

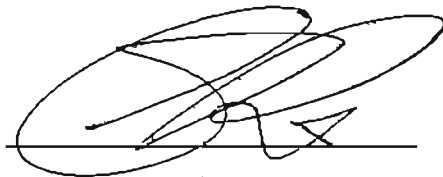
THE HOLY SPIRIT AND DEVELOPMENT

MASTER OF THEOLOGY
(THEOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT)

DECLARATIONS

I, Adrian Roux declare that this study represents my own original work and has not been submitted in any form, for any degree, to any other university. Where use has been made of the work of others it is duly acknowledged in the text.

SIGNED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'A' followed by 'Roux', written over a horizontal line.

Adrian Roux

Date:

1st December 2005

As supervisor I agree to the submission of this thesis.

SIGNED:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by 'de Gruchy', written over a horizontal line.

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the interface between theology and development by a careful examination of the Holy Spirit as presented in the third article of the Nicene Creed with reference to how that interacts with some of the foremost development thinkers.

It shows that there is indeed considerable overlap between the *Missio Dei* and the (secular) field of development and that they share a common end. The Holy Spirit is shown to be a primary tool in development as well as the eschaton of development both on a personal and a global social level.

The thesis aims to make a contribution to the development of a theology for development by suggesting and investigating areas of our faith, that can be emphasised, interpreted and reinterpreted in the formation of a theology for development. We must begin to discover new understandings and possibilities as approaches to theology that while consistent with the faith of the church, are also able to take their place in the world as tools of development.

This thesis hopes to make a contribution to setting out in a anew way of thinking by returning to the fore Christianity's original and inherent focus of transforming this world and its involvement and coherence with development.

DEDICATION AND THANKS

for showing me love, teaching me hope, sharing peace, dreaming *shalom* and nurturing sometimes scary, sometimes messy, life-giving grace...

to Stephanie...

to Josie and Mark for the sacrifices they had thrust upon them...

to Dad, for helping me open doors I might never have known were there...

to Mom, for enthusiasm, encouragement and vision...

to the Church, for better or for worse...

..in the hope of our world made just, peaceful, whole: new

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Introduction

Michael Taylor bemoans the fact that the ecumenical family has pushed for holism (and indeed ecumenicism), without searching for theologies which more satisfactorily hold different emphases, like the 'gospel for the poor' and the 'gospel for the sinner' together.¹ Indeed already in the 1940s Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote of the need to return to the roots of our Christian faith in order to make its truth comprehensible in the society around us.²

Frequently Christians' interaction with societies' problems have indicated that their faith is unable to solve these crises. Worse still their faith has enabled them to dissociate themselves from the crises.³ Such faith often centres on 'souls going to heaven' and the ultimate destruction of the world. Another Christian position of faith holds God's agony at the state of the world in tension with God's hope for the re-creation of the world. While passages which speak of 'heaven coming to earth' (Revelation 21v10), and 'thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven' (Matthew 6v10) support this position anecdotally, a socio-political study of the Old Testament would provide a great deal of support for this position. The difficulty in this latter position is finding the points of interaction between faith and the world. This is the arena in which 'theology and development' operates, and where this thesis aims to make a contribution.

The thesis investigates some of the ways that our Christian faith interfaces with the world, and hopes to make a contribution to discovering how we can understand and present our faith so as to facilitate the world's healing and transformation. It will focus on the secular field of development and work systematically through what the third article of the Nicene Creed teaches us about the Holy Spirit to discover some of the real answers that the Christian faith has to the world's questions of power, meaning and economics, but also to see how our faith can be informed, and affirmed, by development.

¹ Taylor 1995:44

² Bonhoeffer 1984:382

³ I hope I use the words 'Christian' and 'faith' without prejudice here in defining Christians as those who choose that name for themselves and 'faith' as their faith and the manner in which they understand it – quite apart from what might be 'biblical' or 'historical' or 'correct'.

We are searching for a deeper understanding that will show the gospel to be relevant as a source of healing and wholeness in the 'ordinary' lives of individuals, societies and this world. This interpretation would call and empower people to be the body of Christ bringing healing, hope and wholeness wherever they find themselves.

What is needed is more than agreement on the words of the creed,⁴ where those words are perhaps understood in completely different ways among the laity, between the laity and the clergy, and between and within different churches. What is needed is clarity about the core meanings, that does not resort to using words such as 'mystery' to bamboozle and paper over cracks.

The problem is well established by Hans Küng,

Modern man is not always helped in his understanding of this relationship by the interpretations that are based on ancient, Hellenistic ways of thinking and the dogmatic pronouncements that have been formulated in this tradition. Like all such statements, they are historically conditioned and cannot simply be identified with the biblical accounts. They can therefore neither be thoughtlessly rejected nor unreflectingly repeated. They have rather to be differently interpreted for modern man on the basis of the New Testament.⁵

Faith which becomes a blind faith separates itself from its roots and self understanding, and hence is unable to really come to terms with the questions, "What is the heart of our faith and how does that affect development practice?"

I have approached the study with an openness to a broad spectrum of Christian approaches, 'denominationally' and historically. This thesis does not seek to abolish or abandon our faith, nor even the manner in which it is presented in the historical creeds of the church, but to find an understanding that is both consistent with the faith of the church; relevant to the place we find ourselves in history; and relevant and empowering for the field of development. In the same manner as with a biblical pericope, any particular Christian doctrine must first be understood in the context in which it arose, and in the light of the questions or challenges to which it was seen to be an answer. Only then will we be able to move beyond the words to the truth they contain, and from there to a reformulation that is both relevant and understandable to society at large and true to all its essentials.

⁴ Whether that is the Apostle's creed, Nicene Creed or any other particular creed. While the Apostle's Creed is used as the framework for this study the position put forward is completely compatible with the Nicene Creed.

⁵ Küng and Moltmann 1979:116,117

This work argues that pneumatology is central to theology, and the key to responding to this challenge. Karl Barth dreamed of ‘a new theology that would begin with the third article of the creed and would realise in a new way the real concern of his old opponent Schleiermacher.’⁶ Moltmann mourns that, “...a new paradigm in pneumatology has not yet emerged. Most studies are no more prolongations of the traditional doctrines...”⁷ A renewed understanding of the Holy Spirit will invigorate and empower the gospel for today. In fact it is fair for Robinson to say, “...no theological subject is more comprehensive... It comprehends or involves all others, for it is in experience that all the great doctrines are focussed to their burning point, and the *doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the doctrine of this experience* [italics mine]. To write adequately on this doctrine would require a strong grasp of every other doctrine and an expert knowledge of all the great theological problems, such as usually belongs to an expert in one of them...”⁸ Having heard this, it is with humility, and some trepidation, that I approach the topic, nevertheless suggesting that this work makes a contribution to the search for that theology and understanding.

⁶ Moltmann 1992:1 Essentially this was a concern for more focus on the experiential element of religion.

⁷ Moltmann 1992:1

⁸ Robinson 1930:1

What is Development?

"Development is indeed a momentous engagement with freedom's possibilities."

- *Development as Freedom* (1999:297) – Amartya Sen

What constitutes development is a widely contested issue. There is no clear, universally accepted definition of development, and there are many tensions and counter-positions within what is a very broad field. Despite this, for us to examine the interaction of development and theology meaningfully, we will have to clarify a working definition within this milieu. It is to this end that we will examine some of the tensions within the field and review the approaches of some prominent development thinkers.

Development is About More Than Money and Economics

Development has often been misunderstood as being synonymous with Westernisation, modernisation and the accumulation of things,⁹ and as being the material and social change through which the industrialised countries' economic values and technical progress could be imparted on the rest of the world, through technology, industry and economic growth.

The good intentions behind this approach were embodied in the Bretton Woods institutions¹⁰ over 50 years ago. Unfortunately even as globalisation has become suspect, disappointing the hopes of the poor and making them poorer,¹¹ the strategy is as firmly in place as it ever was.¹²

Capitalism is however a completely unsuitable vehicle for the development of the poor because the benefits of growth accrue to those who are least in need, and because global ecology will not be able to support the necessary levels of industrialisation, environmental degradation, and consumption.¹³ Sen shows that many existing ideas and definitions of development, particularly with regards to the place of money and

⁹ Myers 1999:3

¹⁰ Institutions such as the World Bank, International monetary Fund, General agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

¹¹ Taylor 1995:65

¹² Taylor 1995:62

¹³ Indeed it is unable to support current levels. (Korten 1990:3)

markets, are inadequate. While the capability to participate in markets is a form of freedom, the market system is unable to bring complete freedom to all.¹⁴ Money is one possible means among many to the end that is freedom; it is neither freedom in itself, nor essential to finding freedom or development.¹⁵ Wealth is only useful to the extent that it is liberating. Beyond that, or short of that, it serves no purpose at all, and its maximization or loss is meaningless.

Development is far more than the maximization of wealth or income. Nevertheless, despite economic growth being unable to achieve freedom and development on its own, Sen does support it, as one means among many, in working towards that goal. Obviously to deny or ignore it would weaken, rather than strengthen, some people's freedom.¹⁶

Despite this, conventional development assistance has embraced the dominant development system (particularly of export-led growth) and hence exacerbated problems of underdevelopment, poverty, exploitation, environmental destruction and communal violence, causing many to query whether this is really good for people or the planet¹⁷ and Korten to comment that "... the fervour with which these policies are being promoted forces us to ask to what extent the underlying motives of the governments of the Western Industrial nations have changed consequentially from the days of colonialism."¹⁸

Unfortunately the development industry seems structurally ill-suited to providing real answers. Most development organisations are growth centred creations and therefore unable and ill suited to challenging this approach.¹⁹

Development has become a big business, preoccupied more with its own growths and imperatives than with the people it was originally created to serve. Dominated by professional financiers and technocrats, the development industry seeks to maintain an apolitical and value-free stance in dealing with what are, more than anything else, problems of power and values.²⁰

¹⁴ Sen 1999:7

¹⁵ Sen 1999:16

¹⁶ Obviously to decide whether the balance in this move is development, or underdevelopment, is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice to note that it would bring, for different people, movement in both directions.

¹⁷ Myers 1999:3 and Taylor 1995:8,9

¹⁸ Korten 1990:59

¹⁹ Korten 1990:5 They are inherently; self-centred; greedy and sinful.

²⁰ Korten 1990:ix

The answer lies in people gaining their freedom, so that they are not dependent, and can take their future into their own hands, whether that be ‘liberation’ or ‘revolution’;²¹ yet in order to appease sponsors, and not to hamper access to countries the development agencies (on the whole) prefer not to confront ‘the powers that be’.

The necessary change that is beginning to be recognised is that affluence is not liberation, even where it is achieved, and, “that the poor cannot be liberated through money.”²² Some key scholars who have articulated this recognition are Martha Nussbaum, Amartya Sen and David Korten.²³

Martha Nussbaum

Nussbaum defines development as giving people the capability to function within all the areas that are central to being human, limited only by not limiting the freedom of others.²⁴ Development cannot be said to have taken place – irrespective of any rights, opportunities or policies that are in place – where those capabilities are retarded by anything other than the individual’s choice.

Nussbaum understands development as being respectful of each person’s struggle for flourishing; treating each person as an end and as a source of agency and worth in

²¹ Taylor 1995:8,9

²² Taylor 1995:49 quoting the declaration of the 1974 consultation of CICARWS and CCPD in Montreux.

²³ I have chosen to work with Martha Nussbaum, Amartya Sen and David Korten because they are all well respected within their field, and because they are among the secular development thinkers with which I am most familiar. Obviously Nussbaum and Sen’s broad vision and attempts to address development issues in universal terms are well suited to a work such as this.

²⁴ Nussbaum 2000:78 Nussbaum’s Central Human Functional Capabilities:

1. Life: normal length, not reduced to a state not worth living
2. Bodily Health: good health, reproductive health, adequately nourished and sheltered
3. Bodily integrity: free to move from place to place, having one’s bodily boundaries treated as sovereign
4. Senses, imagination and thought – adequate education, being able to search for meaning in one’s own way. Able to have pleasurable experiences and avoid non-necessary pain.
5. Emotions: to be able to develop emotionally, have attachments to things and people outside ourselves, love grieve long be angry
6. Practical reason – to be able to form a conception of good and engage in critical reflection about one’s life
7. Affiliation: capability for justice and friendship, to live with and towards others, also the social basis for self respect and non-humiliation
8. Other species: living with concern for and relation to
9. Play: being able to laugh, play and enjoy recreational activities
10. Control over one’s environment – political and physical

Together they seem to provide a vision that is not unlike ‘the Kingdom’.

their own right; not being dictatorial about the good; and within broad guidelines honouring individuals' freedom of choice and affiliation.²⁵

Consequently she contends that development is best assessed and attained, not by focussing on satisfaction or resources, but on what individuals are actually able to do and to be, in the search for life that is worthy of the dignity of each and every human being. Each person must be treated as an end in themselves, rather than as a part of a group, or a tool in the service of others.²⁶

Her approach enables each capability to be realised according to local taste and customs,²⁷ and allows the individual the freedom to choose whether to act or not.²⁸ It ensures that individuals retain the power (the freedom) to choose and direct their own development according to their own understanding of what it means to be human within the broad guidelines that the key capabilities provide.

Amartya Sen

Sen asserts that "to counter the problems that we face, we have to see individual freedom as a social commitment."²⁹ Consequently he defines development as the "process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy," and argues for concentrating on that overarching objective, rather than any particular methodology.³⁰ Consequently any increase in freedom for people is development, almost irrespective of what people do with that freedom and no gain in freedom can be viewed as 'not being in the interests of development.'³¹ This provides a far broader and more useful view of development than the typical narrow focussing on GDP, development in technology and infrastructure, and modernisation.

Sen calls for people to be placed at the centre of development in a manner that enables them to exercise their freedom and shape their destiny, rather than just being seen as

²⁵ Nussbaum 2000:69

²⁶ Nussbaum 2000:4,12

²⁷ Nussbaum 2000:105

²⁸ Nussbaum 2000:105

²⁹ Sen 1999:xii. We need individual freedom and realism to live as free as possible in an 'unfree' world – in Christian theology and jargon we say that even here and even now we can experience the kingdom of God.

³⁰ Sen 1999:3

³¹ Sen 1999:5

recipients of development programmes.³² Indeed his approach questions whether ready made packages and programmes are possible. “It is characteristic of freedom... it cannot yield a view of development that translates readily into some simple ‘formula’...”³³ rather freedom is the organising principle and the social commitment of development.

Sen’s primary thesis is however that freedom is not only the principal end of development, but also its primary means;³⁴ freedom promotes freedom and is causal in bringing it about. A growth in freedom must be seen, ‘both as the primary end and as the principle means of development... the removal of substantial unfreedoms, it is argued here, is constitutive of development...’³⁵ Freedoms of one kind promote and support freedoms of another kind, ‘the linkages between different kinds of freedoms are empirical and causal, rather than constitutive and compositional.’³⁶

Consequently freedom is also a good measure of the level of development within society, and a good means of critiquing approaches to development.³⁷ Sen identifies several key areas of freedom and power for evaluation to include economic activity, political freedom, social facilities, transparency guarantees and protective security.³⁸

He also calls for development to be understood more in terms of capability deprivation, rather than an exclusive concentration on income poverty, in order to better understand poverty and freedom. “The role of income and wealth – important as it is along with other influences – has to be integrated into a broader and fuller picture of success and deprivations.”³⁹

³² Sen 1999:53

³³ Sen 1999:297

³⁴ Sen 1999:3

³⁵ Sen 1999:xii

³⁶ Sen 1999:15,16 Sen shows much closer link between economic growth and the freedom of the economic climate than the ‘Lee Thesis’ linking of economic growth and political oppression. Indeed he shows clearly that ‘unfreedom’ of one kind serves both to encourage and strengthen ‘unfreedom’s of another kind, and to weaken and undermine other areas of freedom. Development must be balanced in addressing all areas of ‘unfreedom’, and advances in freedom in particular areas need to be seen in the context of losses of freedom in other areas - where such losses exceed the advances ‘undevelopment’ is happening.

³⁷ It is not inconceivable that economic ‘development’ could reduce rather enhance freedoms in certain situations. Wealth can reach a point where it is limiting rather than liberating – beyond some point increasing wealth is not development.

³⁸ Sen 1999:10 Sen, perhaps as might be expected from a self-confessed atheist, misses or ignores the freedom and power associated with religions and ideologies.

³⁹ Sen 1999:20

David Korten

Korten defines development as the process through which society and its processes are transformed into what is just, sustainable and inclusive, which is more than 'simple undifferentiated economic growth.'⁴⁰ Accordingly the critical development issue is not growth but transformation: justice - not equality of income; sustainability; and inclusiveness – not equality of status and power, but equality of opportunity, respect and recognition.⁴¹ All these things are at their core, issues of power and values. Development calls for a change in our understanding and use of power and a change in our values: a transformation that depends on our overcoming the conditioning of our history, culture and institutions, in which the great religious teachers' insight into the values of humility, moderation and love, 'the integrative values we must now learn to live', will surely play a part.⁴²

Here Korten makes a critical insight into development – it is primarily a problem of values and not a financial and technical problem, and this elevates religion to a central role.⁴³

Korten recognises the people centred nature of development. It "is a *process* by which the members of a society increase *their* personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in *their* quality of life consistent with *their own* aspirations. [all italics mine]"⁴⁴

Some Christian Perspectives on Development

The close relationship between development and the Missio Dei has meant that there has been frequent interaction between Christians and development. Again we focus on just a few, pertinent perspectives.

Bryant Myers' understanding of development emphasises the transformational nature of development. He emphasises that development is neither natural, nor inevitable, but involves changing our choices, and hard work. It has as its goals enjoying life as

⁴⁰ Korten 1990:67

⁴¹ Korten 1990:4

⁴² Korten 1990:214

⁴³ Korten 1990:223

⁴⁴ Korten 1990:67

it should be, recovering our true identity as human beings created in the image of God and discovering our true vocation as productive stewards faithfully caring for the world and the people in it.⁴⁵

Samuel Parmar, speaking at Uppsala in 1968 would accept the term 'development' only if it was defined as revolution because it, "... breaks up old institutions to create new, brings about radical alterations in the values and structures of society." In Montreux in 1970 he added, "Development cannot take place without radical changes in economic and social relationships, and diffusion of political power. Such changes are accompanied by instability, disorder, upheaval. We completely misunderstand the process of development if we equate it with static stability. Thus understood development is revolution."⁴⁶ Similarly Gustavo Gutierrez favoured the term 'liberation' over 'development'.⁴⁷

Julius Nyerere, defined development as, "the growth of people in freedom, and the growth of a society that upholds and protects that freedom."⁴⁸ It is the establishment of peace,⁴⁹ 'the struggle for humanity',⁵⁰ and a, "...change in the direction of human equality and justice,"⁵¹ which is more than, "...having money to spend on clothes, roads and so on, although of course it includes these things...[but] also means not having to work as a beast of burden, not having to walk miles for clean water, [and] having plenty of good nutritious food."⁵²

A Working Definition of Development

Development is about people⁵³ about liberating and empowering people and handing over responsibility to them, so self reliance is both the means by which people develop,⁵⁴ and the aim of development. Capital expenditure,⁵⁵ the building of roads

⁴⁵ Myers 1999:3

⁴⁶ Quoted by Taylor 1995:71

⁴⁷ Quoted by Taylor 1995:71

⁴⁸ Nyerere 1973:259 Development is the removal of oppression, and consequent gaining of freedom. If the power doesn't go to the people, but merely changes hands so that the oppressed are lorded over by someone else, it is not development (:372).

⁴⁹ Nyerere's understanding of peace is akin to the Hebraic 'shalom' which is more than just the absence of conflict and violence, but includes the idea of justice, equality and equity. (see Nyerere 1973:228)

⁵⁰ Nyerere 1973:335

⁵¹ Nyerere 1973:336

⁵² Nyerere 1973:91

⁵³ Nyerere 1973:59,67,94,280,320

⁵⁴ Nyerere 1973:70

⁵⁵ Nyerere 1973:101

and buildings,⁵⁶ and similar things are the tools of development, not development itself.⁵⁷ In analysing the weaknesses in previous approaches to development Nyerere says, “What we were doing, in fact, was thinking of development in terms of things, and not of people.”⁵⁸

Korten’s call for a redefinition of ‘quality of life’ in terms of social, mental and spiritual development rather than consumption⁵⁹ is an important position for development. This asserts that freedoms other than economic freedom are important in their own right, and not only in the extent to which they bring about economic freedom. Development is far broader than economic development, or the creation of wealth,⁶⁰ just as the nature of poverty is far broader than economic deprivation, but relationships that do not work, with origins that are spiritual, and experienced as a marring of identity.⁶¹

For these reasons, the provisional definition of development that we are working with is a combination of Sen’s and Nussbaum’s definitions:

Development is freedom and freedom is development. Development is about increasing the real freedoms that people are able to experience and enjoy. Freedom is both the goal of development and the means by which we attain it.

We must hold this provisional definition before us through the thesis bearing in mind that our work will constantly lead us to reflect back on this definition and possibly to reconsider or refine it.

How Does Development Happen?

Changed Values

True development will never be achieved without a complete change, some might even say reversal, in the values which guide and drive society. Minor adjustments to societal structures and values are irrelevant. What is called for is a revolutionary reorganisation that will embrace the values of justice (in its fullest sense), sustainability and inclusiveness.⁶²

⁵⁶ Nyerere 1973:67,280

⁵⁷ Nyerere 1973:59

⁵⁸ Nyerere 1973:66

⁵⁹ Korten 1990:133

⁶⁰ This is a familiar, and well understood Christian position, that could be illustrated from many bible and gospel stories but perhaps best from the parables in Matthew 25 v14-30 and Luke 16 v1-13.

⁶¹ See Myers’ exposition of the work of Jayakumar Christian (Myers 1999:xvii,xviii)

⁶² Korten 1990:4,133

Korten says that what is called for is a,

new human consciousness in which the more nurturing, enabling and conserving dimensions of female consciousness gain ascendance over the more aggressive, exploitative and competitive dimensions of male consciousness that have so long dominated the social and economic life of human societies.⁶³

While this is the type of conclusion we might expect from a theologian it is critical to note that Korten is not a theologian. He arrives at this conclusion from his work and experience within the development industry.

Development's most fundamental need is just reconciliation, which can almost exclusively arise out of people living religious values (e.g. love, mercy, and tolerance) which attack the root causes of human suffering. This is therefore the most important development work,⁶⁴ and that through which our technologies and institutions will be transformed to a pattern of justice, sustainability and inclusiveness.

