



Full Length Research Article

“FIVE BREAD AND TWO FISH...”1–A THEOLOGICAL QUEST FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability is the cry in today's world by many concerned earth dwellers with a view of developing the earth's resources in such a manner that it will not be depleted for future generations. Key to these developments is justice and equity regarding the redistribution of all goods and service on planet earth. The question is: What could theology and the church's contribution be to this quest of sustainability of the earth's resources? This paper is then an attempt to articulate theologically the contribution and thinking of the church about its role in ensuring sustainability from its position of faith in God.

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INTRODUCTION

For my interpretive schema I allowed myself to be led by the imagery of the five loaves of bread and the two fishes. In this lies the realization that the challenge to all concerned in the world is to multiply the available means by not exhausting the sources at the detriment of future generations and our environment. The strategic question that I wish to pose to enquire into the contribution of theology and the church to the debate is: What is Evangelical, Theological and Missional about Sustainability in Development? I venture to address this question by means of the following approach.

Interpretive schema

- The assessed need?
- What is available (the resources)?
- What needs to be done (what is possible)? The element of reality vs. the element of faith.
- The willingness (co-operation, partnership)? The resistance from vested interest and entrenched habits and power structures.

- The mode (the how)?
- Meta-theoretical Theological Elements: The Glory of God, The Integrity of creation (life - sustaining), Salvation of the world (Reconciled with God), Evangelical Stewardship and Pneumatology (Empowerment, Responsibility, Organizing, Managing, Caring, Accountability and Sustainability), Consummation (*Parousia*) and the purpose of creation in Jesus Christ the *Eschaton*.

The Context of the problem¹

The cry in all the world is SUSTAINABILITY (German: Nachhaltigkeit/ Zukunftsfähigkeit). Make the world more sustainable! The world needs a greener, more sustainable future.

The vision of “sustainability” or sustainable development” sets out to address these inequalities and attempts to show how things can be changed. It aims for nothing less than a fundamental change of course in every sector, on every level. The goal is to conserve the natural resources that support life, and establish social justice and a model of balanced, stable,

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¹ Cf. Hoering, Uwe 2009 Compass Bearings for a Course Change. English summary by Church Development Service and Brot für die Welt; Entwicklung und Religion DEZA, 2008

self-determined economic and social development for all countries.

The problem of our existing strategies (the problem of simplistic thought processes and approaches)

- Triangulation is needed in reasoning about Sustainability: Economic, Social and Ecological factors are of importance for a balanced view. The problem is that the economy always enjoys priority under the guise of prosperity.... There is no balance.
- The rise of emerging economies in Asia, Africa and Latin America in their ambitious attempt to draw level with Western economies. The question is: At what price; what are the implications for life on planet earth. And yet, people want a better life!
- "Shareholder value" is driving the economies around the world in pursuit of cheap labour, low production costs and new markets. Is there any consideration for the quality of life and the sustainability of non-renewable raw material?
- Growing the economy: The developing countries need more industries to feed and educate their people, need more revenue for social services, need investment for infra-structure and job-creation. Will the greed of the *North* allow and support the global South to attain this by down-scaling their consumerist societies?
- The effect of ruthlessly following the model of the industrialized countries by the emerging markets increases the already devastating result of climate change.

The maxim of People-centeredness and Human rights (political, economic, cultural and ecological justice); as well as the issue of culture in Development (the respect for culture and the dignity of people) must guide and regulate development initiatives. The negative impact of culture on development must also not be ignored for the sake of political correctness. Human rights and ecological soundness must define the frame-work for economic objectives.

The Evangelical or Biblical premise

When we speak of sustainability it calls up various teachings from the rich history of the church's life and witness over the centuries based on the Biblical evidence of God's revelation in covenant relationship with Israel and his church, without which a theological reflection on the matter would not be possible nor could it be termed Christian.

The doctrine of God (Theos –logos)

We worship God as the Supreme Being, creator of heaven and earth (cf. Apostolic Confession). He is worthy of all honor and glory. He is the omnipotent, the omniscient and the omnipresent. We worship him because He entered into a special covenant relationship with us in his special revelation, i.e. He will be our God and we will be his people. And He has renewed that covenant that he made with Israel through Jesus Christ with his church and through the church with the world. It is God's will to reconcile the world with him in a holistic sense.

"...God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself...." (2 Cor. 5:19).

