

# DEVELOPMENT AND SOUTH AFRICA: A CRITICAL THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE DISCOURSE OF DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

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## ABSTRACT

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) has made significant contributions to the theological discourse of development in Africa. Two gatherings, Lome (1987) and Harare (1992), stand out in the history of the AACC as defining moments in the theological discourse on the regression of development in Africa since the achievement of independence of the first African states from colonial rule. The purpose of this article is to investigate the contributions of these two gatherings and to assess the role of personhood and personal responsibility for development in South Africa as one of the last African countries to achieve democratic rule. Development attempts by the religious, and specifically Christian institutions such as the Ecumenical Federation of Southern Africa (EFSA) and the World Council of Churches, are correlated with dominant development theories to demonstrate the overlapping of development approaches. Some of the weaknesses of these approaches are pointed out. The constructive part of the article suggests that a theological notion of personhood and its relation to development is a more sustainable form of development within the context of contemporary South Africa.

**Keywords:** South Africa; development; All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC); Ecumenical Federation of Southern Africa (EFSA); personhood; personal responsibility

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## INTRODUCTION

This article will investigate the use of the category of personhood in the ecumenical theological discourse on development in Africa, with reference to publications of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) leading up to and including the 6th Harare (1992) Assembly. The 6th AACC at Harare (1992) is the most significant assembly for the study of development in Africa. At this assembly, the resolutions of the previous meeting in Lome (1987) were properly engaged with as the church's missionary activity on a continent that was increasingly plagued by leadership crises, material deprivation, and social disintegration. Lome (1987) was overwhelmed by a leadership crisis and financial bankruptcy. The South African context and the leadership of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu influenced the direction of the AACC. It is for this reason that Harare (1992) is very significant for the investigation of development in South Africa with reference to the level of poverty and the widening gap between the rich and poor.

During the period leading up to and after the dismantling of apartheid, many attempts were made by various church denominations, religious institutions, and non-profit organisations to contribute to the development of a unified South African society. The four conferences of the Ecumenical Foundation in Southern Africa (EFSA) are the most prominent development initiatives by religious institutions in the period under investigation. This article will correlate the main issues that made up the development approach of the Harare (1992) assembly with the approach of EFSA. It will further investigate to what extent the AACC addressed personhood and responsibility as harbingers of development.

## CIVIL SOCIETY, THE STATE AND AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

Two publications summarise a turning point in the development debate within the AACC. *Civil Society, the State and African Development in the 1990s*<sup>1</sup> (AACC 1993) is a report of the role of the state in African development and the shift from colonial and neo-colonial economic policies towards non-profit organisations.

By the early 1990s Africa had witnessed the last of colonial political rule and South Africa was the hope that Africa would become competitive in global economics and politics. The development debate had shifted from the binary of the developing world and the Western world to the state versus civil society (NGOs). These two binaries addressed serious questions about the uncritical implementation of ideologies such as capitalism, Marxism, and socialism. "Thus 'capitalist' Zaire has faced economic decline as has 'socialist' Burkino Faso and 'marxist' Ethiopia" (Kisare 1992, 11).

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1 This report contains the findings of a study and workshop jointly conducted by the AACC and MWENGO (Reflection and Development Centre for NGOs in Eastern and Southern Africa) between 1991 and 1993. The workshop took place from 2–6 August 1993 in Arusha, Tanzania.

The relationship between Africa and the Western world is generally viewed as antagonistic. Africa is referred to as a victim of the Western world because of the long history of colonialism and imperialism. On the other hand, the Western world has also been viewed as the exploiter of the natural resources of Africa. From an internal perspective, the role of the state for development in Africa has come into question during the economic stagnation in the neo-colonial period.

The shift in the role of the state in development is attributed to the move from one party rule to multi-party democracies. Most African countries had gone through this shift by the late 1980s. South Africa was a latecomer to democracy on the African continent in 1994. This shift in South Africa and elsewhere on the African continent has not translated into economic growth for the overwhelming majority of its citizens. “A 1989 World Bank report flatly stated that overall, Africans were almost as poor then as they had been for 30 years earlier” (Nyang’oro 1993, 17).

