that resources are limited and finite. Hardin's article challenges that theme of common owned resources in any given social milieu. Hardin's theory works on the assumption that if one assumes that, for instance, a number of cattle at a given point in time eat grass at the same rate as grows, there is a steady state in the consumption and production of grass, but the additional of just one extra cow will inevitably produce diminishing marginal returns <sup>(23)</sup> He further states that:-

*each human being is locked into a system that compels him to*

*increase his use of the commons without limit in a world that is limited. Ruin is the destination to which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interests in a society that believes in the freedom of commons...freedom in commons brings ruin to all* <sup>(24)</sup>

There is a need to promote an idea that resources are limited and finite. Both renewable and non-renewable resources should be properly utilized so that future generations inherit safer and enough resources to sustain conditions for life.

## 2.4 UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment has become both a social and theological problem. It is a social problem because in most cases leads to crime and other social evils such as suicide, prostitution, etc. It is a theological problem because a human being is created in the image of God and thus his/her dignity should not be compromised through any form of economic disorder.

It is generally accepted that no measurement of unemployment is completely accurate. This general assumption stems from the fact that measurements of unemployment be *overstate* or *understate* the number of people who are on their own accord wish to remain unemployed. The measurement figure understates involuntary unemployment by omitting some people who would accept a job if one were available but who are not actively looking for one during the period in which the data were collected. For example, people who have not found jobs after searching for a long time may become frustrated and stop seeking work. Such people are many, and many of them have withdrawn voluntarily from the labour force and will not be recorded as unemployed.

Nevertheless the official statistics of unemployment rate in Namibia, is put between 30-40 per cent.<sup>(25)</sup> The unemployment rate is the highest among youth aged around 18-30 years. The youth constitute about 30 per cent of the total population of Namibia.

The problem of unemployment in Namibia might be informed by the following two

concepts.

*(i) Frictional unemployment*

'Frictional unemployment' refers to the fact that when workers change jobs, they do not move immediately to new jobs. Some of the workers find employment, but the majority fail completely to find new jobs. Retrenchment is one of the root-cause of frictional unemployment. Those who favour retrenchment argue that since the economy does not expand, retrenchment is inevitable in a slow-growth economy such as that of Namibia.

*(ii) Structural unemployment*

This occurs especially when jobs are available and there are workers seeking for employment, but they are not qualified for such jobs. There are thousands of Namibians who are not employed as a result. This is very much common in Namibia today. Some of the specialist areas such technology and science are filled by expatriates.

*Full employment* is meant that all available human resources should be employed. The economy should provide employment for all who are willing and able to work. The question here is, is this possible in Namibia? The answer is: it is impossible at present movement. It is also difficult to suggest how a full-employment issue is tackled at this stage. It also depends whether this issue is a priority, say of the government or not. Even the government wants to employ everybody, does it have required resources to do so?

The other problematic area is the *recession* issue. *Recession* by definition refers or occurs when there is not enough demand or purchasing power for the products.<sup>(26)</sup> From a layperson's observation, the economy of Namibia expands slowly at slightly above 3 per cent per annum. The purchasing power is not powerful enough to stimulate economic growth. The informal sector, too, is too small to make a meaningful contribution.

What is the way forward in this context? Philip Wogaman argues that it is no longer a matter of effective economic policies or stimulation of purchasing power, or restoration of full employment, but in his opinion, it is:-

*more a question of convincing people that they should be satisfied with lower wages or profits than they had hoped for or, alternatively of finding some way of forcing them to accept lesser wages or price increases*<sup>(27)</sup>

Whether this suggestion will be accepted in Third World political contexts or not, is a different issue, but the fact remains that this proposal, one would argue, would in the final analysis contribute to the problem of unemployment.

About 80 per cent (17/20) of the returnees saw employment as the most crucial factor. It is indeed difficult to find employment in Namibia at the moment. A lack of appropriate education was referred to as a source of the problem. Thus most of the returnees (18/20) feel that they have not acquired the necessary training that

would enable them compete in labour market.

The opportunities for both training and employment are also extremely limited in Namibia. Over 80 per cent of respondents have never heard about training (this refers to vocational training) or employment opportunities.

The State of Namibia tries to address poverty, environment and unemployment as was discussed above. The government, one would argue, is conscious of these problems and it tries to address them as its development policies try to focus.

In the next section, I try to examine yet another government attempt in introducing corrective state interventionist programmes especially in rural areas.

## 2.5 PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACH

The government of Namibia's approach to development is quite conscious of the fact that:-

*Cultural knowledge should be integrated into modern practice, as it contributes significantly to the wise planning of social administration and natural resource management* <sup>(28)</sup>

The documents referred to above are meant to introduce *corrective state intervention programmes*, especially among the disadvantage social groups in Namibia.

In the light of the above-mentioned article 95 of the Constitution of Namibia, there is a realization of a paradigm-shift on the part of the government of Namibia to move away from the nature conservationist approach that she inherited from its former colonial power and embark on the environmental policies that are sustainable and beneficial to all Namibians, both present and the future. Thus in this environmental and ecological contexts, priorities are set. These are among others:-

(1) improve the conservation of natural resources by wise and sustainable resource management and protect our biodiversity

(2) to redress past discriminatory policies and practices which gave substantial rights over wildlife to commercial farmers, but which ignore communal farmers.<sup>(29)</sup>

Commercial farmers have for many (until now) years enjoyed the right to use and benefit from the wildlife which occurs on their farms. In order to redress this situation corrective state intervention is introduced which would enable people in communal areas to enjoy similar rights to utilize natural resources such as wildlife.

*(i) Resource Management*

Rural communities were alienated from the natural resources like wildlife, fisheries and other marine resources.

As part of the community-based natural resources management, the government has introduced a joint gesture between the State and local communities. This partnership between the government is over the sustainable utilization of wildlife especially in Western Caprivi economic investment and returns in Western Caprivi are based on natural resource management (wildlife).

A total of N\$ 3 million will be earned from the wise management and utilization of natural resources over the period 1995-97. The following returns are proposed as follows:-

*Some 20 % in salaries for resource management*

*About 42 % to community funds and;*

*About 29% to the state treasury <sup>(30)</sup>*

The sharing of benefits with local communities is vital component of community empowerment and shared responsibility for resources management.

One would agree with Redclift that the State would intervene in environmental problems by adopting a 'corrective approach'.<sup>(31)</sup> This corrective intervention, in my view, is the most appropriate form of reform when it corrects socio-economic imbalances. Carley et al. puts this point clearly when writes that:-

*The people already have knowledge, what they do not have, is the right over their local environment. This is the meaning of self-management, where people define their own problems and take control of their own environment.*<sup>(32)</sup>

It is generally accepted in environmental and development planning that there is an urgent need to integrate the management of natural resources with rural development. This recognition eventually would contribute to a healthy environment for the improvement of the quality of life.

The government specifically has plans to provide funding to people in rural areas especially those who are interested in engaging in tourism and the protection of the environmental friendly related activities. Under this programme people in communal areas are encouraged to form groups, pool resources together, invest them in their conservation of wildlife and other natural resources. The aim of the policy is to correct a belief that existed in the past that wildlife is a property of the government alone, therefore, they have no responsibility in management of their environment. It is clear that the government policy and land use puts local communities at the centre, but it is difficult for local communities realize this paradigm-shift in development practice.

