

**A THEOLOGY OF DECENT WORK:
REFLECTIONS FROM CASUAL WORKERS IN THE
N D J ETHIOPIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ZION IN
ESTCOURT, KWAZULU-NATAL**

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DECLARATION

As required by University regulations, I hereby state unambiguously that this work has not been presented at any other University or any other institution of higher learning other than the University of KwaZulu-Natal, (Pietermaritzburg Campus) and that unless specifically indicated to the contrary within the text it is my original work.

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As candidate supervisor I hereby approve this thesis for submission

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIC	African Independent Church
AMEC	African Methodist Episcopal Church
ANC	African National Congress
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
CBS	Contextual Bible Study
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Union
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
FIFA	Federation of International Football Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
NCSA	New Church of Southern Africa
NDJ	Naphtal Daniel Joshua
NGP	New Growth Path
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACP	South African Communist Party
SARB	South African Reserve Bank
SOE	State Owned Enterprises
SRPC	School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics
UN	United Nations
WEF	World Economic Forum

ABSTRACT

The rapid changes in the world of work today have resulted in the paradigm shift from standard to non-standard types of employment. These changes are intimately connected with the world of the economy that has brought extreme inequalities between rich and poor in the world.

First, the primary objective of this thesis is to discuss the concept of work in the context of the paradigm shift using Karl Marx's concept of alienation manifested within a capitalist society driven by the institutions of economic globalization. This paradigm shift has seen an increase in casualization of work across the globe. The thesis provides an analysis of the contemporary changes in countries like Brazil, Argentina, Japan and South Africa. These changes have influenced the International Labour Organization (ILO) to reflect on the alternative types of work that are dignified hence its call for the adoption of decent work by affiliated countries.

Second, the thesis explores the concept of decent work as proposed by the ILO. The thesis deals comprehensively with the four components of decent work analysing its relevance to the world of work today. In addition, the thesis critically analyses South Africa's New Growth Path as a policy framework designed to ensure the realization of decent work.

Third, the thesis proposes a theology of decent work as an alternative to a paradigm shift from standard to non-standard type employment. Using the Contextual Bible Study (CBS) as a tool for liberation theology the thesis argues vehemently for an alternative type of employment. It provides the tools for churches and ecumenical organizations to speak theologically and prophetically about work today.

KEYWORDS: *Economic Globalization; Casualization; Decent Work; Contextual Bible Study (CBS) and Theology.*

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The primary objective of this chapter is first to give a rationale for the research. Second, it is to give a synopsis of all the chapters. The thesis is presented as a contribution to the industrial mission and theology and development disciplines. It is intended to engage with socio-economic challenges using biblical and theological resources.

2. The Rationale for the Research

The hegemony of economic globalization under capitalism as an economic system is driven by a need for accumulation of wealth and profit maximization. The impact of such a system among the people of the world, particularly those in the developing nations has been detrimental to say the least. This hegemony has once again raised the question of economic justice and redistribution of wealth among global citizens. This reality and the need to make an analytical contribution inspired me to pursue this research project.

The research project prompted me to begin to think more deeply about what contribution one could make in conscientizing not only the community about economic injustices in our societies, but also in engaging academically with a wider audience of intellectuals through this project. This work therefore is a product of a series of workshops with the poor, unemployed and casual workers in KwaZulu-Natal over the past ten years of work with communities through Ujamaa Centre's¹ Theology and Economic Justice Programme that I am privileged to coordinate. Through this programme, I was able to do social analysis of our socio-economic context with communities and got to understand the impact of neo-liberalism and its market-orientated policies on ordinary people in rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. It became

¹ Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research was founded in 1989 by Prof Gunther Wittenberg and serves both as Community Development and a Research Centre based at the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg.

clear that our economic policies have not produced the anticipated results for the majority of the people who are poor, hence the huge economic inequalities among South Africans.

The South African government has always argued that our economy is a mixed economy, meaning it takes into consideration both capital (economic growth through investment) and human development (social investment through job creation) as fundamental in its outlook and implementation. However, it is an open secret that the former supersedes the latter in the implementation stage as capital takes centre stage over and above human needs and priorities. Economic globalization promotes capital intensification than labour, and this has resulted in job losses and retrenchment in most industries.

3. Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1 is an attempt to introduce a reader to the chapters that deal with these issues. It is designed to give background to the issues raised and prepare the reader for an engagement with economics, politics, and religion in the public realm. The focus is the fundamental need for economic justice in the midst of changes in industries across the globe.

3.1 General Introduction

Most industries have embarked on a paradigm shift from standard (permanent) to non-standard (casual) forms of work.² The emphasis on capital has created an impression that efficiency and growth can only take place within a market economy rather than social development through decent job creation that ultimately contributes to economic growth through social spending and investment.

In the South African context, the debate has always been about our macro-economic policies and whether or not they serve the public in accelerating service delivery

² See full discussion in Chapter 2 detailing the experiences of Japan, Argentina, Brazil and South Africa after the introduction of neo-liberal economic model, which encourages capital intensification above labour intensification leading to casualization of work and in the process creating a shift from standard to non-standard type of work.

among the poorest of the poor. The question that remains unanswered in the minds of many is where are we going economically as a country?

As the African National Congress (ANC) approaches its policy conference in the year (2012) in which they celebrate their centenary, the question about economic policy shift is more pertinent than before. The African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) has contributed to the debate by calling for the nationalization of mines and land repossession without compensation as tools to economic freedom in our lifetime. The huge economic inequalities that exist among South Africans have seen us surpass Brazil as the most unequal society in the world. These inequalities are mostly evident in the income between middle class and working class on one side and the executives and private entrepreneurs on the other.

These inequalities have come because of the shift in employment patterns due to international pressure on local markets. The challenge is therefore about South Africa's response to this shift and its implications at national, regional and global levels.

Chapter 2 therefore is an attempt to discuss in detail these and other pertinent issues beginning with the definition of work and gradually moving towards a discussion about work under capitalism using Karl Marx's concept of alienation articulated by Keith Grint to demonstrate economic injustices. An attempt is therefore made to deal with the dynamics of contemporary work by engaging with different contexts that have undergone changes in the world of work like Japan, Brazil, Argentina and South Africa.

This analysis leads to a reflection on economic globalization and its policies especially South Africa's paradigm shift from the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) policy framework. In responding to the challenges of this paradigm shift, the notion of decent work has been used by the ANC and its alliance partners as part of their electioneering campaigns in 2009 and 2011 respectively.

It is therefore important that the notion of decent work does not become a political rhetoric, but a genuine effort by government to find a lasting solution to economic injustices.

3.2 The Dynamics of Contemporary Work

The concept of decent work originates from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and was popularized by the Director General Juan Somavia. It is intended to create opportunities for decent and productive employment for men and women in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

This would be achieved through its four fundamental components namely rights at work, employment at work, social protection at work and social dialogue at work. The rights at work include freedom of association, removal of forced labour and a conducive environment for growth and development.³ Employment and work includes security and decent remuneration at all times for all type of workers.⁴ It forces the employer to have proper contracts and policies to regulate his or her staff. Social security or protection addresses issues of insurance, pension and injury on duty to ensure the protection of workers from exploitation by their superior and powerful employers.⁵ Social dialogue is a pro-active tool for both employers and employees to avoid conflict and industrial action by negotiating in advance and in good faith. The South African government led by the ruling ANC is proposing decent work as an alternative to the paradigm shift in employment patterns and income inequalities among workers.

Chapter 3 is an attempt to explore the notion of decent work in detail in preparation for a theology of decent work. Most of the employers and employees are religious people and are mainly Christians. It is therefore against this background that a biblical and theological response to the challenge of work is fundamental. In this thesis, I will attempt to propose a theology of decent work.

³ See, Ghai D: Decent Work: Concepts, Models and Indicators, International Institute for Labour Studies, 2002, Pg 19.

⁴ See, Ghai D: Decent Work: Concepts, Models and Indicators, International Institute for Labour Studies, 2002, Pg 19.

⁵ Full reference for the components of decent work, namely rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue is provided in chapter 3 which deals comprehensively with the concept of decent work. This chapter introduces the concepts and does not detailed analysis and references.

3.3 The Concept of Decent Work

The theology of decent work recognizes and begins with the struggles and experiences of casual workers who were interviewed about the challenges in the workplace. It proposes a framework that can lead to an alternative understanding of work. The casual workers who participated in this research are Christians and belong to an African Independent Church (AIC) known as the N D J Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, which is predominantly a working class church with a high level of illiteracy and unemployment. In order to understand the struggles and challenges facing these casual workers from this church I used Albert Nolan's theology of work framework as a tool to argue for a theology of decent work that is informed by the experiences of casual workers. In his article, Nolan argues that a genuine theology of work has to be a worker's theology, meaning that their voices must be central to a theology of decent work.

Chapter 4 is therefore an attempt to give casual workers a platform to have their voices heard as people's theology. Both the semi-structured interviews and Contextual Bible Study (CBS)⁶ were conducted primarily as a response to the quest for a 'genuine theology of work' articulated by Nolan. The first part of the interviews dealt with the socio-economic context of their work, whereas the second part dealt with the biblical and theological context of their work.

In engaging with the biblical theological focus I used a CBS as a theological tool for liberation theology. The CBS creates an enabling environment for social transformation because it deconstructs the dominant paradigms of biblical interpretation that monopolize the biblical text. During the CBS, casual workers were able to engage with the selected biblical text (Mt 20: 1-15) and produce their own interpretation based on their struggles and challenges in the workplace, without an imposition of a particular ideology.

The responses from casual workers affirmed the view that God is in control of the earth and its inhabitants, which include human beings as subjects of God's creation. In

⁶ Contextual Bible Study (CBS) is a Biblical and Theological framework used by Prof Gerald West and other Biblical scholars. See GO West's work, *Contextual Bible Study* (1993), *Biblical hermeneutics of Liberation, Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African context* (1995) and *the Academy of the Poor* (1999).

the proposed theology of decent work I underscore the importance of the concept of *Imago Dei* with its five pillars of the theology of rights, the theology of employment, the theology of social protection, the theology of social dialogue and the theology of human dignity. I therefore conclude this chapter with the research findings, which demonstrate the struggles and challenges faced by casual workers in the workplace and the role of religion in their protest against economic injustices in the workplace.

3.4 The Theology of Decent Work

Central to this thesis is a fundamental need for economic justice among casual workers who are imprisoned by their work in the workplace. This chapter gives a short summary of issues dealt with in the thesis and the recommendations for future research.

In the thesis I argue that economic globalization through capitalism deprive the poor of access to economic benefits that are intended for all. It uses Karl Marx's notion of alienation to demonstrate the gap between workers under capitalism and the product they produce.

The thesis shows how oppressive work under capitalism is and argues for an alternative employment pattern in the form of decent work. It uses the four components of decent work as proposed by the ILO. The thesis also indicates the challenges of decent work and its possible failures due to unstable economic contexts. The thesis argues for the embrace of humanity as a means for humanization and dignity.

The thesis proposes five pillars of a theology of decent work as a tool for the implementation of decent work from a theological perspective. These three critical chapters form the basis of the argument in the thesis.

4. General Conclusion

Chapter 5 is therefore an attempt to summarize and bring to a conclusion critical points raised in these three main chapters of the thesis. The following chapter will begin the discussion on the dynamics of contemporary work.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DYNAMICS OF CONTEMPORARY WORK

1. Introduction

First, in this chapter I will attempt to define the concept of work and its relevance to the understanding of casualization. Second, I will argue that work under capitalism is alienated and exploitative deprives workers of their dignity and reduces them to objects rather than subjects. Third, I will discuss the dynamics of contemporary work by looking at the impact of economic globalization and its neo-liberal imposition on the working class through the experiences of Argentina, Brazil and Japan in the 1990s, and South Africa's shift from RDP to GEAR.

2. What is Work?

According to Tony Watson, work is understood to be the “carrying out of tasks which enable people to make a living within the environment in which they find themselves.”⁷ For Watson it does not necessarily matter what that work environment is, as long as people make a living it is understood to be work. It is important to underscore that Watson's reference to ‘making a living’ refers to the payment for the activity rendered. In this case Watson's argument is that work means paid activity. Edward Gross's view of work relates to Watson. He argues “if one asks the layman what work is, the answer would probably be ‘it's what I do to earn a living or pay my rent’”⁸ Again the emphasis is “to earn a living.”

Carol Auster concurs with Watson and argues that “work is the set of activities associated with performing one's paid occupation, and provides the money to purchase those goods and services.”⁹ In this case, Auster uses “paid occupation” and not “making or earning a living” as is the case with both Watson and Gross, but they all seem to suggest that “work” refers to paid activity that leads to “earning or making a living.” It is important to make the connections between Watson, Gross and Auster

⁷ Watson T: *Sociology, Work and Industry*. 1980. Pg 83.

⁸ Gross E: *Work and Society*. 1958. Pg 5.

⁹ Auster C J: *The Sociology of Work*, 1996. Pg 1.

in terms of their arguments. Important to understand with Watson's definition is that making a living can either mean monetary or other means of compensation that the worker can use to make a living. Watson is not specific about what it means to "make a living."

The expectation is that in a formal working environment when a specific task has been performed and completed monetary payment is given to a person or a group of people for them to make a living. On the other hand and in agreement with Watson is Gross. Gross's definition of work is specific. He makes reference to "payment of rent" as a possible response from a layman's perspective of work. In this case Gross's assertion about work means monetary payment. Auster's definition of work is also specific. She makes reference to "providing the money to purchase those goods and services" as compensation for what she terms "paid occupation."

Some sociologists have argued against the definition of work as a paid activity divorced from the wide range of unpaid activities that are classified as work. According to John Horne "sociologists have long been aware that wage-labour, to give its technical name, is only a particular form of work, gaining its centrality and definition from the specific set of productive relations which occurs within capitalist, market-exchange economies."¹⁰ Furthermore Horne argues that the paid work equation ignores much work carried out by women and unduly restricts the scope of the subject of work.¹¹ Wage-labour is work understood mainly as paid activity as discussed in this section through the work of Watson, Gross and Auster. The question that arises is, is this what work is?

In the midst of unemployment, poverty and inequality people in contemporary societies are desperate for incomes to ease their financial burdens that come with these socio-economic challenges.¹² In the light of the challenges it is possible that the emphasis will be on paid work rather than the general concept of work which includes unpaid domestic and voluntary work. Horne reminds us that sociologists and others have always understood wage-labour as only one form of work within a wide range of

¹⁰ Horne J: Work and Unemployment, 1987, Pg 2.

¹¹ Horne J: Work and Unemployment, 1987, Pg 72.

¹² The South African Government has identified these socio-economic challenges as "Triple-Challenge" facing the country and to some extent the continent. This was evident in the State of the Nation Address of 2011 by President Jacob Zuma.

other activities. It is therefore important to acknowledge that Watson, Gross and Auster's definition of work is not the only definition, but one among other different understandings and definitions of work. However, I agree with their definitions of work because I find them to be relevant to this research project. Horne's reminder about other definitions of work is correct, but beyond the scope of this thesis.

My understanding of work is twofold. First, I understand work to mean any paid activity be it academic, manual, community or church done by either an individual or a group of people to sustain their livelihood on a permanent or casual basis. I believe this is what Watson, Gross and Auster are suggesting. Second, I understand work to mean any unpaid voluntary activity be it academic, manual, community or church done by individuals or groups as a service to a broader society on a permanent or casual basis. For the purposes of this research I want to emphasize the former rather than the latter for two reasons.

Casual workers who are the primary focus of this research are involved in paid casual activity that relates to the understating of work as paid activity rather than voluntary. Second, casual workers work primarily to earn or make a living, though they also hope that this work will contribute to their personal development as workers. Unfortunately work under capitalism does not help casual workers to achieve this latter important goal. On the contrary, capitalism has brought to the world of work extreme economic challenges affecting workers and their families.

Grint argues that for Marx, "capitalism inverted the world of work, turned it against the workers, and in the process developed a system through which work became the source of anti-humanism, the origin of alienation and exploitation."¹³ It is in this context that work under capitalism is seen as domination of one by the other. The exploitation of workers in the capitalist system is a violation of human nature.

3. Work and Capitalism

Tony Watson argues that "Marx's conception of human nature is one in which it is assumed that people realize their essential nature, as species, through productive work

¹³ Grint K: The Sociology of Work. 1991. Pg 23.

which is carried out of their own purposes and not under the control and exploitation of others.”¹⁴ The disjuncture between the producer and the product brought about Marx’s concept of alienation. Whenever workers labour because of the product, which is their wages, and not because they are connected to their work, as productive work, they are alienated from the product.

Grint argues that for Marx the first aspect of alienation in work is that in the “absence of control the product reduces, rather than expresses the producer’s humanity.”¹⁵ In the context of capital intensification the product reduces, rather than expresses the worker’s humanity. It is not the worker that produces, but a machine. The machine is more important than its operator to the eyes of the owners.

Second, Grint argues that for Marx another aspect of alienation in work is “the division of labour.” Grint believes that for Marx this “fragments the productive process into meaningless and ostensibly unrelated tasks” such that “the general orientation of labour to work is not one of creative liberation, but instrumental and forced labour.”¹⁶ Workers seldom find work that they are comfortable with; they often find themselves in jobs that do not correlate with their personalities and characters. They are employed in jobs designed to suit the owners rather than the producers of production, and this hinders human development because individual workers do not grow when they are alienated from their work.

Third, Grint argues that for Marx, another aspect of alienation in work is “the market and the economic aspect of alienation, because they turn every productive group into competitors, setting individual against individual and reducing social relations between people to economic exchanges of commodities.”¹⁷ The rhetoric of the survival of the fittest describes the economic atrocities of capitalism within the market, which is guided by the principles of profit maximization. Individual workers fight each other in pursuit of better opportunities in an unjust economic environment that ultimately has only the capitalist as its winner.

¹⁴ Watson T: *Sociology, Work and Industry*, 1980. Pg 85.

¹⁵ Grint K: *The Sociology of Work*, 1991. Pg 92.

¹⁶ Grint K: *The Sociology of Work*, 1991. Pg 92.

¹⁷ Grint K: *The Sociology of Work*, 1991. Pg 92.

Fourth, Grint argues that for Marx another aspect of alienation in work “asserts that the mindless repetition that typifies work under capitalism blurs the distinctions between humanity and animality by destroying the creative content of production.”¹⁸ Human beings within a capitalist market economy resemble rigid robots who only act on instruction from their operators. Even certain aspects of animality are better than such an experience. The capitalist system manipulates those participating in it into a pseudo belief that they are developing by being part of such a system. A typical example of this manipulation is a sense of benefit without development from workers doing what I will call unproductive work.