The doctrine of Creation

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein (Ps.24:1). The covenant of works: The earth was entrusted to Humankind to manage it and care for the earth: the issue of earth-keeping (stewardship)² The Deists and the industrialists abuse their understanding of "rule over the earth" as if the earth had endless resources and that the eco-system could maintain itself despite man's exploitation of the earth's resources. The biblical and evangelical perspective is that we value the resources that God the creator has put at our disposal. Important for us is the integrity of creation and the preservation of the eco-system. The Peace with the Earth component of the program of the WCC refers to the dramatic challenges we are facing with the increase of CO2 emissions, the depletion of natural resources, deforestation, the erosion of the soil due to pesticides and intensive agriculture, the water crisis etc. Many of these components are related to climate change. The way humanity has been treating the earth at least since the industrial revolution can easily be expressed as a violent way. Peace and reconciliation with the earth is urgently needed in the current times.

Biblical anthropology

People are created in the image of God (The Imago Dei: Gen 1: 27). This is a maxim of Scripture and a pillar of Evangelical theology. The creational relationship of human beings in the centre of creation – the People-centeredness of God's approach. The new Adam motive of Paul and the new creation in and through the church are notions also of great value in this respect. Never to be forgotten in the scriptural sense of development is God's preferential option for the poor, the widow, the widowed and the stranger (Deut. 10:18, Jer. 7:6, Ezek. 44:22, Zech. 7:10, Mal. 3:5). The fact that God was prepared to die for the salvation of humankind in order to restore the relationship and the union between God and man (John 3:16) is important. "The life and life in abundance" (John 14) surely does not mean the life style of the Developed world, which is the cause of most of the ecological, financial and health crises we have in our world today. The call is rather "scale down!" But then what about a dignified life for all God's people on earth? The cry is to live a "green life," (too much greed, too much luxury and too much waste). Human beings are responsible for these crises. Government and political policies and short sited legislation, business decisions with a view of creating more profit for the investors at all cost. Manufacturers and industrial usage of raw material - from the extraction and processing of raw material- to the retailing and disposal of end products(the ecological cost of production). Regarding New Liberal Capitalism with its attempts to create cheaper job-markets in the 2/3 world: What about the industrial waste and conditions created by these markets during manufacturing? Consider also Consumerism and the quest for more luxury items. The question is how to reinforce remarkable efforts around the world to recycle, to switch to solar economy, economical cars usage, simpler lifestyles, etc.

²WCC's program on Earth-keeping. The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) which was held in Jamaica, May 2011 was the culmination of Decade of Violence – Churches seeking reconciliation and peace.

Then we are also faced by the effect of inhuman working condition in the 2/3rds. world, especially affecting women and child labour.

The doctrine of Atonement

This doctrine is not so popular today but it still holds true biblically. We can learn anew from this cultic concept in the history of God's covenant with his people for over 4000 yrs.

What do we have to atone for in this world after centuries of making war, mercantilism, industrialization, colonialism, neocolonialism and in our day of globalization. There is unconditional forgiveness yes, but restoration (restorative justice) and reparation³ have to take place in the process of reconciliation. Much damage had been done in and to God's creation in the process of developing our technologies and for the sake of growing the economy for better living conditions. Restoration has to take place where it is still possible by planting new forests (stop further deforestation especially in the Amazon), stop desertification in Africa and the resettlement of communities in Asia because their place of abode and lively-hood have been damage and flooded due to earth warming and climate change⁴. In the process of colonialism millions of people have lost their land, therefore there is room also for responsible land-claims and restoration of their property. The outsourcing of production to less industrialized countries by which the international and national companies get away with offloading the social and ecological cost on the 2/3rd worlds must be monitored and stopped.

Christology

This doctrine is about the person and work of Christ. This universal act of God is motivated by the love of God (John 3:16): God's mission for Justice, reconciliation and peace through Jesus Christ in the world becomes of the utmost importance. The attitude of kenosis (self-emptying in love by Jesus Christ re. Philip.2: 5-8) the giving of himself in servanthood. In John's gospel (ch. 13) we find the metaphor of the "apron and the bowl." Luther called this: The ministry in cross-form⁵. Cross-form entails a process of becoming less, of dying to the "this-worldly" way of life (the Theology of Glory) in order to serve the common good. Sacrificing for and in the ministry in order to bring the good news to those who need it in all spheres of life, but also sacrificing the selfish, greedy, consumerist way of life.⁶

³ The right to reparation should cover all injuries suffered by victims and embraces three kinds of action:

- a) Restitution (seeking to restore victims to their previous state);
- b) Compensation (physical or mental); and
- c) Rehabilitation

⁴ Climate change is also an area that the WCC embarked on as part of its advocacy role at the level of the UN Framework Convention and within those circles look also at "victims' rights, especially at the "most vulnerable communities." (cf. International Panel on Climate Change 4th Assessment Report).