*(ii) Conclusions*

This chapter tries to marry environmental and development discourses. In a sustainable development paradigm, poverty and environmental degradation are closely interrelated issues. In looking at the sustainability of development efforts it is necessary to realise that we are looking at several aspects of sustainability. Namibia's environment is fragile and therefore any development practice must be compatible with the maintenance of ecological process, wise resources management. To this end the government of Namibia is apparently sensitive.

Other important dimensions of sustainable development which are often ignored and need to be promoted are socio-cultural aspects in policy formulations.

My interviews, however, showed that these good intentions of the government are not yet understood by people, especially at local level. The government should work hard to propagate its development policies to people who are the target of these policies.

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**NOTES**

(1) Charles C. Ragin and Becker Hoards (eds). What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry, 1992, p.121

(2) David Pearce. Sustainable Development: Economic and Environment in the Third Countries. 1990, p.2

(3) Ibid.

(4) New Era, 30 March -5 April 1995, p.29.

- (5) Henning Melber et. al. Namibia and External Resources, Research Report, No.96.p.9
- (6) Ibid. New Era
- (7) Namibia Review, Vol.4 No.3, May 1995, p.1
- (8) Government of the Republic of Namibia. Development of Statistics in Namibia: A Five year Plan 1993/4-1997/8, p.18
- (9) Government of Namibia: Namibia's Green Plan, 1992, p.88
- (10) Government of Namibia. National Development and the Regions of Namibia, 1995 p.6
- (11) The term informal sector implies that there is a formal sector. This concept is difficult to define, but in this thesis it is referred to those 'self-employment economic activities' (See Kees van der Waal and John Sharp. "The informal sector" in 1988. South African Keyword, chapter 10).
- (12) Matthias Seiche, Scopes for policies towards the development of informal small business in Namibia (NEPRU Occasional Paper, No.3) July 1995, p.24
- (13) Ibid.
- (14) Ibid.
- (15) Michael Haralambos and Martin Holborn. Sociology: Themes and Perspectives. pp 191-5
- (16) Weli Mazamisa, 'Reparation and Land' in 1994 John de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio, Doing Ethics in Context: South African Perspectives, p.212
- (17) Namibia's Green Plan op.cit. 1992, p.84
- (18) UN: Earth Summit: Agenda 21: The United Nations Programme of Action From Rio, 1992, p.19

## CHAPTER 3: THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN NAMIBIA (CCN)

### *Introduction*

Chapter 3 will examine how the Council of Churches in Namibia responds to the issues of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment in Namibia.

Chapter 2 examined how the government of Namibia tackles these issues. We have seen in chapter 2 that at a theoretical level, the government is aware of the implications lie behind sustainable development paradigm.

Chapter 3 argues that the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), though exercising an active role in combatting poverty and unemployment, is still lagging behind both the government of Namibia and the Ecumenical Movement (at global level) on the issue of environmental degradation.

### **3.1 The Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN)**

The Council of Churches in Namibia is a religious body that pulls together nine full members.<sup>(1)</sup> In the light of the Toronto Statement of 1950<sup>(2)</sup>, a Council of Churches in general is part of the Ecumenical Movement. *The Consultation on the Significant and Contribution of the Councils of Churches in the Ecumenical Movement in 1986*, in Geneva, stated that by definition the Councils of Churches are instruments at the local level in one Ecumenical Movement in its search for the visible unity of Christ's church.<sup>(3)</sup> It is in this context that the various Councils of

Churches adopt similar theological basis to that of the World Council of Churches. The Council of Churches in Namibia too followed suite and its theological basis states as follows:-

*The Council is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and only saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father and Holy Spirit. (CCN Constitution, Article 2)*

From this basis and understanding, the Council of Churches in Namibia seeks to promote its ecclesiological character. Its objectives are enshrined in its Constitution and provide clear indication of its mission. Its objectives are as follows:-

- (1) To foster that unity which is Christ's will and gift to his church, especially assisting member churches in their common calling to proclaim the gospel to all people.
- (2) To coordinate and consolidate the activities of the member churches in any field which may be agreed by the general meeting, with specific attention to ecumenism.
- (3) To assist people in need and to promote development through self-help projects, etc. (CCN Constitution, Article 3)

These objectives should be understood in terms of how the Council of Churches in Namibia sees its purpose and functions.

Religiously and theologically, the Council of Churches in Namibia stands for God's justice in society. It is called into being to witness to the Jesus of history, who in his earthly life shared material and spiritual resources with both the rich and the marginalized of his society. It is from within these parameters Christians are obliged to bear witness (*marturia*) to the justice (*mispat*) of God in human society.

In practice, the above objectives are reinforced in the following three areas: witness, service and worship.

Witness programmes direct the Christian community towards Christian discipleship in the power of God. Member churches are invited to identify with those who are in difficult times, the 'poor' in the broadest sense of the word of human society.

Service shows follows the example of Christ the servant. In this way, the Council invites its member churches to offer a humble responses to the crises and needs that characterize social, economic and political life.

At worship the Christian community is nourished in the communion of its members in sharing spiritual blessings and growing together.<sup>(4)</sup>

In the field of development, the development cluster <sup>(5)</sup> is the appropriate organ of the Council that pursuing issues of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment in the interest of both the Council of Churches in Namibia and its member churches. I thus discuss these issues within the paraments of the

development cluster.

*(ii) The Development Cluster*

It is on the basis of a sense of God's justice, that the Council embarks on its economic programmes. The Development Cluster is mandated with the tasks of economic programmes on behalf of the Council and its member churches. The cluster states its aims and objectives as follows:-

- (1) To co-ordinate and facilitate activities of its member churches
- (2) To help rural communities move towards self-reliance through their own local initiatives.
- (3) To encourage production oriented rather than services oriented projects and programmes.<sup>(6)</sup>

The Council of Churches in Namibia does not have one official theology, but accommodates several theologies. These theologies are in line with the doctrinal positions of its member churches. But though this is the case the Council has a duty and a commitment to draw its member churches to the issues of common concern such as poverty, unemployment, social injustice, the promotion of economic development, etc. This finds form in the Development Cluster.

*(iii) An ecclesiological dilemma*

*The spirit of ecumenical unity and cooperation is lacking between and among the Council of Churches in Namibia member churches* <sup>(7)</sup>

This was the remark of the general secretary, pastor Ngeno Nakamphela at the

Ninth Ordinary General Meeting of the Council of Churches in Namibia, 12-14 July 1994. He further states that the reason for this negative attitude towards *ecumenism* is because of confessionalism and ethnicity, which are creeping in and are serious enemies of our local and national ecumenism.<sup>(8)</sup> In the same meeting a message was sent to member churches on the issue with *inter alia* the following notes:-

- (1) - that the Council of Churches in Namibia should indulge in self-examination;
- (2) - that member churches should encourage their pastors and workers to participate in and support CCN activities;
- (3) - that churches motivate their members for an ecumenical awakening in order to revamp and strengthen the present non-working ecumenical structures.<sup>(9)</sup>

In light of the objectives of the Council of Churches in Namibia stated earlier the on, the 1994 meeting indicated evidence of real dilemma.