We need a transformation from values that idolise power, wealth and success. Development, as we have defined it, is inherently opposed to the debilitating nature of paternalistic, patronising, dominating, imperialistic, dependency-creating, 'donor-recipient' relationships, in favour of self-reliance, independence, equality and partnership.⁶⁵ We need a transformation of our thinking on poverty from 'poverty as the lack of resources that results from laziness and incompetence' to 'poverty as the unjust distribution of resources resulting from an imbalance of power in which the weak become over dependent on the strong who in turn act predominantly in their own self interest'.⁶⁶

This will however only happen through a transformation of our values, our attitude to power and, in particular, our definition of 'quality of life', which needs to be focused more on freedom and our social, mental and spiritual development, than consumption.⁶⁷ Unfortunately conventional approaches to development, and in particular 'export-led growth' have supported the entrenched value system promoting underdevelopment by serving a limited and exclusive group, being unsustainable and not translating into justly distributed benefits for all. They have been dehumanising,

⁶³ Korten 1990:4

⁶⁴ Korten 1990:189

⁶⁵ Taylor 1995:76

⁶⁶ Taylor 1995:87

⁶⁷ Korten 1990:133 ...in a sense this a secular exploration of soteriology and a re-evaluation of secular soteriology.

have increased poverty and hunger, and legitimated and strengthened political and economic dualism rather than addressing it.⁶⁸

Development practitioners' hunger for ever more power to achieve their objectives, has frequently resulted in strategies which pander to the rich and powerful. These policies and decisions seek to alleviate suffering rather than addressing its root causes by altering the status quo. Such welfare rather than justice oriented policies are in a sense a siding with the powerful rather than the weak. Their failure to focus on institutions and power means that the benefits they produce have inconsequential and short lived benefits. Development is now an 'industry' more concerned with its own growth than the development of people.⁶⁹

It is critical that the understanding of power changes from 'a means of achieving one's personal interests and ambitions', to 'a responsibility to serve the community and, in particular, the powerless'.⁷⁰ In as much as development is about freedom, the solution cannot be to remove power from people, nor can it be to limit people's access to power, neither can it *ultimately* be to place external controls on that power.⁷¹ The ultimate – possibly eschatological – solution can *only* be in each individual's choice to exercise their freedom and power in a way that does not hinder (and possibly serves to advance and promote) the freedom and power of others. This lofty goal can only be achieved through the transformation of the values by which each individual lives, for anything less than the ultimate freedom of each individual will be an inherently unstable system.

The biggest weakness in Nussbaum's *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach* is her assertion that none should act as agents or supporters of another's life or goals.⁷² Out of a context of oppression and internalised oppression her contention can be understood, but it is overstated. Society, capitalism, employment and economic development are networks of relationships like this.

⁶⁸ Korten 1990:59

⁶⁹ Korten 1990:ix

⁷⁰ Korten 1990:169. Korten would like to raise the consciousness of the powerful toward their responsibilities.

⁷¹ Korten would like to ensure that power is vested in responsible hands (1990:169) but this implies removing some people's access to power or limiting some people's power. Either approach limits their freedom, and is consequently only suitable as an interim measure, because it *reduces* the freedom of everyone, both those with, and those without, power.

⁷² Nussbaum 2000:5

Instead we should be working towards all, the community and particularly the rich and the powerful, being supporters and agents of *everyone's* lifestyle. Amartya Sen says it is essential for development that we see 'individual freedom as a social commitment.'⁷³

The responsible use of power is in service and self giving towards those with less. Society will not be transformed, nor development fulfilled, through structures and institutions of power because of the self interest⁷⁴ of the people within them and controlling them. Society's transformation will be complete⁷⁵ when all individuals are transformed to using their power and freedom in the interest of others rather than themselves.⁷⁶ The power for development, which is freedom, is found in individuals.

Development is dependent on millions of individuals catching the vision to serve and live in a different way that builds an entirely new collective pattern of behaviour through a new global consciousness and intelligence.⁷⁷ The changes necessary are so deep-seated, that it is misleading to speak of anything but a revolutionary restructuring of society, which is necessarily people-centred and 'bottom-up', asserting the principle of people's sovereignty rather than the sovereignty of the state.⁷⁸ Taylor says, "Real development can no longer be conceived apart from a people's movement for liberation and social justice... People's participation... must therefore be basic to the work of the churches in fostering social change."⁷⁹

The realisation of the importance of the 'ultimate', of the language of power, freedom, choice and transformation (subjects over which the church has a long history of reflection) is a pointer to the fact that it is appropriate for a religious and theological dialogue within development, and sets the scene for the reflections in this thesis.

Working With People, Not For Them

Associated with this is the realisation that it is not only universal value changes that are necessary. Values are firstly found and changed within people not constitutions,

⁷³ Sen 1999:xii

⁷⁴ In Christian parlance this fear and self interest would be called 'sin'.

⁷⁵ In Christian parlance we might say, 'the kingdom will come'.

⁷⁶ In Christian parlance this might be called 'salvation'.

⁷⁷ This is Korten's primary thesis e.g. see 1990:216

⁷⁸ Korten 1990:159

⁷⁹ Taylor 1995:72

trade laws and business plans, and so individuals, rather than nations, tribes or averages, must be the focus of development. “Aggregate data aren’t enough for a normative assessment of how a nation is doing: we need to know how each one is doing, considering each as a separate life.”⁸⁰ Development must undergo the value change of becoming people-centred, and assert that rights, belonging and control are not determined by power.⁸¹

This value change means that the powerful have a responsibility to the less powerful in the establishment of peace and justice,⁸² and that the correct use of power is in assisting the powerless, preventing exploitation and promoting justice and human equality.⁸³ Correctly used power is not so much taken, as given.⁸⁴ Development depends on people, including those coming into power and overthrowing powers, giving up their ‘right’ and power to exploit others.⁸⁵

Development is people increasing their ability to use and maintain resources for ‘sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life’ according to their own aspirations,⁸⁶ and asserts the ‘sovereignty of people’ rather than the ‘sovereignty of states’.⁸⁷ Development must be shaped and worked by the oppressed individual,⁸⁸ rather than being imposed on them. It must give individuals the freedom to decide what they want, where they are going, take the decisions to get there, and the responsibility to make it happen,⁸⁹ and so transform them from the objects of

⁸⁰ Nussbaum 2000:60 Nussbaum emphasises is that development must focus on individuals – averages and means are meaningless in that can serve to hide the quality of life of the majority or most disadvantaged people in the sample Nussbaum 2000:55-61, 69,73 and elsewhere.

⁸¹ Nyerere 1973:53,90

⁸² Nyerere 1973:246,247

⁸³ Nyerere 1973:206

⁸⁴ Nyerere 1973:335, 336, 338, 344 i.e. not so much used to meet one’s own aspirations as to meet those of others. Obviously, in the interim, the cause of development could be seen to be advanced when the ‘powerless’ take power when it has been denied them. However, this needs more scrutiny in terms of our understanding of power – those ‘without power’, would not have the ability to ‘take power’ from those who had it. Rather their power is different, the real power that effects true development (as opposed to military or financial power), the power of people willing to live according to their values, to effect change according to their values. History has shown that where those who have taken power don’t use their new found power to give power to others, and according to the values we are speaking of, the cycle of power being taken away, continues.

⁸⁵ Nyerere 1973:131

⁸⁶ Korten 1990:66 Nyerere 1973:5

⁸⁷ Korten 1990:159

⁸⁸ Nyerere 1973:142,230,267,350. Leadership and education can only encourage people to participate in it (1973:61)

⁸⁹ Korten 1990:159 “The principal of people’s sovereignty establishes the basic human right of the people of any country to organize, access information, undertake development activities of their own

someone else's history to being the subjects of their own.⁹⁰ People cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves.⁹¹

One system in which individuals are valued in their own right is in equity-led (rather than export-led) approaches to growth. This system focuses on ensuring broad based participation in the economic growth process where all individuals are able to participate and benefit. This was the backbone of the Asian Tigers' success.⁹²

Where power is held on behalf of others there is always the danger of it delivering the trappings of development but without freedom,⁹³ because, generally those with power are happy to exploit others.⁹⁴ A people-centred approach to development ensures that structures of power within society can never systematize that power and so dominate people rather than serving and representing their will. This unjust systematisation of power structures is however a reality in our world, one that has become nearly impossible to change and will 'need to be undone at the people level'.⁹⁵ Change must begin with people within the structures, from where the structures will be transformed, and from where the change will take more widespread hold within society.

The Particular Role of Religion

The fundamental development issues are issues of power in the interaction between people. That power is controlled and directed by people's values; consequently the values people hold, and how to challenge and change them, are central to development. Recognising development as a crisis of values elevates religion, which is primarily about values, what they should be, and how we develop and deepen them, to a central role. Despite this the crises of politics, food, power, and economics will only be solved when economists, politicians, psychologists and other 'secular' experts

choosing on their own initiative, express views on policies, participate in international exchange and receive financial and other assistance from foreign and domestic contributors of their choice."

⁹⁰ Nyerere 1973:38,50,51,94)

⁹¹ Nyerere 1973:60;219, and Taylor 1995:72

⁹² Korten 1990:73,75,77

⁹³ Nyerere 1973:53

⁹⁴ Nyerere 1973:37, 234, 235,236 e.g. 'big power politics' and the West are opposed to true development. Current US involvement in the Middle East is possibly another example.

⁹⁵ Korten 1990:168

work alongside theologians in implementing those values within cultures and societal structures.

Religion has more to offer than converting people to a narrow 'rule book' style behaviour, producing narrow-minded and robotic ethics. It has the power to create a new world view: new vision, new ethics, new values and a new identity for people. Further it has the power to address the real issues of power imbalances in the interaction of people, and the injustice and dehumanisation of people that results within those relationships and their consequent structures. (c.f. "Jayakumar Christian's understanding of the nature of poverty as relationships that do not work and the cause of poverty as being spiritual."⁹⁶)

While on one level the problems won't be solved simply by people being 'brought to Jesus' or submitting to Allah, on another level, despite its depth and breadth, this is the key to the problem of development. The development problem will be solved as people are 'born again' to using their power for others, when they are loving rather than fearful and serve the common good rather than their own ambition. Herein lies the incarnational nature of Christian faith and the relevance of every religion. It is the value changing power that answers the question: "What is it that makes us more than Oxfam with hymns?"⁹⁷

Questions relating to the uses of power, values, love, community, peace and the ability of people to live in harmony with one another are not just development questions. They are questions that are fundamental to religion and the role of church in society.⁹⁸ Even Korten, a secular development theorist, says that 'the human spirit must be strengthened to the point that greed and egotism play a less dominant role,' and that is the irreplaceable role that religion holds within development. Remember that he is not a theologian!

Full development will never be achieved without a change in values. Mission is about winning people over to those new values and changed way of living. If ever there was serious debate about whether mission and development should be kept apart or

⁹⁶ Quoted by Myers 1999:xvii. Also see Myers 1999:12 "the poor are largely poor because they live in networks of relationships that do not work for their well being"

⁹⁷ The expression is drawn from the heading of Taylor 1995 Chapter 5, where he uses it debate Christian identity within development circles.

⁹⁸ Korten 1990:168 quoted in Myers 1999:96

held together, the answer is undoubtedly that they belong together.⁹⁹ Taylor is quite right to challenge the Christian development agencies' concept of development,¹⁰⁰ but not because, "in the church's opinion, development of the inner person is a prerequisite for healthy and lasting human development overall." Rather because any attempt at development which does not move to change values is ultimately a cul-de-sac of 'fishing babies from the river'. On the other hand Christians and development workers are right to object to 'a prayer for a bag of rice' style of 'relief work' when the values that are most profoundly impacting development and most in need of change are in opulent, mostly Western, societies.

Recognising religion's central role means that its theology becomes central. Most likely it needs to be developed away from ideas of a sinful world that has to be liberated, a fallen world that needs to be restored or an established order that needs to be maintained. The Jewish and Christian idea of covenant could be helpful here in speaking of a just, whole and peaceful world *being* created by men and women in partnership with God. Religion would need to play its part by bringing people into the vision of *creating* this world, and in working out what it would be like and how best to achieve it. "It will view with a new seriousness not the moral obligation to serve the poorest but the creative strategy of starting at the most neglected and unpromising point with those regarded as unnecessary for any constructive enterprise."¹⁰¹ Whether this is a fundamentally new approach, the basic premise of most religions (healing, perfecting this world and finding peace in it), or a well established but often disregarded 'strand' of Christianity might be open for debate.

Sen, an agnostic and an economist, portrays development as the overcoming of societal problems through the power of freedom.¹⁰² Many religions, including Christianity, would be comfortable with this assessment but prefer to convey their mission in their own jargon.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Taylor 1995:21

¹⁰⁰ Taylor 1995:27

¹⁰¹ Taylor 1995:157 I must credit Taylor with the ideas contained in this entire paragraph.

¹⁰² Sen 1999:ix

¹⁰³ Christians might substitute 'sins' for 'problems' or 'societal problems' and 'salvation' for 'freedom'.

Is Development the Secular Expression of the *Missio Dei*?

Michael Taylor notes that Christianity currently seems to believe that it has little more to offer to development than convincing people to take part in what is largely a secular operation, an attitude that reveals the widespread failure of Christians to come to terms with the heart and roots of their faith. This is a theological failure born of a blind faith rather than a faith seeking understanding. Consequently development has been reduced to something that some Christians do out of compassion, instead of being recognised as the very heart of our faith and undeniably a secular expression of that faith. The church must walk hand-in-hand with development practitioners providing guidance and helping find solutions to the inadequacies of the secular model.

However even where the church has recognised the need for “a rounded or ‘holistic’ approach to the task of God’s church and to the people God loves,”¹⁰⁴ such as in the ecumenical response to poverty and human need, it has generally failed to recognise that diakonia and evangelism are not two separate things. We don’t serve so that we can evangelise – we serve because it is at the heart of the good news.¹⁰⁵ That is how Orthodox Theologian Alexandros Papaderos can say, “any division between verticalism and horizontalism is not merely absurd but actually heretical!”¹⁰⁶

Gustavo Gutierrez was also emphatic that the history of our salvation and the history of our struggle for a better life in this world are one and the same reality, “to work to transform this world is in itself salvation.”¹⁰⁷ While Christianity uses metaphors and expressions that are not common to development (such as God, heaven and the kingdom of God), “the goals of Christian witness are the same as the goals of transformational development.”¹⁰⁸

Indeed Myers provides a useful caveat with regard to ‘god-talk’, suggesting that it is better to ask “Who is God and what is God doing?” than simply “Who is God?” Focusing simply on theological abstracts of God’s being and character (like

¹⁰⁴ Taylor 1995:22

¹⁰⁵ Service does open hearts and doors to evangelism, and a positive response to the good news does advance that cause and create workers for it, yet the point is still the values being lived and the world that is being created rather than a running tally of souls.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted by Taylor 1995:24

¹⁰⁷ Taylor 1995:120

¹⁰⁸ Myers 1999:210

omnipotence and omnipresence) means that we will struggle to provide useful and believable answers to difficult questions. Focusing instead on “Who is God and what is God doing?” leads to a God who is saving a fallen and failed world in a particular way (or better still creating a perfect world out of chaos), and therefore not a God who permitted the Holocaust; but rather, “the God who is hard at work trying to prevent future ones.”¹⁰⁹

Unfortunately there are two large schools of understanding within the Christian faith which Taylor names ‘good news for the sinner’ and ‘good news for the poor’.¹¹⁰ These schools have been polarised by their passion for their faith when in fact their positions are complementary rather than diametrically opposed. Perhaps once again we should hear the rallying call, ‘doctrine divides, service unites’, for development might well prove to be place where mutual recognition can be found.

Where the church’s core task is seen as centring on ‘good news for the sinner’ there will be little to choose between people as to which of them should be given priority. The good news is a message that can be conveyed, heard, responded to and its benefits enjoyed without any change in concrete circumstances. The gospel is no longer essentially incarnate, and acts of ministry and compassion are an outworking of Christian kindness but not intrinsic to salvation nor an essential part of the good news or the mission of God.

On the other hand where the church’s core task is seen as centring on ‘good news for the poor’, the poor are seen to have a prior claim on the church’s attention. The gospel is not about forgiving sins so much as about overcoming hunger and injustice, putting the last and the least first, and lifting the burden of oppression. The key tasks of the church will tend to be active and practical and the gospel is essentially incarnate, embodied in deeds and occasionally explained in words. The concern about poverty is an essential part of the definition of the gospel.

The tensions between the two approaches are obvious yet they balance each other. Good news for the sinner is a powerful tool for broadening people’s vision and renewing their values. Christian faith and discipleship is however more than getting

¹⁰⁹ Myers 1999:24

¹¹⁰ Taylor 1995:42

abstract intellectual ideas into order, it is about getting our actions right,¹¹¹ which happens through them being directed and incarnated through faith that recognises itself as good news for the poor. ‘Good news for the sinner’ and ‘good news for the poor’ parallel both ‘diakonia’ and ‘evangelism’, and ‘(Christian) mission’ and ‘development’. “We must both be Christians and do Christian work. Doing transformational development *is acting out who we truly are.* [italics mine]”¹¹²

The gospel of Jesus Christ is about the salvation (i.e. the liberating and healing, or the development) of people and creation. Jesus expresses his mission as ‘coming that people might have life, and life in all its fullness.’¹¹³ This corresponds to the idea of development (particularly as portrayed by Korten). Central to this is the re-creation (or re-formation) of people and their values (which the Christian tradition has understood as ‘sanctification’), which is consistent with the developmental idea that injustice must be undone ‘at the people level’,¹¹⁴ and that the elimination of unjust structures is dependent on, “the emergence of an alternate human consciousness...”¹¹⁵

Korten (who is not a Christian theorist) defines the most fundamental development need as the need for just reconciliation, and the following of the teachings of love, brotherhood and tolerance.¹¹⁶ He openly calls for the repentance of development agencies that started with the right ideas and intentions but have become lost in serving power and growth, rather than people,¹¹⁷ calling them to acknowledge their limitations, regain their vision, re-evaluate the assumptions on which they are acting and to activate, support and challenge their constituencies. He says that the consciousness of power holders must be raised, “especially with regard to their responsibility to the powerless,”¹¹⁸ and rejects the entrenchment of top-down ‘non-servant’ power within societal structures, instead recognising that the power for a renewed world will come from the service and action of millions of individuals.¹¹⁹ This is not secular talk. Theologians will recognise it as practical Christianity – the

¹¹¹ Taylor 1995:125 Faith talks about this world and its history and is therefore relevant to development.

¹¹² Myers 1999:24

¹¹³ John 10 v10

¹¹⁴ Korten 1990:169

¹¹⁵ Korten 1990:169

¹¹⁶ Korten 1990:189

¹¹⁷ Korten 1990:215

¹¹⁸ Korten 1990:168

¹¹⁹ Korten 1990:216

practical expression of faith based in self-giving, sacrificial love working towards the establishment of God's kingdom of justice and peace.

In a similar manner Nyerere understands development as the establishment of a deep rooted 'shalom-ic' peace,¹²⁰ through the liberation and empowerment of people.¹²¹ He sees power neither as something to be used to lord it over others nor as something to be grasped or pursued for its own sake, but as something to be used in the service of the poor, in a way that liberates rather than subjects people.¹²² "The goals of Christian witness are the same as the goals of transformational development," says Myers.¹²³ Our discussion has shown their methodologies to be the same too.

The Way Forward

This thesis seeks to make a contribution to the understanding that the secular field of development, at its best,¹²⁴ is entirely consistent with the mission of God within this world. It aims to do this by systematically analysing and interpreting the third article of the Apostle's Creed in a manner not inconsistent with the faith of the Christian church and to show this Holy Spirit as providing the interface between the secular understanding of development, and theology.

As such it seeks to provide a model through which development workers can understand the essential position of faith within their work, as well as the particular contribution that the Christian church has to offer, not only in terms of finance and manpower, but more particularly in terms of providing a 'ready made' framework (and perhaps also an empowering 'myth') for development.

Further it hopes to help the church find its true identity as a source of liberation and healing for the nations. To this end it will quote widely from many traditions to show that what is presented here is not only rooted in our common faith, but further, not inconsistent with the many expressions that have been found within the church. In

¹²⁰ See Matthew 5 v9.

¹²¹ i.e. moving them from being objects in someone's history, to subjects in their own.

¹²² Nyerere makes it clear that intellectual and academic power and privilege is to enable people to become servants of society. See also 1Peter 5 v3 and John 13.

¹²³ Myers 1999:210

¹²⁴ That is to say no in pursuing unlimited growth, unhindered free trade and wealth creation, but in pursuing development as portrayed by, among others, Sen and Nussbaum.

this it hopes to make a contribution to bringing development issues clearly into the sights, lives and actions of those who profess to follow Jesus.

Having now examined the relationship between theology and development and in particular the contribution that the church and theology can make to development, and the centrality of development to our faith, in the next chapter we turn our attention to our statement of faith, "I believe in the Holy Spirit." We'll argue that this is something that makes sense, and indeed comes alive, within our experience. This chapter will highlight some of the experience and context of life within this world and examine some views on how these crises can be addressed, showing quite clearly the central role that values and religion will have.

I Believe in the Holy Spirit

“Words exist because of meaning.

Once you have caught the meaning, you can forget the words.”

-Lao Tsu

Compared with other Christian doctrines, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has been underdeveloped dogmatically and there has been little formal elaboration of ecclesiastical decisions. A study of church history provides sparse resources for insight and perspective because the history of the doctrine quickly reduces to a survey of individual thinkers (often elicited indirectly), and the barest of outlines drawn from ecumenical statements.¹²⁵

Indeed in the past few hundred years the church has responded to questions which struck at its core, but for which it nevertheless had inadequate answers by asserting that the things of God are incapable of being understood (‘they are a mystery’) and that people could not really expect to understand since these things cannot be reasoned, but must be accepted in faith and recognised through the Holy Spirit.¹²⁶ Such answers which reduce the Holy Spirit to “the principle of the supernatural knowledge of faith,”¹²⁷ deny much of our journey of faith, particularly the aspects dealing with liberation, and consequently politics,¹²⁸ and would never have found favour in the early or, even in the medieval church where the assertions of the Christian faith convinced people through their substance.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Based on Robinson’s observations Robinson 1930:1, but also well illustrated by the historical section of Gaybba’s book (1987).