According to Watson “alienation is not necessarily reflected in job dissatisfaction or frustration because a person may be happy sitting in a desk at someone’s office moving pieces of paper five days per week which mean little to them in return for a wage.”¹⁹ Both Watson and Marx seem to agree that the division of labour within an alienated capitalist society creates an environment where workers are less productive due to meaningless work, which does little or nothing to develop the worker. Watson argues that people are “alienated when they are not being what they could possibly be to fulfil themselves or achieve self-actualization – they must create a society, which, although taking a basically different form from capitalism, is still one in which work, as a source of fulfilment in its own right, is central.”²⁰

The fulfilment of work and the achievement of self-actualization depend mostly on the conditions of work rather than the individual worker and his or her aspirations. Kai Erikson recalls that Marx argued, “People are alienated when they are estranged from their fellow creatures, which he believed, was inevitable within capitalism.”²¹ In his fourfold argument, I believe that Marx is arguing that under capitalism workers are dominated by those that are more powerful than they are, and that the control by producer over the product, the division of labour, the relationship between market and the economy and the blurred distinction between humanity and animality are instruments designed by a capitalist system. It is intended to divide and alienate workers and to take comprehensive control of their labour power to maximize profit.

¹⁸ Grint K: *The Sociology of Work*, 1991. Pg 92.

¹⁹ Watson T: *Sociology, Work and Industry*, 1980. Pg 85.

²⁰ Watson T: *Sociology, Work and Industry*, 1980. Pg 85.

²¹ Erickson K: *The Nature of Work*, 1990. Pg 22.

Gerald Cohen seems to challenge this notion that portrays workers in Marxist thought as victims of an atrocious capitalist system that has no regard for human beings. Cohen argues that some would “deny that workers are forced to sell their labour power, on the grounds that they have other choices.”²² Gary Young concurs with Cohen that the “same line of reasoning which demonstrates that the worker is compelled to sell his labour power to some capitalist shows equally that the capitalist is compelled to obtain labour power from the worker.”²³ Both Young and Cohen seem to challenge the Marxist concept of alienation on the grounds that both the worker and the capitalists have equal power to either sell, in the case of a worker, or invest, in the case of the capitalist. However, I would argue that the capitalist has an option of consuming his or her capital through alternative economic means that are not available to the worker, whose only power is his or her labour to the capitalist.

The worker has a family that depends on the power that he or she sells to the capitalist to survive which leaves the worker with little or no option at all. I therefore concur with Marx that workers are susceptible to exploitation, which eventually leads to alienation in work. Capitalism, through economic globalization, has brought rapid changes in contemporary work, many of which have increased the alienation of workers from their work.

4. The Dynamics of Contemporary Work

The changes in the contemporary world of work have seen a paradigm shift from standard permanent employment to non-standard casual work. A profound sense of apprehensiveness among casual workers is unequivocally a product of uncertainty due to the casualization of work in the 20th Century. The nature of employment in the 20th Century has changed drastically due to free-market capitalism.

Casualization has replaced standard employment as companies seek to minimize costs of production; this has created uncertainty among casual workers across sectors. According to Andrea Baumann, casualization is the “systemic replacement of full-time and regular part-time staff with staff employed on an ad hoc basis.”²⁴ This type

²² Cohen G A: *History Labour and Freedom*, 1988. Pg 255.

²³ Young G: *History Labour and Freedom*, 1988. Pg 272.

²⁴ Baumann A : *Surge Capacity and Casualization*, 2006. Pg 230.

of employment is undignified and dehumanizing, as workers struggle to keep their jobs and become susceptible to exploitation by employers.

Maria McNamara believes that “casual” is an “old phrase” for “temporary employment which has retained its usage in Australia and New Zealand and refers to workers engaged in short term employment with no continuity of service.”²⁵ The term is used interchangeably with “informal” employment, which also refers to non-standard or unregulated short-term employment. The dominance of capital over labour has seen the emergence of economic globalization as a force in the past two decades, leading to worldwide trends towards casualisation.

4.1 Economic Globalization

The massive challenge of economic globalization and its neo-liberal (market oriented economic framework) policies in the 20th Century has had both positive and negative impacts on people. The positives are evident in the advancement of technology and the negatives manifested in the loss of jobs and changes in economic policies.

Rauber states that “in 1970s, Argentina underwent a process of structural and super-structural adaptation to the neoliberal capitalist model and this was imposed through violent military dictatorship, particularly, the one led by Videla in March 1976.”²⁶ The violent imposition of the neoliberal ideological economic model onto the people of Argentina by Videla was resisted and rejected by the people as another form of economic imperialism and neo-colonialism. During this time in the Latin American region, Rauber argues that, “Argentina had neoliberal economic conditions and it was not surprising that an uprising that made international headlines took place in December 2001.”²⁷ The uprising was a reaction to what had transpired in 1976 and 1990 respectively, which is linked to the introduction of neo-liberalism as a form of neo-colonialism that polarized people according to economic classes. In the 1990s, Rauber argues, “the growth of the Argentine economy ran concurrently with a profound deterioration of the job market.”²⁸

²⁵ McNamara M: The Hidden Health and Safety Costs of Casual Employment, 2006. Pg 9.

²⁶ Rauber I: Labour and the Challenges of Globalization, 2008. Pg 99.

²⁷ Rauber I: Labour and the Challenges of Globalization, 2008. Pg 99.

²⁸ Rauber I: Labour and the Challenges of Globalization, 2008. Pg 100.

This was not unique to the Argentine economy as most developing countries who had adopted neo-liberal policies experienced the same drop in employment opportunities around the world. Rauber argues that these “unprecedented levels of unemployment, as well as the growing precariousness of a considerable number of new jobs, have had negative repercussions on remuneration, the combination of a shortage of jobs and falling wages.”²⁹ The nature of precarious unprotected employment benefits the owners of production and creates uncertainty among the workers as they fight for their survival, while the owners maximize profits through reduced wages with no benefit to the worker. Casualization of work is a systemic strategy for economic globalization to control the workers and exploit their labour while claiming to provide them with jobs.

According to Kjeld Jakobsen and Alexandre de Freitas Barbosa, to use another example, the 1990s may be “considered as watershed in Brazilian economic history, because unlike the 1980s, an economic model of structural change was being pursued.”³⁰ According to Jakobsen and Barbosa, throughout the 1990s “unemployment emerged as a mass phenomenon, leaping from 3% to 10% between 1989 and 2001 quadrupling the total of unemployed, which increased to approximately 8 million by the end of the decade.”³¹

The Brazilian experience is almost similar to that of Argentina when it comes to rapid drop in job market, which affected mostly working class poor households in the Latin American region. According to Jakobsen, the Brazilian working class experienced a “regressive trend in terms of the levels of income, access to labour law and union representation which made the country a champion of inequality.”³² This therefore made Brazil the most unequal country in the world as the poor fight for their survival while the rich continue to reap the benefits of their investment at the expense of the working class workers.

Similarly, according to Wakana Shuto and Mac Urata, “during the 1990s, the long term employment previously understood to be pillar of the Japanese employment system was deeply shaken by the significant restructuring Japanese firms were forced to undergo in order to accommodate intensified international competition

²⁹ Rauber I: Labour and the Challenges of Globalization, 2008. Pg 103.

³⁰ Jakobsen K and Barbosa A: Labour and the Challenges of Globalization, 2008. Pg 118.

³¹ Jakobsen K and Barbosa A: Labour and the Challenges of Globalization, 2008. Pg 123-4.

³² Jakobsen K and Barbosa A: Labour and the Challenges of Globalization, 2008. Pg 130.

characteristic of the trend toward economic globalization.”³³ The rapidly increasing decline of protected jobs signalled a new economic era of a structured and systemic neoliberal ideological economic model designed to benefit the owners of production in minimizing costs and creating fear among the working class.³⁴ The working class suffered severely because of the introduction of neo-liberalism in the Japanese economic system and could not rely on unions because at the time the unions had failed to negotiate in the restructuring process.³⁵

The failure of trade unions was due to a decrease in full time formal employment which most members of the trade unions belonged to in Japan.³⁶ Shuto and Urata argue that “during the past decade the number of full-time employees declined by 4.5 million while the number of non- full-time employees increased by 5.9 million.”³⁷ The emergence of the era of the flexible labour market due to neoliberalism and its capitalistic policies was beginning to take centre stage in the Japanese economy. In addition to this, China with its violation of human rights announced its arrival through goods produced using cheap labour that continue to flood international markets and destroying local economies in pursuit of capital.³⁸ The reality of casual work is that it is associated with technology and capitalism.

South Africa has adopted international norms and standards since its re-admission to global politics and World Economic Forum (WEF) structures. According to Devan Pillay, “the South African economy since 1994 has followed global trends of jobless growth due to labour saving technology, increased unemployment, informalization and social inequality.”³⁹

Most young people in South Africa have the necessary qualifications, and to a certain extent experience, but remain unemployed or as casuals, which means the problem is structural rather than a matter of the individual’s abilities or skills. Similar or related

³³ Shuto W and Urata M: Labour and the Challenges of Globalization, 2008. Pg 141.

³⁴ Shuto W and Urata M: Labour and the Challenges of Globalization, 2008. Pg 141.

³⁵ See Shuto W and Urata M. Labour and the Challenges of Globalization, 2008. Pg 141-2

³⁶ Casual Workers are often not unionized hence their susceptibility to exploitation by employers, the departure from standard permanent jobs to non-standard casual jobs due to the introduction of neo-liberal economic model affected the stability and growth of trade unions in Japan.

³⁷ Shuto W and Urata M: Labour and the Challenges of Globalization, 2008. Pg 143.

³⁸ The Proudly South Africa initiative was established among other things to prevent the flooding of cheap Chinese goods to South African market which adversely affect Local Economic Development (LED) and other local initiatives that contributes immensely towards sustainable human development.

³⁹ Pillay D: Labour and the Challenges of Globalization, 2008, Pg 48.

to this, is the issue of a corrupt public service, which prevents casual workers from accessing permanent jobs in the public service and creates the perception that the majority of casual workers are unskilled. The challenge of entrepreneurship, which the government is advocating for, assumes that every person is a potential employer. This notion undermines both the private sector and government's ability to concentrate on the real problem, which is the failure of our macro-economic policy to create adequate job opportunities for people.

The government and the private sector have failed to acknowledge this gap and to work towards a policy framework that will address these inequalities in the world of work. According to Randy Hodson, "Economic globalization, conceived primarily as an economic process, is predicated on market-oriented, government policies."⁴⁰ In the South African experience, economic globalization and its neo-liberal policies are reflected in our macro-economic policy framework (GEAR), adopted after 1996, substituting the RDP as a people-driven economic policy framework.

4.2 The Paradigm Shift: From RDP to GEAR in South Africa

The dawn of democracy in 1994 was unequivocally the most important milestone in the history of South Africa, with the ushering in of the first black government after more than forty eight years of white minority rule that polarized the country along racial lines. The majority of South Africans across the racial divide had an opportunity to elect leaders of their choice. The vociferously joyous mood of the elections was a manifestation of the anticipated arrival of the new leadership.

Among the obvious challenges that the new Government of National Unity had to deal with immediately after assuming office was the issue of a balanced macro-economic framework. It was critical for a new government to adopt an economic framework that would take into consideration the imbalances of the past and the aspirations of the future. The majority of people depended on the new government for a better and prosperous future that would bear witness to political emancipation. The new ANC government had worked in alliance with the Congress of South African Trade Union (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) to abolish apartheid minority rule. The organizations had similar aspirations and ideological

⁴⁰ Hodson R: Research in the Sociology of Work, the Globalization of Work, 1997. Pg 9.

positions; it was therefore inevitable that both COSATU and the SACP would have a fundamental role to play in the new government.

According to Wessel Visser, “the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) emerged as an attempt by labour unions to produce an accord that would tie a newly elected ANC government to a labour-driven development programme.”⁴¹ Patrick Bond concurs with Visser and states that the “Mass Democratic Movements (MDM) which included COSATU, SACP and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO’s) supported this move.”⁴² This was a deliberate attempt by the ANC aligned trade union to drive government’s agenda for socio-economic transformation using the power of the working class as a vehicle. The RDP had most of the aspirations of the Freedom Charter adopted in Kliptown in 1955 by the first “Congress of the People” gathering. Sampie Terreblanche saw the RDP as a “Growth through Redistribution”⁴³

Visser further states that “the RDP soon became the paradigm within which all development policies were to be discussed, an extended wish list in which the homeless, the landless, workers, and even international bankers could take equal comfort.”⁴⁴ The RDP, it seems, was an inclusive policy framework designed to accommodate the ‘new’ government and its priorities aimed at providing the necessities to the poor who were excluded by the previous minority government of the National Party. Visser states that from “1994 to 1996 the RDP became ostensibly the guiding document of the Government of National Unity, located in an RDP office within President Nelson Mandela’s office, under the authority of Minister Jay Naidoo, who was then the former General Secretary of COSATU.”⁴⁵

Furthermore, argues Visser, “South Africa’s RDP and its White Paper on developmental social welfare were thus clearly compatible with the social development approach and consistent with its humanitarian and “people-centred” values.”⁴⁶ Evidently, the RDP objective was socio-economic development focusing on

⁴¹ Visser W: Shifting RDP into GEAR, 2004. Pg 6.

⁴² Bond P: Elite Transition, From Apartheid to Neo-liberalism in South Africa, 2005. Pg 89.

⁴³ Terreblanche S: The History of Inequality in South Africa. 2003. Pg 89.

⁴⁴ Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 7.

⁴⁵ Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 7, See Webster and Adler, (1998: Pg 1-2) Midgley, (2001, Pg 269).

⁴⁶ Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 7.

social investment through government's social security system. Visser believes that in terms of social security "the RDP did indeed achieve some remarkable results, which include an extensive welfare system, catering for the aged, the disabled children and foster grants given to parents."⁴⁷

According to Gerald West, when former President Thabo Mbeki was Deputy President in 1995, he argued that the ANC government's RDP had "established a unique national consensus on the need for prosperity, democracy, human development and the removal of poverty."⁴⁸ Asghar supports both Visser and Mbeki when he states "economically, the RDP was successful in articulating the main aspirations of the movement for post-apartheid South Africa that is, growth, development, reconstruction and redistribution, in a consistent macro-economic framework, using a Keynesian paradigm."⁴⁹ However, despite these successes, Visser argues that the RDP "suffered a major blow when a White Paper on reconstruction and development published in November 1994 departed significantly from the original RDP document and introduced fiscal prudence not as a means of attaining RDP objectives, but as an added goal."⁵⁰

Signs of a paradigm shift from RDP to GEAR were evident at this stage. The Government of National Unity had abandoned the profound words of President Mandela at an ANC rally. According to Bond, President Nelson Mandela had "elevated the RDP document to a lofty status" when he said, "We have emerged as the majority party on the basis of the programme which is contained in the Reconstruction and Development book that is going to be the cornerstone. The foundation, upon which the Government of National Unity would be based. I appeal to all leaders who are going to serve in this government to honour this programme."⁵¹

President Mandela's noble intention and appeal to the ANC leaders regarding the implementation of the RDP articulated in this statement did not materialize. This is so partly because of the ANC's broad-church concept, which was (and still is) an attempt to accommodate all interests, either socialist or capitalist. It seems the latter's

⁴⁷ Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 7, See Harsch, (2001, Pg 9).

⁴⁸ West G O: Thabo Mbeki's Bible, Religion and Spirituality in South Africa, 2009, Pg 88.

⁴⁹ Adelzadeh A: From The RDP to GEAR, 1996. Pg 66.

⁵⁰ Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 8, See Adelzadeh, (1996, Pg 66).

⁵¹ Bond P: Elite Transition, From Neoliberalism to Apartheid in South Africa, 2005, Pg 90.

concerns emerged as opposed to that of the former, hence the ultimate rejection of the RDP. Some might argue that it was circumstantial rather than deliberate, but the fact is there was an unprecedented change in economic policy.

A key catalyst for this shift, according to Visser, was “when the new ANC government encountered its first major currency crisis in February 1996 when the value of the rand plummeted by 25%, in order to remedy the situation and calm domestic capital and foreign currency markets.”⁵² Visser argues that the government embraced a conservative macro-economic strategy, “Growth, Employment and Redistribution” (GEAR) that was developed by a technical team of 15 policy makers.”⁵³ The team was “comprised of officials from the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the South African Reserve Bank, the three state departments, academics and two representatives of the World Bank.”⁵⁴

According to Faranak Miraftab, “the adoption of the neoliberal GEAR framework by the post-apartheid government perpetuated great divides between different population group’s access to basic urban amenities like waste collection, water, electricity, shelter and transportation, and has generated the casual labour markets created under the apartheid government.”⁵⁵ It is fundamental to acknowledge that the RDP made provision for a comprehensive social security system that catered for the poor majority in our communities, and argued for provision of basic amenities to millions of poor households as an attempt to bridge the gap between the affluent and the destitute. GEAR on the other side sought to reverse those progressive projections.

GEAR brought with it jobless economic growth, chronic unemployment, casualization of labour and unfair redistribution of wealth. Visser argues, “Since the GEAR macro-economic strategy was announced, it has not lived up to expectations of its objectives which were to enhance growth, employment and redistribution.”⁵⁶ “During the period 1996-2001 the economy grew by only 2.7% a year instead of 6% as originally anticipated.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, Visser argues that “employment dropped rapidly instead

⁵² Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 8, See Adelzadeh , (1996, Pg 66).

⁵³ Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 8, See Adelzadeh , (1996, Pg 66).

⁵⁴ Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 8.

⁵⁵ Miraftab F: Neoliberalism and Casualization of Public Sector Services, 2004. Pg 877.

⁵⁶ Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 10.

⁵⁷ Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 10.

of growing by 3%, the projected 1.3 million job opportunities expected to be created in 2001 was not achieved, instead more than 1 million jobs were lost in 1996.”⁵⁸

The ANC’s unilateral endorsement of GEAR as the government’s macro-economic framework caused havoc within the tripartite alliance, especially within COSATU and the SACP who were contributors to the RDP and were not considered in the formulation of GEAR. Ideological differences began to emerge as alliance partners voiced their concerns in public about a ‘new’ macro-economic policy. Ironically, the ANC, including the then President Mandela, defended GEAR and argued that it was “non-negotiable.”⁵⁹ This was a turnaround by President Mandela and his ANC government from a document they had publicly endorsed towards a neoliberal economic framework that favoured capital.