During this same period, civil society in the form of NGOs played a very prominent role in the economics in Africa. The relationship between NGOs and the state has not always been cordial, but in the South African context development initiatives had to be done in solidarity with the state. The significant point is not whether the state or NGOs should be involved in development, but rather what their role should be in relation to economics. Despite the historical differences between the state and NGOs, one commonality that replaces the state and NGOs from a binary relationship to one of creative tension is “the political question of participation” in development (Nyang’oro 1993, 49). Justice is at the centre of this creative tension. Development does not only refer to individual or community development, but the policies and structures that govern development. These themes became the core of liberation theology under the authorship of Gustavo Gutiérrez and Leonardo Boff.

The shift from individual or community development to social justice also became a major theme in the broader ecumenical movement. At The Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Nairobi (1975), economic development could only be meaningfully debated within the context of social justice. Value systems, institutions, structures, and perceptions of peoples’ capabilities had to change. Parmar, formerly Assistant Director of the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches, refers to the change as the realisation that “development is a means to human welfare; it is not an end in itself. Man (and woman) is more important than social processes. But if efforts for development are to bear fruit these processes must be allowed to shape the values and structures of society ... Eradication of poverty and economic stagnation necessitates structural changes” (Parmar 1967, 353). Swart (2006, 45–46) claims that egalitarian distribution became more important than production. He further asserts that the focus was on ethical and political indicators.

The second publication considered here, *Christian Education and Development in Africa: Reconciliation Process in Social Development* (AACC 1992), is a report of the strategy meeting held in Banjul, The Gambia in April 1992. This report reflected a continuum with the report *Civil Society, the State and African Development in the 1990s*

(AACC 1993). The centrality of the marginalised becomes the catalyst for development. Active agency and not passive recipient is identified as the core element for social transformation.

Transformation entails the process of becoming aware of both the source of life and the forces of death. It also involves a commitment to take charge of restoring the order of creation, ejecting the sinful power of corruption from our own behaviour and attitudes towards others ... Transformation is therefore the continuing restorative task of the Church ... This implies a sacrificial commitment to the struggle from a better humanity that reflects the image of God in us. (AACC 1992, 18)

The report identified development as integrated with the substance of the self. "People are created to develop and rule this world and that development starts in the centre of their being, namely, in their hearts" (AACC 1992, 15). Here is the clearest evidence of the link between self and development. The integration of the self and development theologically necessitates engagement with the dominant theological notion of creation. The report continues with the previous one by emphasising the centrality of people for development, but it differs on the relationship between people and development. In the former report (1992), development is viewed as external to the people and in the latter report (1993) development is an integral part of selfhood.

The shift in the relationship between people and development was also evident in the broader ecumenical theology circle. At the ecumenical gathering in Melbourne (1980), the centrality of participation and particularly the participation of those at the margins was also affirmed as a major aspect of the mission of the church. This meant that production was meaningless unless the marginalised and economically deprived were primary participants. Bosch (1992, 434) noted:

In a sense, the poor became the dominant hermeneutical category at Melbourne. In at least three of the four sections (I, II and IV) the poor were prominent. Reflecting after the conference, Emilio Castro (1985, 151) suggested that, at Melbourne, the affirmation of the poor was the "missiological principle par excellence" and the church's relation to the poor "the missionary yardstick."

Another commonality between the two reports is the programme-orientated nature of the recommendations of both gatherings. At Banjul development was not defined as independent of programmes and projects. The "AACC and other ecumenical institutions have worked hard to promote the notion that social transformation is essential in development work and other social action programmes" (AACC 1992, 8). The 1992 report also reflects that Christian education, which was the dominant activity of development, was programme and project orientated. The objective of Christian education is recorded as "to identify themes and areas in the history and community-life of African people which might benefit from the educational function of African communities; to articulate new meaning and induce a new vigour in Christian education,

to enable it to become integral to the life situations of African communities” (AACC 1992, 10).

The recommendations from the two task teams also clearly indicate the programme-orientated development embedded in transformation and Christian education. Task team one recommended: “The ultimate aim of this process is to transform Christian/development Education into a multi-disciplinary learning process in which skills such as political and social analysis, development skills, economic analysis, and theological skills will inform the content and thrust of the programmes and activities” (AACC 1992, 28). Task team two recommended: “For the implementation of a programme that would encourage and equip churches to adopt Christian education as a strategic tool in social education, it is suggested that three teams should be identified to work closely with the AACC” (AACC 1992, 30).