⁵ Luther's Theologia Crucis; cf. also Zinzendorf and Moltman in August 1993 KruisTeologie by Zinzendorf. University of the Western Cape.

⁶ Can Companies be motivated by God's love for fairness? What about codes like the Sullivan Code in SA whereby

Ecclesiology and Ecumenism: The church as new Creation and the alternative community

Our oneness (unity) in Christ means acting together on all level, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally is crucial for local and global effectiveness. The Church is in the world: That is how it must understand its calling and participation in God's mission. The church has a holistic approach; not allowing a dichotomist understanding of life, but should regard the totality of life as sacred, although paying serious attention to the distortion of reality by sin. The values of the kingdom: "the salt, light and yeast" nature and functions of the church metaphorically spell out that the church has to have "a giving of self and self-sacrificial nature" in its engagement with the world and in context. The movement is from within to the inhabited and ecological environment: centrifugal rather than centripetal. Through the church the Kingdom values should 'rub off' on the world. There is also the "remnant shall return"-motive of the Old Testament which as motivation and source of strength in the local setting could at first be crucial to get the formation of action groups going. Ever- a-new the Christians should invent and reorganize themselves even after seemingly not gaining much success with their efforts. From small beginnings in the local setting we can snow-ball our efforts if we have the vision and drive. The slogan, "thinking globally acting locally is very important in the development process. But together, we can.

This is a genuine Christian approach and fundamental to the understanding of the church. Joining hands with fellow Christians all over the world within the Conciliar movement and also with other religions (a challenge to the mono-cultures). This is truly ecumenical. The community-forming nature of the church is critical to the individualistic, secularized and estranged world under the influence of Western society. In its community-forming nature it is especially called to stand in an advocacy way in solidarity with the poor and the marginalized in order to protect, to defend, to empower and to wrought justice for the poor. The church with the true "common good" in mind, is called to act in partnership with other role players in society for the sake of humanity's "salvation" or wellness. The church will rationally and purposefully join other role-players and stakeholders in society in order to improve the quality of life in society. In this process the church retains its prophetic voice but does not neglect its *diaconic* role (John 13: 4-12). Of course it will always remain a question of how the church engages the public sphere with all these modern challenges? What mode of church do we need for today's challenges and especially for its witness and ministry in the public sphere? It should be remembered that in Development ministry there are Churches on each side of the divide: Rich and poor, North and South. The question of our involvement is about attitude and policies. Important is the value of human dignity before God, and therefore the following issues are of crucial importance;

- Our motivation for being involved

businesses are compelled to subscribe to codes of ethical trade and human working conditions, and whereby they are held responsible for the social and health costs of their workers and the environmental impact costs.

- The nature of our partnerships, the structure and composition
- The manner in which we cooperate.
- The ways in which we give and receive (objects or subjects)

The doctrine of Hamartia (the doctrine of sin)

The forces and powers that endanger God's creation and bedevil relations between God and human, amongst human beings and societies and with nature must be "unmasked" (Walter Wink). The structural nature of sin: political structures, economic structures, investment and profit structures have to be constantly analyzed and critiqued with respect to their equity and justice. In modern Greek usage of the word *hamartia* the meaning is very interesting: a flaw in the character of the protagonist of a literary tragedy that brings about his or her downfall. The protagonist of globalization, of economic growth and investments have flaws in their characters, which may bring about their and unfortunately our downfall. It is already happening and we refuse to speak about the fundamental element of sin in our consumerist life-style and systems. It is not politically correct to speak of sin and discipline any more – I hope it is still possible to speak of our responsibility, the moral issues involved, and our accountability in this world to God. *Hamartia* originally meant to miss the target. Yes, we are missing the purpose of the creator with the way we live and that is why we have become a force of destruction. Borrowed from the destructive world of war, we are loose canons in His creation. By the sheer massiveness of the problem, we behave like elephants in a china shop!