It was a betrayal for the majority of the working class who had entrusted the ANC with their vote to consider their socio-economic challenges. Instead, they were deprived of their constitutional right to basic amenities by the ‘new’ economic policy that brought profit for investors in capital returns and poverty for the unemployed and the poor. The ANC continued to argue that GEAR was an extension of the RDP’s ideas and aspirations, which of course is controversial when comparing the formulation and implementation of both documents and the results thereof. The RDP had argued vehemently for an integrated and sustainable programme, a people driven process, peace and security for all, nation building, reconstruction and development and the democratization of South Africa.

COSATU became increasingly impatient and critical of GEAR; in a speech delivered to the Central Committee, the then COSATU first Vice President Connie September complained that COSATU members had to carry the burden (by means of tax) of providing a social security net for the unemployed and demanded that this role be shifted to the state:

Two years into GEAR workers and their families are really beginning to feel its pinch. GEAR’s rigid deficit and revenue targets have meant a very limited implementation of RDP. Despite the RDP’s promise, job crisis is worsening and many of us face job losses or fear that we will

⁵⁸ Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 10.

⁵⁹ Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 11.

never be able to find good jobs, education, housing, and social services to overcome our apartheid legacy. Many working in the public service find themselves with the axe of retrenchment hanging over their heads. GEAR must go, and it must go now, so that we can see the full implementation of the RDP.⁶⁰

First, the statement above attests to the socio-economic challenges that GEAR brought to millions of workers and families who were mostly in the country. GEAR encourages privatization of State Owned Enterprises (SOE) as a means to generate additional revenue for the state.

Second, GEAR encourages deregulation, which is the reduction of tariffs on imported goods and flexible labour legislation when it comes to minimum wages. This exposes workers to exploitation by foreign companies who claim to create jobs while exploiting our people by paying them wages below the poverty line and inflation.

Third, GEAR encourages trade liberalization through foreign direct investment with the view that profit returns would be invested in job creation for local people. The reality is that this often does not happen as most investors re-invest their profit elsewhere or take it back to their native countries for the creation of job opportunities there.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have dealt with a definition of work as paid activity that is expected to contribute to a worker's livelihood and personal development. I have argued that work under capitalism is alienated and exploitative and deprives workers of their dignity, and reduces them to objects rather than subjects. I have discussed the dynamics of contemporary work by looking at the impact of economic globalization and its neo-liberal imposition on the working class through the experiences of Argentina, Brazil and Japan in the 1990s, and South Africa's shift from the RDP to GEAR.

The failure of GEAR to create adequate jobs for the majority of South Africans who are poor resulted in service delivery protests against the ANC government. These

⁶⁰ Visser W: Shifting RDP to GEAR, 2004. Pg 11.

protests were fundamentally about job creation and basic services. The ANC has since emphasized a need to create decent jobs for the people, hence 2011 was declared a year of job creation by the State President. The notion of decent work was adopted from the ILO and is perceived to be an alternative to unemployment and casualization of work. The following chapter will deal with the concept of decent work.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONCEPT OF DECENT WORK

1. Introduction

Since its establishment in 1919, the ILO has always advocated for socio-economic justice in the area of labour throughout the world. The recent adoption of the concept of decent work in South Africa testifies to this historical principle. The decent work concept is not a top down approach to socio-economic emancipation in the world of work, but a bottom up endeavour based on the aspirations of the people in the world, whose experience is fundamental in the creation of decent work.

In this chapter I will attempt to define the concept of decent work by tracing its elements through statements made in strategic international forums concerned about changes in the world of work. Second, I will focus on strategies, objectives and features of decent work as outlined by the ILO. Third, I will reflect on South Africa's initiatives to implement decent work through the New Growth Path (NGP) as a policy framework.

2. What is Decent Work?

The ILO Director-General's original statement is unequivocally clear that decent work is designed to respond to the universal need for socio-economic and political justice through improved standards of living particularly among the working poor in the world. According to Tasneem Siddiqui, the "overarching goal of the ILO is the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights."⁶¹ Tasneem further states that the ILO defines decent work as "productive work which generates an adequate income, in which rights are protected and where there is adequate social protection."⁶² It refers to a situation that "promotes opportunities for men and women to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity (ILO 1999 and 2001)."⁶³ The worker is respected and acknowledged by his or her family and community through the activity of work that sustains life and human dignity.

⁶¹ Siddiqui T: International Labour Migration in Bangladesh: A Decent Work Perspective, 2005. Pg 1.

⁶² Siddiqui T: International Labour Migration in Bangladesh: A Decent Work Perspective, 2005. Pg 1.

⁶³ Siddiqui T: International Labour Migration in Bangladesh: A Decent Work Perspective, 2005. Pg 1.

A comprehensive understanding of the concept of decent work is reflected in the following statement about what decent and productive work means from within the ILO. Juan Somavia states “Everyday we are reminded that, for everybody, work is a defining feature of human existence.”⁶⁴

In this statement it is important to note three important things that the Director General of the ILO is saying, namely that work is understood to be a defining feature of human existence, that it sustains life and meets basic needs. It is not just any type of work that Somavia is referring to here, but it is productive and decent work that can provide growth and sustainable development to workers. Work is not only about income, it is about identity within families and the community at large. Through work, people are expected to be creative and innovative, in conditions that allow them to be human beings as stated in the declaration, the Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities. Arthur O’Reilly state that: “All human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity”⁶⁵

We learn from this statement that through their work, human beings affirm their identity as creative creatures. The call by the ILO is therefore crucial to all member states in ensuring that justice and equity at work prevail. O’Reilly state that:

All ILO members, even if they have not ratified the Conventions in question, have an obligation arising from the very fact of membership in the Organization, to respect, to promote and to realize, in good faith and in accordance with the Constitution the principles concerning the fundamental rights which are the subject of those Conventions, including the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.⁶⁶

The ILO Conventions, which most countries have signed, obligate these countries to ensure that they strengthen labour laws in their respective countries to protect the interest of workers. Multinational companies and labour brokers are advocating for labour market flexibility. They vociferously argue that this will create an enabling

⁶⁴ Somavia J: The Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities, 2003. Pg 3.

⁶⁵ O’Reilly A: Declaration of Philadelphia, International Labour Conference, 1944: The Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities, 2003. Pg 3

⁶⁶ O’Reilly A: ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998). The Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities, 2003. Pg 3

environment for job creation. The million-dollar question is, what kind of jobs are they hoping to create? Surely, it is not decent work, because it will cost them more, which is what they are trying to avoid.

The ILO is not interested in the creation of any job, but in the creation of full-time employment, that promotes human dignity, and this applies to all progressive forces representing workers across the globe, as this statement by O'Reilly attests: "The promotion of full, productive and freely chosen employment should be regarded as the means of achieving in practice the realization of the right to work."⁶⁷ Access to a job should not be a privilege for the elite, but a constitutional right, especially in those countries that believe and practice constitutional democracy. The right to work and full time employment is central to the realization of other human and economic rights in democratic states. The challenge is the implementation of these rights that are enshrined in our respective constitutions around the world to ensure that there is socio-economic development in the lives of the working poor.

3. The Decent Work Paradigm

According to Dharam Ghai, the decent work paradigm is in "principle applicable to all working people in all societies and its objectives are valid across the full spectrum of institutional and developmental diversity."⁶⁸ However, the contextual and economic realities of each country and continent will ultimately determine the successes and failures of the implementation of decent work in each country and continent.

Decent work is a concept, developed by the ILO reflecting the aspirations of the working poor across the globe. Countries therefore have a responsibility through their economic policy frameworks in partnership with their respective private and religious sectors to practically implement the decent work agenda. The political leadership in various countries has a fundamental role to play in the advancement of the economic development of their citizens.

⁶⁷ O'Reilly A: ILO Recommendation No 169 concerning Employment Policy. The Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities, 2003. Pg 3

⁶⁸ Ghai D: Decent Work: Objectives and Strategies, International Institute of Labour Studies, 2006. Pg 4.

4. The Features of Decent Work

According to Dharam Ghai, the notion of decent work emphasizes four fundamental elements: rights at work, employment, social dialogue and social security. Ghai underscores that the first two refer to work of all kinds and that they have “both quantitative and qualitative dimensions.”⁶⁹ These first two also encompass three sub-themes, which are remuneration, security and conditions at work. The second two refer to the “social security component of decent work which is intended to protect workers against the risk of losing income.”⁷⁰

The notion of decent work is an attempt by the ILO to eradicate economic atrocities in the world of work that has seen rapid changes over the past three decades due to the prominence of economic globalization and a paradigm shift from labour to capital intensification. In response to economic globalization, the decent work paradigm emphasizes the right to work. In the following sections, I will explore each of the key tenets of “decent work”.

4.1 Rights at Work

Ghai reflects on each of the fundamental decent work elements in his analysis of the rights at work. The rights of freedom of association create a conducive environment for workers to be fully human as they collaborate and network at work with other fellow workers irrespective of race, gender and age.

Fundamental to this discussion is the issue of forced labour that has gained prominence because of its impact on children in the past years in various countries. Countries like China are known for such practices, which are not only exploitative, but a human rights violation as well. According to Ghai the ILO’s apprehensiveness about this problem can be traced back to “one of its first conventions on the subject, convention no 5: Minimum Age (Industry) that was adopted in 1919, the first year of its operation.”⁷¹ According to this convention, the “minimum age for work was

⁶⁹ Ghai D: Decent Work: Concepts, Models and Indicators, International Institute for Labour Studies, 2002. Pg 1.

⁷⁰ Ghai D: Decent Work: Concepts, Models and Indicators, International Institute for Labour Studies, 2002. Pg 1.

⁷¹ Ghai D: Decent Work: Concepts, Models and Indicators, International Institute for Labour Studies, 2002, Pg 19.

defined at 14 years and the use of child labour was prohibited in all industrial enterprises.”⁷²

Last but not least is discrimination at work, which according to Ghai “implies the denial of equality of treatment and opportunity.”⁷³ Discrimination deprives human beings of their right to freedom of association in the workplace and dehumanizes the workers, which limits their contributions. Discrimination on any grounds is illegitimate, but the form that discrimination often takes is that which includes sexual preference, religion, illness, race or gender.

According to Ghai, the ILO convention no 111 on discrimination in respect to employment and occupation (1958) identifies elements of discrimination as follows: “Any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation (ILO, 1992).”⁷⁴ The guiding principles are unequivocally stated in this convention regarding discrimination in the workplace for all the countries to take note of the seriousness of the problem.

With respect to the focus of my research, the most susceptible to discrimination within the workforce are the working class whose jobs are casualized because they are often not unionized like those in standard or permanent employment.

4.2 Employment at Work

It is important that there should be employment opportunities for people in various sectors of the economy. Ghai argues that for decent work to exist certain conditions must be satisfied, for instance employment should yield remuneration either in cash or kind that meets the essential needs of the worker and the family members.⁷⁵

⁷² Ghai D: Decent Work: Concepts, Models and Indicators, International Institute for Labour Studies, 2002, Pg 19.

⁷³ Ghai D: Decent Work: Concepts, Models and Indicators, International Institute of Labour Studies, 2002, Pg 19.

⁷⁴ Ghai D: Decent Work: Objectives and Strategies, International Institute of Labour Studies, 2006, Pg 7.

⁷⁵ Ghai D: Decent Work: Objectives and Strategies, International Institute of Labour Studies, 2006, Pg 10.

The first condition, then, is employment, which often creates conflict between workers and employers. The tendency is for employers to pay workers “fair wages” rather than “living wages” which is what is required by the notion of decent work. A “fair wage” is usually at the discretion of the employer and does not take into consideration market flexibility and its socio-economic challenges. It is not negotiated between two parties but imposed upon a desperate worker whose desperation ultimately leads him or her to worse forms of humiliation.

I subscribe to the notion that decent work provides an alternative model to dehumanizing conditions of a “fair wage.” It is a “living wage” which contributes immensely towards decent employment. It is ethically and legally just to compensate a worker for his or her labour irrespective of the nature of work done. Remuneration is fundamental in wage employment. Tasnem Siddiqui states that the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) in Bangladesh, for example, has “classified short-term migrants to the Middle East and South-East Asia into four categories: professional, skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled.”⁷⁶ Fundamental to this classification is the difference in remuneration of workers based on their sectors. The challenge is that in most situations government’s economic policies are designed to grow the economy without emphasizing the creation of employment and work opportunities as a priority to properly remunerate workers. This is often encouraged by the global capitalist’s economic system that most countries adopt. Nomaan Majid points to another challenge in employment in developing countries, “that income generating work, whatever form it takes, be at least equal to a standard set by society that is sufficient for earners and their families or households.”⁷⁷

Governments ought to manage the economy and legislate on the minimum wage, which protects vulnerable workers from exploitation by their employers. It is important to protect the poor from abject poverty and national governments have a responsibility to regulate labour. Gerry Rodgers argues that remuneration is fundamental to the decent work paradigm, which amounts to “Decent Wages, above poverty thresholds, paid regularly, or a decent and reliable income from self-employment.”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Siddiqui T: International Labour Migration from Bangladesh: A Decent Work Perspective, 2005, Pg 9.

⁷⁷ Majid N: Economic Growth, Social policy and Decent Work, Employment Paper, 2001, Pg 18.

⁷⁸ Rodgers G: The Goal of Decent Work, 2008, Pg 66.

During the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, for example, casual workers working as security guards in stadiums around the country had to embark on industrial action during the tournament for their wages to be paid, after a series of promises made to them by their employers were not met. This is just one example of the failure of the state to provide just remuneration.

The second condition is security at work, which promotes the security of employment and discourages casual work, which affects mostly semi-skilled or unskilled workers who work in the agricultural, hotel, manufacturing, and transport sectors. Majid argues that the “dimension of security is closely tied to employment, in actual fact, a considerable difference between formal employment on the one hand, and informal, casual and irregular employment on the other, lies precisely in the dimension of security.”⁷⁹ It is almost impossible to even entertain the notion of decent work without dealing with the challenges of insecurity in employment and work globally. Security at work, according to Rodgers, includes “the regularity of work and protection against dismissal, protection from occupational risks and hazards, and the security of income at different points in the life cycle and in the face of particular contingencies including periods of ill-health, maternity and unemployment.”⁸⁰

In the era of casualization, regularity of work is unequivocally under threat. Majid states that some within policy circles have argued vehemently that “protective security is expensive and ought to be expected after the fruits of economic growth have produced a wealthier society.”⁸¹ Furthermore, argues Majid, though “strong versions of such views are less widespread, it nevertheless holds sway in some form with many policy makers.”⁸² The perception created by policy makers is that decent work without economic growth based on neo-liberal economic models is unsupportable in the modern economic world. However, the state in partnership with the private sector ought to find ways and means of financing the security of employment for vulnerable workers even if it means borrowing while the economy recovers from the recession.

The third condition at work according to Rodgers, “include the duration and intensity of work, the adequacy of the working environment, the scope for creativity and self-

⁷⁹ Majid N: Economic Growth, Social policy and Decent Work, Employment Paper, 2001, Pg 19.

⁸⁰ Rodgers G: The Goal of Decent Work, 2008, Pg 66.

⁸¹ Majid N: Economic Growth, Social policy and Decent Work, Employment Paper, 2001, Pg 19.

⁸² Majid N: Economic Growth, Social policy and Decent Work, Employment Paper, 2001, Pg 19.

fulfilment, and possibilities for the development and application of skills.”⁸³ Hence the fundamental need for workers to have representation as part of social protection in the workplace.

4.3 Social Protection at Work

According to Siddiqui, “Decent work provides for certain assurances against vulnerabilities when people are out of work (eg social protection) which includes protection of income to ensure subsistence during old age or sudden loss of income due to sickness, accidents or death.”⁸⁴ Decent work is not confined to those who are workers, but extends to those who are unemployed and their families to ensure that they live decent and productive lives. This should not be a privilege, but a constitutional right of people to be protected by the state. However, forms of protection might differ according to the status of each country. The classical or industrialized countries with a high Gross Domestic Product (GDP) based on their economic growth patterns will have adequate protection for its citizens, while the transitional countries, in the process of becoming fully industrial will need to have a balanced protection plan. The problem lies with developmental countries whose economies are emerging with a wide range of socio-economic and political challenges. The critical issue with regard to social protection is how best a country can protect its citizens from abject poverty and underdevelopment in the midst of unemployment and stagnant economic growth.

According to Ashwani Saith, “in order to evaluate the significance of the concept of decent work, it is necessary to view it against the backdrop of a string of earlier paradigms of deprivation and emancipation.”⁸⁵ Saith makes reference to the “independent and seminal work of Dadabhai Naoroji (1901) in 1875, who viewed poverty from the vintage point of colonized people.”⁸⁶ Related to this, argues Saith, was the work of Seebohm Rowntree in 1901 in his attempt “to measure urban poverty in York, England, close to the heart of industrial empire.”⁸⁷ Common to both the work of Naoroji and Rowntree is the relationship of poverty as a socio-economic predicament to the concept of decent work and their determination to unearth the

⁸³ Rodgers G: *The Goal of Decent Work*, 2008, Pg 66.

⁸⁴ Siddiqui T: *International Labour Migration from Bangladesh: A Decent Work Perspective*, 2005, Pg 18.

⁸⁵ Saith A: *Social Protection, Decent Work and Development*, 2004, Pg 13.

⁸⁶ Saith A: *Social Protection, Decent Work and Development*, 2004, Pg 13.

⁸⁷ Saith A: *Social Protection, Decent Work and Development*, 2004, Pg 13.

causes of poverty in order to provide protective solutions to the vulnerable groups of people in the world. The debate on absolute poverty is based upon the notion of modern economic growth, which according to Saith should be “promoted through state intervention.”⁸⁸

Saith believes that the “failure of such state-led development to alleviate poverty rekindled the debate about the absolute poverty line, which served to demonstrate the persistence of poverty even where economic growth had occurred.”⁸⁹ Fundamental to this debate are elements that entrench poverty. First is the disjuncture between economic growth and the eradication of poverty across the globe. Second is the state’s inability to use resources effectively to protect its citizens, which ultimately leads to poverty-stricken communities. Third is the fact that certain communities are completely dependent on state facilities due to lack of skills or illiteracy. Such state led development initiatives promote decent and productive living standards among human beings and ultimately lead to sustainable livelihood because of their comprehensive approach.