¹²⁶ Of course this is true, the Holy Spirit within us recognises truth, and recognises the Holy Spirit at work in the world around us. However it cannot be extrapolated to say that those outside the church and those who have failed to ‘pray the sinner’s prayer’ don’t understand the church’s life and methods because they have no experience of the Holy Spirit. Rather if they fail to understand it is because these things have been inadequately or badly explained by a church that often understands inadequately too, and because selfish self interest (sin) keeps people from taking up the cross and laying down their lives for the life of the world.

¹²⁷ Pannenberg 1972:130

¹²⁸ In this regard Ched Myers, 1988. *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books provides a brilliant exegesis of Mark’s gospel.

¹²⁹ Much of the insight in this paragraph is drawn from Pannenberg 1972:130. The church has largely failed to address many modern issues, and so finds itself ill equipped to truly engage the post-modern issues of the Western world. Consequently it finds itself increasingly sidelined and irrelevant in matters of consequence. Good solid answers to modern questions might well help make the church more relevant in post-modern society.

The Holy Spirit has been used as an attempt to secure authority and provide absolute certainty to our faith. The journey of faith is not based in certainty, (objective certainty can only come from trusting in authority), but from an experience of the presence and actions of God both individually and within history and the tradition. It necessarily involves some doubt, and some uncertainty, and it is this that makes Christians capable of dialogue.¹³⁰

Holy Spirit talk has also become more about 'bodiless personality' or 'disembodied personality' ('ghost') than spirit (as in a spirit of calm, the spirit of inclusion, the spirit with which the 1994 elections were conducted, the spirit which characterised the early years of the 'new South Africa', the spirit of Mandela).

Consequent to all of this, the Holy Spirit, which is meant to be the present experience of the risen Lord, has become distant and remote, a mysterious and even incomprehensible power which has been used to legitimate the absurd, the contentious and indeed even the incomprehensible. However just as the definition of church is not exhausted by its character as a human institution, preaching is not simply human talk, and its not only people who are at work in sacraments, so the Christian's experience of faith is more than human experience – the more is the divine reality of the Holy Spirit.¹³¹

Living the Holy Spirit: Christian Life and Hope

Christianity's relevance in society, and its consequent role in striving for a just society lies in its ability to transform people from self-interested and self-serving individuals to become members of a community that strive for the good of others rather than themselves. Karl Rahner has shown that, "It is impossible to love God if we do not love each other," and that love of God and love of neighbour are in fact one and the same activity.¹³²

Brian Gaybba says

The idea is still widespread that to talk about the Holy Spirit is to talk about a religious reality that has nothing to do with socio-political issues. However, the Spirit's very identity is definable only in social terms – to be the way in which persons are present and united in love to each other.

¹³⁰ Pannenberg 1972:131,132

¹³¹ Pannenberg 1972:128

¹³² Rahner quoted by Gaybba 1987:264. 1John 4 v20 also puts this plainly.

Hence it is wrong to see the Spirit's role in our unity with God as the primary one, relegating unity with neighbour and the social structures expressive of it to a secondary position. Jesus was condemned by the Jewish leaders precisely because he refused to accept that. He was condemned precisely because he made love of neighbour as important as love of God.¹³³

Striving for a just, holy society is simply a part of a Christian's striving to be holy, and so from a development perspective there is a great contribution to be made by churches, which work and move to transform the way people relate to themselves, to their communities and to God. Among these people there are those who make a contribution to developing just economic systems, wholesome food supplies, combating dread diseases and providing a work force and finance for development organisations. However the primary Christian contribution is in practicing and encouraging that which makes good interpersonal relationships and societal shalom - the defining characteristics of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control, at all levels of society. Those characteristics must come to characterise everything from interpersonal relationships through economic and foreign policies to the relationships between countries, races, continents, peoples and nations.

Wholeness will come to society when all relationships are characterised by the above mentioned characteristics of the Spirit. This society will then be characterised by justice and the all embracing *shalom* of God. It will be a society consistent with the vision of the prophets, filled with the fruits of the Spirit, established in the teachings (and the Beatitudes) of Jesus and living in accordance with the teaching of James.

The Third Person of the Trinity

The simple original assertion of the doctrine of the Trinity, was that the Father (quite obviously) was divine, that Jesus was divine and that the Holy Spirit was divine. The doctrine of the trinity is, "not a biblical dogma as such; it is rather just interpretation of what we find in the bible."¹³⁴ It was intended to help Christian believers understand their faith and experience, rather than being an abstract mystery of its own.

...it was a simple fact that the Christians experienced the presence of the triune God; and it was in that presence that were gathered and held together the remembrance of the God of Israel, the presence within the congregation of the crucified and risen Christ and, from Pentecost, the power to hope in God's coming kingdom which is the future of humankind.

¹³³ Gaybba 1987:263,264

¹³⁴ Knight 1953:1

This perception celebrated in worship, strengthened and renewed by word and sacrament, and expressed in the individual and corporate lives and actions of believers, was not 'dogmatic' or 'conceptual' in the sense of enabling them to distinguish between the 'advent of the risen Christ', "the presence of the Spirit" and "the presence of the Father." Their experience was – as it still is today – of the unity of the triune God.¹³⁵

It was the unity or commonality that was the crucial issue. Each was an experience of God which could be recognised as divine,¹³⁶ and while it was that 'sharedness' or commonality that was God,¹³⁷ each was recognised as being distinct.

The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is distinct from the other two in being most clearly recognisable as an aspect of community, relationship or character, where it is recognised in what are more commonly called 'the fruits of the Spirit' (viz. love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control¹³⁸).

Speaking of the Holy Spirit as 'person' is a manner of articulating the inner relationships of the Trinity as Father, Son, Holy Spirit, three persons and one essence. But what does 'person' mean in this context? In fact the terminology 'person' might be quite unhelpful in describing the Holy Spirit. Gaybba goes as far as to say, "In the scriptures...all the stress is on the Spirit as a 'what' ... we must say that the stress in the scriptures is on the Spirit as a 'what'."¹³⁹ This was the Christian consensus for the first three hundred years.¹⁴⁰ Of course even within that paradigm the 'what' can never be impersonal in just the same way as love, grace and mercy could never be impersonal.

This is an important and empowering understanding because it means that any acts that embody the fruits of the Spirit can rightly be understood as incarnating the Spirit and hence making this world more closely resemble the kingdom of God.¹⁴¹ This is a sharing in the mission of God which is 'making the kingdoms of this world into the

¹³⁵ A group of theologians from eastern and different western traditions who meet at Schloos in France 26-29 October 1978 and 23-27 May 1979 quoted by Vischer 1981:3.

¹³⁶ i.e. godly

¹³⁷ Crudely but in a similar manner to which we can recognise the colour green – whether it be in grass, or paint or eyes, and even when has differing shades.

¹³⁸ Particularly if one recognises the link between justice and love.

¹³⁹ Gaybba 1987:118

¹⁴⁰ Gaybba 1987:118,119 The 'what' would be understandable as emotion, spirit, attitude or state of relationship, as opposed to the 'ego centred' boundary definable idea of 'who'.

¹⁴¹ Such a strongly incarnational understanding might also prove useful in helping us to discern more meaningfully the relationship between what is essentially human and what is essentially divine. The popular idea (sometimes attributed to having been inferred from Paul's writings) that godliness is over and against what it means to be human is not universally accepted, nor especially helpful in convincing people to act within their lives and their world. Some Christian anthropological (and soteriological) thought understands godliness as the high point of what it means to be human.

kingdom of our God' (Revelation 11 v15). Christians should be characterised by such acts for the Spirit is also the 'Spirit of Jesus'.

Understanding the centrality of the values of God to the mission of God and so the lives of those who would call themselves disciples of Jesus, enables Christians to evaluate and choose their actions within the world, in a way that is consistent with the values of God, while simultaneously assuring them of the importance of any, and all, of their actions.

Just as the work of the Holy Spirit leads to the establishment of the fruits of the Spirit, so the work of God leads to the establishment of the values of God. Yet the fruits of the Spirit and the values of God are the same things, both leading to shalom, justice and the transformation of the world. This recognition is crucial, because it enables us to see that the values of God are not only what are being established in this world, but also the means by which they are being established.

Live the Holy Spirit

The Creed's structure reveals an inherent logic and understanding of the Spirit that is helpful to us. It makes no attempt to provide an orthodox theological definition of the Holy Spirit, but instead moves directly from, "I believe in the Holy Spirit" to explaining what that means in terms of human experience (the church, the community of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting). Belief in the Holy Spirit is, according to the creed, rooted in experience rather than theology. It is in experience that we find what it means to believe in the Holy Spirit.

Karl Barth seems to have had a vague sense of what we are saying when he described the third article of the creed as being close, practical and about man [people], "all of this is not only for God, and also not only for the mediator Jesus Christ, but for *us* for man, is what is meant."¹⁴² Barth understood the Holy Spirit as an external agency

¹⁴² Barth 1962:127

which worked through people¹⁴³ yet he was clear that ‘the work of the Holy Spirit’ and ‘the work of God on earth’ are synonymous.¹⁴⁴

...to *experience* the Holy Spirit

In order to understand how the Holy Spirit relates to development it is crucial to understand how the Holy Spirit is experienced. Does the Holy Spirit have substance or being beyond the things and the manner through which we experience it? ...or is it fully described by the things through which we experience it?

While a major stream of Catholic thought asserts that we can only experience the things attributed to the Spirit and not the Spirit itself,¹⁴⁵ the more comprehensible, less convoluted and more useful approach to kingdom building might be to simply make no distinction between the attributed things and the underpinning from which they are drawn. Gaybba concurs that any such distinction would be very difficult to make when he acknowledges that although experienced as different from spatio-temporal realities the divine does not come to us in such a way as to be distinguishable from them. “God’s presence can only be *experienced in and through spatio-temporal realities and as a dimension of them.*”¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless there is a difference that enables us to acknowledge that what we have experienced is indeed divine, and not simply our attributing to the divine what are simply spatio-temporal experiences.

An experience of the Spirit is an experience of the power of love,

the normal way in which a Christian will experience the Spirit will be most unspectacular viz. in the very ordinary experiences of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, truthfulness, gentleness, self-control. A Christian who experiences these virtues is experiencing the Spirit’s presence – for they are the fruits of that presence (Gal 5v22).

.... love and the fruits of love remain as *the* [Gaybba’s italics] way in which the Spirit is experienced very often love is not actually experienced precisely as the presence of the Spirit. *But this may be due to our stubborn tendency to identify experiences of God with the abnormal.* [italics mine]¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ This conveys the truth that the Holy Spirit is quite unlike people’s typical and natural spirit.

¹⁴⁴ Barth 1949:137 ‘There is a faith in men, so far as this man freely and actively participates in the work of God. That this actually takes place is the work of the Holy Spirit, the work of God on earth...’

¹⁴⁵ cf Rahner quoted in Gaybba 1987:253. Gaybba claims this stream to be in conflict with patristic and medieval tradition and scripture, asserting that there must be some manner in which it is possible to experience the Spirit apart from the things attributed to the Spirit. He gives a very unsatisfying conclusion declaring it beyond the scope of his book. While Gaybba questions whether the Spirit can be experienced when it can neither be touched, nor tasted, nor seen, it is obvious that we do experience things such as attitudes and feelings without them being tasted, touched or seen.

¹⁴⁶ Gaybba 1987:254

¹⁴⁷ Gaybba 1987:256,257

This stubborn tendency also causes us to entrench the Holy Spirit so firmly in heaven that we are surprised to find it in the world, expecting the Spirit to be distinct from our experience of the Spirit.

...to live the Holy Spirit

Hebblethwaite has written that, “Christianity is totally misunderstood if its ethical imperatives are held to stem from the desire to avoid damnation. The Christian hope in as far as it really is Christian, far from distracting us from the present task, inspires and energises just such commitment to make the world a better place.”¹⁴⁸ As long as we understand our faith purely in terms of a life after death, in either heaven or hell, we are trading in greed and fear. Neither greed nor fear is a suitable tool for the transformation of people, for the enthusing of people with life and freedom or for the creation of the kingdom. The love of God revealed in Jesus in which our faith and hope are grounded provide the inner strength and motivation to live and work for the creation of the kingdom ‘on earth as it is in heaven.’

Christian thought centres on neither doctrine nor abstract truths, but on a living person. Its aim is to show and teach the ability to live, what Anderson calls “the ultimate answer to the African quest for power (i.e. physical well being, social stability and peace; life itself)” which the Holy Spirit provides.¹⁴⁹ In our increasingly polarised and hurting world this may well mean the ability to heal, be healed and cross divides. It is as pertinent to the rich as to the poor, to the development worker as to the (other) hurting, exploited and suffering person.

It is this ability to live that creates community, directs structures and is expressed in allowing and enabling others to live. “The Spirit’s presence therefore is meant to result in the transformation not only of individuals but also of their environment. The presence of love should result in the creation of an environment in which people can feel loved and at peace, an environment that reflects that people share in God’s Spirit of love, an environment, therefore, that is holy. By sanctifying humanity the Spirit sanctifies humanity’s world.”¹⁵⁰ Despite this it is a two-way-street in which people’s actions, and in particular their choices to live, or not live, according to the values by

¹⁴⁸ Hebblethwaite 1996:206

¹⁴⁹ Anderson 1991:vii

¹⁵⁰ Gaybba 1987:261

which the Spirit is experienced, determine the degree to which the Spirit is present in the world.¹⁵¹ Christian's faith centres on this world and its improvement, and so should Christian's lives.

The third article of the creed, places God firmly in the everyday of this world. It affirms that God is neither, abstract, remote, irrelevant or ineffectual. As Eduard Schweizer says, "...biblical prophets have put forward very rational political and social solutions when under the influence of the Spirit."¹⁵² So let us turn our attention to one of the areas through which God is placed firmly in the everyday of this world: the holy catholic church and the communion of saints.

¹⁵¹ I believe it would be non-sensical to speak of the Spirit's omnipresence given that the ways in which we experience the presence of the Spirit are not universally present, given that we are not making a distinction between 'the Spirit itself' and the 'way in which it is experienced', and given that 'omnipresence' is not an essential characteristic of divinity. (Omnipresence is so far removed from our experience that divinity would probably be an essential characteristic of omnipresence). Nevertheless if we were to insist on it we would speak of the 'experience of the Spirit's presence' instead of the "Spirit's presence." Either way the transformation that the Spirit is meant to result in is directly related to people's actions.

Gaybba says that the old practice of, "constantly talking to God present within one in the middle of one's daily work is extremely important, if one is to create the milieu in which the ordinary becomes a constant experience of the Spirit's presence." (Gaybba 1987:257)

¹⁵² Kung and Moltmann 1979:xi

...the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints,

"The church doesn't happen in cathedrals etc, but where the springs of living water meet people..."

–Helmut Thielicke¹⁵³

What is 'Church'?

Inherent to defining 'church' is the assertion that certain things are not 'church'. I believe that, generally, the Spirit requires of us to do this self-critically and not as a means of declaring other Christ-followers' understanding of church as invalid. The definition is not the means by which we define ourselves as church to the exclusion of others, but a guide in our trying to follow Christ faithfully, and a means of evaluating whether we are being true to the fullest sense of what it means to be church.

'Church' is at once building, institution, hierarchy, place, service of worship and none of those things. Not everything called 'church', or normally done in association with 'church' is however necessarily church.

According to the established Reformed definition 'The church is where the word is rightly preached, and the sacraments are properly administered.'¹⁵⁴ 'Rightly' preached must refer to more than technique and style and more than a particular interpretation of what the word means. Similarly proper administration of the sacraments must refer to far more than the form of the liturgy and the technique by which they are administered. The 'rightly' preached word must be congruent with the values of God, in accordance with God's Holy Spirit, and in a manner which is transforms the lives of people and through them the world. In the same way 'properly' administered sacraments must produce actions and attitudes consistent with God's Holy Spirit and God's mission in this world. Understood in this manner, it is in these things that the church experiences the presence of the risen Jesus through the presence, and activity, of his Holy Spirit. This communal experience of God, through those values that characterise the Holy Spirit points to the creed's qualifier of 'the holy catholic church', 'the communion of saints'. Consequently it is fair to say that, "anything that builds up the Christian community is a true sign of the presence of the

¹⁵³ Thielicke 1968:241

¹⁵⁴ Albert Van Den Heuvel in Rein 1969:69

Spirit while anything that breaks down or mars the Christian community is not a sign of the Spirit.”¹⁵⁵ It is by the Holy Spirit experienced in, albeit not exclusively in, the Word and Sacrament that the church is defined. This is why the church falls under the Third Article of the Creed, “I believe in the Holy Spirit”.

Helmut Thielicke asserts that the church doesn’t happen in cathedrals and similar places, simply because they are defined as ‘religious buildings’, but where the word becomes springs of living water. He continues that the glory of the church is the presence of the One who has come into the midst of his people.¹⁵⁶ The way that God is present with God’s people is through God’s Holy Spirit. The church, “is an event; an activity... a way, she happens... Church is mission – mission is not one of her activities... the church is not liturgy etc... We encounter the church only where we observe her missionary service in action.”¹⁵⁷ ‘Church’ is wherever ‘church’ happens.

‘Church’ is “where the Holy Spirit is ‘lived’ and experienced”. This is the implication of the fact that the Church is part of the third article of the creed. The church is the place where people do, and increasingly strive to do, the values and characteristics of God - those values and characteristics that we experience in Word and Sacrament and by which we recognise the Spirit’s presence in our midst. I would suggest, as a working model rather than a definitive list, that those things would necessarily include love, grace, mercy and justice (as the most widely accepted characteristics of the Father), healing, freedom and self-giving, servant-leadership (as principle focuses of the ministry of Jesus) and the familiar fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control (from Galatians 5 v22)).¹⁵⁸ Church is the place and the event that is characterised by the character of God that is described by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁵⁵ Gaybba 1987:268,270 Gaybba points out that any other supposed signs of the Spirit even the spectacular and extraordinary are ambiguous as signs of the Spirit.

¹⁵⁶ Thielicke 1968:241

¹⁵⁷ Albert Van Den Heuvel in Rein 1969:70

¹⁵⁸ The so called ‘fruits of the Spirit’ are given primacy over the so called ‘gifts of the Spirit’ in defining the Spirit because ‘the fruits’ describe the Spirit’s essence while the gifts describe some of the possible outworkings of that Spirit.

Church is identified with the Love-Unity-Freedom of the Communion of Saints

The Holy Spirit is experienced within the church as community which effects the transformation of people, resurrecting them from flesh to life so that they too may participate in, and work towards, the life everlasting. “The pre-eminent spiritual gift is fellowship and that by which all others are tested.”¹⁵⁹ The fellowship or communion of the Holy Spirit is *the* essential character of God’s community.

It is indeed a striking fact that the early church should thus have found the fulfilment of the prophecy [Joel 2.28 at Pentecost] *in its own life...* St Paul’s central theme seems to be that *the new presence and power of the Holy Spirit constitute the very life of the Christian society as a corporate whole.* [my italics]¹⁶⁰

For Paul *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit is the essential characteristic of the church’s new life,¹⁶¹ but not just for Paul. Overwhelmingly the New Testament assumes that Christians have the Spirit.¹⁶²

The community of saints is characterised by love, worked out as unity, and by freedom, worked out as grace. Moltmann describes it as, “a unity in diversity and a diversity in unity. The power of unity is love. The power of diversity is freedom.”¹⁶³ This love-unity binds diverse groups together intertwining their present and their future. The freedom that arises in this atmosphere of love and acceptance liberates them to be themselves, and ensures that each, “through love contributes something to the good of all because, not in spite of, his special gift, calling, and characteristics.”¹⁶⁴ Gracious condition-less love, arising from freedom, allows and encourages freedom – that is the heart of the gospel and the power of the communion of saints to transform the world. The Spirit’s mission is to be the love that unites, and by uniting transforms all it unites.¹⁶⁵

Our faith says that together this freedom, love and unity effect a deep, shalomic and divine peace, which through being experienced draws one into nurturing it. The

¹⁵⁹ Hebblethwaite 1996:135 One can only assume that Hebblethwaite is distinguishing between gifts and fruits – for certainly the singular most important characteristic by which the presence of the Spirit is recognised is love, but then, is true, expressed love, really any different from fellowship?

¹⁶⁰ Quick 1960:281

¹⁶¹ Quick 1960:284

¹⁶² Only one verse in the New Testament (Luke 11v13) suggests that Christians ought to pray *for* the Spirit.

¹⁶³ Moltmann 1992:194

¹⁶⁴ Quick 1960:307

¹⁶⁵ Gaybba 1987:141 Unity and love are also the recurring theories of Augustine’s theology of the Spirit. (Gaybba 1987:66)

church has not been regarded as holy because it is composed solely of holy people (saints should be understood not as especially fine people but as those set apart for 'holy gifts and works,' like 'the saints of Corinth'¹⁶⁶), but rather because, "it could make people holy and because in it there resided the grace which could enable all who would come to find salvation."¹⁶⁷

The church is a Spirit-filled community, and "the greatest sign of the presence of Jesus' Spirit is love – God's Spirit is found not simply in the spectacular but rather in every act of love. In fact love, and not the spectacular, is clearly seen as *the* sign of the Spirit's presence, [Gaybba's italics]"¹⁶⁸ or as Koch observes "'to walk in the Spirit' is virtually synonymous with 'to love one another.'"¹⁶⁹ This love is the source of the community's unity¹⁷⁰ particularly in difference and diversity,¹⁷¹ and this loving unity ultimately works itself out as freedom. When people can act free of external authority (fear), they have been set free and are subject to the only authority which will not diminish their sovereignty when they obey.

This is because the truth of another being addresses itself to the truth of oneself, and draws it out compelling one to discover one's own truth more deeply and live it out more freely... My response is totally subjective, if you like, and consequently free.

To be made alert towards that self validating truth of 'the other' is an annunciation of the Holy Spirit. That is how he shows "where wrong and right and judgment lie," John 16:8 At the end of the day we have no other authority to guide our conduct.¹⁷²

This love-fellowship which characterises the church is seen in the unity of the church.

"The Holy Spirit was the unifying principle in the life of the church."¹⁷³ Gaybba identifies this unity as characterising the church and having four particular facets – a unity that overcomes diversity; a unity with God which comes where, "the Spirit is at work uniting people to each other"; a catholic unity (i.e. one which is open for all to

¹⁶⁶ Barth 1949:144

¹⁶⁷ Barclay 1969:303

¹⁶⁸ Gaybba 1987:27 Also Gaybba 1987:66 on Augustine's ideas "...love stands out as *the* sign of the Spirit's presence.... How is a person to know he or she has received the Spirit?look into your heart and see whether you love your neighbour, whether you love the church, whether you love the peace and unity bonding the church members to each other."