This dilemma also stemmed from the procedural protocol of the Council. The relationships between the Council and its member churches is hooked to the General and Executive meetings, which usually means a gathering of church leaders to decide what the Council shall do, instead of what their churches should do together through the Council of Churches in Namibia. The general congregations of member churches in most cases do not know what is going on. Ecumenical programmes such as Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, Ecumenical Social Thought, Resources-Sharing, etc., are only known by church leaders while general memberships have not even heard of these programmes. As a result, the

Council's development efforts, one could argue, lacks real commitment from its member churches. This dilemma undermines the functions and purposes of the Council in addressing pressing problems such as poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment in Namibia.

How this dichotomy can be better addressed is both a theological and cultural puzzle. I would suggest that a theme of ecclesial reconciliation should be very seriously considered by member churches in the Council. Debates on themes such as ethnicity, culture, etc., in Namibia should be given a priority in church meetings.

*(iv) Community-Empowerment: Unemployment*

Despite its ecclesiological dilemma, the Council has embarked on programme of social action directed especially towards empowerment of local communities. Seeing unemployment as a major economic problem in the country the Council's development programmes try both to fight unemployment and to strive towards job-creation activities.

The Council of Churches in Namibia is moreover a facilitating body to other development projects. The purpose of this facilitating role is to let member churches themselves implement community projects. Member churches in this context, are expected to identify, design, plan, implement and evaluate community development projects on the basis of sustainable development. The director of the Development Cluster, Edwin Mwenda, in an interview with myself, pointed out the following:-

*you need to dis-empower yourself and empower the target local groups, we are encouraging local communities to grasp this approach and use it to their maximum capacity. People know what they want and how they plan to achieve their goals in life*

On the other hand, the Council of Churches in Namibia encourages people to look for alternative ways as to how they could find employment themselves. In this regard the director of Faith, Justice and Society Cluster, Garised Hendrik, in an interview, puts forward following views:-

*We in the Council of Churches in Namibia see a person in totality. We try to take care for both spiritual and material needs of a person. We do not divide a person, between spiritual and material, but see him/her holistically...We encourage our youth and especially women to be creative and active in their own environs. To seek skills that would enable them to find employment or self-employment.*

The Council of Churches in Namibia attempts to redirect material resources to local communities, as a matter of development policy. The director of the Development Cluster, Edwin Mwenda, further states that:-

*it was discovered in recent years that the only relevant development efforts are those directed and managed by local communities. People themselves should take part in the process and make a meaningful contribution*

The facilitating role of economic development programmes, on the part of the Council, is a new development practice. Power to identify, design, plan, implement development programmes are left entirely with local communities. The aim is to involve as much as possible local participation in development programmes. The Council of Churches in Namibia provides local communities with material resources, such as finance, human resources in terms of expertise and training.

In the field of development, education is crucial. Thus the cluster puts a serious stress on holding workshops and different courses that are relevant to the field. Thus the following areas are stressed:-

- (1) Management of development programmes: planning, reporting, evaluation and accounting.
- (2) Women in development management
- (3) Dependency, foreign aid, sustainability, etc.<sup>(10)</sup>

The target groups of these workshops are, in the first instance, people from member churches and consequently from local communities. The purpose of this training is to meet the aims and objectives of the Development Cluster.

The Council does not pin-point *poverty* as such but sees this scourge as part of the *unemployment* problem. The *environment* is, however, not even mentioned in the official development policy. The Council never focuses on ecology in its official development policy, nor does it combine its development efforts with ecological issues.

### 3.2 CONTRASTS: THE STATE AND THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN NAMIBIA

At this stage, I try to pull together the main thrusts of chapters 2 and 3 by way of making contrasts between the approaches of the government of Namibia and the Council of Churches in Namibia on the problems of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment. The aim of this contrast is to summarize clearly the different approaches to economic development of the two institutions.

#### *(i) The Government of Namibia*

As we observed earlier on, Article 95 of the Namibian Constitution opens doors for formulations of policy documents on environment and development in Namibia. Most of the policy documents take this article (Article 95) as a point of departure. Namibia's Green Plan: Environment and Development is a policy document that deals with all government ministries. The document a paradigm-shift in motion; a new vision of looking at development and environment in which poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment are to be addressed together. It was in this political context, that the Namibia's Environmental Assessment Policy: For Sustainable Development and Environmental Conservation 1994, was born. This is a policy document that seeks to ensure development projects are implemented in accordance with the procedures laid down thereof.

The Government of Namibia has moreover committed itself to various international environmental and economic agreements. Mention of two international meetings is sufficient to indicate this involvement.

The first international meeting on Environment and Development was the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. This meeting has had a great influence on the government of Namibia in tackling poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment. *Agenda 21* came into being as a result of this meeting and is presently ready for implementation by a wide range of governments including the Namibian Government.

A second international meeting was held in Copenhagen in March 1995. It dealt with the theme of Social Development and focused squarely on the unemployment problem. This meeting, too, has influenced the Namibian government's development strategies. In the light of this meeting, the Namibian government's strategy now focuses on:-

- (1) - inequalities and imbalances that need to be corrected
- (2) - encouragement of labour intensive economic growth that can absorb large numbers of workers and;
- (3) - and invest in the development of human resources amongst the poor.<sup>(8)</sup>

There is ample evidence both at conceptual and practical levels, that the present government of Namibia is trying to address poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment.

#### *(ii) The Council of Churches in Namibia*

Unlike the Namibian government, the Council of Churches in Namibia in its Constitution does not specifically address poverty, environmental degradation and

unemployment in any of its policy documents. The closest it comes is to see a link between poverty and unemployment. This is manifesting its Constitution, with regard to objectives such as the following:-

*To assist people in need and to promote development through self-help projects (Article 3: Section 5)*

A constitutional handicap seems thus to exist on the part of the Council of Churches in Namibia. Although Article 3 of the Constitution of the Council of Churches in Namibia provides the Development Cluster with a mandate for its programme, this section lacks a clear reference to the promotion of integrity of God's creation in terms of development.

In contrast, article 95 of the Namibian constitution mandates the State to embark on an agenda of "utilization of living natural resources on a sustainable basis for the benefit of all Namibians, both present and future..." (Article 95). As was stated above, the Council of Churches has a development policy document, but there is no clear-cut focus on the environment in general, and in particular on the relationship between development and the environment. This means in effect that the Council of Churches in Namibia presently does not contribute to the revitalization of the environment in Namibia whereas the government of Namibia is diligent in promoting sustainable development in its development programmes.

All in all, chapter 2 argued that the government of Namibia promotes the

sustainable utilization of natural resources in which poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment are the priorities.

Chapter 3 has shown that despite the fact that the Council of Churches in Namibia has taken interests in human issues, on the question of *environmental degradation*, it lags behind the government of Namibia and the sentiment of the Ecumenical Movement of which she is an active part.

The Council of Churches in Namibia needs to join the government in promoting sustainable development. Ecumenical efforts such as Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation and Resource-Sharing are good starting points but not yet utilized by the Council of Churches in Namibia.