The state together with stakeholders like trade unions and the private sector are central to social dialogue. The Public Private Partnerships (PPP) reflect the importance of this dialogue among these stakeholders. It is important to emphasize that government alone cannot create decent jobs for every casual worker in the street, hence the need to engage each other in dialogue to harness these partnerships. The role of trade unions is crucial in the defence of workers who might be exploited by the employers in the private sector, whose main goal is profit rather than human development.⁹⁰

4.4 Social Dialogue at Work

Siddiqui states, “Social dialogue is a process through which employers and employees resolve their differences in order to ensure social equity and collective bargaining, it is the mechanism through which employers and employees assert their rights.”⁹¹

⁸⁸ Saith A: Social Protection, Decent Work and Development, 2004, Pg 13.

⁸⁹ Saith A: Social Protection, Decent Work and Development, 2004, Pg 13.

⁹⁰ The objective of any business is return on investment which is basically profit maximization, if this is the end product the goals are achieved, social development is not the primary mandate for business, on the other hand trade unions have a duty to protect the interest of their primary client which is the workers, if this is done properly and workers are compensated and protected this therefore can lead to sustainable social development.

Furthermore, Siddiqui argues that these are the two important stakeholders to this process, and that each has a place in dialogue. Social dialogue is fundamental, because it creates space for both parties in ensuring decent and productive opportunities for men and women to work under conditions of freedom, security and equity that promote human dignity.⁹²

According to Dharam Ghai, “social dialogue among different social and economic groups and between these groups and the public authorities is an essential attribute of a democratic society.”⁹³ Critical to a constitutional democratic dispensation are the strategic platforms to address socio-economic differences between stakeholders, which contribute immensely towards economic growth. Social dialogue promotes among other things social cohesion and economic justice through constructive engagement. Ghai states that it also enhance “equity, efficiency and adjustment and sustain economic progress.”⁹⁴ Ghai recalls the ILO report, which stated that, “Processes of bipartite and tripartite social dialogue and information exchange can promote pro-equity and pro-efficiency incentives in the institutional environment. Tripartite social dialogue can play an important role in support of broader macroeconomic coordination and the enlargement of consensus over economic and social strategies (ILO, 2000b).”⁹⁵

Social dialogue should not just be perceived as just another concept within the decent work framework, but as an important element that ensures productivity and economic growth within the workplace. In the absence of social dialogue from both bipartite (employers and employees) and tripartite (employers, employees and trade unions) the possibility of conflict is high.

First, the tension can affect foreign direct investment, which often leads to job losses. Second, the tension can lead to disruption of essential services, which affects the poor and the needy. Third, it can lead to social disintegration because of industrial action

⁹¹ Siddiqui T: International Labour Migration from Bangladesh: A Decent Work Perspective, 2005, Pg 21.

⁹² Siddiqui T: International Labour Migration from Bangladesh: A Decent Work Perspective, 2005, Pg 21

⁹³ Siddiqui T: International Labour Migration from Bangladesh: A Decent Work Perspective, 2005, Pg 27.

⁹⁴ Siddiqui T: International Labour Migration from Bangladesh: A Decent Work Perspective, 2005, Pg 27.

⁹⁵ Ghai D: Decent Work: Concepts, Models and Indicators, 2002, Pg 27.

from disgruntled employees as well as damage to institutional or company property. As the statement above indicates, social dialogue can play an important role in support of broader macroeconomic coordination. It is important for government, the private sector and labour to work together towards the formulation of a macroeconomic a policy framework informed by the needs of all parties concerned.

Macroeconomic policy is not the business of the private sector alone, government must regulate the economy by legislating and protecting vulnerable sectors like workers. Trade unions have the responsibility to hold both government and the private sector accountable to the people and the decisions they take. Ghai states that “social dialogue on issues relating to work can take place on three levels: between employers and employees in relation to terms and conditions of employment, between management and workers over the functioning of an enterprise, and between social partners and public authorities on social and economic policies.”⁹⁶ The promotion of social dialogue is fundamental in building a democratic society that values the contribution of its citizens irrespective of their class, race, gender or religious affiliation.

Having discussed a range of elements that constitute “decent work”, we now turn to examine decent work within the context of South Africa as one of the most unequal societies in the world in terms of income.

5. Decent Work in South Africa

The South African government, led by the ruling party the ANC together with its alliance partners COSATU and SACP, promulgated their intention to create decent work as part of their election campaign in 2009.⁹⁷ I will revisit the commitments made by the ANC and its partners in their 2009 manifesto together with the introduction of the New Growth Path earmarked to forge a way forward with regard to economic policy and the creation of decent work.

5.1 The New Growth Path (NGP)

In his inaugural State of the Nation Address in June 2009, President Jacob Zuma stated, “It is my pleasure and honour to highlight the key elements of our programme

⁹⁶ Ghai D: Decent Work: Concepts, Models and Indicators, 2002, Pg 27.

⁹⁷ See ANC Election Manifesto, 2009.

of action. The creation of decent work will be at the centre of our economic policies and will influence our investment attraction and job creation initiatives. In line with our undertakings, we have to forge ahead to promote a more inclusive economy.”⁹⁸ Fundamental to this statement is the acknowledgement that decent work should be central to economic policy and investment. Furthermore, the statement seems to admit that the economy is not inclusive, hence the inequalities that exist between the affluent and the destitute. Decent work, according to Zuma, is an attempt, it seems by the government to rectify the socio-economic imbalances through economic policy reform.

The New Growth Path document states: “Creating decent work, reducing inequality and defeating poverty can only happen through a new growth path founded on a restructuring of the South African economy to improve its performance in terms of labour absorption as well as the composition and rate of growth.”⁹⁹ Clearly, the government acknowledges that previous macroeconomic frameworks have not adequately dealt with the challenge of unemployment and poverty in South Africa. Unemployment and jobless economic growth have been the critical issues facing the democratic government since 1994 when it took over the country. The NGP suggest a fundamental shift from previous positions rejecting any paradigm shifts in economic policy. The statement suggests that the persistent problem of unemployment has brought about a change of mindset regarding the economy, and that the government is moving towards a shared vision of development through employment creation.

In the 2011 State of the Nation Address the President said, “We are concerned that unemployment and poverty persist despite the economic growth experienced in the last 10 years. In order to address these concerns, we have declared 2011 a year of job creation through meaningful economic transformation and inclusive growth.”¹⁰⁰ Again, the President uses the term “inclusive,” suggesting that there has been “exclusiveness.” An “inclusive” economy produces inclusive economic growth and human development at all levels of society. The President further states that, “We have introduced a New Growth Path that will guide our work in achieving these goals

⁹⁸ Zuma J: State of the Nation Address, The New Growth Path: The Economic Framework of the South African Government, 2009. Pg 1.

⁹⁹ The New Growth Path: The Economic Framework of the South African Government, 2009. Pg 1.

¹⁰⁰ Zuma J: The State of the Nation Address, 2011, Pg 5.

working within the premise that the creation of decent work is at the centre of our economic policies.”¹⁰¹

However, I am not convinced that the government’s understanding of decent work is similar to that of workers and the unemployed. I am apprehensive about three related issues with regard to our current economic policy position. The government is not consistent enough on its commitment to a decent work programme, because it uses different terminology for different audiences for their own political correctness and this does not benefit the people. Recent reports in the South African media indicated that the ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe and the deputy minister of labour had argued that, “there was no need to put emphasis on decent jobs.”¹⁰²

Business Day also had a similar headline, that the “ANC thinks again on its decent work drive”, making reference to an interview with Gwede Mantashe who argued that, “calling for the jobs to be decent was putting the cart before the horse.”¹⁰³ If the focus of the New Growth Path is the creation of just any job, rather than quality decent jobs that restore human dignity and development in the lives of the working class, it is destined to fail, as was the case with GEAR.

The government also gives an impression that it is changing its position on economic policy on the one hand, while on the other insisting on implementing the decisions taken by the ANC at its National Conference in Polokwane in 2007, which were against changes in the GEAR economic policy. Another challenge is the government’s economic and political relationship with China, known for the violation of human rights through cheap and child labour designed to maximize profit. China’s economic agreements with African states have left millions of workers across the continent with health problems and extreme poverty due to the conditions that they work under in the Chinese industries, with slave wages that are unregulated.

The question that remains is how is the New Growth Path an answer to these socio-economic problems? How different is it from the previous initiatives? The government, through its New Growth Path, commits itself to two important things: first, to identify “areas where employment creation is possible on a large scale as a

¹⁰¹ Zuma J: The State of the Nation Address, 2011, Pg 5.

¹⁰² <http://www.citypress.co.za/politics/News/ANC-Cosatu>. 2011, Pg 1.

¹⁰³ <http://www.businessday.co.za/articles>, 2011. Pg 1.

result of substantial changes in conditions in South Africa and globally.”¹⁰⁴ Second, is to “develop a policy package to facilitate employment creation in these areas.”¹⁰⁵

Some important announcements were made by the President in an attempt by his government to focus on employment creation, which include “the jobs fund of 9 billion over the next three years.”¹⁰⁶ Another important development was the “R10 billion for the Industrial Development Corporation over the next five years for investment in job creation initiatives.”¹⁰⁷ Then again the “20 billion tax allowances or tax breaks to companies or institutions in the private sector that focus their programmes on investment and expansion that result in job creation.”¹⁰⁸ These three announcements reflect the areas identified by government for job creation. The approach from government suggests that the New Growth Path policy focus is labour intensification with both micro and macroeconomic initiatives. The emphasis on the creation of jobs indicates labour absorbing initiatives in the identified areas where an estimated substantial amount of R39 billion will be spent over the next eight years by the relevant institutions appointed by government. In addition to this, both provincial and local spheres of government are expected to phase into their programmes job creation initiatives as directed by the NGP.

However, it is still not clear how the R9 billion will be dispersed to ensure that the unemployed and the working poor benefit from it. The government’s New Growth Path gives an in-depth description of the rationale behind the projected creation of 5 million jobs by 2020. This would be achieved through what is known as Jobs Drivers.

The NGP “identifies infrastructure focusing on public investment which is believed to be able to create 250 000 jobs a year in energy, transport, water and communication infrastructure and in housing by 2015.”¹⁰⁹ However, during the 2010 FIFA World Cup much was expected from these sectors and most unemployed youth were not absorbed, and even those who were fortunate to be employed had problems with their respective companies in terms of their contractual agreements.

¹⁰⁴ The New Growth Path: The Economic Framework of the South African Government, 2009. Pg 1.

¹⁰⁵ The New Growth Path: The Economic Framework of the South African Government, 2009. Pg 1.

¹⁰⁶ Zuma J: The State of the Nation Address, 2011, Pg 6.

¹⁰⁷ Zuma J: The State of the Nation Address, 2011, Pg 6.

¹⁰⁸ Zuma J: The State of the Nation Address, 2011, Pg 6.

¹⁰⁹ The New Growth Path: The Economic Framework of the South African Government, 2009. Pg 11.

The NGP “targets opportunities for 300 000 households in agricultural smallholder schemes plus 145 000 jobs in agro processing by 2020, and a potential to upgrade conditions for 660 000 farm-workers.”¹¹⁰ In addition to this, argues the NGP, “the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) suggest that mining can add 140 000 jobs by 2020, and 200 000 by 2030.”¹¹¹ But it is also not clear how the unskilled or illiterate who are unemployed will be accommodated in these projected job opportunities, that might require skilled labour, which means only the unemployed graduates or those with specific skills will have an opportunity to be employed.

The NGP identifies “technological innovation which opens the opportunity for substantial employment creation of 300 000 jobs by 2020. This is intended to green the economy with 80 000 jobs in the manufacturing sector. The rest are projected in construction, operations and maintenance of new environmentally friendly infrastructure. The job creation is projected to rise to 400 000 by 2030.”¹¹² The challenge with these projections is that they are subject to economic challenges globally, and it is possible that the economy might not be able to respond positively in certain instances. I would have hoped that the government would alert the people to these possible economic turbulences to avoid being embarrassed when the economic context changes.

It is estimated that about “260 000 new employment opportunities are anticipated and the public sector can generate 100 000 jobs in health, education and policing by 2020 even if it grows by just 1%.”¹¹³ The NGO sector is shrinking due to the recent economic recession that has affected global agencies and led to shifts in funding priorities and this has severely affected this important sector in the community. The government can create jobs in the public sector in specific areas but that will not be adequate to reduce unemployment by 2020. It is therefore unrealistic for government to expect immediate changes and the creation of 260 000 job opportunities.

The NGP argues that “while urbanization will continue, a significant share of the population will remain in rural areas, engaged in rural economy and the government will step up its efforts to provide public infrastructure and housing in rural areas and it

¹¹⁰ The New Growth Path: The Economic Framework of the South African Government, 2009. Pg 11.

¹¹¹ The New Growth Path: The Economic Framework of the South African Government, 2009. Pg 11.

¹¹² The New Growth Path: The Economic Framework of the South African Government, 2009. Pg 12.

¹¹³ The New Growth Path: The Economic Framework of the South African Government, 2009. Pg 13.

is estimated that improvements in 500 000 households will take place, as well as stimulating employment in other sectors.”¹¹⁴

In view of this commitment, one believes that the government is making an effort to address economic discrepancies in rural areas through its rural development programme which is one of the five key priorities of government. However, the challenge still remains for most rural women who are still expected to fetch water and wood from the forest to prepare meals for their families. This is an area of concern if you compare these women with their counter-parts in the city and suburban areas.

The five identified areas in the New Growth Path are key strategic sectors for labour absorption aimed at the creation of employment. However, as much as the sectors identified demonstrate the potential to create jobs, the projected creation of 5 million jobs by 2020 seems to be an ambitious proposition.

The reasons are as follows, first, it depends among other things on social dialogue between government, the private sector and labour. Second, it depends on the government’s macroeconomic framework, particularly fiscal and monetary policies reflecting national income and expenditure. Third, it depends on the global market forces that drive economic growth and investment.

It is evident from these five identified areas in the “jobs drive” of the NGP that there is no emphasis on “decent jobs” but on the “creation of employment opportunities,” which begs the question about the quality of these jobs that are anticipated to be created by 2020 to 2030. Apart from the jobs in the public sector, which include health, education, agriculture, transport, energy, policing and communication, which might offer permanent jobs with benefits described by the decent work framework, the reality is that the government is referring to short term job opportunities, not decent and productive employment that will eradicate abject poverty and inequality.

Another critical challenge that might hinder the creation of any decent job is corruption and maladministration in both public and private sectors that has deprived thousands of potential workers the opportunity to be employed and provide for their families. Nepotism and cronyism have become a culture in our society and the

¹¹⁴ The New Growth Path: The Economic Framework of the South African Government, 2009. Pg 14.

struggle credentials of cadres elevate them to a superior status in both public and private sectors of employment. This culture of entitlement defeats the purpose of decent and productive employment advocated by the ILO based on the principles of human dignity and equity. Decent work is about a living wage, in conditions of freedom, security, equity and human dignity with access to union representation and association in the workplace. Every human being deserves the opportunity to have decent employment irrespective of their position or class in society. It should not be a privilege, but a constitutional right to work.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed a number of related issues regarding the concept of “decent work”. First, I have endeavoured to define decent work using the ILO framework of what constitutes decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, security, equity and human dignity. Second, I have discussed in detail the four fundamental features of decent work as proposed by the ILO framework. Third, I have reflected on South Africa’s New Growth Path designed to create decent jobs in the midst of joblessness, poverty and inequality affecting the working class.

I have argued that there is a fundamental difference between “decent work” and “job opportunities” and the challenge to the South African government is not to divert from their commitments articulated in the 2009 Manifesto, the State of the Nation Addresses of 2009 and 2011. In these commitments they prioritized the creation of decent work for the majority of workers and the unemployed in South Africa. The following chapter attempts to propose a theology of decent work informed by the experiences of casual workers themselves, recorded during semi-structured interviews and CBS sessions. This work is important, for it adds the important voice of the faith community to the quest for a society in which there is decent work for all.

CHAPTER FOUR

A THEOLOGY OF DECENT WORK

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will first introduce the N D J Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion and its historical significance and relevance to the thesis through casual workers. Second, I will then attempt to deal with Albert Nolan's theology of work framework as the basis for the study. The framework argues for collaboration between professional theologians and casual workers. Third, I will reflect on the outcome of the semi-structured interviews conducted in Pietermaritzburg and Estcourt respectively among casual workers in the N D J Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion. Fourth, I will reflect on the CBS session outcome with casual worker which was used as a tool for a theology of decent work focusing on Matthew 20:1-15 as a group text. Fifth, I will then discuss in detail the five pillars of a theology of decent work using the categories of decent work as outlined by the ILO. Sixth, I will present the research findings based on the semi-structured interviews and CBS. Lastly, I will conclude the chapter by summarizing fundamental components of the chapter.

2. The N D J Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion

The N D J Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion is primarily a working class church with a membership of about 1000 in both KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng respectively.¹¹⁵ Archbishop Mvunyelwa Khanyile of Estcourt currently leads the Church with Bishop Petros Zondi and Bishop Obed Zuma responsible for Pietermaritzburg and Umsinga respectively. Previously Bishop Christopher Zwane and Bishop Levi Marwa, the son of Bishop N D J Marwa, who worked as a Police official led these areas. It is important to acknowledge the fact that only Bishop Levi Marwa, among the leaders mentioned above had formal employment and the rest worked in informal employment, which is the case with most members of AICs because of their poor

¹¹⁵ I understand that there are broad epistemological implications for the AIC's, but for the purposes of this study the focus on this AIC church is primarily class and faith analysis which therefore informs the thesis's argument that central to a genuine theology of work are the experiences of casual workers, an argument that Albert Nolan vehemently put forward in his article entitled "A Workers Theology of Work," Pg. 161.

educational background.¹¹⁶ The financial element for African Independent Churches (AIC) has always been a predicament for them, which is the reason why they are struggling in comparison with their mainline counterparts who have mission churches abroad or national structures that provide financial support for them.¹¹⁷

According to JA Millard, Samuel Brander, the founder of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion sought a religious home in a number of denominations before finally establishing his own independent church.¹¹⁸ Among the churches Brander joined was the Methodist Church, where his father was a local preacher, but he left the church after a quarrel with a white minister.¹¹⁹ According to Millard, Brander then moved to the Anglican Church and in 1873 was employed as a transport contractor.¹²⁰ When Brander's family moved to Potchefstroom in 1884, Brander who had been an Anglican for 10 years, became a catechist, and according to Millard was sent to work in the Waterberg district for a salary of 12 pounds a year. Using his personal funds in the hope that the Anglican Church would refund him, Brander built a church and school to assist the community of Waterberg.¹²¹

When he applied to Bishop Bousfield of the Anglican Church in Pretoria for a refund of the money he spent, Bousfield refused to refund him, an argument ensued, and Brander left the Anglican Church.¹²² Brander had used part of his salary to finance the activities of both the church and community at large. According to Millard, when "Mangena Mokone founded the Ethiopian Church in 1892, Brander and a number of

¹¹⁶ There are different types of AIC's and most of their leaders have limited education and resources, perhaps with the exception of Messianic, which include Nazareth Baptist Church (Shembe) and Zion Christian Church (ZCC). In my explanation I will limit myself to three, that is Ethiopian, (those who broke away from missionary churches because of racism and discrimination), Messianic (Those who believe in a chosen leader that represent Christ in the Trinity), and the Spirit type (Those who believe in the manifestation of the spirit through individuals. The N D J Ethiopian Catholic Church is a combination of both Ethiopian and Spirit type AIC.