¹⁶⁹ Quoted by Gaybba 1987:30

¹⁷⁰ Gaybba 1987:27

¹⁷¹ Gaybba 1987:163

¹⁷² Taylor 1973:175

¹⁷³ Bruton 1967:156

join in),¹⁷⁴ and an apostolic unity (i.e. one which unites the church of different generations).¹⁷⁵

The thing that makes the church and the coming Kingdom distinctive, *is* the communion. It is what raises Christianity above being a religion to what Quick calls, “a whole social life of communion in God among men, a community which embraces both sacred and secular activities and is altogether transfigured by the pervading presence of God’s love. The life of heaven itself is the life of perfect community and communion.”¹⁷⁶ As Hunsinger expresses it, “...its members uphold one another in fellowship instead of causing one another to fall. It is a community that lives by the forgiveness of sins, where one sinner may love another, because *the sins of each and all have been taken away*. It is also a community whose members bear faithful and joyful witness to Christ *for the sake of each other and the world* [my italics].”¹⁷⁷ It is the distinctive character that identifies the church, even now, as the, “society of the redeemed humanity living out the life of ‘the world to come.’”¹⁷⁸

The Spirit however can not be owned. Having the Spirit means living it out, and so Barth says that the life of the church is the fulfilment of service.¹⁷⁹ Love is more than either gift or fruit of the Spirit, rather in a real sense the Spirit is the love,¹⁸⁰ “which marks each spiritual gift to be, not a mark of some special superiority or privileges in its possessor, but a contribution which the individual supplies to the common life of all,” and so, “...it makes the results of his special gifts to be common property for the good of all.”¹⁸¹

As Moltmann says “The hope that sways them is due largely not to what they are lacking but to what they have already received.”¹⁸² –the current, real, presence of God

¹⁷⁴ “The gospel must be preached in such a way that the unity offered by the Spirit is not a threatening but rather a fulfilling one.” Gaybba 1987:179

¹⁷⁵ Gaybba 1987:175-181

¹⁷⁶ Quick 1960:306

¹⁷⁷ Hunsinger 2001:172

¹⁷⁸ Quick 1960:306 There is a large school of ecclesiology which understands that the church, “is not identical with the reign of God, it is only its witness and anticipatory realisation,” I do not believe that this approach is the most helpful to use on the interface of development and theology, because it undermines the significance of our actions in forming (or establishing) that ‘reign of God’.

¹⁷⁹ Barth 1949:146

¹⁸⁰ “Love is the very spirit of community itself...” Quick 1960:283

¹⁸¹ Quick 1960:283

¹⁸² Moltmann 1992:75

within the communion of the saints. Within the communion of saints people participate in the divine mysteries of salvation, communing with Jesus and God.¹⁸³

Love binds the community together by directing every action and choice towards the common good of all. "It is love which makes possible a true koinonia of the Holy Spirit, because it makes the results of his special gifts to be common property for the good of all..."¹⁸⁴ The Spirit permeates every aspect of Christian community affecting, directing and infusing them all with a new power and new direction, and hence binding the church and the world together through their common eschaton of the kingdom of God.

The freedom found and celebrated within the early church led to new ethics and standards of behaviour. Unfortunately it was these things, rather than the freedom that the church chose to emphasise. The strict attention given to behaviour, while intended to demonstrate the contrast between the new life in the Spirit and the old unredeemed life of the world, instead turned Christianity into one more religious system that was essentially the same in approach as all the others. The distinctive characteristic of the Christian community is freedom, not standards of behaviour.¹⁸⁵

What is this 'Communion of Saints'?

Jurgen Moltmann queries why the emphasis is always placed on the fellowship of the Spirit, rather than perhaps the Spirit's grace or love – before suggesting that the Spirit is present as community and is experienced in the community of believer's one with another.¹⁸⁶ Moltmann describes this 'community of saints' as the image of God and the place where God is known and experienced. It is not far fetched to understand this as the presence and power of God in this world, for this world's transformation. He says,

¹⁸³ Pannenberg 1972:151

¹⁸⁴ Quick 1960:283

¹⁸⁵ Taylor 1973:159,60 says of Jesus, "In all his sinless obedience one never gets the impression that he is guided by a moral code. He lived in the world like a prince in his Father's house – 'therefore the sons are free.' Moving in perfect unison with the Spirit of God he has the incalculable quality of the ruach. "The wind blows where it will, you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from, or where it is going. So with everyone who is born from Spirit." Not the conceptions of men, nor the necessity imposed by the past, nor the remote control of the principalities and powers, can hold him. And he, on his part, never makes out that he is the victim of circumstances, he is always freely responsible."

¹⁸⁶ Moltmann 1992:217

It is not the soul of the individual person, detached from the body, which is *imago Dei*, God's image... God is not perceived and known in the innermost chamber of the heart, or at the solitary apex of the human soul – the places where human beings know and perceive themselves. *Imago Dei* are men and women in their wholeness, in their full sexually specific community with one another, for 'male and female he created them' (Genesis 1 v27)

...He is known in the true human community of women and men, parents and children. And if this is so, then the place for the experience of God is not the mystical experience of the self it is the social experience of the self and the personal experience of sociality. The individual soul detached from the body and isolated for the community must first of all become 'incorporated' and 'socialised' before it can know God as God himself knows the soul.¹⁸⁷

"Our journey is not that of solitary individuals to a solitary God, we travel in company to a God who is company."¹⁸⁸ The community of saints is the experience of the nature of God, the right relationships governed by love and grace, which operates as the 'area' within which we find God in our midst. As Knight says, we know God only in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and that fellowship only in community, so it is, "...only when two or three are gathered in Christ's name that the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is experienced."¹⁸⁹ Obviously 'in Christ's name' refers to everything that Christ was, stood for, and represented – his nature and character, rather than just any community that chooses to associate itself with the five letters C-h-r-i-s-t.

This inherent divine power in wholesome community has seldom been recognised. Christian theology has frequently sounded more like "God is distant yet 'relationship and community', and so, since God is perfect community that is what we should aspire to,"¹⁹⁰ rather than extolling the communion of saints as the presence and power of God for life and the transformation of the world.

Too often the church has misunderstood the Spirit as solely a source of supernatural, superhuman power and wisdom (which is not to deny the Spirit as a source of wisdom and power which is quite contrary to that of the world), but misses the point that the Spirit, "works primarily by generating awareness and communion and that whatever

¹⁸⁷ Moltmann 1992:94. In his confession X,6,8 Augustine says "For a long time I looked for you within myself, and crept into the shell of my soul, protecting myself with an armour of unapproachability. But you were outside – outside myself – and enticed me out of the narrowness of my heart into the broad place of love for life. Quoted in Moltmann 1992:98

¹⁸⁸ Tilby 1985:114,115

¹⁸⁹ Knight 1953:58

¹⁹⁰ Gaybba 1987:65 "Father and Son wish to give us that which unites them so that we can be similarly united to them and each other This communion is one of love which is broken by lack of love. This love is the special gift of the church to its members.

power and wisdom he gives derives from that.”¹⁹¹ This in turn has led to a misunderstanding of the Spirit as a ‘private possession’ rather than an expression of community, and often tempted churches to try to standardize the signs of the Spirit’s presence and the conditions of the Spirit’s coming in complete contradiction with scripture.¹⁹²

The communion of saints rebirths people into what is possible within this life and world, giving them a hope for all of life and all of creation. It enthuses people to keep (or start) being loving, relating and feeling towards all people. Cynicism, callousness and hopelessness are replaced with faith and hope for this world, not through certainty, but through their present experience extrapolated.¹⁹³

The Church is an Extension of the Incarnation

The church as the place where the Holy Spirit is ‘lived’ and ‘experienced’ is consistent with the other common definition of church as ‘the body of Christ’. ‘Body of Christ’ implies the risen ‘body of Jesus’. This means that ‘the church’ is not a memorial to Jesus of Nazareth who once walked the earth, but rather the present experience of Jesus walking the earth, the incarnation of Christ and Christ’s Spirit; the ever present experience of the incarnation. Thielicke¹⁹⁴ puts it this way, the martyrs through history, “did not suffer in order to honour the memory of the great Nazarene. They suffered because they were already ahead of the present in which their executioners lived; they heard the steps of the coming one approaching from the other side...” and one might add because through his Spirit He was alive in them.

Gaybba asserts it in this manner, “...we form with Christ one body because we share the life that brought into being and fills Christ’s risen body,” but then critically continues, “What exactly is this ‘life’ that fills Christ’s risen body and which we too

¹⁹¹ Taylor 1973:200

¹⁹² Perhaps the understanding of *umoya* within African psychology bridges the two points of view and brings harmony, “*umoya* is that which a person receives from God and has in common with him [God], the personal, ‘vital force’ which gives a person being and life, strength and power, harmonising one with humanity and with the universe.” Anderson 1991:101

¹⁹³ Moltmann makes a similar point in speaking of the Spirit as the ‘eye’ to life and the ‘well of life’. (1992: 97)

¹⁹⁴ Thielicke 1968:240

share in? It is the Love, *the Spirit*, binding Christ and us to the Father.[Italics mine]”¹⁹⁵

As the ‘body of Christ’ and the extension of the incarnation, the church is the means through which the ‘values of heaven’ come to reality in this world. Wherever the values of heaven are lived in this world; wherever the Spirit of God is incarnated; there is the church. This is a workable definition of ‘church’, and is another way of saying, “where the word is correctly preached and the sacrament rightly administered”, but in a way that takes us beyond a mere formal and technical adherence to a set of rules to a living and experienced reality of God and the ‘values of heaven’. It foregrounds, again, the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Church that is articulated by the creed.

Unfortunately this understanding of church has been obscured and perhaps even destroyed by the churches’ structures and bureaucracy, which have raised administration, adherence to rules and hierarchical authority, above the Spirit in importance. When the church is conceived of first and foremost as a legal entity or clearly defined structure it loses its true identity as a Spirit filled community. The church is no longer Spirit driven but rules driven, and because the Spirit exists in relationship and in community “when the church succumbs to these pressures it loses its true identity and its distinctive mission in the world.”¹⁹⁶ This means that the “church’s unity, consensus in faith, and sacraments were no longer seen as resulting above all from the Spirit’s work. Instead, legal structures were seen as the immediate source of such effects. The church’s unity was brought about by adherence to legal structures.”¹⁹⁷ John V Taylor explores the shift between the first and second generation of the early church – the shift from being a Spirit driven community to becoming one centred on teaching and legislation, and hence on the careful weighing of sins and measuring of merit, “a far cry from the gospel of grace and the Spirit of liberty. The wheel had come full circle and the church had decided in effect, that her

¹⁹⁵ Gaybba 1987:163

¹⁹⁶ Migliore 1991:187

¹⁹⁷ Gaybba 1987:92

Lord was wrong after all, and the legalism against which he had rebelled was right. For this you will remember, was the essence of Judaism.”¹⁹⁸

Migliore critiques many current models of church: church as institute of salvation; intimate community of the Spirit; sacrament of salvation; herald of good news and servant of the servant lord concluding that all but the last inadequately capture ‘church’ on the grounds that they have focused the church on institutional survival and domination rather than costly service and have allowed the faith community to miss, or escape, their social responsibilities.¹⁹⁹

Migliore’s critique of the church as an ‘intimate community of the Spirit’ is that it is inward looking, and concentrating on the ‘facilitation of spiritual experiences and the promotion of interpersonal relationships.’ However a community that is characterised by the Spirit of God could never be closed and inward looking – as that would be quite contrary to the values and characteristics of the Spirit as revealed in Jesus. Rather a community characterised by the Spirit would be working to make their experience of the Spirit real to all people throughout the world even in everyday life,²⁰⁰ and would demonstrate its values in ways that are best explained in the model of church that Migliore thinks is best: ‘servant of the servant Lord’

This model sees the church as a servant community called to minister in God’s name on behalf of fullness of life for all of God’s creatures. It parallels Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s idea that the church is the community that exists for others.²⁰¹ It serves God by serving the world in its struggle for emancipation, justice and peace, yet can only do this in a manner consistent with its faith and hope if it does it in submission to the Spirit of Jesus,²⁰² rather than in submission to those being served. This servant character of the church is not incidental but quite essential to its very being as the people of God.

Helpful as this model might be it is only a model, “Perhaps the greatest obstacle to a proper understanding of the church is the absolutization of any of its historical forms

¹⁹⁸ Taylor 1973: 153-156

¹⁹⁹ Migliore 1991:192f

²⁰⁰ In religious language we could term this ‘establishing the Kingdom of God’

²⁰¹ Bonhoeffer 1984:382

²⁰² Jesus’ values and characteristics

or of any particular ecclesiology.”²⁰³ Any model, by its limits, constrains the underlying catholic essence of the church, and it is only as the church keeps its eyes on Jesus, and the Spirit of Jesus, rather than any particular model, that it can follow closely and faithfully in a process that will necessarily, in a changing world, be a process of constant reform and rebirth. There is no super-model of the church that combines the best points of each model with none of the weak points simply because no model could capture the dynamism, and the particularity of a global body incorporating and liberating diverse people, all seeking to faithfully follow Christ, and that Spirit of Christ which bonds, drives, and leads them.

Holy and Catholic, Different and Universal

The church is the place where the Spirit is found, not in a narrow exclusive manner which naïvely suggests that the Holy Spirit of God is found only in those places that declare themselves church, but in the sense that wherever the Spirit is found that is ‘church’. Moltmann says that the church, “has no monopoly in the operation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not tied to the church. The Spirit is not concerned about the church as such. He is concerned with the church, as he is with Israel, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, the rebirth of life and the new creation of all things.”²⁰⁴ He argues against the idea that Spirit is ‘simply and solely’ the spirit of the institutional church because, “this would restrict ‘the fellowship of the Holy Spirit’, and make it impossible for the church to communicate its experience of the Spirit to the world.”²⁰⁵

I would suggest that in the terms of *the filioque*, the assertion that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone is decidedly more helpful for a theology of development than the assertion that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.²⁰⁶ While Christianity can be the myth that builds and motivates development, a self-defined

²⁰³ Migliore 1991:199

²⁰⁴ Moltmann 1992:230

²⁰⁵ Moltmann 1992:8

²⁰⁶ I realise that this is a very bold position, and without substantiation appears to gloss over a very complex debate. It is however because of the size and complexity of the debate, and because it is not critical to my position that I have chosen not to enter into it here. For a good ecumenical reflection see Vischer, Lukas (ed) 1981 *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ – Ecumenical Reflection on the Filioque Controversy* – London: SPCK

church which then loses sight of what it truly means to be church is a far greater risk, and far less useful to development than those who pursue the *Missio Dei*, outside the structure and metaphor of the Christian church.²⁰⁷

Notably too the church is found not only where the Spirit is found in all of its fullness and eternity, but also where the Spirit is revered, and worked towards, where it is valued and increasing, where people give of themselves in humility, service, grace and love to establish love-justice, mercy, grace honesty kindness – the things of God's kingdom.

The two words preceding 'church' in the creed are then not understood as trying to refine and narrow our understanding of the church, but as statements of the inherent characteristic of the church.

The church is holy because the Spirit which creates and defines the church is the very definition of what is holy. Barclay shows the root of holy (*hagios*) as meaning *different* – not set apart or separated. The church is in the first place different. "The church is different, but the difference is to be expressed not by detachment from the world, but by involvement in the world."²⁰⁸ It is precisely in its interaction with the world that the church is revealed as different.

The holiness of the church has been understood as 'being set apart' or 'being morally irreproachable', but perhaps this is too easily misunderstood as dis-engagement.

Pannenberg stresses that, "the holiness of the church denotes its bond with God *and his cause in the world*. [Italics mine]"²⁰⁹ The church only finds expression in the world, in much the same manner as God only finds expression in and through people. The church is separated from the world in the sense that its destiny is with the future of God and his kingdom, not in the sense that it is disengaged, or in some superior manner less sinful. Indeed the church's holiness is shown in engagement with the world because it is here that the church's difference from the Spirit of the world is most obvious.

²⁰⁷ As we have already seen there is a growing recognition even in this latter group that religious values are necessary for the achievement of their goal, even without the embracing of Christian models, metaphors and myths.

²⁰⁸ Barclay 1969:256

²⁰⁹ Pannenberg 1972:156

Catholicity is an inherent characteristic of the church because it speaks of universality. The Holy Spirit, and hence the church, is universally relevant and applicable. There is only one Holy Spirit through which the church belongs to all people, all cultures and all ages and can become embodied in every culture and age.²¹⁰ It no more belongs to western culture and theology, than to theologians of 1700 years ago, or any other particular people or time.

The Church is the Place where the Spirit is at Work

Christian faith, even as expressed in the creeds has never truly been *in* the church so much as it has been an acknowledgment that the church is ‘the field of the activity of the Spirit of Christ’²¹¹

Karl Barth acknowledged that we do not believe *in* the church, going on to say,²¹² “but we do believe that in this congregation the work of the Holy Spirit becomes an event.” That is precisely the point – the church is the place where the Spirit is lived, the work of the Holy Spirit happens, and where the Spirit’s presence guarantees this (wherever the Spirit is present it is at work transforming people and through them the world).

The centrality of the Holy Spirit to the church does not of necessity mean a buying into any particular pneumatology, instead it asserts that the real, present experience of the fullness of the Spirit can be consciously enjoyed by every Christian, in a manner as real among communities that do not experience the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit as among those who do. “The whole weight of New Testament evidence endorses the central affirmation of the Pentecostalists that the gift of the Holy Spirit transforms and intensifies the quality of human life and that this is a fact of experience in the lives of Christians”²¹³ Bishop Leslie Newbegin says that by contrast modern church leaders are inclined to assure converts that they have received the Holy Spirit, even if they are not aware of it, if they align themselves with the theological positions and the practice of that particular part of the church.²¹⁴ The Holy Spirit is more than a mysterious aspect of the Trinity, it is the daily experience of lives and communities that are

²¹⁰ Tilby 1985:116

²¹¹ Pannenberg 1972:145

²¹² Barth 1949:143

²¹³ Taylor 1973:198,199

²¹⁴ quoted in Taylor 1973:198,199

changed, healed and given meaning and power, communities that are characterised by the self-giving, justice seeking Spirit of Jesus, the spirit of love, joy, peace, patience kindness, goodness, humility and self-control – it is the experience of church.

Yet quite clearly it is not an experience that is necessarily limited to ‘steeple, cathedrals and churches’, in truth it can be an experience that is foreign to many ‘steeple, cathedrals and churches’. The early church was not based in theology, except for the most basic of creeds; the early church judged people by their relationship to the Spirit, the church became a mission church because of the Spirit at work in it.²¹⁵ So when Quick asserts that neither John’s gospel nor the writings of Paul give any hint to the work of the Holy Spirit outside the church,²¹⁶ it is quite possibly an affirmation that wherever the Spirit was at work- there was the church!²¹⁷ In fact that is where the weight of the evidence seems to lie. “The fact that the apostolic community linked Spirit and church did not mean that it never saw the Spirit as active outside the Christian fold. But it did mean for them that any action of the Spirit outside their community had as its purpose the leading of people to Christ and his church.”²¹⁸

Catholicism does not believe there is no salvation outside the church. Vatican II makes it clear that even atheists are not necessarily excluded from salvation.²¹⁹ “Yet Catholicism insists that in another sense there is indeed no salvation outside the church. This implies that wherever the Spirit is at work, there too in some way or other is the church. It implies that any share an atheist may have in Christ’s unity with the Father is also in some way or other part of the church.”²²⁰

Gaybba sees this as an ‘apparent contradiction’ which can be only resolved, “if one believes that ‘church’ is a reality that can find visible expression in varying degrees.” Those varying degrees are the varying degrees to which the Spirit can be present and

²¹⁵ Bruton 1967:158

²¹⁶ Quick 1960:291

²¹⁷ See Mark 9 v38-41

²¹⁸ Gaybba 1987:26 Gaybba’s use of church here would necessarily imply the established ‘organisation,’ e.g. Cornelius in Acts 10.

²¹⁹ Gaybba 1987:171

²²⁰ Gaybba 1987:172 There might be some objection to this approach of anonymous Christians and anonymous church as being arrogant. Yet, of course, we allow them to speak for themselves and choose their own names and ‘labels’ graciously embracing them where they are, within their own metaphor, in the Spirit of Jesus declaring that, “Whoever is not against us, is for us.” (Mark 9 v40) How can they be against us when they share our values and further our (and God’s) mission?

expressed in the lives of people, which is effectively what Gaybba skirts around when he continues, “To believe that the church is the sacrament of unity that stretches beyond its borders is to believe that the church is the visible, structured embodiment of a larger reality. This larger reality is the unity in love, of a wide variety of people. Such a unity can manifest itself in a variety of ways from genuine human love through belief in God, to the structured sacrament of unity in Christ that is the church in the strictest sense of the word. However since the church in that strict sense of the word is the sacramental embodiment of a larger reality, that larger reality can also be given a name “church” but in a wide sense.”²²¹ Gaybba seems to agree with our understanding of church as the place where the Holy Spirit is ‘lived’ and experienced.

What are the Implications of this for the Church and Development?

...for the church.

The church is struggling with an apparent lack of credibility which arises in part from an uncertainty of what its primary identity is (the discrepancy between its expressed faith and its actual practice), and in part from appearing not to have real-world, real-life answers. The language of the church sounds triumphalistic, unreal and even unrelated to what it is seen to be doing in the world and the world’s perception of it. The church has to become the church once again, the living, active body of Christ in which the Spirit is found and through which people are served and brought to life. The church must, “stop preening itself with all sorts of metaphysical compliments without any corresponding social reality.”²²²

The problem has been that frequently the church has had a dismissive cry to ‘the world’s’ dismissive attitude and cry of irrelevance. If the church is not causing people to ask questions and show interest, perhaps it is not sufficiently different (not sufficiently holy), or at least not showing that difference in the world. “If the people do not ask questions to which the gospel is the answer, we can no longer just say, “Their hearts were hardened,” and walk away feeling good that we have witnessed to the gospel. Instead, we need to get down on our knees and ask God why our life and our work are so unremarkable that they never result in a question relating to what we

²²¹ Gaybba 1987:172

²²² Migliore 1991:187

believe and whom we worship.”²²³ The burden lies with us to live lives that so incarnate the Spirit that people will be drawn to us and to God and to the church.