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NOTES

(1) CCN member churches:-

The Anglican Diocese of Namibia;

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN);

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-DELK);

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCERN);

The Roman Catholic Church;

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa and;

The African Methodist Episcopal Church.

(2) The Toronto Statement was received by the 1950 meeting of the central committee of the World Council of Churches at Toronto. Its full title was: The

Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches. It discussed the ecclesiological significance of the World Council of Churches.

(3) Thomas F. Best (ed). Instruments of Unity: National Councils of Churches Within the One Ecumenical Movement. 1988, p.55.

(4) WCC: Report: "Consultation on the Significance and Contribution of Councils in the Ecumenical Movement", Venice, 15-18 February, 1982.

(5) CCN uses three terms for its administrative purposes: desk, cluster and department; its constitution does not define its usage of this basic terms such as *cluster*, but in this thesis it may refer to a status of a department, without obstruct its CCN meaning.

(6) CCN Documentation: "Proceedings of the Ninth Ordinary General Meeting of the Council of Churches in Namibia", 12-14 July 1994, p.38.

(7) CCN Documentation, August 1991, p.78.

(8) Ibid.

(9) Ibid. p.10.

(10) Namibia Review, op. cit. p.1.

## CHAPTER 4: A THEOLOGY OF SHARING <sup>(1)</sup>

### *Introduction*

In chapter 1 we argued that the current international economic system is inadequate for addressing the problems of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment. We argued that the classical and neoclassical economic thinking is based on the economic practice that focuses on human acquisitiveness.

The case study in chapter 2 showed the seriousness of the government of Namibia in addressing the problems of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment.

In chapter 3 we saw that the Council of Churches though trying to address poverty and unemployment fails to recognize the urgent problem of environmental degradation in Namibia.

In Chapter 4 we return to the Ecumenical Movement, to discuss its Theology of Sharing and in particular to see how this theology can inform the Council of Churches in Namibia and contribute to addressing the problems of poverty, environmental degradation and poverty in Namibia.

A Theology of Sharing focuses to alleviate of poverty, especially in the South, and to promote the norms of sharing especially in the North.

Chapter 4 is then motivated by the fact that the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth was characterized by the norm of sharing both material and spiritual resources. Douglas Oakman argues this point by saying that Jesus' words and activities can be understood in part as an attempt to articulate new economic values and a new economic behaviour in his society.<sup>(12)</sup>

This biblical basis has generated a theology of sharing that is enshrined in the World Council of Churches' resources sharing model. A model that is known as: *Sharing Life, A Holistic Approach To The Economic Life.*

The Ecumenical Sharing of Resources (ESR) has emerged as a conceptual framework for new relationships that would free the churches in the North from their traditional roles as sending and giving bodies. The vision of ecumenical sharing of resources implies a broader understanding of what is meant by 'resources' and includes spirituality, culture, human resources as well as finance. The Guidelines for Sharing states that it focuses on:-

*a new understanding of sharing in which those who have been marginalized by reason of sex, age, economic and political condition and ethnic origin...homeless, refugees...take their place at the centre of all decisions and actions as equal partners* <sup>(3)</sup>

The Ecumenical Sharing Resources (ESR) believes that mankind has abused its partnership with God. Drawing on scriptural authority, the ecumenical sharing resources model maintains that those who possess power have made themselves

gods over their fellows, refusing the sharing to which they were invited by God.<sup>(4)</sup>

It further states that the history of sharing starts with God who in Jesus gave himself as a partner to his people, he shared both his power and creation. He put the earth and all that is in it into that hands of mankind, *Thus, the World and all that is in it belongs to the Lord (Ps.24:1).*

#### 4.1 MINISTRY OF SHARING

The sharing of faith involves sharing of life, (Acts 2) in all its fullness, and in all its aspects: economic, social and ecological life. Sharing, it may be argued, is what affirms our true humanity. Sharing material resources and engaging in social action are important expressions of our faith. Sharing also means that we work concretely to overcome economic disparities between the North and South. The Ecumenical Sharing Resources model suggests that there should be:-

- (1) Resistance against international mechanisms such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank's deprivation of people of the South of their resources-transferring, hard-earned capital, etc.
- (2) equal sharing of power so that there are no absolute donors or absolute recipients.<sup>(5)</sup>

The Ecumenical Sharing Resources argues that the North and South need to share material resources. This may include mutual workings towards fair structures. Towards this end, the model focuses on the following levels:-

##### *(i) local community*

The local community, says the Ecumenical Sharing Resources should be at the core of the process of resources-sharing. The Ecumenical Sharing Resources model insists that *sharing* should start at the local level with individuals. There should be initiatives to obtain resources both nationally and internationally which should then be directed to the local community. In this regard, the Ecumenical Movement proposes community-empowerment. Community-empowerment is suggested to be

the goal of this model: *Think globally, act locally*. This phrase has become a watchword in most local ecumenical forms of forging a sharing of material resources. The idea of community-empowerment entails what Carley et al. call "self-management approach", where people define their own problems and control of their own environments.<sup>(6)</sup> This approach encourages community participation and sharing.

*(ii) National level*

A call for national mechanisms for by resources-sharing with an interdisciplinary approach is demanded. The Guidelines for Sharing at this level demand that power structures both in the church and society should be examined, so that a more just and equitable resources-sharing is achieved.<sup>(7)</sup> But the problem at this level could be that ecumenical collaboration among churches (a point made in chapter 3) is weak. Unless this problem is addressed, sharing of resources at national level would be impossible.

*(iii) International level*

The Ecumenical Sharing Resources demands an equal representation of partners involve in resources-sharing including of all relevant information, financial, of projects among partners. The question as to how this highly charged complex and controversial suggestion is carried out depends on dialogues churches have among themselves.

## 4.2 RECIPROCITY AND REDISTRIBUTION

### *(i) Sharing and Culture: An African Perspective*

There is no economy that is totally separated from the social, political and cultural structures of a society. This section argues for *reciprocal exchanges* in community as one way of addressing a vicious cycle of poverty at local level. It is in this context that in Africa, the ecumenical resources-sharing model is well understood, though few churches have not heard about it. Buakas Tulu Kia Mpansu, from Zaïre, states:-

*Sharing in African cultures is a state of mind, an attitude, a practice, an institution and an element of culture. It implies giving when one has anything to give, and distributing goods among the original owner and his or her peers without any preliminary agreement being formalized.*<sup>(8)</sup>

In Africa, this model can be understood in terms of the concept and practice of reciprocity in African anthropology. Sharing in community is a practice and more than a theory. In terms of African cultural values it is based on moral economy. Kia Mpansu argues that sharing as generous act and something reciprocal, amounts to a moral obligation on all: all can claim the right of reciprocal giving and receiving.<sup>(9)</sup> The principles behind all this is entirely at one with African anthropology, which represents the human being as an order within essential to an order. This order is a relation of being and living in the world, implying a life received, shared and fully entered into. Thus the human being is not just one

alongside many, but a being who is the product of one another's relations with others. Tulu Kia Mpansu further talks of:-

*parents, instructors, relations by marriage, ancestors, friends and acquaintances. Here reciprocal sharing simply continues and develops the relational network fundamental to be being of an individual in terms of this life one has received, entered into and shared with others* (10)

Despite the presence of reciprocity in African culture, many African Churches still do not contribute to the ecumenical resources-sharing model.