¹¹⁷ Most funding agencies abroad are primarily from the mainline or Protestant Churches and they are able to support their Churches and other organizations in other parts of the World, this is not the case with AIC's who rely on the income of their members in a local congregation for all their needs including church building and social responsibility initiatives.

¹¹⁸ Millard J A: Malihambe - Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, <http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/brander>, 1999, Pg 1.

¹¹⁹ Millard J A: Malihambe - Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, <http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/brander>, 1999, Pg 1.

¹²⁰ Millard J A: Malihambe:Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, <http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/brander>, 1999, Pg 1.

¹²¹ Millard J A: Malihambe:Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, <http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/brander>, 1999, Pg 1.

¹²² Millard J A: Malihambe:Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, <http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/brander>, 1999, Pg 1.

Anglicans joined the new church.”¹²³ Furthermore, states Millard, the new church “amalgamated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) in 1896.”¹²⁴ Because of this amalgamation, Brander was ordained two years later by Bishop Turner into the ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC). In 1902, an American minister, Carleton Tanner, argued for “stricter American control of the South African branch of the church.”¹²⁵ Brander and others “complained to the AMEC that the conditions in the church were no different from those in the mission churches where indigenous South African had no say in the running of the church affairs.”¹²⁶ The cause of disagreement between Brander and the American AMEC leaders was the fact that funds generated by the local church were used to finance the American church leaving poor South Africans with nothing.

Brander then left the AMEC and established his own AICs. According to Millard, “on the 3 April 1904 Brander and 45 worshippers held their first service of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion in Marabastad, Pretoria.”¹²⁷ In 1961, the New Church of Southern Africa under Obed Mooki amalgamated with the Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, which according to Millard, “had been threatened with closure by the government.”¹²⁸ Bishop Naphtal Daniel Joshua Marwa was part of the delegation of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion that amalgamated with the New Church of Southern Africa. Marwa broke away from the New Church of Southern Africa to start his church in Natal in 1968. He met with other AICs leaders like Bishop Zeblon Zuma, who later passed on and was replaced by Bishop Mvunyelwa Khanyile. The other leaders were Jabulani Ngubane, Mandlenkosi Zwane and Mbuyiselo Bhengu and together they formed the New Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion based in Ladysmith and Pietermaritzburg respectively.

When Bishop Naphtali Daniel Joshue Marwa died in 1970, the church was divided over the leadership and Bishop Mvunyelwa Khanyile left the church to start the N D J

¹²³ Millard J A: Malihambe:Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, <http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/brander>, 1999, Pg 1.

¹²⁴ Millard J A: Malihambe:Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, <http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/brander>, 1999, Pg 1.

¹²⁵ Millard J A: Malihambe:Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, <http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/brander>, 1999, Pg 1.

¹²⁶ Millard J A: Malihambe:Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, <http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/brander> 1999, Pg 1.

¹²⁷ Millard J A: Malihambe:Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, <http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/brander> 1999, Pg 1.

¹²⁸ Millard J A: Malihambe:Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, <http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/brander>, accessed in 1999, Pg 1.

Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion in 1990 in honour of the late Bishop N D J Marwa, which is the current church. He left with other leaders including Bishops Mandlenkosi Zwane and Jabulani Ngubane. The rest remained behind and changed the name of the church to Holy Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion. Now there are these two churches under separate leaders as breakaway churches.

Two important points are worth noting at this stage. First, central to the history of the N D J Ethiopian Catholic Church is its pursuit for economic justice. Brander argued against the American AMEC church that was taking money from poor Africans. Second are the leadership battles over the control of the church, most of which are linked to financial benefits. The leadership of the church within AICs is perceived by some to be an opportunity to earn a living from the limited income that is generated by church members. My view is that AICs represent the poor who are victims of economic injustice and abuse. Casual workers in the N D J Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion are victims of the changes in the world of work that has seen an increase in chronic unemployment and casual work globally.

Albert Nolan's theology of work framework, used in this research project, created a safe environment for casual workers to articulate their struggles and experiences in the workplace. Nolan's theological framework underscores the importance of a worker's role in the construction of a theology of work.

3. Albert Nolan's Theology of Work Framework

Albert Nolan argues that a "genuine theology of work will have to be a worker's theology, a theology that is constructed by workers and for workers."¹²⁹ Nolan challenges the dominant view of speaking for and not with the working class who are predominantly poor and marginalized in society. He states, "A theological reflection of workers upon their experience of work and struggle is fundamental."¹³⁰

A theology of work requires collaboration between workers and professional theologians because they both have important contributions to make in pursuit of justice and knowledge. Nolan believes that "professional theologians today are not

¹²⁹ Nolan A: A Worker's Theology: Three-Fold Cord, 1991. Pg 160.

¹³⁰ Nolan A: A Worker's Theology: Three-Fold Cord, 1991. Pg 160.

workers, are not members of the working class and therefore do not have the experience of work, that is manual work.”¹³¹ In the absence of such an experience, professional theologians have intellectual work experience required in the construction of a theology of work for workers by workers, hence the collaboration between both. However, this is not the “primary experience,” according to Nolan, the “primary experience is that of the worker or labourer, the experience of the working class.”¹³²

Both Prophetic theology done by ordinary people including casual workers and Academic theology done by professional theologians bear testimony to the collaboration between activists and professional theologians. Some professional theologians have been part of the struggle for justice at work, but it is certainly not their struggle, it is the workers’ struggle, which requires their resolve and commitment.¹³³ The struggle for economic emancipation by workers becomes their kairos moment. It is an opportunity for them to speak prophetically and theologically about their challenges of work.

According to the Kairos Documents “Prophetic theology differs from academic theology, because whereas academic theology deals with all biblical themes in a systematic manner and formulates general Christian principles and doctrines, prophetic theology concentrates on these aspects of the Word of God that have an immediate bearing upon the critical situation in which we find ourselves.”¹³⁴

Professional theologians doing academic theology admit in this statement that their interest in reading the Bible is different from that of ordinary lay people doing prophetic theology. Nolan underscore the importance of worker’s experience of work when he states “whatever we produce, no matter how scholarly and scientific it may be, will remain second hand and therefore second best.”¹³⁵

According to Nolan, “it does not matter how sophisticated our knowledge of the Bible is, if we do not have the experience of work that we are reflecting upon in a theology

¹³¹ Nolan A: A Worker’s Theology: Three-Fold Cord, 1991. Pg 160.

¹³² Nolan A: A Worker’s Theology: Three-Fold Cord, 1991. Pg 161.

¹³³ See Kairos Document, South Africa, 1985, Pg 1ff.

¹³⁴ Leonard G (eds): The Kairos Documents, 2nd edition, 2010, Pg 63.

¹³⁵ Nolan A: A Worker’s Theology: Three-Fold Cord, 1991, Pg 161.

of work, we will not see in God's word what workers see in it."¹³⁶ Our approach to the Bible as professional theologians is different from that of the workers involved in prophetic theology whose struggle is economic emancipation. Casual workers seek in the Word of God a message of economic emancipation because this has an immediate bearing in their critical situation of casual work. This is what they seek in the Bible, which might not be the case with a privileged academic or a middle class university student for instance. Nolan argues that:

Biblical scholars, because they are generally not oppressed people themselves, had missed the very extensive description of oppression in the Bible because they live in middle class environment, and share the experience of bourgeois individualism and think of suffering in personal terms.¹³⁷

It is evident, based on this assertion by Nolan that our approach to the Bible is not neutral, but prejudiced because of our diverse interest. A privileged middle class male would not have the same interpretation of the Bible as a working class female labourer on some deserted farm. Nolan's notion that fundamental to a worker's theology of work is the experience of workers is critical. However, Nolan is conscious of the fact that "the average worker does not have the theological and biblical expertise to construct a theology of work."¹³⁸ The pertinent question that arises therefore is, can the workers write their own theology of work? If not, what are the repercussions of someone constructing it with them?

First, it is evident that neither the worker nor the professional theologian can write a genuine theology of work without the other, hence the emphasis on the collaborative nature of the project. Second, central to a credible theology of work should be the experiences of workers, based on their struggles in the workplace, which minimises the question of who writes, as long as the content of what is written reflects the struggles of workers in the workplace and their pursuit of justice. Third, according to Nolan, "the ideal situation for constructing a theology of work is not that professional theology makes use of the insights of workers (their experiences of work without any commitment to their struggle) but that workers make use of the expertise and

¹³⁶ Nolan A: A Worker's Theology: Three-Fold Cord, 1991. Pg 161.

¹³⁷ Nolan A: A Worker's Theology: Three-Fold Cord, 1991. Pg 161.

¹³⁸ Nolan A: A Worker's Theology: Three-Fold Cord, 1991. Pg 164.

technical knowledge of academics (to enhance their struggle for economic emancipation).”¹³⁹

When approaching a biblical text in this framework, it is important “to read with” rather than “to read for.” It is about re-reading the Bible with the workers to help them develop the critical consciousness required to effect social transformation and justice in the workplace. According to Nolan, this process requires humility on the part of the theologian and militancy on the side of the worker.¹⁴⁰ It is about the ability to receive and share knowledge between the two partners. It is in this context that I use Nolan’s theological framework. It is not gratuitous, but informed by social analysis indicating that there is a need for socio-economic justice. The experiences of casual workers in the semi-structured interviews attest to this reality.

4. Semi-structured Interviews

Sithembiso Zwane set up the semi-structured interviews with the help of Muzikayise Dlamini. Dlamini was the logistics coordinator for the research project tasked with the responsibility of communicating with informants regarding travelling and the venue for those coming from Umsinga, Estcourt and Mooir River for the first session. The first session was the semi-structured interviews conducted on the 15 September 2010 in Pietermaritzburg with 12 casual workers from the N D J Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion. The 12 informants were selected from the three main branches of the church using their current employment status, age and gender as a criteria. The priority was given to those who were employed as casual workers in various industrial sectors ranging from hospitality to transport, cleaning, security and manufacturing because of the precarious nature of their sectors. The group had casual workers who were between the ages of 18-35 with six males and six females.

I focused mostly on those who had been employed as casual workers for a longer period as primary informants. Those with less experience were seen as secondary informants to complete the selection process. Once identified we phoned them to explain the purpose of the exercise after we had our briefing with Dlamini. The interviews were conducted in IsiZulu and were recorded on digital recorder for

¹³⁹ Nolan A: A Worker’s Theology: Three-Fold Cord, 1991. Pg 165.

¹⁴⁰ Nolan A: A Worker’s Theology: Three-Fold Cord, 1991. Pg 165.

analysis. Each interview lasted for 30 minutes excluding breaks, which translated into 6 hours of face-to-face interviews. The questions were structured according to the theme of casualization of work and faith. Using See-Judge-Act methodology,¹⁴¹ the semi-structured interviews set out to ‘See’ or analyze the lived reality of casual workers and focused on the experiences of casual workers in the workplace. The responses of casual workers are discussed and analyze in the tables and narrative below from each of the 12 informants.

The semi-structured interview questions used were the following:

1. How has casualization of work affected you and your family?
2. What changes would you like to see in your workplace?
3. What you think the benefits of permanent employment are?
4. What you think the relationship is between faith and work?
5. What is the relationship between faith, work and the economy?

I will now discuss these questions and the responses given by casual workers in details. This will be followed by the analysis of these responses.

4.1 How has casualization of work affected you and your family?

1	Inadequate income	IIIIII
2	Unpredictable and precarious	II
3	Unfair treatment at work	I
4	Unpaid salaries	I
5	Extremely exploitative	I
6	Problematic, but better than unemployment	I

The question of how casualization has affected you and your family was asked to determine the extent of the problem with regard to casualization as theme for the research. It was meant to demonstrate the impact of casualization on casual workers and their families. The above table is a manifestation of the struggles of casual

¹⁴¹ De Gruchy S: See-Judge-Act, Putting Faith into Action, unpublished booklet, undated.

workers in the workplace under casualization, which came into effect because of a paradigm shift from permanent to casual employment. Among the 12 casual workers interviewed 50% agreed that casualization has had a negative impact on them and their families because of “inadequate income” which make it extremely difficult to survive in the current economic climate. About 16.7% agreed that the challenge was the nature of work itself, because it was “unpredictable and precarious” leaving casual workers susceptible and at the mercy of the employer. The other 8.3% (reflected as 1 in each of the responses that follows in the table) differed in their understanding, arguing that “it is unfair treatment, non-payment of salaries, exploitation of workers and the fact that casualization is better than unemployment.” This last assertion is informed by despair with regard to limited job opportunities for many people today.

Today those who are fortunate to get jobs are mainly working as casual workers and are not paid decent wages which affects them and their families in terms of their needs. Nompilo Ndlovu concurs with the notion that casual work does not provide adequate income to support them and their families, she argues that “Inkinga enkulu nganginxanele ukuthola imali, kodwa incane ngingakwazi ukubhekana nezidingo zami kanye nomndeni wami.” (The real problem is that I needed money hence I looked for work, but what I received was an ‘inadequate’ income and therefore could not take care of my needs and that of my family).

Ndlovu’s response demonstrates the exploitative nature of casualization with regard to payment because most of them are paid inadequate slave wages. Casual workers in various industrial sectors of our economy are the most vulnerable when it comes to wages. This treatment of casual workers is perpetuated by the unpredictable and precarious nature of casual employment, which creates uncertainty and fear among workers. Workers react to this treatment differently, some will be passive, protesting silently towards their employers in an attempt to avoid dismissal, while others rebel and lose their jobs. The most challenging aspect of this problem is that most casual workers are not unionized, hence their exploitation. It is also evident from this response that they are aware of the dehumanizing conditions in the workplace and are convinced that changes in the workplace are required.

4.2 What changes would you like to see in your workplace?

1	The treatment of casual workers as human beings	IIIIII
2	Improved remuneration package	II
3	Specific job description	II
4	Transforming contracts to permanent work especially for long-serving casual workers	I

The question about what changes you would like to see in your workplace was asked to identify the problem directly affecting casual workers in the workplace due to casualization of work and the possible changes. The assumption that casual workers are not treated fairly had to be put to the test through this question. The table above demonstrates what casual workers believe to be the necessary changes required in the workplace, which will improve the conditions of work. About 58.3% of casual workers interviewed believe that changes must take place among both the employers and permanent workers in terms of their attitudes towards casual workers.

First, they believe that there is a need to “treat casual workers as human beings,” which is not happening, because they are shouted at and humiliated at work. If they are found to be at fault for whatever reason their salaries are deducted without formal disciplinary hearing because they are casual workers.

This view is shared by Simiso Hlela who says, “Njengomuntu othela uphethiloli egarage, ngake ngenza iphutha ngathela kweqa ngathukwa futhi ngabanjelwe nemali, uma kumele sihole ngisho ungenzanga phutha sinikwa o R30 ngosuku okungeyona okwavunyelwananga ngawo, asikwazi noku khalaza ngenxa yokuncenga ukusebenza ngoba uma umqhashi engasakudingi asikho isexwayiso uvele uyekiswe bafake izihlobo zabo.” (As a petrol attendant I once made a mistake, I accidentally put extra petrol in the customer’s car, and was insulted by my supervisor and a portion of my salary was deducted. When it was time for payment, I was paid R30, and this was not the amount we agreed on as a day’s payment. As casual workers we cannot complain because we fear losing our jobs, if our services are no longer required we are dismissed without notice and they employ their relatives).

Second, about 16.7% of casual workers interviewed believe that “improved remuneration package” is fundamental. Third, the other 16.7% concluded that it was important to have specific job descriptions. Last, about 8.3% thought that transforming casual work contracts to permanent employment for long serving casual workers was important. This view was based on the fact that some casual workers are not promoted to permanent posts and remain as casuals for many years. This is obviously cost effective and convenient for employers because they are able to control their labour force and minimize union interventions in the process this therefore benefits the employer rather than the employee.

This view is supported by Buhlebenkosi Dlamini who says: “Okuhlukomezayo wukuthi ama Contracts awabenzi ubulungiswa kubasebenzi azuzisa abaqhashi kuphela ngoba benza imali eningi ngenxa yokuthi azikho izibonelelo. Kudingeka ulwe kuqala, nalapho usuke ubhekiwe okwenza nokulahlekelwa wummsebenzi kube lula. Angikhoni ukuthenga izimpahla ezifana ne furniture, izingubo zokuqgoka ngenxa yomsebenzi we contract.” (What pains me about contracts is that they do not benefit the employee but the employer, who makes more money at the expense of the worker who is without benefits. Before the worker can get any increment, we are forced to fight for what is rightfully ours and because of this problem, I am unable to buy furniture and clothing because of a contract).

4.3 What do you think the benefits of permanent employment are?

1	Improved working conditions especially the remuneration package	III
2	Employment benefits	II
3	Respect from employers	II
4	Union representation	II
5	Employment security	II

The question about what you think the benefits of permanent employment are was meant to determine casual workers’ understanding of the nature of permanent employment. If as casual workers they are unable to buy furniture as Buhlebenkosi Dlamini argues, will this change once they are permanent? The question created an opportunity for casual workers to compare their work to that of their colleagues

employed on a permanent basis. The above table indicates that about 33.3% of the casual workers interviewed believe that “improved working conditions and better employment packages” are some of the benefits that permanent workers are enjoying, which they would like to also have, once they become permanent. About 16.7% of those interviewed agreed that it was “employment benefits” that is important. Other responses, constituting 16.7% each, felt it was “union representation” and “employment security” respectively. It is evident from these responses that casual workers believe that their working environment is extremely exploitative compare to that of their colleagues who are permanent. It is obvious that those who are employed permanently have various options at their disposal with regard to opportunities for their families.