This should be a matter of major concern for the church, because it is a fundamental question of the church’s own identity. How can the church be characterised by the Holy Spirit unless it is shaped by love and concerned for others and their welfare? How can it be shaped by the Spirit of Christ unless it is prepared to put ‘them’ even before ‘ourselves’? The church is by definition then concerned about development, and only to the extent that it is concerned about development, is the church the church.

Further, where development issues are the most pressing issues facing our world, the church cannot continue to imagine itself relevant, without showing *how* its faith is applicable within this field. Christians should take this world and its improvement extremely seriously, knowing that their attempts at improving the world are not doomed to failure, because the Holy Spirit is at work in those attempts to guarantee their success.²²⁴

Christian faith and obedience is more than getting our abstract intellectual ideas into order (as Western theology has sometimes seemed to imply) – Christian discipleship is getting our actions right... we learn through actions.²²⁵ The fullness of the Spirit will not be plumbed through a theological analysis of its Trinitarian character and role but, rather through working out what implications that character and role have for the Spirit’s work within us and, through our embodiment of that Spirit. Gaybba shows that Father and Son wish to give to us that which unites them, so that we can be similarly united, “this love is the special gift of the church to its members...” and, by implication, the part which makes the baptism of the church as opposed to heretics and schismatics effective.²²⁶

It is imperative that the life of ‘the church’ or development organisation needs to be so characterised by the otherness (holiness) of the Spirit (what Myers calls ‘eloquent lives’) that people cannot fail to be drawn to it. Myers continues to call for an attitude

²²³ Myers 1999:210

²²⁴ Gaybba 1987:262

²²⁵ Taylor 1995:125

²²⁶ Gaybba 1987:65

of humility in our actions ‘the crucified mind rather than the crusading mind’ remembering that it is God, the Holy Spirit that is acting through us, and that means beginning by imitating the divine in the unconditional embrace of the other.²²⁷ Myers asserts that we must get away from “the idea that development is a process in which God periodically intervenes and realise that God has a development process already underway in which the community and the development agency periodically cooperate. *Loving people towards recognition.*”²²⁸ ‘Loving people towards recognition’ is what the church does in incarnating the Spirit (or more correctly what the Spirit does through the church). It is loving people (and that includes working that love out in real and practical ways, not just ‘feeling’ love) that is the work of the Spirit, and that is transforming this world in the kingdom of our God. What this means is that the church must not become ‘hung up’ on theological correctness, or issues of practice. First and foremost things must be evaluated in the light of the Spirit. The Spirit has no special programme that must be followed, but instead, “creates ministries by creating the love that prompts people to see and respond to needs.”²²⁹ Such an approach will allow ‘good news for the sinner’ and ‘good news for the poor’ not just to co-operate, but to be seen as mutually supporting partners.

This means that ‘church’ can include both narrowly defined ecclesiastical structures as well as development (particularly ‘Christian’ development) agencies, activists, politicians and individuals who work towards the establishment of a more loving and just society. The kingdom vision is *shalom*.²³⁰ Myers is right when he says, “*Whatever [my italics] heals and restores, body, mind, spirit and community, all can be part of the better future towards which transformational development should point.*”²³¹

Yet any grouping that wishes to approach this within the framework of the Christian faith needs to recognise that first and foremost they need to be characterised by the Spirit – not structures, law or discipline, not even worship – unless it is the true worship of offering everything in living the life of Christ: living the values of heaven into the world.

²²⁷ Myers 1999:216

²²⁸ Myers 1999:217

²²⁹ Gaybba 1987:204

²³⁰ that rich mix of justice, peace and harmonious relationships with self, God and the environment.

²³¹ Myers 1999:113

The presence of the Spirit is the power and director of meaningful change within people's relationships, and hence in how they handle power. Consequently in and through all decisions, programmes, aid, donor relations and relations with the poor, the values of God (the commonality of the Trinity) must be held as directive. These values incarnated work out in a spirit of self-giving service devoted to peace and justice as demonstrated in the life of Jesus – and inseparable from that tag 'Christian'. Wherever that tag is encountered there needs to be self-critical asking, "Who does this serve? Self? The powerful? The donors? The poor? The weak? The oppressed? The employed? The organisation?"

The church is necessarily involved in development work. Any expression of love and peace is working itself out in issues of justice and for the goodness of all people. In our world that largely means that the church exists for the poor and has its concern for them as its defining characteristic.²³² This is not something that can be done at arms length or by tossing a few things in their direction. For the church to be true to itself, and that means to be truly characterised by the nature and Spirit of God – it must be ordered around the needs of the poor, and must share their life, looking to be servants of their hopes and aspirations, working alongside them, and being one in their struggles. "Social responsibility is not an appendix or an optional extra but an indispensable part of the church's work. It cannot take second place to evangelism or the preaching of the word. Witness and service cannot be separated. *What is said has no substance except in terms of what is done.* The story of the salvation of the poor and the story of freeing them from poverty is the same story."²³³ The overwhelming message of the bible is God's concern for the poor, and so it is not possible to be the disciples of Jesus while failing to respond with love and justice to the cause of the poor.

Yet again we must acknowledge that just as the Church has often forgotten that it lives in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, it has forgotten that it lives to serve the poor. Michael Taylor has drawn our attention to this,

historically ... instead of being closely identified with each other, the church and the poor have grown apart. *Separation without Hope* argues that especially during the period of Western colonial expansion and the Industrial Revolution, the poor barely maintained a foothold within the churches. They were relegated to the least important positions. The

²³² Taylor 1995:102

²³³ Taylor 1995:102

churches failed more than ever before to be the champions of the poor and the poor became increasingly indifferent to the church and its gospel. A church and a gospel for the poor did not suit the interests of the rich. Poverty, material or spiritual, became an ideal to which some might aspire, not an offence to God which all were required to address.²³⁴

The church's ministry is really to make love visible and to incarnate the values and Spirit of God. Through the Spirit within them, Christians continue the incarnation of God begun in Christ. The institutional church will find herself and her life in pouring her life and herself out for others, not in trying to establish or maintain her position. The church is not holy because her people are such perfect examples. She is holy because the values they hold are so different (even when those values are not fully lived out).²³⁵ It is the Spirit shown in the life and acts of the church which is alive and irrevocably at work transforming this world into the kingdom of God.²³⁶ Thus we remain committed to the church, for even within its limited understanding and sometimes crude actions, it contains the Spirit of God and the hope for our world. It is this church, holy and catholic, which is learning how to find universal peace, justice, healing and wholeness within this world.

...for development.

Although we have already highlighted many implications for development, let us dwell on a few specific implications now.

Poverty can accurately be defined as a lack of access to social power such as social networks, information for self development, surplus time, tools of work and livelihood; social organisations; knowledge and skills and defensible life space.²³⁷ It can be defined as disempowerment²³⁸ and as the lack of freedom to grow²³⁹ rather than just as a lack of things. Yet despite the cry that affluence is not liberation even when it is achieved,²⁴⁰ the acknowledgement that growth cannot be sustained, that the poor cannot be liberated through money and that charity can actually work against

²³⁴ Taylor 1995:103

²³⁵ See also Thielicke 1968:236,237

²³⁶ see Gaybba 1987:205 where he says something similar in a quite different way.

²³⁷ Myers 1999:69

²³⁸ Myers 1999:72

²³⁹ Myers 1999:80

²⁴⁰ Taylor 1995:65,67

development,²⁴¹ the structure, operation and approach of the development industry monolith remains unmoved.

Charity, aid and service are inadequate solutions to the development problems facing our world, in that they alleviate problems without addressing the fundamental causes of those problems. “Philanthropy at best can only be a balm for economic ills and at worst an opiate to postpone economic revolution.”²⁴² The fundamental causes will only change when the relationships change “We must look for transformation of our values, technologies and institutions to a pattern of justice, sustainability and inclusiveness. We must transform our definition of quality of life – less on consumption more on our social, mental and spiritual development.”²⁴³ Korten proposes a people centred model as the solution to developmental impotency, but listen to it also as a definition of the community of saints:

“... a new human consciousness in which the more nurturing, enabling and conserving dimensions of female consciousness gain ascendance over the more aggressive, exploitative and competitive dimensions of male consciousness that have so long dominated the social and economic life of human societies.”²⁴⁴

Development needs to focus far more on developing relationships and ensuring that while the network of those relationships is as diverse as possible, the people are brought together to build bridges of understanding and communication. Myers reminds us, “that the life and relationships of Christians are the most powerful testimonies to the transforming power of God...”²⁴⁵ but the statement is more universal than that – people’s lives and relationships change the world according to the values they contain. “The more deeply the presence of this Spirit is experienced in the heart and in fellowship with one another, the more certain and assured the hope for the Spirit’s universal coming will be.”²⁴⁶

Were development about the creation of material wealth, Bretton-Woods style development methods would probably still be inadequate, but given our acknowledging its relational dimension, the solution must lie in transforming those

²⁴¹ The 1974 consultation of CICARWS and CCDP in Montreux quoted in Taylor 1995:49.

²⁴² Taylor 1995:49

²⁴³ Korten 1990:133

²⁴⁴ Korten 1990:5 Similarly Taylor 1995:76 calls for a change from paternalistic, patronising dominating imperialistic relationships of dependence.

²⁴⁵ Taylor 1995:76

²⁴⁶ Moltmann 1992:74

relationships from death producing to life creating²⁴⁷ which will necessitate the non-poor, donors and the entire development industry, placing good, wholesome and just relationships above business-as-usual, projects, power, control, reports and wealth. They will need to forsake independence in favour of entering and submitting to an open-armed, gracious community.

What is needed then are transformed people; transformed people who will in turn will transform the world. Myers lists the attitudes necessary of a holistic practitioner, but we could just as well call this the description of the Spirit working in people or the characteristic some of members of the communion of saints.

“Be a good listener [love]; Be patient; Be humble before the facts [humility]; Everyone is learning [grace]; Everywhere is holy; Every moment and every action is potentially transforming; Love the people not the program; Love the churches too; Cultivate a repentant spirit; Act like dependent people whose reality counts.”²⁴⁸

Moltmann points out that the Spirit is needed to develop, ‘a full and unreserved love for the living’, which will counter callousness and indifference towards suffering and the manner in which people are growing accustomed to the annihilation of life. “The spirituality of life breaks through the inward numbness, the armour of our indifference, the barriers of our insensitivity to pain. It again breaks open ‘the well of life’ in us and among us so that we can weep again and laugh again and love again.”²⁴⁹ Put the other way around, development workers need to counter the world’s growing callousness and indifference through developing life-affirming, loving relationships.

The four principles which Myers extracts from the creation account are as easily drawn from the communion of saints: sharing resources; responsibility to work; expectation of growth; shared produce,²⁵⁰ but the communion of the saints has other implications for development. Most notably, it decries hierarchy and domination. If Jesus emptied himself of all desire to dominate, even to the point of suffering an unjust death, then subjection to and filling with the Spirit of Jesus, must mean the end to all domination in favour of enabling and actualisation.²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ See Myers 1999:65,66

²⁴⁸ Myers 1999:151 My comments are in square brackets.

²⁴⁹ Moltmann 1992:97

²⁵⁰ Myers 1999:26

²⁵¹ Walter Wink quoted in Myers 1999:36

Myers provides an extensive list of aspects to the process of change,²⁵² which again hint at something like the communion of saints as the methodology and power that provides the impetus for world change. The list calls for affirming the role of people and God; transforming relationships and affirming the role of the church. It also calls for the recognition of pervasive evil; addressing causes rather than results and (most important to our discussion here), valuing meaning; seeking truth, righteousness and justice; doing no harm and expressing a bias towards peace.

As a final point we must pick up a call for an affirmation of the roles of God and of the church, because these have caused considerable debate in development circles. Specifically Michael Taylor has challenged the Christian development agencies' concept of development and suggested that aid should be made available for evangelistic purposes because, "development of the inner person is a pre-requisite for healthy and lasting human development overall."²⁵³ Our study so far has certainly shown that development of society cannot be separated from the development and transformation of individuals and any serious development effort will then take seriously what the church, Christianity and other religions have to offer in this regard. Religion deals in the transformation of people's values, which forms the cornerstone of development.

The Communion of Saints is a Development Tool – It Transforms People.

The church shows its divine nature in its ability to transform people to holiness and so enable them to experience salvation.²⁵⁴ This transformation of people, or sanctification, further builds the communion of saints and incarnates the Spirit by establishing the characteristics of the Spirit, especially love, within people and through them within the world. It is through the creation of this love within people that they come to see and respond to the pain and injustice of other people,²⁵⁵ and so to further 'the reign of God' or the 'establishment of the kingdom'. Consequently,

²⁵² Myers 1999:120ff

²⁵³ Taylor 1995:27

²⁵⁴ Barclay 1969:303

²⁵⁵ Gaybba 1987:204

“an individual’s sanctification is the most important part of her or his contribution to the life of the community.”²⁵⁶

As people experience freedom in their relationship with God, self and others, as they experience the freedom that comes from being loved and accepted, and from living graciously and generously, they are drawn to desiring and working for freedom in other areas. Typically we think of development as the removal of substantial unfreedoms, but more critically to understanding the power of the Spirit and of the communion of saints is to understand Sen’s assertion that ‘freedoms are not only the principal ends of development, that are among its principal means.’ Freedom of one type promotes and supports freedom of all types²⁵⁷, including the total freedom that we call the kingdom of God, and which we experience in the interim as the communion of saints. ‘The linkages between different kinds of freedoms are empirical and causal, rather than constitutive and compositional.’ – any freedom or any expression of the kingdom is a foothold in the future. Sen says that the world’s development problems will be solved through seeing individual freedom as a social commitment.²⁵⁸

In a similar manner the communion of saints builds freedom in, around and outside itself until people are so transformed as to become a part of it. It is first experienced in people, not God. Moltmann says that, “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,” (for which we can reasonably read ‘the communion of saints,’) “is experienced by those who know it as both the love that binds and the freedom which allows everything to arrive at itself, in its own unique nature.”²⁵⁹

Critically though as Hunsinger, draws from Karl Barth, it is, “the koinonia established by the Spirit that equips the community in freedom...”²⁶⁰ Haughey also brings out that power of community when he says,

The final component of the Pentecost event was social. The many experienced themselves as one. Individuals became one because the Spirit that was now animating them was making

²⁵⁶ Gaybba 1987:223 read not just ‘Christian’ community, but ‘world’ community. This parallels Korten saying the church’s most important work is the transformation of individuals, not the handing out of aid.

²⁵⁷ Sen shows clearly that the reverse is also true: unfreedom of one kind serves both to encourage and strengthen unfreedoms of another kind, and to weaken and undermine other areas of freedom.

²⁵⁸ Sen 1999:xii

²⁵⁹ Moltmann 1992:220

²⁶⁰ Hunsinger 2001:172,3

them one though they each had a peculiarity and a uniqueness that was irreversible. They were also in such unison that one body was an apt metaphor to describe them. They were also of one heart and mind about their collective identity, as well as single indeed about the direction they were to take. "The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common."²⁶¹

Of course the actions of the Communion of Saints are directly attributable to the Spirit. Through experiencing the touch of the communion of saints within this world (albeit a spiritual experience) people realise that faith is not unreasonable. "What the Spirit does, then, is to enable us to see that the reasons for believing are reasons for believing."²⁶² The communion of saints enables people to see and recognise the things of God (character, ministry and action) in this world that they would otherwise have been blind towards, and enables Christians to share in Christ's mission of making love visible, "Ministry is really love made visible but the Spirit is the real agent."²⁶³

This understanding bridges the misunderstandings between those who support the ideas of 'justification by faith alone' and those who speak of the necessity of works. Love, unity and the communion of saints are both gifts and tasks: God's gift to us, and the task to make them a living reality in this world and life.²⁶⁴ Our actions are important, but the Spirit and our experience of the Spirit precedes any merit on our part – indeed it is the experience of the Spirit that draws any form of meritorious actions from within us. It is of course at the same time misleading to talk of merit – because the entire communion of saints is based on and soaked in the atmosphere of merit's anathema – grace. One might go as far as to say that the only meritorious acts are acts of grace. Although Gaybba is right in saying that while believer's actions form part of the charismatic element in the church's life even when they are without love, they are at their most valuable when they are actions expressive of love, because, "they can evoke further responses of love from community members towards each other and from God towards the community."²⁶⁵

It is also precisely in our understanding of the communion of saints as a means for the transformation of people that we find a solid explanation of the idea of blasphemy

²⁶¹ Haughey 1973:76

²⁶² Gaybba 1987:210,211

²⁶³ Gaybba 1987:205

²⁶⁴ see Gaybba 1987:183

²⁶⁵ Gaybba 1987:220

against the Spirit as the unforgivable sin (Luke 12 v10). Where the communion of saints is constantly decried, devalued and kept at arm's length it becomes impossible to experience. It can only be experienced when it is acknowledged, given a look in or embraced. Consequently the power of the Holy Spirit acting through the communion of saints to bring the individual to repentance, through the experience of love and forgiveness, the power to transform that individual never becomes operational. "Constant and consummate opposition to the influence of the Holy Spirit because of deliberate preference of darkness to light renders repentance, and therefore forgiveness, morally impossible."²⁶⁶

The Communion of Saints reveals the Character of True Development.

Secular development thought already embraces the idea that community, and relationships of grace and justice are essential for the transformation of the world.²⁶⁷

Myers understands, "...the nature of poverty as relationships that do not work and the cause of poverty as being spiritual,"²⁶⁸ and "the poor are poor largely because they live in networks of relationships that do not work for their well being."²⁶⁹ He asserts that the nature of poverty is fundamentally relational: relationships that do not work; are not just; are not for life, are fragmented, dysfunctional or oppressive²⁷⁰ and the cause of poverty (the cause of those relationships) is fundamentally spiritual.²⁷¹

Michael Taylor sees largely the same issues, "Poverty is less about lack of resources than about their unfair distribution. It is the bitter fruit of injustice," shown in people acting in self-interest in manners that are patronizing, dominating and exploitative.²⁷² He sees the solution not in fine words, good intentions or (one-sided) generosity but

²⁶⁶ Bruton 1967:78 Bruton's idea that forgiveness must be preceded by repentance is contrary to what I believe but his case remains.

²⁶⁷ Admittedly Myers, and Taylor are Christian but their works and position are established and recognised throughout the secular field of development. As development can be shown to be so central to the Christian faith it is not surprising to find development practitioners who are Christian.

²⁶⁸ An insight he attributes to Jayakumar Christian but which has obviously influenced his thinking deeply. Myers 1999:xvii

²⁶⁹ Myers 1999:12f

²⁷⁰ Myers 1999:86

²⁷¹ Myers 1999:88

²⁷² Taylor 1995:87

in mutuality, partnership and all parties having, “an equal chance, to influence the decisions that affect their lives.”²⁷³

Myers states that unwholesome spirituality gives rise to dysfunctional relationships which cause poverty. Believing in the communion of the saints states this positively – I believe that wholesome relationships will bring about the healing of world, as their wholeness is shown and eventually all people are drawn into those relationships – I believe in the communion of saints.

Julius Nyerere’s approach to development centred on the liberation and empowerment of people,²⁷⁴ as the means to the establishment of a deep rooted ‘shalom-ic’ peace. Nyerere understood power correctly used as being for liberation, justice and serving the widespread good of the community - something to be used in the service of this development.²⁷⁵ Nyerere was clear that power and privilege were to enable people to become servants of society. To use power to oppress, or to grasp or pursue it for its own sake is to prostitute it. The point of the law was not to oppress and control, but to set people free, and Jesus came to fulfil that.²⁷⁶

Myers adds another important dynamic to our understanding when he brings home that removing the oppression of the poor by the non-poor is for the liberation of both the poor and non-poor.²⁷⁷ The non-poor experience poverty that is essentially relational, caused by their own sin and which results in their having, “a life full of things and short on meaning.”²⁷⁸ “A bank account and abundant diet somehow (I cannot explain it quite satisfactorily) insulate man from coming to feel the primary truth of history.”²⁷⁹

Hierarchy is an anathema to the communion of the saints where each finds themselves subject and director of their own lives and related to with grace and love. The challenge for the non-poor is to move from independence to the interdependence of

²⁷³ Taylor 1995:87

²⁷⁴ i.e. moving them from being objects in someone’s history, to subjects in their own.

²⁷⁵ In Nyerere’s case we have listed plenty of examples, see also 1Peter 5 v3 and John 13.

²⁷⁶ Matthew 5 v17.

²⁷⁷ Myers 1999:xviii Wealth can reduce some important capabilities of people such as freedom of movement.

²⁷⁸ Myers 1999:90

²⁷⁹ Koyama quoted in Myers 1999:90 and of course Jesus parables of the rich fool and the camel and the needle relate.

the community, by not demanding privilege and by employing what gifts (graces) they have for the sake of all people. Myers seems to retain place for a hierarchical relationship with God, but even this is not essential to the Christian faith's understanding of God as covenant partner and servant. God's 'superiority' is in love, holiness and righteousness not in lording-it-over and power.²⁸⁰

This hierarchy-free communion of wholesome relationships creates an atmosphere in which people can be free, and freedom is the eschaton of modern development thinkers. Amartya Sen, economist and development thinker, describes freedom as the primary end and the principal means of development.²⁸¹ Martha Nussbaum builds on his thinking and refines that thought further in her capabilities approach by taking the measurement from the typical development approach of what people have or can command to what they are actually able to do and to be.²⁸²

She sums the approach in words that could suitably describe the communion of saints,

"...an approach that is respectful of each person's struggle for flourishing, that treats each person as an end and as a source of agency and worth in her own right. Part of this respect will mean not being dictatorial about the good, at least for adults, and at least in some core areas of choice leaving individuals a wide space for important types of choice and meaningful affiliation,"²⁸³ [and its search for the divine mix of justice and grace in requiring], "...both generality and particularity: both some overarching benchmarks and detailed knowledge of the variety of circumstance and cultures in which people are striving to do well."²⁸⁴

David Korten says development (change) must come from people: people who are transformed and desire change. The power for development cannot come from 'the barrel of a gun' and more significantly cannot come from trying to reform unjust structures within society. People power is the supreme power.²⁸⁵ Systemised power such as a state or a financial system cannot be reborn or reformed for it takes on a life of its own ceasing to represent the will of the people, dominating people and becoming very difficult to change.²⁸⁶ People must perceive a need for change, and consequently must overcome some of the manner in which structures and history have

²⁸⁰ If we get this wrong we set off down the wrong path –should we worship a God the servant king – or worship a king who decrees us to serve Godself and others?