The diversity of cultures in the ecumenical context is of immediate relevance to the churches' ministry of sharing and reconciliation. The sharing process should respect the languages, cultures and ways of life of the people concerned. The concept of *culture* in anthropological jargon refers to learned, accumulated experiences, to those socially transmitted patterns for behaviour characteristic of a particular social group. (11)

Peter Farb and George Armelagos have observed that sharing of material resources such as food is often reflected in how different cultures perceive the anthropology of food and eating. (12) One could argue that we should allow these cultural values to flourish in society because they can make a significant contribution to alleviating poverty.

In evaluating this model in general, Julio de Santa Ana, concludes that sharing in itself touches the nerves of many cultures and traditions in most parts of the globe.<sup>(13)</sup> Referring to Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs), Julio de Santa Ana states that small groups of twenty to fifty come together and share "common problems, common life ...and also common answers, action , hopes material resources, etc."<sup>(14)</sup>

### 4.3 COMMENSALITY: A MODEL OF SHARING SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL RESOURCES

#### *(i) Towards a Moral Economy*

*The Jesus movement...saw themselves as the salt, light and leaven of the Kingdom of God in Israel and among the peoples.*<sup>(15)</sup>

In this section, I attempt to examine the notion of *moral economy* in biblical terms. The term *moral economy* is used in studies of economic values of a particular groups, most often underprivileged social groups. The peasant economy and value system is not based on market and profit, but on subsistence economy. C. Scott gives a broader definition of subsistence as follows:-

*While a minimum income has solid physiological dimension, we must not overlook its social and cultural implications. In order to be a fully functioning member of a village society, a household needs a certain level of resources to discharge its necessary ceremonial and social obligations as well as to feed itself adequately and continue to cultivate. To fall below this level is not to risk starvation, it is to suffer a profound loss of standing within community and perhaps to fall a permanent situation of dependence.*<sup>(16)</sup>

For a peasant household, a basic need is for a reliable form of sustenance. Scott argues that we should realize that we must start not only from the peasant's needs

for a reliable sustenance but also by examining his relationships to his neighbour, elites and to the state in terms of whether they aid or hinder him in meeting that need.<sup>(17)</sup>

Scott studied peasant economies with special reference to the effect of outside forces, especially market economy, upon this moral economy is developed. Moral economy is closely related to a number of themes, such as generalized reciprocity, conspicuous consumption, open commensality (Morxes 1988, Crossan 1990). I here briefly examine conspicuous consumption and open commensality within the theme of moral economy.

The focus here on the life of Jesus is not about the historical Jesus, but the social world of the gospel narrative. I examine the parable of a rich man and Lazarus in the gospel of Luke 16:19-31. I also discuss Jesus's practice of open commensality (table-fellowships) as a token of sharing of material resources in his society.

Jesus responded to the economic life at his time. Douglas Oakman in his book *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day*, discusses two foci that are important in understanding economic matters in the first century Palestine.

Firstly, is Jesus' responses to economic questions are characterized by an affirmation of a *decentralization of power* in economic life. He demanded that centralization of power would be dismantled in favour of a culturally conditioned generalized distribution of material wealth in the community. Under a generalized

reciprocity, economic goods would flow from below to top and be redistributed to lower classes.<sup>(18)</sup>

Secondly, Jesus' parables are populated with economic examples, which demonstrate a call for societal renewal. Douglas Oakman argues that Jesus saw members of the middle class as agents for social change.<sup>(19)</sup> Oakman on this point refers to the parable about a dishonest steward, recorded in Luke 16: 1-9. A steward in this parable wisely tried to erase debts owed by debtors of his employer - an act that was aiming at challenging the debt crisis in the first century Palestine.

### *(ii) Conspicuous consumption*

The *sitz im leben* (setting in life) of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus appears to be related to a village life where social interactions are conspicuous. The rich man 'feasted sumptuously' (Greek *euphrainomenos*) every day. The beggar Lazarus lies outside his gate while the rich man carries on his feast inside. The rich man probably was with his friends of his own social status as Luke shows (Luke 14:1-14).

First century Palestine was characterized by an ideology of shame and honour. If one follows the honour/shame ideology in Greco-Roman society, the richman was behaving in a perfectly normal and morally acceptable way. In the parable, Jesus tried to challenge this oppressive ideology by indicating that the system was unfair and inhumane. It was an economic system that was dominated by blind rich

people who cared nothing about poor people like Lazarus. Joachim Jeremias argues that this parable (Luke 16:19-31) is not about a richman and Lazarus, but a parable of the six brothers'.<sup>(20)</sup> The surviving brothers lived careless life and took no heed of poverty that went around them. In this context, Jesus introduced a different perspective that of the moral economy of the peasant demanded.

In this new vision, it is shame for the rich to leave his/her brother/sister in great need of food. Jesus saw the social situation from below. The richman is judged already from the outset of the story. He is a man who spends his fortune on himself and on people like himself. The parable of the conspicuous consumption is then a clear manifestation of the moral economy of the peasants. Luke shows us that food are important in human interaction. The main requirement that food should be used for common consumption and for the benefit of the community.

Can, perhaps, the Ecumenical Movement both at global and local levels explore such biblical themes? The following lines of thought could also be considered.

A parallel exists between the first century Palestine economic system and the twentieth century international economic system. In both economic systems the rich are blind to the poor at their gates. Thus the *economics of enough* <sup>(21)</sup> proposed by Goudzwaed and de Lange could be further explored as a remedial measure. *Economics of enough* needs to be connected to Jesus' practice of open commensality thereby enriching the theology of sharing.

*(iii) Open Commensality*

*Jesus is a glutton, a drunkard, and a friend of tax-collectors and sinners. He has no honour. He has no shame* <sup>(22)</sup>

*Acceptance is the atmosphere of humanity* <sup>(23)</sup>

Jesus' open commensality is revealed in the parable recorded in Luke 14.12-14, where one is advised not to invite his/her friends or brothers, or kinsmen or rich neighbours, but to invite everybody in the street the poor, the maimed, lame blind, etc. Here you have rich, poor and middle classes, all put at the same level and sharing a meal at the same table. This is what John Crossan calls an *open commensality*, for anyone is invited to attend the banquet and share the material resources. Crossan argues that the social challenge of *an open commensality* is indeed the radical threat of the parable's vision.<sup>(24)</sup>

According to Crossan, open commensality negates distinctions and hierarchies between male and female, poor and rich, Jesus' table-fellowships, (an open commensality), in most cases shared bread and fish, the entire ritual is suggesting a sharing of material and spiritual goods.<sup>(25)</sup> But commensality went beyond a mere sharing. Crossan states that:-

*Commensality was rather a strategy for building or rebuilding peasant community and therefore it was based on an egalitarian peasant sharing of*

*spiritual and material power at the most grass-roots level*<sup>(26)</sup>

There is a need to re-build a society that has been was torn apart by individualism and egoism and to create a society that cares for one another in community.