Muziwenkosi Zuma who has been a casual worker for almost 10 years and says, “Abasebenza ngokugcwele bayakwazi ukunakekela imindeni yabo ngenxa yesimo esingcono sokusebenza futhi bayahlonishwa bathole nama leave benefits, medical aid nokunye okuningi okumqoka kumsebenzi.” (The permanent workers are able to support their families because of better working conditions and benefits like leave and medical aid that are important to the worker.)

Zuma’s sentiments are echoed by Thabile Mkhize who says that, “Ngabe ngi registered as a permanent worker futhi ngibe ne medical aid kanye nelunga le union ezongivikela emsebenzini ngihlonishwe.” (I would be registered as a worker and therefore be entitled to benefits like medical aid and union representation. The protection and respect will be given to me, as is the case with those employed on a permanent basis.)

From these two comments, which reflect workers’ analysis of their working contexts, a number of factors are clear. First, casual workers require permanent employment and security because among other things they must provide their children with good education, food and clothing. Second, casual workers require permanent employment both as human beings and for protection of income. Third, casual workers require permanent employment because this will narrow the enormous gap between income earners that are casual and contract workers on the one hand, and permanent workers on the other.

4.4 What do you think the relationship is between faith and work?

1	It is Prayer and Perseverance that keeps us going at work	IIIIII
2	It is our faith that teaches us work is a gift from God	III
3	God is aware of our struggles at work	II
4	God is in control of our work	I

The question about what you think the relationship is between faith and work was asked based on the fact that casual workers are Christians. The question was therefore an attempt to help them reflect on their faith at work. This table indicates that about 50% of casual workers interviewed believe that “it is prayer and perseverance” that forms the basis for their resistance against the employers. The notions of “umthandazo” (Prayer) and “ukubekezela” (Perseverance) characterize their struggle in the workplace today. About 25% of casual workers believe that “it is their faith in God that teaches them that work is a fundamental gift from God,” hence their endeavor to correct it. About 16.7% of casual workers believe that in the midst of all the challenges, “God is aware of their struggles at work.” Last, about 8.3% of casual workers think, “God is in control”, therefore there is no need to be apprehensive about the challenges in the workplace. The relationship between faith and work is important because in the past years faith has been understood to be spiritual whereas work outside the church was perceived to be secular therefore creating a gap between faith and work.

According to Xolile Dlalisa, there is a relationship between faith and work. She says, “yebo ngiyakuhlanganisa uma ngingazwani nomqashi njengekholwa angiphakamisi izwi, okwenza kubenzima kumqhashi ukungixosha futhi bengikhulekela isimo ukuthi sibengcono emsebenzini). “Yes there is a relationship when I have an argument with my employer, I do not raise my voice. This makes it difficult for the employer to fire me and I always pray for better working conditions in the workplace).

The concept of prayer is evident in casual worker’s ability to make a connection between faith and work. Prayer (Umthandazo) and Perseverance (Ukubekezela) as spiritual tools within our faith traditions becomes central to non-violent resistance struggle at work. Nompilo Ndlovu says, “yebo kungisiza ngokuthi kungifundisa

ukubekezela ngibhekane nezinselulo zomsebenzi, uNkulunkulu uhlale ekhona njalo emsebenzini wami ngoba uyithemba lami empilweni angikaze ngilahlekelwe yithemba kuNkulunkulu, isinkwa engisitholayo ngisiphiwa wuye ngomusa wakhe.” (Yes, it is helpful because it has taught me to persevere and confront the challenges of work and God is always present in my work because he is my hope, and I have never lost hope in his divine presence in my life, the little I receive is because of his grace).

Muzikayise Zuma concurs with Nompilo Ndlovu when he says, “yebo ukholo lumqoka angihlukani nalo noma ngisemsebenzini uma ngiguqa ngithandaza ngiyakwazi ukuthola engikufunayo futhi nomsebenzi uqobo ngiyawukhulekela kuNkulunkulu futhi ngiyakwazi ukubekezela ezimweni ezinzima ngenxa yokholo.” (Yes, faith is fundamental at work and I will not stop believing because whenever I pray I am rewarded, God intervenes in my work, and I am able to persevere through difficult situations because of faith).

Again, a number of factors are evident from these reflections. First, casual workers subscribe to the theology of non-violent resistance based on “Umthandazo” (Prayer) and “Ukubekezela” (Perseverance) as concepts that inform this theology. This is not a passive paternalistic theology of surrender, but a calculated struggle designed to deceive the oppressor who exercises domination. It is a reflection of James Scott’s notion of hidden and public transcript that argues that “the existence of domination creates hidden transcript.”¹⁴² The hidden transcript becomes a form of silent resistant protest that illegitimizes the oppressor. Second, it is evident from the responses that work is considered a gift from God, which means it is part of God’s plan for humanity. It was not intended to be a burden or a punishment for people. Third, the God of the workers is involved in the struggle to liberate them from their oppression in the workplace, hence the belief in Him.

¹⁴² Scott J C: Domination and the Arts of Resistance, Hidden Transcripts, 1990, Pg 27.

4.5 What is the relationship between faith, work and the economy?

1.	The relationship exist between faith, work and the economy because God provides us with everything we need to survive	IIIIII
2.	It exists between work and faith	IIII
3.	It exists between faith and the economy through the resources we receive from God	I

The question about what the relationship is between faith, work and the economy is an attempt to establish casual workers' understanding of the economy as a concept in which faith and work has to be understood. Faith and work function within a society that is faced with socio-economic challenges. Is there a relationship between these three components? The table above indicates that about 50% of casual workers interviewed believe that there is a relationship between "faith, work and the economy" and this is based upon the notion that "God is the provider of everything we need" as human beings. About 41.7% of casual workers interviewed felt that the relationship exists only between "work and faith," which is influenced by the fact that by virtue of believing in God, one is able to get a job and have access to His creation. The other 8.3% of those interviewed mentioned a relationship between "faith and the economy." The resources generated by the economy become available as resources to everyone through God who created them for all to enjoy. It is therefore evident that for casual workers the relationship exists because the resources contribute to the economy, the economy creates work and faith in God gives them access to work.

Buhlebenkosi Dlamini says that, "yebo kukhona ukuhlobana phakathi kokholo, umsebenzi kanye nomnotho ngoba ukholo lwethu luyasiyalela ukuthi sifake imali esontweni. Lokhu kudinga imali engenayo ngenxa yomsebenzi wona ofika ngenxa yomnotho oqinile owakha imisebenzi." (Yes, there is a relationship between faith, work and the economy because faith requires that we contribute financially to the church. This therefore requires income that is generated through paid work, which also depends on a stable economy).

This view is supported by Nompilo Ndlovu who argues that, "Yebo, ngikubona kukhona ukuxhumana, phakathi kokholo, umsebenzi kanye nomnotho, ukube

umnotho bewungekho ngabe angitholanga umsebenzi, kanti ukube bengingakholwa ngabe angikwazanga ukubekezela emsebenzini ngoba ibinzima impilo idinga ukholo oluqinile.” (Yes, I recognize the relationship between faith, work and the economy because if there was no economy, there would be no work. If I was not a believer, it would have been difficult for me to persevere in the midst of challenges at work, which required strong faith).

First, it is important to acknowledge that casual workers are primarily reflecting on paid work, hence the emphasis on “income” as a determining factor in analyzing the impact of casualization on them as individuals and their families. Second, it is also evident from their reflections that casualization of work dehumanizes them because they are not treated as human beings. Third, this therefore means that there is a need for improved working conditions and better remuneration packages that restore human dignity and decent life. Fourth, it is also important to underscore that these casual workers are Christians who believe in God.

They are convinced that what sustains them in the workplace in the midst of all the injustices against them is “umthandazo” (Prayer) and “ukubekezela” (Perseverance). These casual workers argue that if they were not believers or Christians, it would have been difficult for them to “Pray” and “Persevere” and they could have acted violently towards their employers regarding their conditions of work. The relationship between faith, work and the economy is fundamental; hence, it was important to complement the reflections by casual workers with a focused CBS as an attempt to deepen their biblical reflection and analysis.

5. Contextual Bible Study (CBS) Methodology

The primary purpose of the CBS in this study was to demonstrate the relationship between the literary dimensions of Mt 20:1-15 (as a biblical text) and the contemporary socio-economic context of casualization that affects casual workers in general. After the semi-structured interview session I set up two CBS sessions. The first session was a full CBS facilitated group discussion followed by a second session of individual questionnaires on the same CBS questions. Both the structured CBS and questionnaires were written in IsiZulu and recorded on the digital recorder for data analysis.

Here are the CBS structured questions on Mt 20: 1-15 discussed by the groups and individual casual workers:

1. What is the text about?
2. Who are the main characters?
3. What do we know about them and their relationship to each other?
4. What is the relationship between the disputes in Mt 20: 2-5 and wage negotiations in the workplace today?
5. What is the relationship between the problems of unemployment reflected in Mt 20: 6-7 and the increase in casual work today?
6. What is the relationship between the hours of work reflected in Mt 20: 8-10 and the challenges confronting casual workers today?
7. What is the relationship between the landowner's outbursts reflected in Mt 20: 11-15 and the context of casual work today?

The reason for the same questions in both sessions was first to compare the responses and determine if there is a change in responding to questions from both the groups and individuals. Second, to create a conducive environment for both collective and individual analysis to enhance the process of biblical appropriation. Both these sessions were conducted with the same group of 12 casual workers who were part of the semi-structured interviews.

My own analysis of Mt 20:1-15 included both literary and socio-historical analysis of the text. The CBS focused primarily on the literary component so that the informants could engage as equal partners in the reading process. I explained to the informants that CBS is an attempt to read the Bible contextually, collectively and critically focusing on the poor and marginalized communities.

As the Ujamaa Centre, we have always read the Bible with marginalized communities for socio-economic transformation. The biblical text is not an isolated island without a context, but exists within a particular community, which informs its appropriation and relevance beyond its original context. Gerald West argues that as the Ujamaa Centre, "We activate the Bible as a weapon of struggle for economic liberation, wresting it

from the hands of those who use it to stigmatize, and blame those who are unemployed for what is a systemic predicament.”¹⁴³

Furthermore, argues West, “while we overtly take up the Bible as a resource for economic survival, liberation, and life, and while we discern a prophetic socio-economic trajectory weaving its way through the literary and socio-historical contexts of the Bible, we are committed to respect the details of particular texts.”¹⁴⁴ It is evident from West’s assertion that the Bible has a significant role to play in socio-economic transformation and justice in the workplace, but it is also important to acknowledge the integrity of the text.

The dominant reading of the parables has always been allegorical, resulting in hermeneutical limitations characterized by traditional church theology with a subtle ‘spiritual’ theological reading of socio-economic injustices. The CBS methodology is a theological framework that allows participants to re-read the Bible using their experiences of struggle inspired by their pursuit of justice and economic emancipation. The CBS creates a conducive environment for both academics and organic intellectuals to engage in a process of doing contextual theology.

The process begins by giving participants the opportunity to read the text, reflecting on its general content by responding to the question, What is the text about? This is done in plenary with responses recorded to give affirmation to the participants that their responses are important. The process then moves to the next question, Who are the main characters? The process then attempts to establish a connection between the characters and their relationship to each and ask the question, what do we know about them and their relationship to each other? and this question is designed to take the participants back to the text, respecting its literary form and context. Having done these three questions in plenary and small groups of two respectively, the process moves to the larger groups of three or more to engage deeper with the rest of the questions as reflected in the tables below. The informants were given a full text (Mt

¹⁴³ West G.O and Zwane S S: Why are you sitting there doing nothing? Reading Matthew 20:1-16 in the context of casual workers in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, 2010, Pg 8.

¹⁴⁴ West G.O and Zwane S S: Why are you sitting there doing nothing? Reading Matthew 20:1-16 in the context of casual workers in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, 2010, Pg 8.

20:1-15) to reflect on during group discussions. The responses of the two groups are recorded and analysed in the tables and narrative below.

5.1 What is relationship between the disputes in Mt 20: 2-5 and wage negotiations in the workplace today?

Group 1	Group 2
1. As casual workers today we are not in the position to negotiate on wages with our employers because of the precarious nature of their work	1. There is a contestation in the workplace between casual workers and employers over wages.
2. As casual workers we have no union representation to negotiate on our behalf which makes us susceptible to exploitation and accept whatever the employer offers	2. The employers make decisions about casual workers without any proper consultation with them.

The parable of the workers in the vineyard, as I will discuss more fully below, is a manifestation of the socio-economic injustice under the Roman Empire, which brought misery to day labourers who had lost their land to elite urban landowners. The above table reflects the responses given by the groups during the CBS session on the parable in Mt 20: 1-15. The groups argued vehemently that like the day labours in the text, casual workers today have no power to negotiate with employers regarding wages, and employers give them what they think is right, which is often not adequate.

In summary, Group 1 argued that “as casual workers we are not in the position to negotiate on wages with our employers because of our precarious position” and Group 2 believed that this “leads to constant contestation between employers and workers in the workplace.” In most cases employers emerge victorious in these ‘contestations’ because they have the power to make decisions and does not engage their employees who are casual workers.

Buhlebenkosi Dlamini concurs, he says that, “Abasebenzi betoho abanaso isinqumo semali abayisebenzelayo kanye namalungelo okuxoxisana nabaqashi ngenani lemali abayisebenzelayo. Ngokwamavesi u 2-5 ka Matthew umqashi akabonisani nabasebenzi bakhe kodwa ubathembisa okufaneleyo kodwa akakuchazi ukuthi kuyini, ekugcineni abasebenzi bazithola bengalolo ilungelo lokukhononda.” (Casual workers do not make decisions about wages or engage in negotiations with employers over their payment. According to Matthew 20: 2-5 the landowner does not negotiate with his casual workers, but promises to pay them what is right, and gives no explanation about what that means, eventually the workers discover that they have no right to complain about this injustice). The powerful and wealthy landowner uses his wealth to oppress and exploit vulnerable workers in the workplace.

This comment by Dlamini echoes the work of biblical scholars. As Warren Carter states, the “landowner’s need for more labourers reinforces the sense of his great wealth.”¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, Carter says, “for these ‘expendables’ (as they were known) life was unpredictable, marked by unemployment, malnutrition, starvation, disease, minimal wages, removal from households and begging.”¹⁴⁶ The unemployed were desperate for a day’s work because of the socio-economic context, which deprive them of an income. According to William Herzog, the fact that “the agora (marketplace) is filled with day labourers at all hours of the day indicates a situation of high unemployment.”¹⁴⁷

In agreement with Herzog and Carter, Luise Schottroff states, “The unemployed are evidently in such a weak position that they go off to work without any clear agreement on wages and accept the risk of having the vineyard owner pay them less than they hope for.”¹⁴⁸ The assertions by both Herzog and Schottroff underscore the relationship between wage disputes in Mt 20: 2-5 and the challenge of unemployment reflected in Mt 20: 6-7.

¹⁴⁵ Carter W: Matthew and the Margins, A Socio-political and Religious Reading, 2001, Pg 396.

¹⁴⁶ Carter W: Matthew and the Margins, A Socio-political and Religious Reading, 2001, Pg 396.

¹⁴⁷ Herzog W R II: Parables as Subversive Speech, Jesus as the Pedagogue of the Oppressed, 1994, Pg 86.

¹⁴⁸ Schottroff L: Parables as Subversive Speech, Jesus as the Pedagogue of the Oppressed, 1994, Pg 86.

5.2 What is the relationship between the problems of unemployment reflected in Mt 20: 6-7 and the increase in casual work today?

Group 1	Group 2
<p>1. There is a relationship because today there is unemployment, and if you are lucky you get a casual job</p>	<p>1. There is connection, as a casual worker today, we are like the workers who were unemployed in the text and got a day's job in the vineyard</p>
<p>2. Refusing to work as a casual worker means you remain unemployed</p>	<p>2. Today we have temporary jobs for one or two days a week</p>

The above table demonstrates the group's understanding of Mt 20:6-7 in the context of socio-economic challenges of unemployment, which is evident in most countries today especially in Africa and Latin America. Group 1 argued, "There is a relationship because today there is unemployment, if one is fortunate you graduate and become a casual worker." Group 2 argued, "There is a connection because they are like the unemployed in the text who were employed by the owner of the vineyard for a day's job."

According to Carter, the term "idleness" does not indicate laziness."¹⁴⁹ This has been the view of most people who have read this text and appropriated it without a proper analysis of its socio-economic and political context. The parable of the workers in the vineyard reflects both Roman Palestine under the empire and our contemporary socio-economic context of economic injustices as unemployment and casualization reach unprecedented levels. Herman Waetjen writes,

The parable of the Workers in the Vineyard reflects the same economic realities of Roman Palestine as the parable of the Wicked Tenants, but specifically the condition of widespread unemployment in Galilee. At the same time Herod the Great's expropriation of large tracts of farmland, sold to wealthy landowners or distributed to the officials of the court, had intensified the process of latifundialization. Consequently peasants and tenants, as well as the artisans who

¹⁴⁹ Carter W: Matthew and the Margins, A Socio-political and Religious Reading, 2001, Pg 396.

depended on them, had only their labour to sell to anyone who wished to hire them.¹⁵⁰

Waetjen articulates the socio-economic challenges of Galilee under the Roman Empire, which was characterized by widespread unemployment because of the dispossession of people from their farmland. According to Richard Horsley, “in the late Roman republic and early empire, wealthy and powerful Romans had gained huge estates or *latifundia*, which were farmed by tenants or slaves who were probably taken from Galilee.”¹⁵¹ Having being dispossessed from their farmlands due to their debts, peasants became day labourers and eventually found themselves working for wealthy landowners who took their farmland.

There is a relationship between the Galilean economic context under the Roman Empire and the conditions of casual workers under capitalism today. The nature of our economic system today resembles that of Galilee under the Roman Empire because workers are deprived of job security by wealthy employers, as a result of a capitalist system that rewards the rich at the expense of the poor. Workers are therefore compelled to accept slave wages under hazardous working conditions in order to survive, which contributes to their exploitation in the workplace. The challenge is that if they do not comply, the only option left for them is unemployment, which is obviously not a favourable option. There is a reserve army of labour ready to be absorbed into the mainstream economic activity. This bears testimony to the challenge of chronic unemployment in contemporary societies.