The doctrine of Reconciliation⁷

Reconciliation is at the core of the Christian message. Jesus Christ through his life, death and resurrection reconciled the

⁷ Cf. The WCC, who in 2001 launched the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches seeking Reconciliation and Peace, 2001-2010. See also The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2009 as the International Year of Reconciliation and is thereby,

"Recognizing that reconciliation processes are particularly necessary and urgent in countries and regions of the world which has suffered or are suffering situations of conflict that have affected and divided societies in their various internal, national and international facets,

Recognizing also that many of the activities of the UN system in general and the international community as a whole to support peacekeeping and peacebuilding, conflict prevention, disarmament, sustainable development, the promotion and protection of human rights and dignity, democracy, the rule of law and governance, interalia, lead to the initiation and development of reconciliation processes,

Aware that dialogue among opponents from positions of respect and tolerance is an essential element of peace and reconciliation,

Aware also that truth and justice are indispensable elements for the attainment of reconciliation and lasting peace..."

A/Res/61/17

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/495/45/PDF/N0649545.pdf?OpenElement>

world to God and with amongst inhabited and created world. This is a theological truth for any Christian Theology – be it Catholic, Orthodox or Evangelical, Missiology and/or for Development thinking in Theology. The church in its service in the world (social/political diakonia) is founded in the *diakoniataskatallages*, the ministry of reconciliation which God has entrusted in Christ Jesus to the church for all people in the World. In 2 Cor 5: 18-19 the proclamation of the message of reconciliation is called *diakonia*. Jesus Christ is the first and exemplary *diakon* while He incorporated (embodied) the reconciliation act of God. Through his public speeches and teachings He made righteousness and mercy practical. Through his acts in relation to his message He enabled the transformation to justice and mercy in relation to the Kingdom of God. He rehabilitated the sick of body and soul, He re-socialized the excluded and a-social, He befriended the outcast, the lost, those that were isolated and rejected and thereby reintegrated them in the fellowship of God and people.

Pneumatology

God is preserving the new creation in the Holy Spirit. This season within the salvation economy of the God-head is the season of the Holy Spirit – between *Ascension* and the *Parousia*⁸. The Spirit makes intercessions for us with groaning, while the *creation* eagerly waits with earnest expectations for the revelation of the children of God (Rom.8:19). Therefore we have a champion on our side in our efforts for Mission and Development. We get "power from on high" (Luk 24: 49b; cf. Acts 1:8), which means we are empowered for our engagement in Mission and Development. We are not alone....!

The manifestation of the working of the Spirit in this dispensation of grace also implies that the creation...will also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God⁹.

⁸ In the words of the Apostolic Confession, we confess about the final consummation: "...From whence He cometh to judge the quick and the dead..." When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all (1Cor 15:28).

⁹ Romans 8: 18-27, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the children of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. 26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do

The Eschatological perspective¹⁰

This is the process of renewal of and sustaining creation so that it can be what God intends it to be. The commitment of the Christian to development has the distinctive feature of its eschatological horizon. An overestimation of human capabilities in our enthusiasm to address the problems of the world and especially our concern for the misery of the wretched of the earth might lead to overburdening or discouragement. Thus an eschatological perspective sets us free for action and inspires our action through the promise of the coming Kingdom. Since Christians cannot do everything and need not do everything to overcome poverty and hunger in this world, they are free to act here and now in the light of the future in God's world to come in order to overcome misery and suffering in this world. Christian commitment towards development is informed by the awareness that all human efforts are based on the hope that the fulfillment will come in God's kingdom.

The Church in Gods mission

The Bible is very indicative of the Church's mission as can be gleaned from the following texts:

Mat 28: 18, "To me is given all power in heaven and on earth! Go therefore...." John 20: 21: Peace be unto you! As the Father has sent me, so I send you! Isa 52:7 "How lovely are on the mountains the feet of those that bring on the message of peace." This text in context spells out the role of Israel for the sake of and on behalf of the nation's salvation (*pars pro toto*). The centrifugal and centripetal dynamics between *Koinonia* and *marturea* is emphasized in respect of the calling of the people of God. As Isaiah further explains it, the people of God are called out of the darkness to the light to be a light unto the nations. 2 Cor 5: 20-21, "Now then, we are *ambassadors for Christ*, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be *reconciled to God*. For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." The church in essence is missional in nature – in its very fiber...in its essential or its fundamental character, quality, or makeup. It is called and sent into the world by God for the purpose of his kingdom amongst the people in the inhabited world. That is why we can speak of the missional church from a missiological perspective.