## ALL AFRICAN CONFERENCE, HARARE (1992)

These two reports informed the sixth AACC General Assembly at Harare, Zimbabwe in 1992. The preceding two general assemblies in Nairobi (1981) and Lome (1987) were the turning point in the mission of the AACC. Sakupapa (2017, 165) summarises the turning point as follows:

Amongst the several resolutions at Nairobi, it was also recommended that the AACC creates a department responsible for development problems (see AACC 1982, 72). Related to this was what kind of organisation do we want? ... This recommendation stressed that in order to enable the churches to be effective, the AACC should conscientize its constituency “to the political, economic and social realities of the African continent as it is only after this that the churches can determine their role in Africa (AACC 1982, 84) ... the Research and Development Consultancy Service (RDCS) ... Since the creation of the RDCS, a focus on development formed one of the central thrusts in the AACC programmatic arrangement.”

It became apparent at Lome (1987) that a lack of good leadership and mismanagement of resources prevented the AACC from implementing the resolution about development taken at the previous assembly. The term of the new incumbents after the resignation of Maxime Ranfraso and Archbishop Walter Khotso Makhulu was spent on the second part of the assembly’s resolution. Tutu, the then president, observes: “This assembly marked the end of the first phase and beginning of the second phase of the resolute decision of the member churches in Lome in 1987 to reshape the All Africa Conference of Churches and transform it to become a dynamic instrument and agent to work for the coming of God’s kingdom in Africa” (AACC 1992, 1). It was only after the AACC was rid of the leadership conflict that attention could be given to development issues.

The Harare (1992) assembly had four interrelated sub-themes, which embed the resolutions of the reports: *Civil Society, the State and African Development in the 1990s* (AACC 1993); and *Christian Education and Development in Africa: Reconciliation Process in Social Development* (AACC 1992).

## Vision and Hope

The challenges of the ecumenical church included the effects of slavery and colonisation; dictatorships and one-party political systems; disarticulation; militarisation; disruptions in educational systems; lack of economic resources and vulnerability to outside conglomerates; debt; mismanagement; poor leadership; abstract spirituality; generational, gender and ministerial divisions; undemocratic church structures; religious exclusivism; and poor church and state relations (AACC 1992, 16–17). The recommendations to address these challenges included evaluating church structures and ministerial training; developing contextual theology; intergenerational groups and a ministry of all believers; re-allocation of resources and programmes towards the most vulnerable; and most importantly, to develop moral leadership (AACC 1992, 18–19).

## Justice and peace

Although there does not appear to be any specific session dedicated to a theological analysis and description of justice and peace, this theme comes from the two reports that are discussed above. The right to fullness of life and human dignity are directly related to societal structures and practices. The absence of peace also thwarts justice and fundamental human rights such as freedom of movement, right of speech, and the right to be protected by the state. The violation to express these rights within an environment of peace transgressed selfhood (AACC 1992, 19–20).

In light of the quest for justice, the following recommendations were made at the sixth conference: The church must use discernment to identify opportunities and development efforts of both the state and non-governmental possibilities to restore peace in Africa and to support the organisations. The facilitation of activities and creating networks for co-operation on issues and programmes of justice and peace was also recommended. Ministerial formation and education for clergy and the laity should include peace and justice as missions of the ecclesia. The recommendations of this sub-group emphasised: “All these strategies would be meaningless if they were not seen as church strategies in the context of mission in today’s world” (AACC 1992, 20–21).

## Integrity of creation

This sub-theme addresses the tension of humanity’s role towards the rest of creation. The discussion is rooted in the debate about humanity having dominion over the rest of creation or whether humanity is responsible for the well-being of creation. This tension is coupled with the kind of relationship that humanity has with the rest of creation. “The fruit of our meaningful relationship with all creatures is the fullness of life here on earth ... we are all under judgement as stewards of God’s creation” (AACC 1992, 23). Contrary to the use of the term “dominion” in the 1992 report, *Christian Education and*

*Development in Africa: Reconciliation Process in Social Development* (AACC 1992), the term “stewardship” was used in relation to creation in the 1993 report.