²⁸¹ Sen 1999:10

²⁸² Sen makes a similar point (1999:17,20)

²⁸³ Nussbaum 2000:69

²⁸⁴ Nussbaum 2000:69

²⁸⁵ Korten 1990:27

²⁸⁶ Korten 1990:168

conditioned them, before the momentum to overcome unjust structures will be gained.²⁸⁷

The solution, says Korten, lies in recognising the ‘sovereignty of people’ – in our terms their right to freedom – which he explains in terms of their rights to organise, to access information, to pursue their chosen goals and future, express views, participate and receive assistance from contributors of their choice.²⁸⁸

This is not a naïve assertion of ‘people power’²⁸⁹ but the recognition that when people’s values are challenged and changed, and when they live according to those new values (which generates what we call the ‘communion of saints’ when those values are divine values), those new values are worked out and represented within society – the structure and future of society is changed. Consequently it calls for responsible actions of conscience within the structure, independent of, and even against the structure.

Korten says that development’s most fundamental need is just reconciliation, which can only arise out of people living religious values such as love, brotherhood, and tolerance which attacks the root causes of human suffering.²⁹⁰ In other words ‘secular’ development’s most important work is establishing communities (brotherhoods) of just relationships characterised by love and grace (tolerance).

Myers concurs, “The goals of Christian witness are the same as the goals of transformational development: changed people and changed relationships,” crucially continuing, “This comes about only by restoring the family of relationships of which we are a part.”²⁹¹

²⁸⁷ Korten 1990:168

²⁸⁸ Korten 1990:159

²⁸⁹ This might seem like a contentious statement, particularly in dictatorships, but history has shown repeatedly that oppression doesn’t last, and the development of the people prevails.

²⁹⁰ Korten :189

²⁹¹ Myers 1999:210 Myers goes on to say the only difference between the goals of transformational development and Christian witness is that Christian witness focuses more on God and transformational development on the other critical relationships. He is however not necessarily correct because our incarnational faith implies finding God in the centre of these other relationships (‘where two or three are gathered in my name’ and ‘in so much as you did it for the least among you, you did it for me’). It is perhaps another example of Platonic thinking within theology....

The church has long realised that affluence is not liberation even where it is achieved.²⁹² In fact as long ago as 1974 the consultation of CICARWS (the World Council of Churches Commission on Inter-Church Aid, refugees and Development) and CCDP (the Commission on Churches' Participation in Development) in Montreux declared that, "the churches – and not only those in rich countries – must recognise the fact that the poor cannot be liberated through money."²⁹³ Transferring resources, building capacity and increasing choices can make the poor poorer by further diminishing their view of themselves and what they have.²⁹⁴ These things must happen in the community and dialogue of a concerned and accepting relationship – a relationship that seeks to recover their true identity and place in the world.²⁹⁵

Having examined our belief in the church, both holy and catholic, as well as in the communion of saints, how they could be understood, and their significance for the church and development, we now turn our attention to some of the other key characteristics through which we understand and identify the Holy Spirit. In continuing to rely on the structure of the creed, we now move on to our belief in the forgiveness of sins.

²⁹² Taylor 1995:65,67 Myers (1999:62) makes a similar point when he says that time, not money, is the basic resource of households.

²⁹³ Taylor 1995:49, but perhaps even as long ago as when Jesus told the rich man to sell everything and give it away.

²⁹⁴ Myers 1999:116

²⁹⁵ This is what Myers 1999:116 calls 'recovering their true identity and discovering the vocation God intends for them.'

...the Forgiveness of Sins,

"Grace, it's the name for a girl

It's also a thought that changed the world"

–Bono, U2 *Grace* from the album *All that you can't leave behind*

Introduction

Believing in the forgiveness of sins means holding to the faith that nothing in the past can prevent the future, coming kingdom of God. It is the faith-filled assertion that the past can be the past without determining the future.

The statement is suitably placed within the creed. It is a characteristic of the 'holy, catholic church' which is intrinsic to the 'communion of saints' that provides the power and impetus for it to happen. Forgiveness of sins is closely related to belief in the resurrection of the flesh. It means that the past holds no power over the future and that there is nothing that is irredeemable. All of creation *is* being transformed from 'the kingdoms of this world' to 'the kingdom of our God' (Revelation 11 v15).

Originally the creed was both a statement of faith and a catechism which controlled entry into the community. That this community saw itself more involved in the transformation of this world than preparing for 'the next' means we best understand 'the forgiveness of sins', not as our state of being in relationship with God, but as a declaration of faith in the primary tool for Christian living and the transformation of the world.

The true power of God and of the Holy Spirit is not found in the paranormal and the phenomena of the charismatic movement. It is a strength found in the apparent weakness of 'only' being able to transform people's 'normal' values and actions. The power of God is shown in the weakness of the cross and the resurrection of the flesh, freeing us from independent powers that control us, and equipping us as competent and capable agents within reality. The 'weakness of the cross' was in 'the powers' apparent ability to decide the fate of Jesus, the power of God was revealed in that even in their ability to mete out the death penalty they were unable to change Jesus' life, nature and legacy. Jesus freedom was beyond their control, and the cross became the symbol of 'the forgiveness of sins,' the sign that the perfect life was possible, and

the sign that nothing could prevent us from experiencing the fullness of God's kingdom. Freedom can be found and experienced in this world and in this life.

Defining and Understanding *Forgiveness of Sins* Within Christianity

Forgiveness is both suspect and subversive. It undermines common perceptions of morality and justice. It moves counter to what people expect within relationships. It is according to Tilby, "the only human virtue which is more or less unique to Christianity..."²⁹⁶ and according to Barth, "...what does not pass over this sharp ridge of forgiveness of sins, or grace, is not Christian."²⁹⁷

"What makes this community distinctive is that its members uphold one another in fellowship instead of causing one another to fall. It is a community that lives by the forgiveness of sins, where one sinner may love another, because the sins of each and all have been taken away..."²⁹⁸

Christianity has always recognised that forgiveness is not a soft or easy option, which accounts for its place here. While Christianity put greater weight on the future than the past, it did not deny people's responsibility for their actions (see chapter 5), or that those actions have important consequences (see chapter 6); "the moral law of cause and effect is not the last word in the universe. The last word in the universe, like the first, is love. Love uses our moral laws to guide us, but will overthrow them ruthlessly in order to save us from damnation..."²⁹⁹

The forgiveness of sins is a way of life, a tool in the creation of the kingdom and, along with the *resurrection of the body and the life everlasting*, the faith and assurance that God's kingdom will come on earth as it is in heaven. As such it is a crucial component of our faith, Barth says that forgiveness of sins, and not 'justification by faith' is, "the decisive content of revelation and union with Christ."³⁰⁰

Christianity recognises relationships and community as the means through which the kingdom will come.³⁰¹ Jesus' teaching can best be characterised as being about who

²⁹⁶ Tilby 1985:126

²⁹⁷ Barth 1949:152

²⁹⁸ Hunsinger 2001:172

²⁹⁹ Tilby 1985:127

³⁰⁰ Barth 1962:157

³⁰¹ If Christianity has a primary disagreement with Islam this is it, and not discussions about sonship and prophets and trinity. Islam says submission to a particular way of living and being will bring in the kingdom, Christianity says gracious and loving relationships will.

and how we should love rather than simply what we must believe or do. (The greatest commandment, Matthew 22 v37, centres neither on law nor theology, but on relationships.) Through the forgiveness of sins, the Christian community is one where, “There is never hate; the enemy is never demonised or declared hopeless. The offer of grace is always there.”³⁰²

Barclay provides an analysis of the Greek words for ‘forgiveness of sins’ that is informative for development: it includes to set free and cancel debt (a financial word, *aphesis*), rescue and deliverance, healing and health (*soteria*), freedom (*luein*), liberation and reparation (*eleutheron*) and to give out of grace as an absolutely free gift (*charisethai*).³⁰³

The very early church did not lay great stress on the forgiveness of sins, but in seeing itself as a community of saints, saw place only for forgiveness of sins on entry to the church – post-baptismal sin was not forgiven and led to excommunication. This legalistic approach was, as Taylor rightly points out, in complete contrast to the grace and liberty of the life and ministry of Jesus, where even those who failed to meet the Torah’s standard of holiness were treated with love and grace.³⁰⁴

Barclay sees the later church again focusing more on potential sainthood than actual performance, seeing itself as ‘the ark of salvation’ in which all were welcome and within which they could find salvation. The church became a place where one might find forgiveness and amendment when they failed.³⁰⁵ This movement in the church is not in dispute, but perhaps was driven by this statement of the creed. Consequently the purity of the community did not need to be protected from ‘contamination’, rather it was more important to hold fast to its core values of love, grace and inclusion that it had learned from Jesus. Legalistic conditions of membership were more dangerous in that they denied the true heart of what the community believed, and the church’s openness to all, ‘wheat and tares’, provided a suitable and safe environment in which people could experience and learn to live within the Community of Saints.

³⁰² Myers 1999:51 Hear the voice of Desmond Tutu in Apartheid’s darkest days calling to the government and security officials, “Come and join the winning side!”

³⁰³ Barclay 1969:316

³⁰⁴ Taylor 1973:153ff

³⁰⁵ Much of this paragraph is drawn from Barclay 1969:300-304

The Forgiveness is about Sin and sins

The significance of *the forgiveness of sins* for development exists in the tension between acknowledging that this forgiveness overcomes the fallen character of humanity,³⁰⁶ but is applicable with respect to the 'little' committed deeds.³⁰⁷ Karl Barth expresses it as our insufficiency for this life being fundamental and qualitative rather than quantitative, so, "it is only the fact that we are forgiven and will be forgiven again and again that enables us to live."³⁰⁸ Pannenberg says, "The point at issue is not primarily individual faults, it is rather the faulty foundation of our existence as a whole, which merely finds expression in this or that mistaken attitude or concrete fault."³⁰⁹

Sin, so deeply anchored within the human existence, is an expression of the 'total human situation which has to be conquered'.³¹⁰ To say that we believe in the forgiveness of sins is then to say that we believe that, along with people's natures, all of society and creation can be transformed, 'for a life in communion with God.'³¹¹

It is in this area that African Christian spirituality has been particularly strong in accepting people as having genuine or existential problems and then attempting to conscientise to find solutions for them. "The one who forgives sins is also concerned about poverty, oppression and liberation from all of a person's affliction."³¹² As Anderson points out this reflects a very definite pneumatology albeit arrived at with little or no formal theology.

We must however be careful of simply painting everyone with the same 'all have sinned brush' of collective guilt, for to do so hides and avoids specific, practical guilt and individual complicity in the sin of the world. Together 'Adam and Eve' (the doctrine of original sin) and 'Cain and Abel' (the history of injustice and violence) inform our understanding of sin.³¹³ The approaches of 'good news for the sinner' and 'good news for the poor' enrich and correct one another's vision of freedom. Having

³⁰⁶ This is often referred to as Sin (with a capital S and in the singular)

³⁰⁷ This is often referred to as sins (with a small s and in the plural)

³⁰⁸ Barth 1962:158,159

³⁰⁹ Pannenberg 1972:164

³¹⁰ Pannenberg 1972:164

³¹¹ Pannenberg 1972:164 although Pannenberg only sees this life as life 'beyond death'

³¹² Anderson 1991:103,104

³¹³ Moltmann 1992:124ff

heard that caveat, it is with respect to both (Sin and sins) that the Christian believes (and practices) the forgiveness of sins.

Moltmann moves away from, “the inadequate images of sacrificial theology; ransom; expiatory sacrifice, satisfaction and so forth”³¹⁴ and the associated objectification of our sins to an understanding of sin that is personal and relational. He says that it is, “ourselves as sinners, in our contradiction to life, who have to be justified and given back to life again.”³¹⁵ Importantly then his understanding does not centre on the possibility of the isolated forgiveness of sins, but links it to both the communion of saints and the resurrection of the flesh. This fits better with Paul’s theology of atonement being found in Christ’s death and resurrection than with Western theology’s approach of saying that the atonement is founded only in Christ’s death.³¹⁶

The forgiveness of Sin and the forgiveness of sins cannot be separated. They bear the same relationship as the ‘changing of individuals’ values’ and ‘the establishment of the kingdom’ – inextricably linked. We are redeemed with the world, not from it. The forgiveness of individual sinful acts is a part of the universal overcoming of sin.

The Forgiveness of Sins is About Affirming Life

Forgiveness of sins is the radical reorientation of life from ‘sin and death’ to ‘life in all its fullness’,³¹⁷ from life denial to life affirmation, from exclusivity to radical inclusion. Jesus came to reveal the nature and character of God,³¹⁸ for fulfilment not destruction.³¹⁹

Much of Jesus’ ministry centred on a deliberate intention to include those whom society excluded. As Taylor observes, “This determination to include has been obscured, perhaps deliberately, by portraying his radical invitations as acts of

³¹⁴ Moltmann 1992:135

³¹⁵ Moltmann 1992:135

³¹⁶ Moltmann 1992:137

³¹⁷ John 10 v10

³¹⁸ Which we must not try to understand outside of the historical socio-political influence of Jesus. Jesus challenged the political and social structures of the day, precisely because of the nature and character of God. We could also look to the politics of the Old Testament and particularly the story of the Exodus.

³¹⁹ Barclay 1969:324

“forgiveness”, so much so that it is almost as if Jesus went along with the popular opinion rather than challenging it! To dismiss as “sinners” the people left out – the blind, the beggar, the harlot, the outcast, the leper and the tax-collector – was a handy way to justify this exclusion,³²⁰ yet of course they were no more, and perhaps no less, sinful (destructive towards good wholesome relationships, and the incarnation of the Spirit) than anyone else. Every act of forgiveness is however in some sense an act of inclusion, in that it is the expression of valuing the person and the relationship over the injustice of the offence. “...inclusiveness is not simply a moral duty or a piece of idealism, like putting the last first and the poor on thrones, it is a practical, realistic policy for making a new world.”³²¹

“...forfeiture to death goes together with self-centredness. That is why forgiveness of sins and hope for a new life in communication with God belong inalienably together...”³²² Forgiveness of sins is always a means of saying yes to the bigger vision. To forgive (and so include) is to build the kingdom. It is not a ‘no’ to sin so much as it is a ‘yes’ to the kingdom, a ‘yes’ to life and a ‘yes’ to all the values of God. Jesus’ entire life, even in temptation, was not focussed on sin and injustice, but on ‘saying yes’ to a more vivid alternative.³²³ It is in this context that that we can understand blasphemy against the Spirit (Luke 12 v10) to oppose the Holy Spirit by deliberately and constantly choosing darkness to light is to exclude oneself from the communion of saints and ultimately the life everlasting. Only a recognition that these values are ultimately better (i.e. of God, not of the devil) can reverse that exclusion.

Moltmann asserts that life has to be affirmed if it is to live. He says that denied and rejected life is death, and “we can deny ourselves life too. Then we become unjust and violent towards people who are weaker than ourselves, and take life the away that they have. But in fact we are then taking our own lives as well, in the suicidal sense.”³²⁴ I believe this affirmation comes in no small way through forgiving sins. Forgiving sins is a positive expression of valuing life, not the past. It is valuing life that can be lived, not life that has passed. It is valuing things that produce life, like justice, peace and love.

³²⁰ Taylor 1995:165ff

³²¹ Taylor 1995:165ff

³²² Pannenberg 1972:161

³²³ Taylor 1973:166

³²⁴ Moltmann 1992:122

As we have already seen (in chapter 3) the kingdom is necessarily inclusive, and so needs to deal with victims and perpetrators, those deprived of justice and the unjust. Moltmann rightly says that for an open community free of fear and violence and characterised by justice and righteousness to be created both the oppressors and the oppressed must be freed.³²⁵ Here is where forgiveness becomes crucial, for while violence and retribution destroy life on both sides – “The person who commits the act becomes inhumane and unjust. The victim is dehumanised and deprived;”³²⁶ forgiveness humanises everyone, setting oppressed and oppressor free. Volf captures the ministry and Spirit of Jesus in asserting that the, beginning of reconciliation and therefore the path to justice and peace is the embrace of the other, in spite of all that the other has done, “there can be no justice without the will to embrace.”³²⁷ It transcends the issue of who is right and wrong but as Volf explains, the embrace is not complete until the truth is said and justice is done, “Merely *telling* the truth will not suffice, however. One must *do* truth. [Volf’s Italics]”³²⁸ Moltmann says the same thing, that justice must come, because only justice creates peace and, “It is only on the foundation of justice that our life together can prosper.”³²⁹

Following Jesus means not simply forgiving sins, not even simply including, but embracing the will to include (i.e. being loving).

Forgiveness is Liberating and Empowering.

We have already shown the links between freedom, development and salvation. What remains is to see that ‘freedom is grounded in forgiveness’³³⁰ rather than in a perfect offence-less society. Freedom is not found in legalism, laissez-faire or complete disregard for guilt, shame and conscience. Instead forgiveness frees us from the

³²⁵ Moltmann 1992:132 (Myers 1999:xviii makes the same point with regard to the poor and the non-poor.)

³²⁶ Moltmann 1992:132

³²⁷ Volf 1996 216

³²⁸ Volf 1996 261 When justice is not elicited by forgiveness, that is blasphemy against the Spirit, “Constant and consummate opposition to the influence of the Holy Spirit because of deliberate preference of darkness to light renders repentance, and therefore forgiveness, morally impossible. “ Bruton 1967:78

³²⁹ Moltmann 1992:122

³³⁰ Taylor 1973:172 Taylor understands the whole doctrine of justification by faith as hinging on the painfully reluctant realisation that my father is not going to be anymore pleased with me when I am good than he is now when I am bad, “...in consequence I want to show my love for him fully and continuously and I can do that by insisting on my freedom to push into his presence, grubby and outrageous...”

*repression of guilt if we are guilty and frees us to be guilty when it is necessary*³³¹ (such as in civil disobedience). Freedom is found in forgiveness setting us free from past errors and injustices to live newly and fully within community.

This forgiveness is not a past transaction nor a single transaction, “but a ceaseless flow of loving acceptance. Nothing less than that freedom through forgiveness can release a man (sic.) to take responsible decisions in a world in which any decision can be tragic.”³³² It is this atmosphere of loving forgiveness, which brings forth a freedom that is grounded in truth. Freedom in which actions can be completely independent of external authority and even in defiance of it, because “the truth of another being addresses itself to the truth of oneself, and draws it out compelling one to discover one’s own truth more deeply and live it out more freely... My response is totally subjective, if you like, and consequently free.”³³³ John V Taylor calls this an annunciation of the Holy Spirit, saying, “At the end of the day we have no other authority to guide our conduct.”³³⁴

It is important to understand the relationship between freedom and forgiveness. “The principle of freedom itself must ultimately appear as an arbitrary one, without any claim to absolute truth.”³³⁵ Yet freedom which is directed purely by the unbounded and unrestricted whim of individuals is likely to destroy the freedom of others and discredit the whole idea. Instead freedom needs to be bound by the individuals’ choice and values and that linked closely to the principal of unbounded loving acceptance, ‘the truth of another being’, which we find expressed in the creed as, “the forgiveness of sins” and hence rooted in the Holy Spirit.

Freedom derived and based in these roots, “does not lead a man (sic) astray *from* himself, but brings him to himself. [Pannenberg’s italics]”³³⁶ The experience of the forgiveness of sins and the associated culpability brings, “always acknowledgment of oneself also, the expression of one’s readiness to take over responsibility for

³³¹ Taylor 1973:173

³³² Taylor 1973:173

³³³ Taylor 1973:175

³³⁴ Taylor 1973:175

³³⁵ Pannenberg 1972:168

³³⁶ Pannenberg 1972:168

oneself.”³³⁷ The expression of faith in ‘forgiveness of sins’ is not a defeatist attitude to the inevitability of sin, rather,

it can be understood as an affirmation of life, even where life is distorted and travestied. The very acknowledgment of sin then appears as an act of freedom, for true freedom is responsible freedom: only in the *taking over of responsibility for himself* does a man become identical with himself... He achieves identity with himself to the degree to which he does not seek the faults and failings of his sphere among other people but accepts the guilt and responsibility himself. In this way he identifies himself with his sphere of life and takes the task of its reform on himself. Even in this sense acknowledgment of sin is not an expression of lack of freedom, which is only overcome by forgiveness. On the contrary, lack of freedom expresses itself in the suppression and denial of one’s own guilt and co-responsibility. To look one’s own guilt in the face, if it is not the expression of utter despair over oneself, is only possible through trust in forgiveness. In this way it already evinces the freedom towards oneself for which the forgiveness of sins liberates us. [Pannenberg’s italics]³³⁸

The Forgiveness of Sins and Repentance

The Holy Spirit comes to a person not with ‘membership’ of the church, nor with having completed the entry rite of baptism, but with a new way of living.³³⁹ Obviously then it is also not so much about a moment of changing the direction of one’s life as the ongoing direction of that life. The determination to forge life in a new direction arises from the regret about the old (or current) life’s direction which in turn arises from new thoughts and thought patterns.³⁴⁰

That being the case we must look at how these new thoughts and thought patterns can arise. Two primary manners can be found. The first, the intellectual-Word approach, when the thoughts are persuasively preached (or explained) in a manner that convinces people. The second is when the fruits of those thoughts and thought-patterns are experienced in some way, perhaps by an experience of loving acceptance, or an experience of the grace filled community found within the church. As such then we would say that the forgiveness of sins precedes repentance.³⁴¹

³³⁷ Pannenberg 1972:168

³³⁸ Pannenberg 1972:168

³³⁹ Bruton 1967:160ff; Barclay 1969:314

³⁴⁰ Barclay 1969:312

³⁴¹ ‘Grace reveals sin.’

This is in stark contrast to the popular position within the church, that repentance necessarily precedes forgiveness. Such an argument necessarily distorts justice ('the justice of God') as being vindictive, and retributive, and worst of all, despite the arguments to the contrary, more characteristic of God than love.

There is a sense in which the forgiveness of sins is quite independent of repentance. Forgiveness of sins, is a part of the nature and character of God and of the community of saints. It is a characteristic of their freedom which does not allow any offence, irrespective of how it is caused or by whom, to determine who they are, who they will be and how they will react.³⁴²

The Interface of Theology and Development

Perhaps the most important implication of this statement within the creed for development is that it calls us, even within difficult circumstances such as Rwanda and Apartheid South Africa, to focus our effort on the bigger vision and on true justice. It says to us that there is little to be gained and much to be lost if instead we were to focus on retributive justice.