As Thabile Mkhize says, “Inkinga ikhona kakhulu, umsebenzi awusatholakali nhlobo-nhlobo sengisho lona o permanent, usuyaqashwa kodwa ube yitoho leminyaka noma ube kwi contract kanti lokhu kuyinkinga ebuhlungu ngoba wena msebenzi wetoho awukhoni ukufeza izidingo zakho ngokwanele.” (There is a huge problem, there is no employment today, especially permanent employment, if you happen to be employed, it is either casual or contract work and this does not change for years and it means that as a worker you are unable to meet your obligations). The question therefore is, what is the relationship between unemployment in the text and casual work today?

¹⁵⁰ Waetjen C H: *Intimations of the Year of the Jubilee in the Parables of the Wicked Tenants and Workers in the Vineyard*, 1998, Pg 524-531.

¹⁵¹ Horsley R: *Galilee, History, Politics and People*, 1995, Pg 207.

Mzikayifani Zuma states that, “ubudlelwano buphakathi kwenkinga yokuswela umsebenzi nomsebenzi wetoho ngoba kutholakala abantu bemile emasangweni ezinkampani belinde ukuqashwa bese abaqhashi beqasha otoho njengendlela yokonga imali yenkampani ngoba bazikahle ukuthi abasebenzi betoho kulula ukubayekisa emsebenzini.” (The relationship is between the problem of unemployment and casual work because we often see people standing at the gates of companies waiting to be employed, but most of them are employed as casual workers because it is a cost effective exercise for the employers and it is easy to dismiss casual workers as opposed to permanent).

Casual employment brings to workers uncertainty and constant abuse by employers, as is evident in the text. The problem of unemployment creates an unjust economic order subjecting the unemployed to precarious and humiliating conditions. According to Herzog, the landowner in the text “is taking advantage of an unemployed workforce to meet his harvesting needs by offering them work without a wage agreement.”¹⁵² Furthermore, argues Herzog, “the activity of the owner is congruent with the general strategy of Roman landowners who hired day labourers only for a day at a time so as to keep them in the weakest position possible.”¹⁵³ Herzog’s argument suggests that the landowner’s hiring of day labourers was not an act of compassion or generosity, but a continuation of the coercion of the poor and the marginalized by the elites under the Roman Empire. The exploitation of day labourers by the elites in the Roman Empire was not accidental, but a deliberate attempt to maintain their hegemony over peasants and the unemployed. Both employers and casual workers have a long history of contestation regarding the conditions of work primarily the hours of work and the wages.

¹⁵² Herzog W R II: Parables as Subversive Speech, Jesus as the Pedagogue of the Oppressed, 1994, Pg 86.

¹⁵³ Herzog W R II: Parables as Subversive Speech, Jesus as the Pedagogue of the Oppressed, 1994, Pg 86.

5.3 What is the relationship between the hours of work reflected in Mt 20: 8-10 and the challenges confronting casual workers today?

Group 1	Group 2
1. As casual workers, we work more hours than permanent workers and still get less payment	1. There is no justice with regard to hours of work today in the workplace

The above table reflects the responses of the groups on the relationship between hours of work in Mt 20: 8-10 and the challenges that confront casual workers today. Group 1 argued that, as “casual workers we work more hours than full time workers”, while group 2 felt that “there is no justice with regard to hours of work today”.

Taking into consideration the individual responses, Mbali Ndlovu elaborates and says, “kwathi lapho umnisisivini etshela induna yakhe ukuthi ayibize izisebenzi zokugcina iziholele bese igcina ngabokuqala. Abokuqala bacabanga ukuthi bazothola okukhulu kunabokuqala, ngenxa yamahora amaningi abawasebenza babengalindele ukuthola imali efanayo.” (When the landowner told the foreman to pay the workers beginning with the last and then concluding with the first, the expectation was that the first workers would receive more due to the hours of work which were more than the second group, but to their shock, they were all paid the same amount).

Hlengiwe Khumalo agrees with Mbali and says, “inkinga ukuthi uma ungumsebenzi wetoho wenziwa noma yini, bakusebenzisa ngisho ama over-time ube uzohola imali encane kungabalwa nalawo ma over-time bayazi ukuthi uncengile ngoba awukho umsebenzi. Akulula futhi nokuthi uphawule ngokwama hours owasebenzile uma ungumsebenzi wetoho akulandelwa nomgomo ka hulumeni obheke ezabasebenzi othi kumele umsebenzi asebenze u 8 hours ngosuku.” (The problem is that if you are a casual worker you are subjected to all forms of abuse including unpaid over-time and inadequate income. This is done deliberately because they know there is unemployment and casual workers are desperate and cannot complain about the hours at work and the labour legislation of 8 hours a day is often ignored).

Similarly, Herzog states that casual workers or day labourers “have little bargaining power, owing to the surfeit of labourers on the market.”¹⁵⁴ The employers are aware of this fact hence the reluctance of casual workers to interrogate the employers on the decisions they take about work. This behaviour is evident in the landowner’s attitude in the text towards casual or day labourers grumbling about what they perceive to be injustice.

5.4 What is the relationship between the landowner’s outbursts reflected in Mt 20:11-15 and the context of work today?

Group 1	Group 2
<p>1. As casual workers, we are unable to challenge our employers or question their behaviour or decision.</p>	<p>1. Employers today undermine and disrespect workers</p>
<p>2. The employers exploit casual workers and nothing happens.</p>	<p>2. Employer’s behaviour changes every time they have to pay their workers</p>

The table above underscores casual worker’s struggles in the workplace because of the socio-economic injustices that have seen most workers unfairly dismissed from their work because they had challenged employers about their conditions of work. Group 1 argued that “as casual workers we are unable to challenge or question employers”, and group 2 argued that “employers undermine and disrespect workers.”

Elaborating on aspects of these responses, Xolisa Dlalisa says that, “Ubudlelwano obukhona lana obokuthi umqashi uveza ukuthi bavumelene ngehlo alibeke yena. Namanje uma ungumsebenzi wetoho akulula ukuphikisana nomqashi wakho uma ekuholela iholo eningavumelananga ngalo. Kunalokho abaqashi basitshela ukuthi asenelise yilokho abasinika kona.” (The relationship is that the employer determines the wage. It is his or her right, which makes it extremely difficult for us as casual workers to challenge their decisions. They want us to accept any amount that they offer).

¹⁵⁴ Herzog W R II: Parables as Subversive Speech, Jesus as the Pedagogue of the Oppressed, 1994, Pg 88.

According to JDM Derret, Jewish employers and employees related to each other not as exploiters and exploited but as brothers and Jewish law makers that recognized a minimum wage, and in the process balancing the social and moral rights of the employer and employee.¹⁵⁵ But Herzog dismisses this notion as “unrealistic” and “misguided” because the minimum wage, according to Herzog, must have been somewhat between 0.7 and 0.8 of a denarius, therefore the landowner wanted to avoid extensive discussion with shorter term workers and chose to pay them all equal.”¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, Herzog states that Derret’s “reconstruction would have been more convincing if he had taken into consideration the plight of day labourers in ancient times.”¹⁵⁷

Derret’s argument is naïve, failing to recognize the oppression of casual workers by employers in ancient times. But the participants in the CBS understand precisely how oppression works in the context of unemployment and the casualization of work. As Hlengiwe Khumalo argues, “Abaqashi basibukela phansi thina basebenzi betoho futhi abasihloniphi bayazi ukuthi ngisho angathini kuwe angeke unqabe ngoba usaba ukulahlekelwa wumsebenzi yingakho sixhashazwa emsebenzini.” (The employers undermine and disrespect us as casual workers and they are aware that we are not in the position to challenge them because of the precarious nature of our work, hence the exploitation in the workplace).

A number of things are clear from the CBS and its associated interviews. It is important to acknowledge that casual workers working in groups as part of CBS and as individuals acknowledged that there is a relationship between the disputes in Mt 20: 2-5 and their context of work as casual workers today. They are “unable to negotiate wages or challenge employers” and have no union representation to speak on their behalf and this creates constant contestation and animosity in the workplace.

There is acknowledgement of the relationship between unemployment and casual work or a day’s labour in Mt 20: 6-7. Casual workers reported that casual workers

¹⁵⁵ Derret JMD: Parables as Subversive Speech, Jesus as the Pedagogue of the Oppressed, 1994, Pg 93.

¹⁵⁶ Herzog W R II: Parables as Subversive Speech, Jesus as the Pedagogue of the Oppressed, 1994, Pg 93.

¹⁵⁷ Herzog W R II: Parables as Subversive Speech, Jesus as the Pedagogue of the Oppressed, 1994, Pg 93.

today are like the unemployed in verse 6-7 who became day-labourers. Casual work, they argue, is today the next best option because of chronic unemployment.

Casual workers agree that the situation in Mt 20: 8-10 regarding the hours of work reflect their current position as casual workers. They believe that as casual workers they work more hours than permanent workers, and are paid less than their full-time counterparts. They feel that there is no justice in the workplace for casual workers today.

Last, the employer's outburst against workers in Mt 20:11-15 is similar to that of employers today towards casual workers. Most casual workers are unable to challenge their employers because of the fear of losing their jobs. They believe that employers undermine and disrespect them. The critical question therefore is, are these responses to economic injustices by casual workers in the workplace pertinent? If so, what does this mean for a theology of decent work?

6. A Theology of Decent Work

Christian theology through the *Imago Dei* concept offers resources for each of the five pillars of a theology of decent work. The five main categories, namely rights at work, employment at work, social protection at work, social dialogue at work and human dignity are central to a proposed theology of decent work. There are also clear connections between the concept of *Imago Dei* and the theological reflections of the workers with whom I have worked.

6.1 A Theology of Human Rights at Work

The theology of decent work has to prioritize the implementation of human rights and labour laws in the workplace to protect casual workers. In ensuring that workers' rights are not violated at work, the ILO has argued for the creation of decent and productive work opportunities among men and women in conditions of "freedom" among other important elements. What does this mean? According to Charles Villa-Valencia, "one of the four main goals of the United Nations, as stated in article 1.1 is to foster international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of race, sex, language

or religion.”¹⁵⁸ In this section three things are important, first is the workplace human rights theology of decent work that takes into consideration humanization as fundamental to freedom. Second is the respect for human life as a fundamental human right in the theology of decent work. Third, is the public role of the church as fundamental to a theology of decent work that advocates for human right within the workplace?

A workplace human rights theology of decent work should take into consideration humanization as fundamental to freedom. Villa-Valencia underscores the importance of human “freedom” as a universal right within the workplace that gives workers the opportunity to maximize their potential and become fully human. This right minimizes the subjection of workers to force and child labour, which is the norm in other parts of the world, with China being the main culprit with regard to violation of human rights. The question therefore is, what contribution Christian theology can make to deal with the problem of human rights violation in the workplace? Villa-Valencia argues that “There is consensus within major Christian traditions that the rights identified in most human rights declarations are worthy of theological support, while emphasizing the need for support to be given to socio-economic as well as developmental and ecological human rights.”¹⁵⁹

The respect for life is fundamental to a theology of decent work in the workplace as a God-given right to humanity that binds us together as creatures created in God’s image. Villa-Valencia states, “human rights begin with the right to life, followed by the rights to democracy, dissent, personal dignity and freedom of religion.”¹⁶⁰ Personal dignity affirms the importance of human life that exceeds a relationship between an employer and the employee. The attitude of the landowner in Mt 20:2-5 demonstrates disrespect for life because the landowner makes all the decisions without the contribution of the casual or day workers. The respect for life is more important than the ability of the individual. People are not respected because of what they can do, but because they are created by God as human beings. In the gospel of John it is recorded that Jesus came so that human beings may have the “abundance of life” (John 10:10). The abundance of life means among other things access to the resources for every person, rich or poor, male or female. Desmond Tutu states, “The life of every human

¹⁵⁸ Villa-Vicencio C: A theology of Reconstruction, Nation-Building and Human Rights, 1992, Pg 119.

¹⁵⁹ Villa-Vicencio C: A theology of Reconstruction, Nation-Building and Human Rights, 1992, Pg 123.

¹⁶⁰ Villa-Vicencio C: A theology of Reconstruction, Nation-Building and Human Rights, 1992, Pg 123.

person is inviolable as a gift from God, since this person is created in the image of God and is a God carrier.”¹⁶¹ Both Villa-Vicencio and Tutu remind us that as human beings created in God’s image, we have a God-given right to life and this is not just any life, but the quality of the fullness of life. It is not a life of death, but of living in freedom from all forms of oppression and injustice.

The public role of the church is fundamental to a theology of decent work within the workplace. The revitalization of this role affirms the church as the only organization that exists not only for its members but non-members who are often the victims of economic injustice and human rights violation. David Pfrimmer argues that in this context “human rights cannot merely be an interest for churches, but must be an expression of a public theology.”¹⁶² The church’s promulgation on workplace violations of human rights will affirm its active role in public theology. This will resuscitate and ignite support among communities for the church. The church’s reputation as an agent of transformation and justice is critical, considering the criticism against the church in the past. Pfrimmer argues that, “Criticisms have ranged from the choice of focus, to arguments that the churches remain silent and uninvolved in some situations.”¹⁶³ The church is in the world to be involved in socio-economic and political struggles of humanity and this is unequivocally inevitable if the church is to be relevant to her constituency. According to Pope John Paul II, “The Church considers it her task always to call attention to the dignity and rights of those who work, to condemn situations in which that dignity and those rights are violated.”¹⁶⁴

In this section, I have argued first for a workplace human rights theology of decent work that takes into consideration humanization as fundamental to freedom. Second, I have argued for the respect of life, as fundamental to a theology of decent work in the workplace, which is a God-given right to humanity that binds us together as creatures created in God’s image. Third, I have argued for the revitalization of the church’s prophetic role as an institution of public theology that recognizes injustices as a structural sin against God. These injustices create inequalities among God’s people in paid employment, which justifies a theology of employment at work.

¹⁶¹ Tutu M D: Christianity and Human Rights, An introduction, 2010, Pg 3.

¹⁶² Pfrimmer D: Faith and Human Rights, voices from the Lutheran Communion, 2006, Pg 64-65.

¹⁶³ Pfrimmer D: Faith and Human Rights, voices from the Lutheran Communion, 2006, Pg 66.

¹⁶⁴ Pope Paul J II: On Human Work, Laborem Exercens, 1987, Pg 1.

6.2 A Theology of Employment at Work

A theology of decent work has got to unequivocally deal with the structural injustices in the workplace to justify its theological significance to social justice. Central to a theology of decent work in employment is the notion of decent and productive employment opportunities for men and women in conditions of security and equity in the workplace. According to Juan Somavia, “full employment is the first goal of the decent work agenda.”¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, Somavia says, “the official unemployment figures which are underrated began to rise at the beginning of the 1990s from 100 million people unemployed to 160 million in 1999.”¹⁶⁶ The contemporary challenge is the lack of full time employment that has been replaced with casual work. Casual workers agreed that one of the problems with casual employment is “inadequate income,” and the fundamental need to “improve working conditions which include the remuneration package” in the workplace.

The socio-economic conditions of widespread unemployment reflected in Mt 20: 6-7 remind us of the need to think theologically about unemployment, work and employment. In this section, three things are important, first, that central to a theology of decent work within employment is the recognition of God as a worker who created human beings in His image and likeness to become co-workers with Him, second, that it is important to underscore that central to the theology of decent work within employment is to acknowledge that the ambiguity of work in the Bible was not intended or created by God, but was an act of disobedience, third, that it is important to acknowledge that the theology of decent work within employment discourages unfair treatment of workers regarding remuneration at work.

Central to the theology of decent work is the recognition of God as a worker who created human beings in his image and likeness to become co-workers with him. The God of the Bible is a worker who co-created the world with human beings. The God of Israel is different from the Ancient Near Eastern gods who created human beings as slaves to relieve the gods of burdensome work. David Jensen argues “this God moulds humans in God’s image, establishes covenant with a displaced people, laments when

¹⁶⁵ Somavia J: *The ILO Decent Work Agenda as the Aspiration of the People: the Insertion of Values and Ethics in the Global Economy*, 2004, Pg 7.

¹⁶⁶ Somavia J: *The ILO Decent Work Agenda as the aspiration of people: the insertion of values and ethics in the global economy*, 2004, Pg 7.

covenant is broken, strives to re-establish covenant with the people, and becomes incarnate to labour, suffer, die and be raised for the whole world.”¹⁶⁷ This is a God of liberation and not slavery and oppression, which characterizes the gods of the Ancient Near East.

It is important to underscore that also central to the theology of decent work within employment is that the ambiguity of work in the Bible was not intended or created by God, but was an act of disobedience. The Bible is a manifestation of many voices that need to speak to their respective constituencies. The Bible can speak prophetically to both oppressed people and the oppressors. This depends entirely on who does the interpretation and in what context. However Douglas Meek maintains that the “Bible assumes the perspective of the worker, not the master, not the idle person, not the owner of work.”¹⁶⁸ Meek articulates one of the liberation voices within the Bible. Another voice of the Bible might think of God not as a worker, but as a master, an employer and an owner of the means of production.

It is important to acknowledge that the theology of decent work discourages unfair treatment of workers regarding remuneration at work (Lev 19:13, James 5:4, 1 Tim 5: 18 and Mal 3:5c). God cautions against this injustice saying, “never take advantage of the poor and destitute labourers” (Deut 24:14-15). The God of the oppressed people is angry with those who cheat workers of their wages.

In this section, I have argued first that central to a theology of decent work is the recognition of God as a worker who created human beings in his image and likeness to become co-workers with him. This is a direct protest against the gods of Ancient Near East mythology of creation. Second, I have underscored the fact that the ambiguity of work in the Bible was never intended or created by God, but was a result of human disobedience that is evident today in the workplace especially by those in authority. This therefore means that God will redeem work from its presumed curse. Third, I have argued that central to a theology of decent work through employment and work is the treatment of workers with respect regarding their wages. The failure to pay workers on time is a sin against God with serious consequences for those responsible. The God of the Bible is extremely protective of those vulnerable to

¹⁶⁷ Jensen D: Responsive Labour, A theology of Work, 2006, Pg 22.