Despite the use of “stewardship” instead of the more oppressive symbol of “dominion,” stewardship as a function was external to humanity. Within each of these two notions of “dominion” and “stewardship” is a presupposition that detaches the action from the person. The function is not implicitly connected to what it means to be human, but is secondary to the substance of personhood. This disconnection between personhood and function is demonstrated in the notion that stewardship is a duty and good stewardship is associated with “safekeeping and thoughtful use. Bad stewardship is comparable to ‘stealing’ from others, especially our children and grandchildren, by the destruction of resources which is also theirs from God” (AACC 1992, 23).

This function-orientated approach to creation and its relationship with humanity results in a pragmatic approach to the recommendations made at the conference. The recommendations included that churches appoint advisors on environmental issues, implement tree-planting programmes, and train young people and women to conscientise others about environmental issues. The church should implement the biblical notion of rest; it should teach personal salvation, the theology of creation, engage African spirituality, and formulate appropriate liturgies for awareness raising of God’s creation (AACC 1992, 24–26).

## Participation of all God’s people

The inclusion of women and the youth was given special focus in the gift-orientated model for development. Not only were the voices of women important, but how women were viewed by men and the cultural misrepresentation of women also came into focus. The youth had to have a voice beyond programme participation and needed to be given decision-making power on all levels. Participation is more than involvement in programmes and structures, but it is embedded in power relations and social identities (AACC 1992, 26).

Recommendations are to include all people in development, include training and formation for the youth and women, and to create space for intellectuals to exercise their gifts and skills development. Christian education and worship must be transformed to become a place of engagement and reflection of the fundamentals of identity forming. These include fundamentals such as human rights, human dignity and gifts. Human relationships must go beyond those of the same cultural, social, religious or language group (AACC 1992, 27–28).

## The selfhood of the church

The approach of the AACC at Harare (1992) was also influenced by the need to re-interpret what it means to be church in the context of economic decline and unprecedented

levels of conflict. The president, Desmond Tutu, attested to the social and economic challenges that the church was facing in his opening address:

Africa still suffers from the debt burden and is being further devastated by the IMF and World Bank sponsored Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Africa is still experiencing gross violation of human rights and still produces far too many refugees and displaced persons. Africa still experiences widespread civil strife. We in the churches should therefore address these and other pressing issues to make abundant life a reality for the people of Africa today. (AACC 1994, 1)

This was not only an attempt to address the functional aspects of the church, but it was also a quest for identity. It was an attempt to ask “who or what the church is.” Sakupapa claims that:

Nairobi and Lome cast doubt on the search for authenticity without collaboration with other ecumenical agencies and partner churches ... In his study of the authenticity quest in the AACC, Utuk (1997, 200) has radicalised this view. According to him, what Harare expanded on was the view that a “thoroughgoing, wholesale, authentic African Christianity existing without foreign influence was no longer seen as desirable or even possible.” (Sakupapa 2017, 175)

The selfhood of the church is summarised in the reports of the Business Committee as follows: “The key question is whether the church has a self-understanding, sufficiently clear so as to support equitable dialogue and partnerships with others. The challenge here is for the African church to continue its re-discovery in relation to others” (AACC 1994, 29).

The church is both the context and agent of development. The recommendations from the two reports and the Business Committee reports of the sixth conference included the church as agent of intra and inter-faith dialogue, a space that embeds contextual theological training, a church of the margins, and participant in advocacy initiatives.

## DEVELOPMENT IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

The 6th AACC meeting at Harare (1992) made significant contributions to the notions of development appropriated in post-Apartheid South Africa. This could be attributed partly to the influence of the president, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, and the unprecedented contribution he made to the resuscitation of the AACC from bankruptcy at Lome to becoming a prophetic force on the African continent by the turn of the twentieth century. Jose Belo Chipenda, the general secretary of the 6th assembly, recalls Desmond Tutu as, “Our indefatigable President, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was surely our leading light as we struggled through difficult issues which often have the potential to cast darkness over any gathering” (AACC 1994, 10). It is this influence of Tutu that directed the approach of development at the AACC at Harare (1992). The approach at Harare (1992) and the influence of Tutu is also evident in the development debate in South Africa during the same period.