In this paper¹¹ we deal with material within the realm of Missional Theology (Ecclesiology), which is a functional

not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

¹⁰Ficker, Rudolp, 2008. Christian Commitment towards International Development; cf. August, K.Th 1999 Community Development in Practical Theology. Stellenbosch University.

¹¹ Cf. August, K.Th. 2005 The Quest for PublicChurch, Cape Town: Moravian Printing Works.

theology. Based on Guder (1998:11-12)¹² the term *missional* emphasized the essential nature and vocation of the church as God's called and sent people. Therefore we distinguish the following critical trailblazers for our action in the world in Mission and Development in obedience to God's evangelical will:

- A missional Theology (ecclesiology) is biblical (the different modes of exegesis and hermeneutics observed). The biblical witness is appropriately received as the testimony to God's mission and the formation of God's missionary people to be instruments and witnesses of that mission.
- A missional Theology (ecclesiology) is historical. Ecclesiology continuously needs to be shaped for its particular culture, but as such it is guarded by the Christian church in all its cultural expressions - by those churches that have preceded and those that are contemporary (the ecumenical nature of the church).
- A missional Theology (ecclesiology) is contextual. All ecclesiology functions relative to their context. All ecclesiology is developed within a particular context. There is but one way to be the church, and that is incarnationally, within a specific concrete setting.
- A missional Theology (ecclesiology) is eschatological. The doctrine of the church must be developmental and dynamic in nature if we believe that it is moving toward God's promised consummation of all things. New biblical insights will convert the church and its theology; new historical challenges will raise questions never before considered; and new cultural contexts will require a witnessing response that redefines how the church functions and expresses its hope.
- A missional Theology (ecclesiology) can be practised, that is, it can be translated into practice. The basic function of all theology is to equip the church for its calling, and that calling is fundamentally missional, i.e. to witness faithfully in particular places and spheres of life. A missional theology therefore serves the church's witness. As such it has to do with the function (*praxis*) and mission of the Church in society (in the world). It seeks better understanding of its functionality fundamental to the *Missio Dei* (The mission of God - from the world into the world).
- As Missional Theology is about the Church's serving function to the community and the world, these functions, viz. mission, proclamation, fellowship, education, diakonia, growth, habitual change and transformation will always influence and guard the church's ministry in word and deed in the world.

The mission is about justice, reconciliation and peace for all God's people. The "Good Tidings" is about liberation from the shackles of oppression and exploitation and the natural biological and environmental conditions of life. "The people in darkness" must experience this great light of the Gospel (Isa 9:1-2); they must experience the act of liberation and transformation of the living God! This message and the

¹²Guder, DC 1998. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending Church in North America*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.

embodiment thereof has in its focus structures, politically and economically, structures culturally and socially that have to be enhanced if good and that have to be transformed if bad. Mission is proclamation in Word and Deed¹³ – this implies the embodiment of the truth through our ethical norms and conduct. Proclamation and *Diakoniago* together in God's mission. This service may include a public witness that requires different modes for different spheres in our engagement with society at large and on all levels in the world. And such spheres may be:

- Influencing the Media and use Communication (The role of the Mass Media)
- Partnerships with investors, industry, private enterprise and government (legislation, delivery, budgeting, regulation) in building a humane framework for people-centered development.
- Advocacy role of the church: The 2/3rds world countries and the poor in world trade, production and manufacturing.
- The issue of the "rush to the bottom," and exploitation of the South (women and children).
- The issue of labour: rights and the negotiations by organized labour for fair conditions.
- Health issues (HIV/Aids, Tuberculosis, Malaria)
- The position of national governments in negotiating investments for job creation and infrastructure in the developing countries.
- The issue of Brain-drain, etc., etc.

Development Thinking

International development can be described as a process of liberation from hunger, poverty, disease, unjust economic structures, violation of human rights and power structures which deny people access to resources necessary for life. Development aims at justice and the improvement of dignified living conditions and thus at contributing to peace.¹⁴ Christian involvement and action are rooted in the faith in God the creator who has created humankind in his image and who has commissioned them to use and to preserve the resources of the earth. Christian involvement and action are rooted in the experience of faith that God in Jesus became human, turned to the afflicted and miserable people, suffers with them and leads them out of misery¹⁵. Finally, Christian action is oriented by the promise of the coming Kingdom of God. By engaging the afflicted and identifying in solidarity with the wretched of the earth, Christians embodies the love of God (witness in word

¹³ Mk 16:20 reports about how the ascended Lord has worked with the proclamation of the Apostles (those send out) by confirming the proclamation with "signs (miracles)."