Such an approach will necessarily, following in the footsteps of Jesus, focus on radical acts of inclusion and participation, rather than trying to narrowly sort out the people or the problem in a way that denies that exclusivity and lack of justice is a part of the problem. Jesus'

remarkable suggestion is that there is no practical way to right wrong, build community, discover and travel the road to peace, put an end to the miserable poverty of millions, get ourselves out of the mess we are in without giving a real say and real control and a creative chance to everyone concerned, including the so called lowest and the least. Such inclusiveness is not simply a moral duty or a piece of idealism, like putting the last first and the poor on thrones, it is a practical, realistic policy for making a new world.³⁴³

A similar note is struck by the accumulated wisdom of the development movement, as a means to balance prejudice and partisan positions, and control self-interest.

³⁴² This is where the Buddhist idea of detachment lies close to Christianity – not being determined by one's surroundings or by other people. Of course Christians could never subscribe to the 'don't care' kind of attitude, and the detachment from what is happening in the world with regards to justice etc.

³⁴³ Taylor 1995:165ff

In the interface between theology and development, the question of balance between corporate guilt and individual guilt, between original sin and the real history of injustice, between justification of sinners and the liberation of the oppressed must be addressed. The idea of collective guilt blinds us to the guilt of our own specific choices and actions. The development cry to, “Think globally, act locally!” helps us to address this issue, but it is undermined to a greater degree by popular understanding of the doctrine of original sin, linked with the popular understandings of eschatology (as portrayed in the *Left Behind* series), and soteriology (‘Jesus’ blood covers my sins and responsibility’) Developmentally minded theology, and good scholarship, will call for a redress of the imbalance in emphasis between ‘Cain and Abel’ and ‘Adam and Eve’ in our attempts to deal with sin. Moltmann says of the Garden of Eden that, “Judaism never deduced from it any doctrine of original sin. So it is important for Christians not merely to look at the mythical story, but to see the real history of injustice and violence as sin too, so as to find from God’s Spirit the energy to act justly, and the strength for peace.”³⁴⁴

It is a question of finding balance between two approaches that, rather than being antithetical, are able to address, correct and enrich one another. “Protestantism has underrated the importance of structural sin by looking too exclusively at individuals. But this is a one-sided approach.”³⁴⁵ Nor can the problem be solved purely on a level of structural sin, because such structures are built on the decisions of individuals, and in truth any global or corporate guilt is really the sum weight of millions of individual’s guilt.³⁴⁶

Crucially this provides a starting point in development situation that no longer focuses on where the people are, but where they want to go. It is about the vision, not the starting point: not about what we have to undo, but about what we have to do. Any sin will be forgiven; we can begin with them where they are, accepting that this places no limitations on what can be achieved.³⁴⁷ Such an approach gives the poor and the

³⁴⁴ Moltmann 1992:124ff

³⁴⁵ Moltmann 1992:128

³⁴⁶ While structures may seem take on ‘a life of their own’ and seem to exist outside of the individuals who inhabit them, the point remains that people are the only source of agency and responsibility for such structures.

³⁴⁷ In the gospel accounts of the feedings (check parallels, but working from Mark), while the disciples are focusing on the problem, and questioning whether it can be overcome, Jesus looks rather to what is available, and offering that to God, begins to address the problem (from a development point it is

oppressed the initiative to provide the vision, and challenges Christian development workers to relate that vision and its realisation to the Christian gospel.³⁴⁸

(In Christian parlance) the basic problem of the world, and the barrier to it being overcome, is sin. Sin can be broadly understood as self-interest driven by fear. The gospel is the good news that sin can be overcome, and the power and methodology for this. Michael Taylor highlights this problem of fearful self-interest within the church's relationship with power identifying it as a major obstacle to the church's (and Christian's) role in development.³⁴⁹ Similarly David Korten critiques most development organisations as being growth-centred (which must imply self interest and greed) and as therefore fundamentally incapable of challenging the problems of the world.³⁵⁰ Theology and development have found the same truth and expressed it in different metaphors. The truth and robustness of their respective answers must be evaluated within each other's metaphors.

Nevertheless the declaration of faith in the forgiveness of sins, is a declaration that church and development agency need to be renewed, not rejected. While neither have all the answers, the work they are doing needs to be affirmed, knowing that the vision will come to fruition.

Some Aspects of Theology for Development

Walter Wink argues that the doctrine of the fall is essential to understanding ourselves in relation to the principalities and powers of this world because,

worthwhile noting: Jesus seeing the problem, assesses what resources are available, organizes the people and then acts!

³⁴⁸ This is not necessarily a very big challenge of course, depending on one's understanding of the gospel, and one's approach to the bible, but it does mean that we cannot 'write off people' who fail to buy into our imagery and metaphors. (see Myers 1999:210)

³⁴⁹ Taylor 1995:98 In Christian parlance this might be termed a need for repentance.

³⁵⁰ Korten 1990:5 In Christian parlance Korten calls the development agencies who started with the right intentions to repentance after they have become lost in serving the false gods of power and growth. He calls them to acknowledge their limitations, regain their vision, re-evaluate the assumptions on which they are acting and to activate, support and challenge their constituencies. Korten, consistent with Christianity, rejects the top-down entrenchment of 'non-servant' power within societal structures, opting rather for responsible leadership that serves those underneath them. The responsibility for *the establishment of the kingdom* lies with millions of *born-again, Spirit-led* individuals each serving and adding strength to a people's movement – where each person can and does make a difference that shapes the whole with regards to collective behaviour, conscience and relationships.

the doctrine of the fall affirms the radical nature of evil and frees us from any illusion that we or our social institutions are perfectible apart for the redeeming work of Jesus Christ and the full coming of the kingdom of God. This should save us from any temptation towards optimistic belief in the ability of government or the free market or our own efforts at human transformation to change the reality of the poor in and of themselves.³⁵¹

We must understand this carefully. Christian faith is explicitly and inherently in the ‘redeeming work of Jesus Christ’. The understanding of what that work is, is however not universal. Through the life of Jesus, the death which put the seal on that life, and the resurrection, humanity was redeemed from the hopelessness of being unable to escape a path of injustice and violence in this world. Jesus’ life showed unequivocally that people were capable of living entirely holy, righteous and just lives. In that a real hope was established for the full coming of the kingdom of God, and humanity was redeemed. Further, ‘the full coming of the kingdom of God’ will necessarily involve either the abolishment or the perfection of our social institutions.³⁵²

Our faith is not in the “ability of government or the free market or our own efforts at human transformation to change the reality of the poor in and of themselves”, our faith (which is so much more than ‘optimistic belief’) is in God; in the redeeming work of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit being able to transform the world, one value, one attitude, one person at a time. It is in the understanding that God’s values (like love, grace, justice and shalom), as weak as they seem, will not be overrun and overcome, but like mustard seeds will grow and spread until ‘the kingdoms of this world, have become the kingdom of our God. This is a *definite* plan for the *definite* transformation of *this* world *within* time and history.³⁵³

A theology that is ultimately waiting for the kingdom to magically break into history, or that reduces the church’s societal impact to bearing witness to the kingdom of God that will come when time has ended, is not essentially developmental. In many senses it might actually be anti-developmental. Such an approach discourages earth-keeping – the kingdom “coming on earth as it is in heaven,” is entirely independent of how we

³⁵¹ Myers 1999:26ff

³⁵² Unless we understand that kingdom, as being unrelated to this world, which would be in contradiction with John’s vision of heaven coming to earth. (Revelation 21 v1,2)

³⁵³ Albeit at the culmination of it. See Chapter 6.

do or do not treat creation. Such an approach minimises God's mission within history to deciding who God will be allowing into the kingdom. Worst of all, such an approach is easily seen as dis-empowering people, instead of being co-creators with God, their actions having little or no relevance other than determining how often they need to ask forgiveness of God.

Whenever a person acts in self-sacrificing love for their neighbour, that is the love of God, the ministry of Jesus, the fruits of the Holy Spirit and the (albeit incomplete) coming of the kingdom of God. It is a step within the establishment of the kingdom. Whenever people act contrary to what Paul calls the flesh the redeeming work of Jesus Christ is at work. The church is called to provide, teach and do these things. That it has failed, so far, to fully live up to this calling within history, and failed, as yet, to fully incarnate the life and ministry of Jesus neither discounts the truth of this way, nor renders it hopeless and pointless,³⁵⁴ nor condemns the church to judgment. I believe in the forgiveness of sins, not just as my status before God, but as a tool, and a power for the establishment of the kingdom, and as the assurance that nothing that has been done, or is being done, or will be done can prevent God's kingdom coming 'on earth, as it is in heaven.'

³⁵⁴ That is why we say, "I believe..."

...the Resurrection of the Body,

"Perfect holiness is possible and necessary to be a Christian in the fullest sense."

- The cry of John Wesley and Methodism

Introduction

The 'resurrection of the flesh' is not a biblical phrase³⁵⁵ so there must be some (perhaps less than obvious) reason for its use. This chapter will suggest that while the phrase's meaning is less than obvious, that meaning is deeply significant to the early church, the established church, development work and all who want to follow Jesus in incarnating the Spirit of God, and establishing the kingdom of God within this world.

We find a position that not only helps us envision God's coming kingdom, but inspires hope and faith for its establishment in the tension between Barth's claim that the resurrection of the body is understood 'over and against human life, history, experience and time,'³⁵⁶ and Gaybba's position that, "our transformation does not earn eternal life, *it is already a sharing in eternal life.* [my italics]"³⁵⁷

Resurrection of the body, or of the flesh...

Perhaps critical to understanding this section of the creed is William Barclay's assertion that the translation for *anastasis sorkos* and *resurrectio carnis* in English would be the *resurrection of the flesh* rather than the *resurrection of the body*.³⁵⁸

'Flesh' must be understood in the manner in which Paul uses the word ' – having an atmosphere of evil, a source of physical and moral weakness, that which is subject to temptation, gives sin its bridgehead and which can bring human life to ruin – in short humanity at its worst, human life un-imbued with the Spirit of God. The resurrection of the flesh means that people can move from death to life, from sinful to 'sinless', the nature of humanity can be healed and made whole....

³⁵⁵ Barclay 1969:334

³⁵⁶ Barth 1962:161

³⁵⁷ Gaybba 1987:216

³⁵⁸ Barclay 1969:333

Barclay points out that Paul's views *seem* to deny the resurrection of the flesh,³⁵⁹ and that the early church held Paul's writing in high esteem. Conceivably these form together the reason for including this point within the creed.

Ireneus and Tertullian both asserted that the flesh was not excluded from resurrection, but from the kingdom.³⁶⁰ Their assertions are meaningless unless they are assertions that nothing, not even 'the flesh', is excluded from salvation, but that it is only in salvation, in being transformed and so losing its fleshly character that the kingdom of God will be experienced. It is an assertion that every aspect of people and their lives can be saved. 'Flesh' is not irredeemable but until it is redeemed it is unable to share in the glorious life of the kingdom.

As a statement of faith 'the resurrection of the body' stood in opposition to the Greek belief of the immortality of the soul. The 'immortality of the soul' portrayed the body as a dying tomb that liberated the soul when it was destroyed.³⁶¹ The early church (and modern day development workers) objected and rallied against this inherent devaluation of this world and this life. The resurrection of the body says that this world cannot be disregarded. It is crucial and must be valued.

More Than Just 'Life After Death' and 'Immortality of the Soul'

There has long been debate about how the resurrection of the body relates to the idea of immortality of the soul and life after death. While an intellectual resolution is not clear, it is the implications that are important.

The hellenisation of the church, culminating in the acceptance of Plato as a 'Christian before Christ', was a watershed in the history of Christian thought³⁶² which in a real sense changed Christianity's essence and direction in a manner which will have to be undone for us to find the true heart and roots of our faith. The move from Hebrew to Hellenic thought patterns caused the church to focus on God's eternity instead of God's future, heaven instead of the coming kingdom, the spirit that liberates the soul

³⁵⁹ Barclay 1969:340

³⁶⁰ Barclay 1969:340

³⁶¹ see Barclay 1969:335

³⁶² Moltmann 1992: 89

from the body rather than the Spirit as ‘the well of life’. Most critical to our discussion here is that it caused ‘the immortality of the soul’ to replace ‘the resurrection of the body’ and the yearning for another world to become a substitute for changing this one. Redemption was spiritualised away from the redemption of this body and life to the safe-havening of souls in the heaven of the next life.

Justin Martyr referred in condemnation to those who believed in the immortality of the soul *rather than* the resurrection of the body as “those who say that there is no resurrection of the dead and that their souls, when they die are taken to heaven”,³⁶³ and the church, in no small part through including the resurrection of the body in the creed made a stand against this approach.

It is crucial for the life of the church, and for development, that we escape from Greek (Platonic) thought patterns and re-establish the essence of our faith as being for this life. The popular and predominant thought currently within the Church, despite its objections, is largely irrelevant to the life of this world and most likely accelerating its destruction. This is because in seeing the rebirth and sanctification of people as an end in itself, rather than as the first step in the rebirth and sanctification of the world does not go far enough, and is largely irrelevant to the life of this world. When we escape the Platonic thought patterns we find a new depth and vibrancy to our faith and we realise that development and faith are very closely related, eschatologically intertwined, and feed each other with regard to understanding, ethics and methodology.

It is Total, Inclusive, Holistic Redemption.

Resurrection *of* the body says salvation is a whole.³⁶⁴ It is not redemption *from* the body, or even from the flesh. Body here refers to the whole person, not the physical body – there is no attempt to split ‘body’ and ‘soul’, the whole person is the object of salvation.³⁶⁵ Indeed Barclay asserts that Greek and Hebrew have no words for personality.³⁶⁶ It is the individual who survives as an individual through the body

³⁶³ Barclay 1969:336

³⁶⁴ Barclay talks of whole salvation not soul salvation Barclay 1969:345

³⁶⁵ Max Seckler in Rein 1969:80,81

³⁶⁶ Barclay 1969:346

through which the individual's personality acts and expresses itself. As Thielicke says, "Death is not a sinking into namelessness and nothingness."³⁶⁷

Resurrection of the body is the plain denunciation of the Gnostic position that the body is essentially and incurably evil. The Christian does not believe any part of people being beyond salvation and fit only for obliteration.³⁶⁸ This article of the creed asserts the totality of salvation³⁶⁹ to include the fullness of creation and human life and affirms the importance of every aspect of life. Max Seckler, although still very centred on life after death sums it up in saying, "This means that when I say, "I believe in the resurrection of the body, I confess that nothing of what I have done and experienced during my earthly stay is to be annihilated. What is to be saved is not a neutral indifferent and undifferentiated immortal soul; I myself and all of what I am have received the promise of eternal life."³⁷⁰

Similarly Barth asserted that this statement of the creed was crucial to making sense of our lives amid grace and gracelessness,

resurrection of the flesh does not mean that man ceases to be a man in order to become a god or angel, but that he may according to 1Cor 15 v42f be a man in incorruption, power and honour, redeemed from that contradiction and so redeemed from the separation of body and soul by which this contradiction is sealed and so in the totality of his human existence awakened from the dead.³⁷¹

Sanctification and Raised Flesh

There is a real sense in which the Christian faith in the resurrection of 'the flesh' (and even 'the body') is a statement about sanctification – that all that we are is raised from death to the new life in which the individual shares.³⁷²

The established church's theology and Platonic emphases equip it poorly for the transformation of this world, yet it seems to believe (perhaps arrogantly) that without interacting and debating with contemporary theory and theorists, its own resources and abilities will be sufficient for the task. The problems are however too deep and broad to be solved by simple acts of loving charity, and people verbally confessing faith in Jesus. Solutions will need to be found through the working together of the

³⁶⁷ Thielicke 1968:247

³⁶⁸ Barclay 1969:336

³⁶⁹ Barclay 1969:344

³⁷⁰ Max Seckler in Rein 1969:81

³⁷¹ Barth 1962:169

³⁷² Barclay 1969:339

best minds of the modern area –the best economists, politicians, theologians, psychologists and whoever else working together – to address, and resolve the current crises of politics, food, power, and economics, and then to plot a course forward.

Yet it is not enough to plot a course; the course must be followed. Therefore, on another level, and perhaps the central point of this thesis, despite the depth and breadth of the problems, they will be solved by faith in Jesus, where that faith is confessed in living, acting and ministering in the way and Spirit of Jesus. It will be solved as people are resurrected from selfish lives to using their power for others, to helping rather than exploiting the weak, to being loving rather than fearful, and to giving themselves in humble service. Christian faith believes explicitly in this raising of the flesh to life, and is relevant to the transformation of the world as the values of Jesus become incarnated in the everyday lives of Christians. It is relevant only though as it finds itself, not just in words, prayers, hymns and praise-and-worship but, in service, addressing justice, and being loving towards all people.

Christianity must continue to seek the resurrection of the flesh (even the flesh that is characterised by a narrow ‘rule book’ style behaviour) to the life of a new world: a new vision, ethic, and identity for people and a gracious, loving and just spirit, a divine spirit, with which to characterise this world.

While the Holy Spirit might come to an individual at baptism, it is at repentance that the fuller experience of the Holy Spirit is received.³⁷³ In other words the individuals full experience of the Holy Spirit is largely dependent on a new way of living. This new way of living is essentially an embracing for self of the values that constitute the Holy Spirit (things like love, grace, peace, patience, kindness...). As such then it is fair that Bruton describes the Holy Spirit as ‘confirming the salvation of believers’,³⁷⁴ but we must not try to understand salvation as something which can ‘happen’ apart from the Holy Spirit – the experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit *is* salvation, and so the obvious presence of the Spirit is a sign and a confirmation of salvation.³⁷⁵

³⁷³ Bruton 1967:160ff

³⁷⁴ Bruton 1967:200ff

³⁷⁵ Strange as it seems, this understanding makes a suitable bridge for bringing together those who believe in a ‘Spirit baptism’ (or a Spirit filling) as distinct from expressing faith in Jesus Christ (which some may call the moment of salvation). While faith in Jesus Christ is in a sense the seed that makes salvation and ‘Spirit filling’ inevitable, salvation is only experienced when one embraces and lives the

Justification and sanctification are interrelated, and are flip sides of the same coin. Any clear separation between them is a mistake, probably arising out of the influence of Platonic thought causing us to ask questions such as, “How do we enter heaven if we are not perfect” and “what happens to those who convert but die before ‘making the grade’?”

While there seems to be contradiction between the Lutheran point of view that we are justified but remain sinners and Methodism’s position that perfect holiness is possible and necessary for a person to be a Christian in the fullest sense, it is really just a question of emphasis. Methodism falls in with the idea of the resurrection of the flesh as a tenet of our faith, while the Lutheran point acknowledges (and Methodists would agree) that even when we do not live out our high calling to the fullest, by grace, we still experience the sense of being right with God. “Our transformation does not earn eternal life, it is already a sharing in eternal life.”³⁷⁶

Gaybba asserts that sanctification is a process of growth only achieved, “by pressing all one’s faculties into the service of love,”³⁷⁷ and which is then manifested in fruits of love. This explicitly requires the cooperation of the individual.³⁷⁸ Such cooperation is already a sign of salvation and of the resurrection of the flesh, but the Holy Spirit’s incarnation in people’s lives (sanctification) is the personal eschaton of people / Christians.

fullness of the Holy Spirit within one’s own life. Bruton seems to acknowledge this when he concedes that the Holy Spirit is not present in every case of conversion (Bruton 1967:200ff) although acknowledging that Luke thought that normally salvation and the Spirit went hand-in-hand. (Bruton 1967:203)

³⁷⁶ Gaybba 1987:216

³⁷⁷ This statement does not deny the achievability of entire sanctification. In fact few Christians would deny that that was achieved in the person of Jesus the Christ – who was, ‘like us in all ways, yet without sin’. This argument cannot be countered by appealing to Jesus’ divinity for that would undermine the assertion that he was, ‘like us in all ways’. There are only two alternatives. Either it is possible to be ‘like us in all ways’ and not sin, or sin is such an inherent part of humanity that Jesus was not truly ‘like us in all ways’. I believe that the first approach will prove more useful for a theology of development. (Perhaps a theology for development will need to re-examine the heresies of adaptionism and arianism. Was Jesus’ divinity a recognition of his entire sanctification?) While some might acknowledge that we are en route to sanctification more readily than acknowledging the Methodist position that entire sanctification is possible, it seems peculiar to talk of being *en route* to somewhere that we will never, and can never, get. (The only resolution is an ‘eschatological reserve’, which takes the matter out of this world and life. This example of Platonic thought, that ‘God’ will do it for us ‘one day’ in ‘heaven’, is neither empowering, nor suitable for the transformation of the world, from the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of our God)

³⁷⁸ Gaybba 1987:261

The love that creates the community should be reflected in the community's structures. The love that transforms the individual is meant to be reflected in actions. The Spirit's presence therefore is meant to result in the transformation not only of individuals but also of their environment. The presence of love should result in the creation of an environment in which people can feel loved and at peace, an environment that reflects that people share in God's Spirit of love, an environment, therefore, that is holy. By sanctifying humanity the Spirit sanctifies humanity's world (see Romans 8v21), or in David Korten's terms development (the transformation of the world) happens in the fourth generation through transformed individuals acting on their values.

Salvation is intimately intertwined with sanctification and the Holy Spirit. While it is true to say that, "The Spirit sanctifies the believer,"³⁷⁹ it is a mistake to understand this as happening independently of the believer's choices or actions. Worse still it is a mistake to think of this as somehow doled out by the Spirit – the Spirit is both the subject (doling out the sanctification) and the object (what the believer is receiving to sanctify the believer). The glory and divinity and perfection of the Holy Spirit induces itself within people's lives. This is how Gaybba can quite correctly say that: it influences us more and more as time goes by, and that the holiness co-exists with the sinfulness.³⁸⁰ Critically though, "it is a true inner transformation and not simply a legal fiction whereby God regards us as if we were new creatures. Love truly changes us in the depth of our being,"³⁸¹ and that transformation is salvation, sanctification and 'the resurrection of the flesh'.