The turn of the twentieth century was also the emergence of a new political landscape in South Africa. South Africans and the world at large witnessed the shift from one party apartheid rule to democratic multiparty rule. The church-state relationship became one major issue in relation to development. After centuries of colonial rule, and more than four decades of apartheid rule, the first task of both state and church was to pave the way for economic and social development. Development became the mission of the church.

## ECUMENICAL FOUNDATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

In the 1960s the apartheid government implemented a policy of “separate development” which left a lasting negative connotation in the development process of South Africa. Despite the negative connotation of the term “development,” the prominence that this term gained within world economics, the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches, serves as an explanation for the sustainability of the term in post-apartheid South Africa. The prominence of the term “development” is embedded in the Reconstruction and Development Programme of 1994, the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002 and, more recently, the National Development Plan of 2011. The Reconstruction and Development Plan also became “the African National Congress’s (ANC) election manifesto for the first democratic elections in 1994 ... it spelled out a vision for the total transformation of South African society” (Swart, Rocher, Green and Erasmus 2010, 17).<sup>2</sup>

EFSA is the most prominent institution that has made the most significant and encompassing contribution to the notion of development in the early to mid-nineties (Swart 2012, 3). EFSA’s first three conferences reflect the core characteristics of Harare (1992). These three gatherings criticised the West and its two main development theories, Modernisation and Dependency, which were embedded in a one-way and hierarchical development. These theories focused on a greater Gross National Product, economic policies and technological advancement. In line with Nairobi 1975, the first three EFSA gatherings criticised Modernisation and Dependency theories in favour of a more holistic, bottom-up approach. “The first three EFSA conferences, thus, were clearly rooted in the rather radical development and political economic philosophy of what one participant referred to as ‘an emerging global people-centred development movement’ ... the RDP, a document that echoed the people-centred development” (Swart et al. 2010, 17).

The people-centred approach instead of a greater GNP was the main aim of any development of an emerging growing South Africa. Koegelenberg (1992, 2) emphasises the point at the first three of the four conferences of EFSA, *Church and Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, when he asserts that “development is not in the first place about statistics, about increasing Gross National Products, about technological

2 African National Congress (ANC), *The Reconstruction and Development Programme: A Policy Framework*, Johannesburg (Umanyano Publications) 1994, 3–4; Nelson R. Mandela, Preface, in: *ANC: The Reconstruction*.

innovations or bureaucratic blueprints, but it is essentially about people. People-centred development tries to remind us that the economy is not an end in itself, but merely an instrument to serve the needs of people and to enhance life” (Koegelenberg 1992, 2).

Swart et al. (2010) rightly point out that despite the major role EFSA played in the development debate, the shift at the fourth conference, in Cape Town on 7 May 1997, raises serious questions about the relationship between the church and state in relation to development. Swart et al. point out that the notion of “development” as it was used at the first three conferences, was replaced by co-operation, partnership and an uncritical relationship between EFSA and the state (Swart et al. 2010, 18–20; 2012, 69–73). The church and state relationship was a major theme within the AACC between 1981 and 1992. At Harare (1992), the relationship between church and state had become antagonistic because of the growing moral decay on the African continent under the leadership of autocratic and corrupt heads of state.

Another important breakaway by EFSA from its initial notion of “development” was the neglect of the role of NGOs and civil society. This neglect was a direct result of the shift at the fourth conference towards an uncritical alliance with the state. People and independence were essential characteristics of NGOs, and a dependent one-way and hierarchical relationship with the state was contrary to the people-centred approach. At the 6th AACC, this dependent relationship came in the form of a reversion to the uncritical relationship with Western aid. The turnaround from financial bankruptcy at Lome to a rejuvenated and financially viable organisation is largely the result of contributions from Western partners. In his opening address at Harare (1992), Tutu referred to the contributions of the Western partners:

What a happy privilege and joyful task it is to acknowledge very warmly the remarkable and continuing generosity of our overseas partners. We would need a thousand tongues even to begin to get anywhere near expressing our profound gratitude to them. Let them know that we are deeply indebted to them for holding on to us and for maintaining their faith in us. (AACC 1994, 58)

Much more detrimental to NGOs was that, despite the people-centred approach, they are yet to establish “self-reliance,” “self-help” or “autonomy.”