¹⁴Ficher, Rudolph, 2008.Christian Commitment towards International Development.

¹⁵Luk. 4:18-19 (Isa 61:1-2) The Spirit of the Lord GOD^{is} upon me;
Because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek;
He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD...

and deed) and at the same time they exercise Christian discipleship. In Theological Ethics of Development, Christians endeavor to establish why churches and their members should be committed towards development and why they should engage in development policy and development oriented action. A very appropriate development in the Christian development discourse is the design of a special Christian way of development thinking, viz. Transformational Development. Transformational Development is a Christian way of development thinking and not a theory of development per se as it is based on what is regarded as the best form in development discourse, which is called People-Centred, Participatory, Holistic (integrated), Sustainable Development. Let me just shortly expound on the Characteristics of Transformational Development It is important for Christians in our understanding of development that development goes beyond social welfare, and that it is especially a call for justice concerns, justice ministries, advocacy, systemic change, long-term vision and sustainability. The vision for a Christian thinking about and involvement in Transformational¹⁶ Development is characterized by the following norms or principles:

- Life sustenance (the meeting of basic human needs)
- Equity (equitable distribution of material goods and opportunity)
- Justice (within all social relationships, including democratic participation)
- Dignity and self-worth (feeling fully human and knowing we are made in the image of God)
- Freedom (From external control or oppression; a sense of being liberated in Christ)
- Participation (in a meaningful way in their own transformation. People are not to object but the subject of their own development).
- Reciprocity (between poor and non-poor; each have something to learn from the other; the issue of knowledge transference is very important in this context).
- Cultural Fit (That respects the best in local cultures and that treats them as creative. There are cultural aspects that are a threat to and could hamper development)
- Ecological Soundness
- Spirituality (our style as Christian leaders in being catalyst or change agents is an *incarnational* or *kenotic* approach)

This approach in development shows that a Christian way of engagement in development cannot be dualistic but holistic and systemic.

Conclusion

My premise for this paper is the conviction that one of the most significant responses to mission today is to see Mission as Transformation, whereby the tension between justice and love shapes all contemporary missiological reflection and action. Furthermore, based on the conviction that a theology shaped by the biblical narratives and grounded in the practices of the Christian community within context can provide

¹⁶The concept is borrowed from Bragg in Samuel, V and Sugden, C.1987. The Churches response to Human Need, Oxford: Eerdmans Publishing Company.

resources to enable people of faith to regain a public voice in our pluralistic culture and global liberal-capitalistic prosperity culture by (1) seeking to understand through its faith the relation between Christian convictions and the broader social and cultural context within its situatedness and (2) to conscientiously strive to progressively play its catalytic, transformative public role in society based on:

- The church's nature as the people called and sent by God in the world for his mission with the world according to the principles and values of the Reign of God;
- A socio-political and economic analysis of the global liberal capitalistic context; by not underestimating the importance of wealth creation
- A theology of mission for the advocacy and prophetic *diaconic* role of the church.

In conclusion allow me to remark in all humility that the world, and by name the developed industrialized world, has left terrible scars throughout history due to unbridled development and under the pretext of "a better life for all." In the face of the horrifying reality of earth warming and climate change we cannot speak of "footprints" anymore - these are "gaping wounds", these are mortal blows delivered to God's people and to the integrity of His creation. Let me quote a challenge from Dr Guillermo Kerber¹⁷ of the WCC, "The way humanity has been treating the earth...can easily be expressed as a violent way. Peace and reconciliation with the earth is urgently needed in the current times. And the Churches, following the message of Jesus Christ have a crucial role to play in this regard." I am strengthened by the fact that the church is constantly challenged to live up to its calling! We would serve this purpose and calling best by being reminded to bear the following in mind as we embark on this critical and dangerous course to encounter the powers with their vested interests for the sake of God's people and His earth:

Colossians 1: 15-20

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether they are kings, lords, rulers, or powers. All things have been created through him and for him. 17 He himself existed before all things, and

by him all things hold together. 18 He is also the head of the body, which is the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he himself might have first place in everything. 19 For God was pleased to have all of his fullness live in him. 20 Through him he also reconciled all things to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, thus making peace through the blood of his cross.

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¹⁷ Paper delivered on the 12 June 2009 at the WCC headquarters in Geneva to the ecumenical Tour-group of the department of Mission and Ecumenics of the church of Baden