In this regard, Jurgen Moltmann, observes that:-

*brotherly and sisterly fellowship means in the first place to eat, drink, to live in common. It begins in the 'belly', not in the head, first comes eating and the comes morality* <sup>(27)</sup>

This is what Jesus demonstrates in his table-fellowships sessions. In Mk. 2:13-17, we see that Jesus dines with the outcasts. The Greek verb (*katakeisthai*) is used to Jesus' act reclining with the people listed in the text: publicans/tax-collectors, sinners. Mark does not count them but he simply says that there were many (Greek *polloí*=many). The scribes and pharisees accused Jesus of being a hypocrite. If he is a Son of God, why does he eat with religious and social outcasts? Has he no shame? Has he no honour to respect himself? Jesus' intentions are, however, evident, for sharing of food was central to his ministry. Crossan concludes the point by saying that eating was an absolutely vital matrix for Jesus' own meal symbolism.<sup>(28)</sup>

Peter Farb and George Armelagos conclude this point by saying that:-

*in all societies both simple and complex, eating is the primary act, initiating and maintaining human relationships, once one finds out where, when, with whom the food is eaten, just about everything else can be inferred about the*

*relations among the society's members* (29)

Jesus' practice of open commensality is indeed a serious challenge to our theology of sharing. It concentrates on rebuilding especially the local community so that sharing of material resources becomes culturally and religiously embedded.

*(iv) Conclusions*

Sharing and reciprocity are the cornerstone of the cultural and political economy. It can also be said that African structures of reciprocal exchange could be part of a theology of sharing in combatting poverty, environmental degradation and poverty. In order that we effectively try to alleviate the effects of poverty, such a theology would need both to promote and develop sustainable economic structures and at the same time to preserve the spirit of sharing in the life of the community. The forms of sharing are still limited in scope. They need to be sustained by solidarity at all levels: local, national and international. Thus the Christian communities world-widely obliged by the models of moral economy, open commensality to address the problems of poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment. This action would involve 'sharing' with one another to build a loving humanity.

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NOTES

(1) The purpose of the El Escorial Consultation on Resources-Sharing in October 1987 was to formulate a discipline of ecumenical sharing and foster a process of commitment to such a discipline: Sharing-Life: El Escorial Consultation Report.

World Council of Churches, 1987.

(2) Douglas Oakman. Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day: Studies and early Christianity, 8, p.2

(3) WCC: Sharing-Life: El Escorial Consultation, 1987, p.28

(4) Ibid.

(5) Ibid

(6) Carley et.al. op. cit. 1993. p.28

(7) Sharing-Life, op.cit .pp.27-32

(8) The Ecumenical Review, Vol. 38, Number 4, October 1986, p.386

(9) The Ecumenical Review, op.cit. p.386

(10) Ibid. p.387

(11) Keesing R. Cultural Anthropology, 1981, p.68

(12) Peter Farb and George Armelagos, Consuming Passions: The Anthropology of Eating, 1980, pp.3-4

(13) The Ecumenical Review, op. cit.p 381

(14) Ibid. p.381

(15) Duchrow and Guck, op.cit. p.11

(16) C. Scott. The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia, 1980, p. 10

(17) Ibid. p.5

(18) Oakman op.cit. p.213

(19) Ibid.

(20) Joachim Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, 1963, p.186

(21) Goudzwaard and de Lange, op.cit. p.42

(22) John Dominic Crossan. The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant, 1991, p.262

(23) Jurgen Moltmann. The Open Church: Messianic Lifestyle, p.111

(24) Crossan, op.cit. p.262

(25) Ibid.

(26) Ibid. p 344-5

(27) Moltmann, op.cit. p.111

(28) Crossan, op.cit. p.341

(29) Farb and Armelagos, op.cit. p.4.

## CHAPTER 5: TOWARDS AN ETHIC OF COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### A Way Forward

Chapter 5 looks forward. Our concern is with poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment. In the first chapter I tried to point out the inadequacy of the international economic system in addressing this threefold problem. Chapters 2 and 3 dealt with poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment in Namibia.

Chapter four suggested some conceptual models that would be of a great importance to the economic debate in the Ecumenical Movement. The possibility of *sharing* in theological, biblical and cultural sense was assessed. It was argued that *sharing* of resources spiritually and culturally should be a watchword in the struggle against poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment, especially in the South. From this theoretical framework, I proceed now to describe further those models that in my view may form part of the debate.

Chapter five, as a way forward, is, then, based on the realization that: if liberation from poverty, revitalization of the environment and reduction of the unemployment rate, are to be achieved especially in the South, the struggle must be implemented by the people themselves. The following two models are suggested in this chapter are:-

(1) Sustainable Development Paradigm and

## (2) Person-in-Community.

There are also other models one could propose. The *Socialist Centred Model*, for example, is an economic development label that refers to African Socialism in Sub-Saharan Africa. This model takes African socialism as its point of departure.

The *Basic Needs Model* focuses at increment expenditures on health, education, the supply of clean water and housing.<sup>(1)</sup> It also fostered the concept of Small is Beautiful, which include the notion of small industries and the promotion of the informal sector. Benedict Mongula argues that this model has succeeded in raising basic education in countries like Tanzania or Ethiopia.<sup>(2)</sup>

The major weakness in these two models, I would argue, is that they do not include environmental issues in their approaches.

By contrast, the Sustainable Development Paradigm and the Person-in-Community model, include a linkage between *environment* and *development*. This combination of the two may succeed in adequately addressing poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment in the South. Accordingly, these models provide a possible way forward.

## 5.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### An Overview

The Willy Brandt Reports, *North-South: a Programme for Survival* (1980) and *Common Crisis North-South: Co-operation for World Recovery* (1983) respectively, give signals that there is an urgent need for a renewal of our current economic system. The Brandt reports are part of a longer evolution of thinking about economic interdependence between the North and South. These reports discussed how the North and South together would offer new horizons for international relations, the world economy, and for developing countries.<sup>(3)</sup> Referring to the Brandt Reports, Stuart Corbridge suggests that Brandt's concept of *mutuality* (between North and South) is, insufficiently precise and moreover, impotent to serve as a useful guide to political action on behalf of the world' poor.<sup>(4)</sup>

The report of the World Commission on Environment, *Our Common Future* (1987) was among the first to use the concept of 'sustainable development' *Our Common Future*, attempts to 'recapture the spirit of 1972 Stockholm Conference on Environment and Development. *Our Common Future* places elements of the sustainable development debate within the economic and political context of international development and puts environmental issues firmly on the political agenda. It also starts from the premise that development and environmental issues cannot be separated. It is therefore futile to attempt to deal with environmental problems without a broader perspective that includes the factors underlying world poverty and environmental degradation and visa versa. <sup>(5)</sup> *Agenda 21* continues

from here by arguing that sustainable development requires increased investment in developing countries, for environment and trade policies should be mutually supportive.<sup>(6)</sup> The Brundtland report, *Our Common Future* offers a definition of sustainable development that now has become a classic of its kind that:-

*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs* <sup>(7)</sup>

Though this definition has been criticized by C. Conroy (1988) and S.M. Lele (1991) it does provide a conceptual framework on development capable of harmonizing intergenerational distribution of natural resources and the sustainable existence of the rest of natural world at large.<sup>(8)</sup> O' Riordan sees the concept of sustainability as the 'mediating term designed to bridge the gap between "developers" and "environmentalists"; it is therefore an appropriate model for viable economic development.<sup>(9)</sup> According to Michael Redclift, the term *sustainable development* suggests that the lessons of ecology can and should be applied to economic processes. He further argues that sustainable development requires a broader view of both economics and ecology, along with a political commitment to ensure that development is 'sustainable'.<sup>(10)</sup> *Sustainability*, in this social and political context calls for a broader participation of people in matters that concern their livelihoods.