These problems are associated with two essential contradictions apparent in most African NGOs. The first is that they have actually evolved into local managers of foreign aid money, not managers of local African development processes ... there is a high dependence on external donor funding ... The other contradiction seems to be the closeness with which some NGOs work with national governments (Nyang’oro 1993, 46–47).

These factors influenced the relationship between NGOs and the state, and subsequently, the church and state. By the turn of the twentieth century, NGOs’ relationship on the African continent with the state had been regulated by stringent government policies. Whereas up until the 1970s the relationship between NGOs and state can be described as:

... indifferent or mildly positive ... this position has changed perceptibly. Governments generally continue to welcome NGOs as a source of additional foreign exchange and skilled manpower ... so long as their activities conform to official goals. But they are strengthening mechanisms for their regulation through formal registration and periodic reporting requirements. (Wellard and Copestake 1993, 297–298)

Like the AACC at Harare (1992), development in South Africa was mainly programme-orientated. The prominence of EFSA and the rise of NGOs and FBOs in post-apartheid South Africa was a direct result of the relationship that these institutions forged with the South African state. To some extent, the relationship was determined by the common goals and collective efforts that were embedded in programmes towards development and social transformation. In one of the most comprehensive articles that addressed the service-delivery crisis, Swart (2013) uses the scholarship of prominent South African Hendrik Pieterse to analyse programme-oriented development in the South African context. According to Swart (2013), Pieterse’s “Reformed Liberational” approach has the following stages: 1) preaching from the context of the congregation; 2) the context of the congregation is then confronted by the biblical test; 3) in the next stage “from the standpoint of the preferential option for the poor”; 4) the existential experience of the preacher with the poor; and lastly 5) engaging with prophetic preaching (Swart 2013, 20). Pieterse further developed his approach by connecting the theoretical part to praxis. Using a “homiletic theory for praxis,” Pieterse (quoted in Swart 2013) asserts that prophetic preaching finds expression in “diaconal, diaconally church.” This kind of church whose missionary activities are found between the church *of* the poor and the church *for* the poor is existentially in community projects and “congregational projects of charity” (Swart 2013, 21–23).

Notwithstanding the major conceptual contributions that Pieterse makes to the development debate in South Africa, I concur with Swart (2013) that Pieterse regresses to the international theological debate of the tension between a project-centred approach and social transformation. Both within the AACC and EFSA there has been a progression from the project approach to a more encompassing social transformation approach to development. It is also difficult to imagine how the tension between the church *of* the poor and the church *for* the poor will realistically contribute to sustainable development. In the same way, as rich middle class congregations approach development from above, neoliberal capitalist economics approaches development from a point of charity towards the other.

## THEOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT: FROM AN INWARD TO AN OUTWARD DEVELOPMENT

The weaknesses of the development approach by EFSA, as the most significant church-related institution during the period under discussion, include the loss of people-orientated development, the uncritical church and state relationship, and the programme-orientated co-operation between state and church. Like the AACC at Harare (1992), development

according to EFSA and the Reconstruction and Development Programme was external. With regard to a people-orientated approach, the role of people was a function that was outside of the personhood of people. The role of development can be performed by any agent, including the state, aid agencies and institutions and NGOs, including the church. It is no surprise that development is largely associated with programmes or charity. Even when social transformation and social justice became synonymous with development, programmes in the form of welfare has remained the main form of development.

The AACC at Harare (1992) was the most prominent one in the history of the organisation that debated development in Africa and, with the influence of Desmond Tutu South Africa was a particular focus. The development debate in South Africa was aligned with the broader debate in Africa and moved from the North-South, one-way development of technology and economics, to programmes of social transformation and social justice.

I acknowledge that the AACC at Harare (1992) contributed significantly to the conceptualisation of development in South Africa. The shift from Modernisation and Dependency theories to a people-centred approach was an indication of the broader development approach, of which social justice was essential. I must also add that the AACC at Harare (1992) did not go far enough with the notion of people-centeredness. A people-centred approach has more to do with the role that is associated with what is outside of the person. This role has been given to NGOs, the state and programmes. I would content that “role” or “duty” is intrinsically part of what it means to be a person. When duty is inward, then people take personal responsibility for their own development.