¹⁶⁸ Meek D: Responsive Labour, A Theology of Work, 2006, Pg 23.

exploitation in the workplace because of their position or conditions. The theology of decent work must therefore take into consideration elements of disability and vulnerability as part of a theology of social protection at work.

6.3 A Theology of Social Protection at Work

The theology of decent work is critical in the protection of workers against various forms of abuse and injustice in the workplace. Most workers are permanently disabled as the results of injuries sustained at work during official duties and over-time; others die on duty, hence a need to discuss a theology of disability and vulnerability. A theology of decent work must first take into consideration the protection of workers from irregular hours of work that workers are subjected to which put their lives at risk. This includes unpaid overtime. Most casual workers do not have insurance for injury on duty, and when they are injured or permanently disabled, they are not compensated. In this section, three things are important. First, the compensation of workers within a theology of decent work must take into consideration hours of work as critical. Second, a theology of decent work must reflect on the vulnerability of the worker and should locate itself within the biblical character of God's unconditional love. Third, a theology of decent work must take into consideration the impact of illnesses or disabilities that limit most working class workers from getting a job elsewhere.

The compensation of workers within a theology of decent work must take into consideration hours of work as critical. In Mt 20:8-10 we are reminded about the conflict between the employer and his workers because of the hours of work and the compensation received by the two groups. The context of the parable does not address issues of disability, but does reflect vulnerability of one group of workers who complained about the hours of work and the payment thereof. Hlengiwe Khumalo argues, "The labour legislation of 8 hours is often ignored." This is the case with employers today, as was the case then with the day-labourers in the parable. In most instances, workers become susceptible to injuries at work due to extended hours that are sometimes not compensated fairly during and after work. This is against God's justice and love for his people.

A theology of decent work must reflect on the vulnerability of the worker and should locate itself within the biblical character of God's unconditional love (John 13: 34-36, 1 Cor 13: 1-8) that is characterized by justice for His people. God's love for the sick, the poor, the workers and marginalized people generally is evident in the scriptures. Most workers suffer various forms of diseases while at work due to the nature of their work, which includes being exposed to chemicals, dust, and smoke. Most workers only experience the impact of these challenges when they become sick or disabled. Illnesses or disabilities do not reduce an individual from the love of God found in His character and image. Hans Reinders argues, "All human beings are included among the image-bearers of God, regardless of their state or condition, so there is no problem with the humanity of profoundly disabled human beings."¹⁶⁹ Thomas Reynolds concurs with Reinders when he argues, "disability does not simply mark a personal tragedy that calls for healing; neither does it indicate a diminishment of the image of God imprinted upon human beings."¹⁷⁰ Both Reinders and Reynolds invoke the notion of *Imago Dei* as central to a theology of vulnerability among people particularly the working poor who are also the bearers of the image of God.

A theology of decent work must take into consideration the impact of illnesses or disabilities that limit most working class workers from getting a job elsewhere. When workers become disabled, having served an institution or an individual employer for years, bureaucratic processes prevent them from accessing insurance policies, pension grants and other benefits. Brent Waters states that, "all humans may be said to be disabled, for all humans are also sinners."¹⁷¹ There is a stigma attached to being disabled, as if being physically challenged defines human capabilities. In the process of stigmatization both the employers and society undermine the intellectual capital of workers with such challenges.

In this section I have made the following arguments. First, I have argued that the compensation of workers within a theology of decent work must take into consideration hours of work as critical. Second, I have argued that within a theology of decent work the biblical character of God's unconditional love characterized by justice for his people is fundamental. Third, I have argued that a theology of decent

¹⁶⁹ Reinders H S: *Profound Disability, theological anthropology, and ethics*, 2008, Pg 13.

¹⁷⁰ Reynolds T E: *Vulnerable Communion, A theology of disability and hospitality*, 2008, Pg 24.

¹⁷¹ Waters B: *Disability and the quest for perfection, a moral and theological enquiry*, 2007, Pg 209.

work must take into consideration the impact of illnesses and disabilities that limit workers from accessing alternative employment after injury at work.

6.4 A Theology of Social Dialogue at Work

The theology of decent work reflects the work of the ILO and calls for social dialogue among stakeholders in the world of work as an attempt to minimize contestation and conflict regarding the conditions of work. Central to this dialogue is the participation of government, business and labour. Bargaining councils are created for the purposes of dialogue among different groups with the view to reaching a consensus that benefits all parties. Paulo Freire's dialogical and anti-dialogical framework reflecting both the problem-posing concept of education as dialogical and the banking concept of education as anti-dialogical is worth revisiting in this instance.¹⁷² In this section, two points are important. First, a theology of decent work within social dialogue must encourage workers to speak against their oppressors in an attempt to liberate them. Second, a theology of decent work must recognize the role of the "other" as critical in social dialogue.

Freire argues that "dialogue cannot occur between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied."¹⁷³ Furthermore, states Freire, "dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of profound love for the world and for people."¹⁷⁴ Freire's notion of dialogical engagement assumes a critical consciousness that encourages the oppressed to speak against their oppression to ensure humanization. The oppressor cannot be a liberator because he or she is not capable of loving the "other" loving only "self." The oppressor is against dialogical engagement because it recognizes the oppressed as a human being, and so prefers an anti-dialogical practice which elevates the oppressor to a hegemonic position. In Mt 20:11-15 the oppressor is the landowner and his outburst attests to his power and position against desperate day-labourers. According to Xolisa Dlalisa, "the employer determines the wage, it is his or her right, and they want us to accept any amount they offer." This is not dialogue among social groups, and it does not contribute to broader social cohesion and the role of the "other" in the discussion.

¹⁷² Freire P: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 2005, Pg 81.

¹⁷³ Freire P: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 2005, Pg 88.

¹⁷⁴ Freire P: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 2005, Pg 89.

The recognition of the role of the “other” is critical in the theology of social dialogue. Lyn Holness and Ralf Wustenberg argue, “We come to the “other” with Christ, and yet it is precisely the “other” who shows us who Christ is.”¹⁷⁵ Everyone has a God-given right to speak for themselves about any form of oppression and injustice. Christ spoke against all forms of injustice, which led to his crucifixion and death at the hands of the oppressors who were opposed to justice.

In this section, I have argued, first, that a theology of social dialogue within decent work takes into consideration the right to speak against the oppressor. Second, I have argued that a theology of social dialogue within decent work takes into consideration the role of the “other” in the negotiation process as fundamental in resolving potential conflict within the workplace.

6.5 A Theology of Human Dignity at Work

A theology of decent work is fundamentally linked to human dignity which reflects the ontological nature of humanity, that which is inherent in human beings. Casual workers are human beings first before they are workers. Fundamental to a theology of human dignity is the recognition of this theological truth. I subscribe to the notion that humanity is existential rather than circumstantial. The humiliating conditions of casual workers in the workplace do not necessarily affect the existential nature of being human, but challenge the outward image of what it means to be human in the context of oppression and injustice. The dignity of human beings is not dependent on their ethical or moral ability to act justly in all spheres of life, but their God-given humanity.

For example, human beings are susceptible to sin and disobedience, but this does not necessarily mean they are less human or undignified. The theology of decent work must acknowledge human dignity through Christ as central to all its pillars. The person of Christ as both a human being and God reflect His ability to relate as human being and redeem as God. In this section, two points are important. First, that God relates to us in the midst of suffering and oppression. Second, that God’s redemptive work through Christ restores our lives and dignity through His death and resurrection.

¹⁷⁵ Holness L and Wustenberg R: *Theology in Dialogue*, 2002, Pg XVI.

God relates to us in the midst of suffering and oppression and redeems the fallen responsible for the suffering and oppression of others in His created order. According to Edward Cronan, “the relation of man (human beings) to the rest of creation shows that humanity possesses more actual existence and perfection, and therefore a greater likeness to the Creator than the rest of creation.”¹⁷⁶ Christ as the centre of God’s Kingdom on earth became a substitute and paid the price for all human disobedience and sin. Christ became human in order to relate to our conditions and suffering, to our human limitation and emotions (John 11: 35). It is in this context that casual workers are comforted knowing that God relates to them as human beings regardless of their struggles and experiences in the workplace. It is also in this context that perpetrators of injustices against casual workers are given an opportunity to reconcile with God through His redemptive work.

The redemptive work of Christ restores our life and dignity through His death and resurrection. According to Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead, “human dignity is conferred by God, its measure and norm is to be discovered not in social convention, but in God and in the pattern of God’s action toward humankind in creation and redemption in Christ.”¹⁷⁷ Even in the midst of dehumanizing conditions God’s people through the redemptive work of Christ remain human, because this is not optional, but ontological. According to Jurgen Moltmann, “Christ is the reconciler of human beings who takes away their sin and condemnation.”¹⁷⁸ This theological understanding offers some important resources for a theology of decent work. God’s approach to human suffering is both relational and redemptive.

In this section, first, I have argued that the theology of human dignity acknowledges people as dignified human beings irrespective of their position at work. Second, I have argued that the relational and redemptive power of Christ elevates human beings, especially the oppressed workers, above all the injustices. The belief and trust in God manifested in the responses of casual workers in the research findings attest to this power of God to relate and to redeem.

¹⁷⁶ Cronan E: *The Dignity of the Human Person*, 1955, Pg 36.

¹⁷⁷ Soulen R K and Woodhead L: *God and Human Dignity, Contextualizing Human Dignity*, 2006, Pg 6.

¹⁷⁸ Moltmann J: *On Human Dignity, Political Theology and Ethics*, 1984, Pg 84.

7. Research Findings

The responses of casual workers during the semi-structured interviews indicate that they have acquired knowledge about their context of work. Casual workers are not ignorant about their struggle for economic emancipation in the workplace. They are also aware that the oppressor is powerful, but surely not invincible, hence their commitment to economic justice in the workplace.

7.1 Semi-structured Interviews

First, casual workers argued that casualization has affected them and their families because of “inadequate income” that deprives them their ability to provide regularly for their families. About 50% of casual workers interviewed reiterated this issue of income as a critical point. The other 50% was divided for various reasons. There is a huge gap between income earners in the world today and South Africa is among the most unequal societies in the world. This therefore creates inequalities between rich and poor, “the have” and “the have not.” It was also evident that casual workers are the most vulnerable group of workers and are susceptible to extreme exploitation because of the unpredictable nature of their employment.

Second, casual workers argued that the possible changes in the workplace would have to begin with “being treated as human beings” because the nature of casual employment that dehumanizes and humiliates them as people. About 58.3% of the casual workers interviewed concurred with this view. The other 41.7% was divided based on different reasons.

Third, casual workers argued that critical to the changes in the workplace is a paradigm shift from “casual to permanent employment with improvement in working conditions and remuneration packages” which would give that security in the workplace. About 33.3% of the casual workers interviewed subscribe to this notion. The other responses were shared at 16.7% each.

Fourth, casual workers argued that in the midst of all the economic injustices and oppression, it is Umthandazo “Prayer” and Ukubekezela “Perseverance” that sustains them in the workplace as Christians. About 50% of the casual workers interviewed

agreed with this view. The other 50% was divided. They believe in God who is in control of the earth, including the workplace, which He created. They believe that work is a vocation, and therefore have a responsibility to transform it to represent God. Last, casual workers argued that there is a relationship between faith, work and the economy.

Fifth, about 50% of the casual workers interviewed identified a relationship between faith, work and the economy, while the other 50% was divided indicating different responses based on various reasons. It is evident from the responses that it is “faith, work and the economy” that relates because for casual workers, their “work” is from God, and is dependent on a stable economy which allow them the opportunity to earn a living. This in return contributes to their churches, hence the relationship. The second session, which included individual responses to the text, indicated that there is a relationship between the socio-economic and historical context of the text and the contemporary economic challenges.

7.2 Contextual Bible Study

Both groups in the CBS argued “as casual workers today we are not in the position to negotiate on wages with our employers” and that “employers make decisions”, clearly demonstrating that “there is a contestation” between employers and employees on wages. The situation in Mt 20:2-5 does not indicate the terms and conditions of the agreement between employers and employees except that the first group was promised a denarius. In the context of the second group, the employer used the previous agreement with the first group, saying, “I will give you what you deserve.” Both groups of workers in the text had no bargaining power, which is similar to casual workers today.

Again both groups in the CBS seem to agree that there is relationship between Mt 20:6-7 and the current situation of unemployment. They argued that “there is a relationship because today there is unemployment, and if you are fortunate enough you get a casual job and refusing to take it means you remain unemployed.” In addition to this, the groups believed that “we are like the workers who were unemployed in the text and got a day’s job in the vineyard.” The casual workers

demonstrated that there is a connection between the parable and their context of work as casual workers.

The groups argued for “justice in the workplace” because employers are dividing workers by creating a huge gap between permanent and casual in terms of wages and hours of work. Casual workers recognize the relationship between Mt 20:8-10 and their current situation. The contestation in Mt 20:8-10 about the payment because of the hours of work and the expectation resemble the context of casual work today as articulated by casual workers in the semi-structured interviews and CBS. The employers apply the divide and rule in an attempt to neutralize workers.

The groups argued that the fact that as casual workers “are unable to challenge their employers” means, “Employers today undermine and disrespect workers.” The grumbling of workers in Mt 20:11-15 is a direct response to lack of respect for the workers and their grievances. Workers have a right to complain if their employers treat them unjustly.

I think that casual worker’s assertion that they are “unable to negotiate with their employers” should not be seen as weakness or failure on their part. It does not necessarily mean that they are content with their oppressive situation. Contrary to this view, casual workers are challenging their oppression through non-violent protest that limits the power of the employer. Workers organized themselves outside of the workplace because as casual workers they are not unionized, and cannot risk talking to the employer within the workplace. I argue that this is a theology of non-violent resistance informed by faith through the concept of Umthandazo (Prayer) and Ukubekezela (Perseverance) as articulated by casual workers.

Second, and related to this theology of protest, is James Scott’s notion of hidden and public transcript. Casual workers use public transcript within the workplace, but resort to their hidden transcript outside the workplace to organize themselves against the employer.

Third, also related to this theology of protest is Paulo Freire’s notion of dialogue as a means for humanization in the midst of oppression. Dialogue creates a platform for discussion that ultimately leads to liberation of those who are oppressed. Casual

workers have created this dialogue as a means for liberation outside the confines of the oppressive workplace.

8. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced the N D J Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion and its historical significance and relevance to the thesis through casual workers. Second, I have attempted to use Albert Nolan's theology of work framework as the basis for the study. The framework argues for collaboration between professional theologians and casual workers. Third, I have reflected on the outcome of the semi-structured interviews with casual workers in the N D J Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion. Fourth, I have reflected on the CBS session outcome with casual worker which was used as a tool for a theology of decent work focusing on Mt 20:1-15 as a group text. Fifth, I have then discussed in details the five pillars of a theology of decent work using the categories of decent work as outlined by the ILO. Sixth, I have summarized the research findings of both the semi-structured interviews and CBS. Last, I have concluded the chapter by summarizing fundamental components. I will give a synopsis of the chapters and recommendations in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

GENERAL CONCLUSION

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will conclude the dissertation by looking at the primary objective of the research and by summarizing critical arguments in the chapters. Second, I will present my recommendations for further studies on the issues that still require attention. Last, I will provide general conclusion to the chapters.

2. Summary of Chapters

In chapter 1, I have introduced the rationale for the research. I have also given a synopsis of all the chapters in the thesis. I have introduced the reader to a complex but critical area of economic justice and prophetic theology. In chapter 2, I have made an attempt to define work focusing primarily on work as paid activity. I have indicated that this is not the only definition of work, but relevant for this research project. I have argued that work under capitalism is exploitative and oppressive because workers have no option other than to sell their labour to the capitalist. In an attempt to substantiate this argument, I have used economic globalization to demonstrate how economic atrocities of neo-liberalism have affected countries like Argentina, Brazil, India, Japan, and South Africa. I have also argued that these economic changes manifest themselves in South Africa's paradigm shift from RDP to GEAR.

In chapter 3, I have argued in support of the ILO concept of decent work that is defined as decent and productive work that creates opportunities for men and women in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. This chapter argues for the decent work paradigm and its four fundamental components, which are rights at work, employment and work, social protection and social dialogue. I have also argued against South Africa's use of the NGP to undermine the creation of decent work. I have argued that job opportunities as presented in the NGP misrepresent the ILO's concept of decent work.

In chapter 4, I began with the historical formation of the N D J Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion and its relevance to the research. I then moved to Albert Nolan's theology of work framework, which justifies the use of fieldwork in the form of semi-structured interviews and CBS as methodologies for research. I have then argued for a theology of decent work using five pillars of decent work as set by the ILO.

3. Recommendations

Since the work of Marie Chenu (1963), Gideon Goosen (1974), Dorothee Soelle (1984), Miroslav Volf (2001), Darrell Cosden (2006), and David Jensen (2006) to mention just a few, not much has been written in the area of the theology of work. Yet this is one of the most important areas in modern society. Discussions about development depend on people's ability to earn an income either in a formal or informal type of employment, yet very little theologizing is happening in this area. I therefore recommend the following as critical research considerations.

First, there should be further research projects focusing on AICs as case studies for a theology of work. The AICs have previously been seen as representatives of a genuine African theology outside of Western Christianity. In the same reasoning, they can be seen as representatives of a genuine theology of work that reflects the struggles of African people who are predominantly poor and illiterate. Second, our own University (University of KwaZulu-Natal) prides itself on being a premier University of African scholarship, so a challenge to our School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics is to create space for emerging African scholars who will conduct research among AICs because very few have done research in this area. Western scholars with limited knowledge of African culture and tradition have dominated this area. The leaders of AICs are gradually beginning to recognize the importance of education and are developing themselves academically. Unfortunately, very few have access to university education, but those with education deserve an opportunity to study and conduct research into African theology and tradition. I am aware that this depends on a number of factors, among those is their ability to access higher education. However, this is an area that contributes negatively towards AIC's lack of participation in critical debates and discussions. Last, this will contribute immensely towards the production of a new generation of AIC scholars.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have concluded the dissertation by looking at the primary objective of the research and by summarizing critical arguments in the chapters. Second, I have presented my recommendations for further studies on the issues that still require attention. Last, I have provided general conclusion to the chapters.

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APPENDIX I

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. How has casualization of work affected you and your family?

2. What changes would you like to see in your workplace today?

3. What do you think are the benefits of permanent employment?

APPENDIX II

CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDY (CBS)

MATTHEW 20: 1-15

1. What is the text about?

2. Who are the main characters?

3. What do we know about them and their relationship to each other?