*(i) Measuring Economic Growth: Meeting Basic human Needs*

*Our Common Future* proposes that *economic growth* should be revived for it is still

an effective way to tackle poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment. Thus the report suggests seven critical objectives for environment and development policies that should follow the paradigm of sustainable development:-

1. *Reviving economic growth*
2. *Changing the quality of growth*
3. *Meeting essential needs for jobs, food, energy, etc.*
4. *Ensuring a sustainable level of production*
5. *Conserving and enhancing the resource base*
6. *Reorientation technology and managing risk; and*
7. *Merging environment and economics in decision making*

*(Source: Brundtland Report 1987:49)*

*Our Common Future* calls for a new form of growth, a growth that is sustainable, environmentally aware and that moreover integrates economic and social development.<sup>(11)</sup>

One of the most important area that economic development should promote is the linkage between economic growth and meeting basic needs. *Our Common Future* argues that the concept of 'needs' could include the essential needs of the world's poor<sup>(12)</sup>. The report clearly points out that the goals of economic and social development must be defined in terms of sustainability in all countries: developed and developing<sup>(13)</sup>. Because the present economic system focuses only on economic growth, essential needs of vast numbers of people in the South are not

being met such as food, clothing, shelter, jobs, etc.

It is in this context that Goudzwaard and de Lange argue that the Gross National Product (GNP) is an inadequate measure of economic growth because it does not evaluate the distribution, for instance, of *inter alia* subsistence production of which reciprocity plays an important role <sup>(14)</sup> Goudzwaard and de Lange propose the following:-

*We urge organizations and political parties to take steps toward introducing new public measurements of economic growth as quickly as possible. Further we urge our governments themselves to place this issue on the agendas of the emerging North American trading block, the Group of Seven nations and the European Community* <sup>(15)</sup>

Goudzwaard and de Lange's suggestion is indeed valid. Neil W. Summerton observes that the concept of sustainable development was endorsed by the Group of Seven industrialized nations at Toronto Summit in June 1988 and that the concept has also been incorporated as a foundation principle in the Maastricht Treaty on European Union.<sup>(16)</sup> This could mean that these powerful economic groupings may consider a new measurement of economic progress that would include other factors such as environmental and social indexes.

Mankind has always been capable of both great good and at the same time great evil. That is certainly apparent in our role as custodians of our biosphere. An Ethic

of Sustainable Development provides the possibility of controlling the threat human beings pose to the planet, while ensuring the humanity a safer world to live in.

*(ii) Changing Life-Styles*

*Our Common Future* report further states that ruling elites in the South tend to live a life-styles that is incompatible with the level of development and resources available in a given country. This tendency has repercussions on the lives of the poor.<sup>(17)</sup> This practice should be properly checked if possible. The Ecumenical Movement at both global and local levels should encourage the process of sharing through ethics of sustainable development and broader participation of people concerned. From classical and neoclassical economics, the object of production in the final analysis is consumption. It is a universal phenomenon that consumption is promoted through the expansion of capitalist commodity production. *Consumer culture* is accompanied by a desire to accumulate more and more material wealth through the market place.

The World Council of Churches' seventh assembly at Canberra in 1991, called for a replacement of *the idolatry of consumerism* with a new spirituality.<sup>(18)</sup> The Ecumenical Movement should be firm on its vision, that a *consumer culture* should be replaced by a new spirit of *sharing culture* at the level of household and families. Charles Villa-Vicencio in this regard, proposes that:-

*there should be provision of the basic necessities which enable all people to share fully in life* <sup>(19)</sup>

He further proposes that the provision of basic human needs should be accompanied by an orderly redistribution of resources to the benefit of the poor.<sup>(20)</sup>

One could argue, moreover, that in order to combat consumerism, the process of *socialization* should be taken very seriously at family and household levels. Sociologically, the process of *socialization* refers to individuals learning the culture of their society. This is a life-long process. This should be done through cultural orientation at homes. In *Ovambo culture* (Ovambo people lives in the extreme North of Namibia), traditions, wisdom and knowledge are imparted to new generation at *ohungi* (an informal evening meeting). The *ohungi* normally follows *super*. After *super* parents instruct their children about the meaning of life, dwelling around important issues that pertain to economic life, ethical and religious instructions.

Christian instructions, too, in confirmation schools, bible studies etc., should focus on a life-style that is culturally acceptable from the Christian point of view and contributes to the 'great commandment to love one's neighbour.

Religious instructions, too, in schools could stress on an ethics of sharing. There is a need to emphasise the fact that all human beings are entitled to material resources. *The economics of enough* does not reduce the rate of quality of production. The production rate should be maintained at high level. Production process should be geared towards meeting the needs of community on the basis of sustainable economy. As consumers, we must fight the *throwaway mentality*

which is common in most of the middle class households both in the North and South. In this context, one needs to promote the notion of sharing of resources based on the *economics of enough* as proposed by Goudzwaard and de Lange. *Economics of enough* suggests the following: sharing of material resources, the needs of the poor, securing work, needs of the environment and its sustainability and welfare of human community <sup>(21)</sup>

There is a need, then, to move away from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism. This is a central theme of sustainable development. Environmental degradation that takes place in our contemporary world today came about as a result of poverty. The Brundtland report makes this point very clear that poverty itself puts heavy pressure on the environment. It is clear that the international economic system is responsible for the threefold problem: poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment. Accordingly a model of development would have to address basic human needs on the basis of sustainability. Resources should therefore be redirected to a *person-in-community* as Herman Daly and John Cobb Jr. propose in the next section.

## 5.2 PERSON-IN-COMMUNITY

The authors of the monograph, For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community and Sustainable Future (1987), Herman Daly and John Cobb Jr., criticize the international economic system, by showing that economic growth model and industrial economies have led to poverty and environmental disaster. They carefully present their model that might not only be applicable to the social and political context of the United States of America, but in the Third World socio-economic contexts. I therefore convinced that the person-in-community model has a common purpose as the model of sustainable development we discussed earlier on. There are numerous similarities between the two models.