Bosch (1992) describes Paul’s sense of responsibility towards others as a combination of duty and grace. Bosch asserts: “In his letter to the Romans he establishes an intimate relationship between ‘grace’ or ‘gratitude’ and ‘duty’; put differently, Paul’s acknowledgement of indebtedness is immediately translated into a sense of gratitude. The debt or obligation he feels does not represent a burden which inhibits him; rather, recognition of debt is synonymous with giving thanks” (Bosch 1992, 138).

Inward development is also about the relationship between identity and calling. Here we have the tension between knowing what is right (theology) and doing what is right (ethics). To have identity is more than knowing one’s story. It has to do with doing. Within the creation narrative there is a clear continuum between the human being and taking responsibility. De Gruchy (2003) illustrates the un-separated connection between being and duty when he asserts:

It is important to recognise that in both creation accounts in Genesis, from which the affirmation of identity is traditionally drawn, the truth of being made in the image of God (1:17) or being filled with God’s breath (2:7) is immediately coupled with the theme of vocation, the calling to be responsible actors in this world newly created by God (1:18; 2:5). (De Gruchy 2003, 24)

The development debate within the South African context is much more than the way the AACC at Harare (1992) approached people-centred development. Sustainable development in the South African context cannot be left to corporations, programmes,

projects or policies that provide opportunities and choices. Development must be approached as part of who we are. In other words, development is about identity more than function. Lubardic (2011) captures Zizioulas's assertion that "the ethical encompasses not only bringing oneself to another in a morally acceptable form, but creating something good and beautiful in the world for one's other and one's ecclesial personhood to begin with" (Lubardic 2011, 578–579).

The activity of duty binds one's identity intrinsically with the other, and specifically the other as marginalised. In this sense, identity also has to do with the quality of one's relationship with the other. The other is not an insignificant subordinate that has meaning only as a passive receiver; but the other is significant for identity forming and reforming. This kind of relationship is mirrored after the Cappadocian Fathers' (Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea 329–379; Gregory of Nyssa 335–394; Gregory of Nazianzus 329–390) notion of God as unity in diversity. The Trinity is three hypostases, by which Father, Son and Holy Spirit is in an inseparable relationship. John of Damascus explains the kind of relationship amongst the three persons as "reciprocal giving and receiving of free communion" (Speidel 1994, 290). "This implies that the persons do not merely exist in and through themselves, but through voluntary invitation, in relationship with the others" (Klaasen 2013, 187).

The person is motivated towards taking personal responsibility for development of oneself and for the other because one's vocation is both inward and outward. Personal responsibility in this two-way sense does not negate the other to a secondary source or towards the margins, but the other is primary for the identity forming and transforming of the person.

Personal responsibility is not a justification for economic policies and practices that exploit the poor and marginalised. Rather, personal responsibility engages critically with aid and charity. Personal responsibility motivates persons to commit to policies and laws that ensure equality and justice. Any programmes and projects are the result of the faithfulness of the persons towards their calling and vocation that is inseparable from whom they are.

## CONCLUSION

The Modernisation and Dependency theories did not bring the desired economic and social transformation in Africa. Social justice and people-centred approaches to development go beyond community development and challenge policies that deprive the poor of development. The 6th AACC replaced technological advancement and Greater National Product with values and morals within a multi-party democracy.

EFSA, as the most significant religious institution that engaged with development during the period under discussion, was influenced by the development approach of the 6th AACC in Harare (1992). NGOs had a prominent role in the development debate in the early nineties in South Africa. Like the AACC at Harare (1992), programmes and projects replaced the people-centred approach.

Development in South Africa has not resulted in sustainable development, partly because development was not motivated by personhood and personal responsibility. Personhood as a theological phenomenon presupposes responsibility, two-way relationship, identity forming, and broad transformation. Personhood is embedded in economic growth, social integration, equality, and justice.

Despite the negative connotation attached to development in South Africa during the 1960s, termed “separate” development, development has formed an integral part of post-apartheid transformation. This is evident in the establishment of the Reconstruction and Development Plan and the more recent National Development Plan. Personhood and personal responsibility for development will enhance the efforts of both state and church to motivate people and institutions towards sustainable and value-based development.

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