Daly and Cobb (an economist and a theologian) call their model '*person-in-community*'. This is an attempt to re-direct resources to human needs and to revitalize the integrity of the environment. This economic development model tries to change the *homo economicus* that is based on an individualistic economic model to person-in-community. They state that:-

*We believe human beings are fundamentally social and that economics should be refounded on the recognition of this reality. We call for rethinking economics on the basis of a new concepts of homo economicus as person-in-community<sub>(22)</sub>*

Herman Daly and John Cobb apply their economic model of person-in-community to a wide range of public social policy questions such as market economy, labour,

industry, etc. They argue that the market economy should be re-directed and re-structured towards community and the environment. They further argue that a *person-in-community* model would also include advances in agriculture and industry and would moreover provide a decent livelihood for those entering the labour market for the first time.<sup>(23)</sup>

Daly and Cobb advocate a 'new' biocentric approach in economics, an approach that is life-oriented. In this context, they state that:-

*There is a need for re-thinking economics on basis of a new concept of homo economicus, person-in-community. This new concept replaces economics that is based on old homo economicus as self-interested individual which are inevitably disrupt existing social relationships in community* <sup>(24)</sup>

As the international economic system fails to adequately address poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment, Daly and Cobb suggest that there is a need to direct resources to human beings and to protect the environment. They see this as the focal point of any development practice.<sup>(25)</sup>

#### *(i) Possible steps*

The entire project in Daly 's and Cobb's person-in-community is to suggest that our present economy needs to be re-directed to human beings and the entire biosphere. They propose three basic possible steps that would in their view "getting us

there". These steps are open-ended options that one could consider as a way forward. *The first step toward redirection must be a widespread recognition that something is wrong with the present economic system.*

They argue that present economic policies do not work for a betterment of community. In order that economic policies work, politicians in the United States of America and elsewhere must recognize that *the present economic situation worldwide need renewal, specifically to re-direct resources to poverty, environmental degradation and unemployment.*

*Second step is a widespread recognition that most of the problems faced by humanity today are interconnected and indeed have a common source*

In their view, humanity shares a common life on earth. This idea is an evolutionary process that was emphasised by the Brandt reports which stated that "the biosphere is our common heritage" and must be preserved by cooperation.<sup>(26)</sup> The Brundtland Report (1987) takes its title from this idea: *Our Common Future*. If humanity shares the common future then there is a need that humanity, too, should face the problems of the time: poverty, deterioration of the environment and providing employment to all.

*Third step is the recognition that human beings still have the possibility of choosing a livable future for themselves and their descendants.*<sup>(27)</sup> This step is a summon for change in one's lifestyle. Daly and Cobb argue that people can be attracted by new

ways of ordering their lives, as well as driven by the recognition of what will happen if they not change. <sup>(28)</sup> This step requires a practice of sustainability which humanity take as a way forward in economic life in dealing with poverty which is a source of environmental degradation in the South.

These steps proposed by Daly and Cobb speak for themselves. For they are clear enough to be understood. They utter a warning: "century-old habits of mind do not give way readily, especially when they are established in all the places of prestige and high leverage" <sup>(29)</sup> This warning is indeed serious, we need to take Daly 's and Cobb's first step very serious.

In the next section Daly and Cobb suggest an alternative measurement for economic progress that would challenge the current system of Gross National Product (GNP).

### *(ii) Measuring Economic Progress*

According to Daly and Cobb, there is an urgent need to seek an optimum scale instead of infinite growth requires a different judgement of economic welfare than the one use of the gross national product (GNP) as basic measure of progress. <sup>(30)</sup>

Daly and Cobb suggest that we should abandon GNP as a measure of economic success and seek to counter balance its influence by pointing to social and ecological indicators as of equal importance. They propose that the most successful effort in this direction has been the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI)

which is composed of three variables: infant mortality, life expectancy at age one and literacy.<sup>(31)</sup> Daly and Cobb further argue that policies geared to improving the conditions measured by PQLI are often quite different from those geared to increasing the GNP.<sup>(32)</sup> The PQLI measure focuses on the quality of life as its name indicates. The three variables are indeed so crucial to the quality of human life. This measurement could be considered as new approach to measure income, though it does not include environmental indexes.

## THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP

### CONCLUSION

Economic questions are an integral part of the gospel. Churches should understand that economic questions are not *adiaphora*, or secondary, but well rooted in the message of Jesus who sought for alternative social order that is based on *inter alia* sharing material resources at local level as we saw in the parable of a rich man and Lazarus and open commensality. Every human being has the right to live a full life, with respect in society.

There is a great and urgent need to empower the grass-root people through the local Council of Churches. The process of empowering of local people cannot be realized when particular ecclesial traditions tend to hamper unity of the church at local level. Confessionalism hampers churches from joining one another in alleviating poverty, fighting against environmental degradation and the problem of unemployment. The question of identity should be properly understood, interpreted and addressed in order that there can be meaningful dialogue between a particular and universal and moving towards a meaningful *reciprocal engagement*.

The question of environmental degradation is extremely serious. It is good that the World Council of Churches in Vancouver in 1983 has linked the question of poverty to ecological crisis. The World Council of Churches now is part of the programme on the Commission on Sustainable Development. This engagement on

sustainable development issues would certainly put member churches of the Council at a proper level to make a contribution to the dilemma. The great task that faces the Church today is, in my view, to take this message to the local settings around the globe. We need public awareness mechanisms which are understood and which speak the language of the people. There is need to join our governments for the sake of environmental integrity. In most cases, churches lack technical aspect and skilled people in areas such as environmental management and development issues. A partnership should be sought locally and internationally.

Unemployment is declared by the Ecumenical Movement as structural sin. Therefore work is indeed crucial to everybody. Work, one would argue is life. Without work, life becomes meaningless. Our economic system should be humane in the sense that it should cater for alleviation of poverty, revitalize the environment and reduce high rates of unemployment in the South. The debate should continue.

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Notes

- (1) 'Development Theory & Changing Trends in Sub-Saharan African Economies' in Ulf Himmelstrand et.al (ds) African Perspectives on Development, 1994, p.91
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Willy Brandt (ed). North-South: a Programme for Survival, 1980 p.64
- (4) Stuart Corbridge. 'Interdependent Development? Problems of Aggregation and Implementation in the Brandt Report'. Applied Geography 1982, 2:253-65
- (5) Our Common Future. op.cit. p.3

- (6) United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, 1992 p.19
- (7) Our Common Future op.cit. p.43
- (8) William Adams. Green Development: Environmental Sustainability in the Third World. 1990 p.208.
- (9) Timo O Riordan 'The Politics of Sustainability' in R.K. Turner (ed) Sustainable environment Management: Principles and Practices. 1988, p.29
- (10) Redclift, op.cit. p.3
- (11) Our Common Future op.cit p.52
- (12) Ibid.
- (13) Ibid.
- (14) Goudzwaard and de Lange, op. cit. p.151
- (15) Ibid.
- (16) Neil W. Summerton. 'Principles for Environmental Policy' in Evangelical Review of Theology 1993, 4, 2: 226
- (17) Julius Nyerere (ed) Challenge to the South, 1990, p.273
- ((18) WCC: Signs of the Spirit, op.cit. p.59
- (19) Charles Villa-Vicencio. A Theology of Reconstruction, 1992, p.240
- (20) Ibid. p.249
- (21) Goudzwaard and de Lange op. cit. p.90
- (22) Daly and Cobb op.cit. p.164
- (23) Ibid.
- (24) Ibid. p.371
- (25) Ibid.

(26) Brandt. op.cit. p.73

(27) Daly and Cobb op.cit.pp.355-7

(28) Ibid.

(29) Ibid.

(30) Ibid. p.371

(31) Ibid.

(32) Ibid.

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