The resurrection of the man Jesus is not simply the first fruits of some future event, nor did it signify that Jesus now ceased to be human, "The risen Lord remains part of humanity. The unity between God and humanity has not been broken. However the risen Lord is a gloriously transformed part of our world. In him the eternally planned process of the transformation of humanity and its world has begun."³⁸² With the resurrection of Jesus the fullness of salvation planned by God for us has begun to

³⁷⁹ Gaybba 1987:213

³⁸⁰ Gaybba 1987:213

³⁸¹ Is Gaybba referring to 'justification' when he speaks of the legal fiction? Gaybba 1987:213, Robinson 1930:14,15 speaks of the increasing recognition that the Holy rather than Rabbinical 'justification' is central in the thought of Paul.

³⁸² Gaybba 1987:156

exist as a part of this world. While it is true to say that we await its fullness in the culmination of time and history (see Chapter 6), we must not ignore that it is nevertheless a part of our world and history now (albeit growingly and not universally).

Wholly Inclusive Redemption

The resurrection of the body means that God's promise includes all of society, the body politic and indeed all of creation. More than this it embraces all people: those who have died; those now living and those still unborn. In this it gives a glorious glimpse of the inclusivity of the communion of saints with which, through the Spirit, it is closely connected. As Migliore points out it is a far broader hope than, "secular hopes for a golden age of the future in which only those living at that time will participate."³⁸³

Wolfhart Pannenberg takes this a critical step further and asserts that, "...without a general resurrection of the dead and a last judgment – that is to say without the participation of all individuals – there is no kingdom of God, and mankind is not perfected."³⁸⁴ Resurrection of the body then is also critically connected to the coming kingdom and the life everlasting.

Participation in the Kingdom

This section of the creed is often not taken seriously. Helmut Thielicke concludes that it because it no longer answers a question concerning and motivating us in other areas of our life.³⁸⁵ Truth is that this underlines the church's move from changing this world, to praying for the next. What are the questions that would demand the resurrection of the body as an answer?

Why should I give up wealth, prestige and status?

Why should I oppose injustice when it might well cost me my life?

³⁸³ Migliore 1991:244

³⁸⁴ Pannenberg 1972:177

³⁸⁵ Thielicke 1968:245

Why should I give up my life for the establishment of the kingdom when I will never partake in it?

and of course to a lesser extent, (for the question is equally answered by belief in a spiritual heaven), the question of meaning in the face of mortality.

Both Hebblethwaite who says, “all will participate together in this new creation”³⁸⁶ and Barclay who says that it is only fair that all who built the kingdom of God should share in it,³⁸⁷ support the view that this is a justice issue. Barclay goes as far as to say that reward and punishment go to the body who committed it and not just to the attached soul.³⁸⁸

The Interface of Theology and Development?

David Korten analyses development work into four distinct generations, the fourth being ‘people’s movements’.³⁸⁹ People’s movements live the coming reality into being ‘on the streets’, and are able to do it here and now. They are loosely defined networks of people and organisation bound together by a vision of justice and the willingness to act. (Largely) through civil disobedience the space between the present reality and the vision collapses, and the enforcing structures are taken out of the loop. “Within the past three decades people’s movements have reshaped thought and action on the environment, human rights, women, peace and population.... These experiences demonstrate the power of people’s movements in driving social change.”³⁹⁰ Nevertheless Korten identifies the need to energise decentralised action towards a people centred vision on a much broader scale.³⁹¹

Korten’s developmental insights are certainly of relevance here. His description of the nature and the actions of people’s movements are equally descriptive of the church (although the church always operates within its own particular metaphor and idiom). His vision is comparable with the Christian vision of a life everlasting, and the people’s movements operate from the assumption that individuals and the

³⁸⁶ Hebblethwaite 1996:190,191

³⁸⁷ Barclay 1969:334

³⁸⁸ Barclay 1969:344

³⁸⁹ Korten 1990:96ff

³⁹⁰ Korten 1990:124

³⁹¹ Korten 1990:124

community can (growingly) learn and live new values, which is a secular expression paralleling the ‘resurrection of the body’. ‘The resurrection of the body’ speaks to the possibility of the creation of these communities, and for all people to be included in the life everlasting, through the inclusiveness, and the hope, of ‘the forgiveness of sins’.

The church needs to reclaim the ideas of ‘the resurrection of the body’ and ‘the resurrection of the flesh’ to find once again the centrality of its message for the life of this world, and to reclaim the hope that it contains. Eternal life is not earned by transformation, yet that transformation is already a sharing in eternal life.

It is important that the church incarnate the Holy Spirit within its people and hence within the world, that they might become soaked in the new life that is God’s love and Spirit. “But believers must *allow* that new life to press them into the community’s service, just as that new life must be allowed to sanctify the believer.”³⁹² The church, and people of faith, must live, and if necessary be taught, the real, practical and incarnational relevance of their faith, myths, imagery and beliefs.

This is not a call to start or join something new. This is a call to the church to return to the origin and heart of our faith, from which we have wandered. From the earliest days salvation was seen as embracing the whole of creation – restoring paradise, creating a new universe; and a new environment for humanity, bringing unity with the environment (as well as God, neighbour and self).³⁹³

For those actively involved with development, it is a reminder not to write off anything, or anyone as irredeemable (shades of ‘the forgiveness of sins’ here). It is a reminder of the massive inclusivity necessary for development – where none are demonised – and even the perpetrators are being welcomed in and called over to a new way of living.

...and a reminder of the power and value of a good metaphor or story, a ‘mythology for development’, which can help build and develop the values and processes. The development industry is fortunate in having one ready made – the Jewish history and

³⁹² Gaybba 1987:225

³⁹³ Gaybba 1987:260

the account of the Messiah Yeshua, linked with the faith of the Christian church – but it is also one that has to be reclaimed lest it be domesticated instead of incarnated.

...and the Life Everlasting.

"...undoubtedly, Dietrich Bonhoeffer is fully justified when he reproaches many Christians for believing in 'a life everlasting' as merely 'a last escape into eternity.'"
– Helmut Thielicke³⁹⁴

"God is a god of becoming not just being..."
– GAF Knight³⁹⁵

Introduction

To speak of 'the life everlasting' is roughly equivalent to speaking of 'the kingdom of God', as an understanding in which time comes to an end as there is no more change (or need for change) – wholeness and holiness have come in fullness – "the dwelling place of God is with man." (Revelation 21 v3)

As crucially within the context of the creed it is the assertion that the values of God, the kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit *will* come in fullness. Justice, love, peace, joy and patience will become a universal reality on earth as in our models of perfection.

"The world's consummation will be the completion of the pneumatic process... The pneumatizing of the whole of creation."³⁹⁶ The eschaton of creation is the kingdom of God, the real worldly expression of the values of heaven. It is only those parts of creation which have no place in the perfect coming kingdom which will either be transformed³⁹⁷ or obliterated.

This assurance girds up our faith and empowers us to act even in the face of opposition, oppression and the threat of bodily harm. Believing that our goal is not only achievable, but will be achieved, calls us toward our vision and goal. Surely without this hope our faith is meaningless, and all our actions reduced to trying to win over God.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁴ 1968: 244

³⁹⁵ 1953:61

³⁹⁶ Gaybba 1987:262

³⁹⁷ The word 'transformed' here is synonymous with the Christian terminology of 'converted'.

³⁹⁸ Some would argue that the actions are an attempt to win over people to God's way ('to convert them'). That is fair comment, unless that winning over is reduced to some action on their part (e.g.

Everlasting can mean more than lasting forever within time, or having no end. It can also be understood as being beyond time – unchanging – stable and having to do more with the quality, rather than the quantity, of life. Eternal life, the life everlasting is that in which shalom peace has been established and good has eradicated evil. It is when life in all its fullness has come in such a way that nothing is willing or able to undo it. It is self-reinforcing. Barclay makes the point that ‘eternal life’, which could easily be subsumed in ‘the life everlasting’, is the life of God, and that Plato used it in terms of a life that is nothing less than the life of God.³⁹⁹ The ‘life of God’ is not belonging to God in the sense of providing his being, but belonging to God in the sense of being utterly characterised by God’s nature and character. The ‘life everlasting’ happens when the world is filled with the character of God. As such it is “both the promise and gift of God. Eternal life is not a human achievement; although man has a part to play in the attainment of it.”⁴⁰⁰

Thielicke implies that while the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting can appear to be personal, selfish and even trivial given the crises in this world, they are in fact about transformation, healing and hope.⁴⁰¹

Defining ‘the life everlasting’ and the kingdom of God

The world’s eschaton is in the complete establishment of the kingdom of God – where the world is filled with the Spirit of God. “The kingdom of God is that future intended end-state of creation where God will unambiguously reign and God’s will, will be done.”⁴⁰² The prophets understanding of the Messianic times was that they were to be characterised by the creation⁴⁰³ of the Spirit in the ultimate final experience of God (e.g. Joel 2v28), and Luke’s infancy narratives indicate all the players as overflowing with the Spirit.⁴⁰⁴ This universal, total, enduring and direct experience of God’s presence is the sign of the advent of a new age, with the Spirit as both pledge

praying the sinners’ prayer) which convinces God to alter his disposition towards them which would then be convincing or winning over God.

³⁹⁹ Barclay 1969:373

⁴⁰⁰ Barclay 1969:373

⁴⁰¹ Thielicke 1968:242,243

⁴⁰² Hebblethwaite 1996:167

⁴⁰³ This is Bruton’s word.

⁴⁰⁴ see Bruton 1967:41f

and source of this new age. God dwells, “wherever his will is done and his Torah obeyed in spontaneous, matter-of-course obedience... this happens when God’s Spirit itself fulfils the divine law by creating new hearts in people ... this presupposes a future in which God himself is manifested universally and without any mediations”⁴⁰⁵

The life everlasting is the “the good news of God’s Holy Spirit which provides the ultimate answer to the African quest for power (i.e. physical well being, social stability and peace; life itself)”⁴⁰⁶

As the Old Testament Jewish ideas about life and the Spirit unfold, they point us to the understanding of what would happen in the end-time (even the use of the term ‘end-time’ points to the life everlasting being the end of time rather than the ‘unending forever beyond time’). In Isaiah 11 v2 the Messiah is portrayed as not only being led by the Spirit, but as permanently partaking of the Spirit. Isaiah 42 v1 and 44 v3 and Ezekiel 36 v27 promised the conferring of the Spirit not only on the king but on all of the people of Israel. Zechariah (6 v1-8) saw the Spirit descending on all nations, and Joel (3 v1 ff) foresaw the Spirit being poured out on all flesh. The early church understood these prophecies fulfilled in the events of Pentecost (see Acts 2 v17ff). The end-time or life everlasting would be characterised first and foremost by the Spirit of God being entirely and inalienably appropriated by all people.

While Pannenberg seems to err on the side of understanding life everlasting as being about a next life, we can agree wholeheartedly when he says, “the life of the end-time is bound to be a different and more intense life than the mortal life which we lead now. Our present life is mortal because in it men have not remained united to the origin of that life, which is the Spirit of God. The origin remains external to this present life, for life has detached itself from its origin. Consequently, although as creatures men can certainly be led by the Spirit, the Spirit is not vouchsafed to them, in the sense of inner appropriation – or at least not permanently.”⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁵ Moltmann 1992:55,56

⁴⁰⁶ Anderson 1991:vii

⁴⁰⁷ Pannenberg 1972:136

Christians must understand that a life everlasting is not merely a final escape into eternity, from the misery of this life.⁴⁰⁸ This so-called 'life everlasting' is, "an illusion of the weak, one that all sensible people who are up to their ears in this life would shrug off or even turn from in disgust. And there is no doubt that Karl Marx saw part of the truth when he said that belief in a Beyond and a heaven in the future serves many people as merely an opiate which helps them out of their present predicament with the aid of a thin veil of smoke."⁴⁰⁹ We do not deny the hope that many, and particularly the wretched of this earth, find in the idea of a final escape into eternity, but we do declare that any philosophy which actively undermines the healing and transformation of the world is positively un-Christian, and particularly the idea that the earth is just slowly unwinding to its destiny on the trash heap of the end time. We offer a fuller and deeper hope.

Eschatological talk is necessarily not separated from the present, rather it is "looking into the furthest and final future, and from there back again into the present,"⁴¹⁰ so that we can better understand the unfinished present and our role within it. Our faith in Jesus means that in him the world is reconciled (no longer separated from God and the perfection of heaven), but it is along with that a teleological-type faith – faith in Jesus as 'the way' (the model to follow) to the completion and perfection of creation. The 'life everlasting' of the creed is the assertion that life and history have an endpoint and a purpose around which they revolve. It is the answer to ultimate questions of meaning and purpose, and to questions of our own involvement when we see in this life the kingdom of God veiled and distant.

Martha Nussbaum working in a development environment from teleological considerations⁴¹¹ proposes a means of assessing and implementing justice, liberty, worth and true equal opportunity across diverse lives and cultures.⁴¹² Her central human functional capabilities define a vision similar to 'the Kingdom' or 'the life

⁴⁰⁸ See Thielićke 1968:244

⁴⁰⁹ Thielićke 1968:244

⁴¹⁰ Hunsinger 2001:178

⁴¹¹ Nussbaum 2000:51 One of the principles on which she bases her work is that *teleological* considerations must be used in assessing cultures and practices. I agree strongly with her position, but the point is not so strong as to be beyond debate.

⁴¹² Nussbaum 2000:69

everlasting'.⁴¹³ "We want an approach that is respectful of each person's struggle for flourishing, that treats each person as an end and as a source of agency and worth in her own right. Part of this respect will mean not being dictatorial about the good, at least for adults and at least in some core areas of choice, leaving individuals a wide space for important types of choice and meaningful affiliation. But this very respect means taking a stand on the conditions that permit them to follow their own light free from tyrannies imposed by politics and tradition."⁴¹⁴

Amartya Sen plays a similar tune, also from a developmental perspective. Sen says that the world's problems will only be countered by seeing individual freedom as a social commitment.⁴¹⁵ Sen's primary thesis is that freedom is both a means and an end for development.⁴¹⁶ That is to say that the achievement of freedom is the achievement of development itself and thus freedom becomes a good measure of the level of development within society. This corresponds with faith in 'the life everlasting' and the gracious loving and liberating heart of the Christian faith, which, while holding the faith of true capability freedom for all people, frees people as far as possible within an unfree world, to experience the kingdom of God and the life everlasting now, not only for their own sake but also that they might become agents bringing freedom to others. Sen says that, "The ends and means of development call for placing the perspective of freedom at the centre of the stage."⁴¹⁷

⁴¹³ Nussbaum 2000:78 Identifies the Central Human Functional Capabilities as

- 1) Life – normal length, not reduced to a state not worth living
- 2) Bodily Health – good health, reproductive health, adequately nourished and sheltered.
- 3) Bodily Integrity – free to move from place to place, having one's bodily boundaries treated as sovereign
- 4) Senses, Imagination and thought – adequate education, being able to search for meaning in one's own way. Able to have pleasurable experiences and avoid non-necessary pain.
- 5) Emotions – To be able to develop emotionally, have attachments to things and people outside ourselves, love, grieve, long, be angry [not hate etc?]
- 6) Practical reason – be able to form a conception of good and engage in critical reflection about one's life
- 7) Affiliation – capability for justice and friendship, to live with and towards others. Also the social basis for self-respect and non-humiliation
- 8) Other species: living with concern for and relation to
- 9) Play – being able to laugh, play, and enjoy recreational activities
- 10 Control over one's environment – political and physical

⁴¹⁴ Nussbaum 2000: 69

⁴¹⁵ Sen 1999:xii

⁴¹⁶ Sen 1999::3,10

⁴¹⁷ Sen 1999:53

The Church and the World Share a Common Future

Belief in the resurrection convinces us that the future kingdom can be established on earth, and enables us to declare that we believe in 'the life everlasting'. However it would be a mistake to equate the church and the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the church's future as it is the future of the world,⁴¹⁸ yet to the extent that the church is able to fulfil its true nature it can be regarded as a foretaste of God's kingdom,⁴¹⁹ even as it is working towards the fulfilment of the kingdom of God within the world. The church points towards the life everlasting, through the holiness of the Spirit found in its members.

Through sharing the common future of the kingdom, the church and the world are bound together, and the relevance of the world to the church is made plain. The church cannot and will not find its fulfilment apart from the world.⁴²⁰ The culmination of history is when (Revelation 21 v3) the dwelling place of God is with people. Further the relevance of the church to the world will act as an indicator of the extent to which the church is building the kingdom: Revelation 7v16 and 21 v4 speak of no more tears, crying pain, famine and drought, "The mission of the church as a history making force is completed. The kingdom of God stands alone in the final reality, all other kingdoms have passed away."⁴²¹

Believing in the life everlasting means expecting this common eschaton and working and living to make it a reality for all people – not just justice, but freedom as well. This is however not only the goal of the church, but also of 'development'. As the kingdom and the life everlasting are the common eschaton of both the church and the world, so the church and development also share a common goal.

The church must come on board with development work or deny its destiny. The church witnesses to the possibility of the kingdom through its ability to increasingly establish the kingdom, even now, albeit in limited and localised ways. That witness is about more than a 'faithfulness' to God, that can be separated from working alongside God in what God is doing. Simply waiting for God to break into history 'on the

⁴¹⁸ Pannenberg 1972:152

⁴¹⁹ Hebblethwaite 1996:168

⁴²⁰ see Pannenberg 1972:153

⁴²¹ Myers 1995:41

clouds' demeans people (What role do they play, or what value do they have, in God's plan for the world and history other than being unwitting pawns, albeit ones that God is fond of?), and makes their actions meaningless and irrelevant (the kingdom will come anyway, at God's appointed time and these actions (witness to the possibility) are nothing more than works salvation attempts to win the favour of God.)

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This World Transformed Becomes the Next...

"The Christian hope in as far as it really is Christian, far from distracting us from the present task, inspires and energises just such commitment to make the world a better place."⁴²³ Poorly presented the concepts of heaven and hell trade more in greed and fear than hope. Christianity is totally misunderstood, "if its ethical imperatives are held to stem from the desire to avoid damnation,"⁴²⁴ or if its hope is somehow separated from the life of the world. The love of God in which Christian hope is grounded, coupled with the vision of the incarnation's perfect consummation ('heaven'; 'the life everlasting') provide meaning, motivation and inner-strength for the task.

We must not lose sight of the Old Testament picture of the remnant of Israel living faithfully and being expected to live faithfully with no hope of a next life.⁴²⁵ Instead they were motivated by the vision of experiencing life in this world that was the best that it could be (we might say a sharing in the life of God). It is not the next life in a life-after-death sense which motivates us, but the hope of life on this earth made new and made whole. All would agree that the next life is dependent on this life and continuous with it.

⁴²² Such an approach might also seriously undermine our theological tenet that Jesus was entirely and completely human (...and yet without sin! Giving us sure notice that the sinless life is entirely possible for human beings, and if achieved in Jesus and therefore possible for all, the assurance that, as the light burns in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out, so the assurance that sin will be entirely overcome.) Was Jesus the same as us in everyway except that he did not sin? ...or was Jesus the same as us in everyway, and yet despite being the same as us in everyway he did not sin? The answer has huge implications for our understanding of humanity and soteriology. I would tend to towards the second option, and believe that it would be a more useful option for a theology of development, always keeping it alongside belief in the forgiveness of sins.

⁴²³ Hebblethwaite 1996:206

⁴²⁴ Hebblethwaite 1996:206

⁴²⁵ Barclay 1969:349

South Africa's transformation (and healing) from Apartheid to a multi-racial democracy has been for many Christians an example of God's healing and transforming power, a sign of the Spirit's sanctifying power and a sure sign of God's *continuing* creation of the kingdom of God in this world. Coupled with the way in which the gospels, and particularly the infancy narratives, indicate the birthing of a whole new age and a completely different concept and experience of life, it seems incomprehensible some can still assert that, "the final realisation of God's kingdom will not be on earth. God's kingdom will only be fully present in heaven."⁴²⁶ Perhaps this has to do with the difficulty of breaking a long established mindset within the church, more likely it shows limited faith that the ways of the world can be changed (i.e. limited faith in the resurrection of the flesh⁴²⁷)

The Holy Spirit is the present pledge⁴²⁸ and the present, active principle and power of the coming life which will be fully revealed and expressed as the life everlasting when all things have been transformed into conformity with it.⁴²⁹ As we saw in chapter one there is a growing realisation in development thinking acknowledging that growth is unsustainable, and recognising the need to shift technologies and institutions to patterns of justice, sustainability and inclusiveness, while at the same time redefining quality-of-life in terms of social, mental and spiritual development rather than consumption.⁴³⁰ Development thinking is calling for the incarnation of the Holy Spirit!

Gutierrez⁴³¹ is emphatic that 'the history of our salvation' and 'the history of our struggle for a better life in this world' are emphatically one and the same reality, concluding that, "to work to transform this world is itself salvation." I would make the proclamation even more emphatic by suggesting that the two histories are indistinguishable: The former history is one of making a better life in this world, and the latter is the unfolding story of the world's salvation.

⁴²⁶ Hebblethwaite 1996:167

⁴²⁷ see chapter 5

⁴²⁸ Gaybba 1987:216 "The Spirit is indeed aptly called the 'pledge' that one day we will share fully in the risen life (Ephesians 1v14; 2Cor5v5 see also 2Cor1v22) and the 'first fruits' Romans 8v23 of the great harvest yet to come.

⁴²⁹ see Quick 1960:279

⁴³⁰ Korten 1990:133

⁴³¹ as presented by Taylor 1995:120

To put God over and against freedom is to completely misunderstand what is liberating in the action of God. Moltmann says, "To experience God is to experience freedom."⁴³² Surprisingly, the church has not always recognised freedom as one of its core values and liberation as one of its central actions.⁴³³

The Eschatological Life Now! ...Not an Apocalypse to Come...

The eschatological experience is not reserved only for the future; in fact believing in the life everlasting attests to the eschatological age of redemption having been inaugurated.⁴³⁴ As Gaybba says, "Our transformation does not earn eternal life, it is already a sharing in eternal life."⁴³⁵ This life is not purely an experience for after death in that 'the life of God' (life everlasting) can be possessed and lived here and now. This assertion is the logical outworking of the incarnation and the humanity of Christ. The resurrection together with our understanding that nothing can separate us from God, also forms the argument for *this* life continuing beyond the grave, as an extension of *this* life.

Yet, "the gospel is not a message of personal salvation *from* the world but a message of *a world transfigured, right down to its basic structures* [his italics]"⁴³⁶ the final overthrowing of Satan (Luke 10 v18) is linked to *the disciples' actions in overthrowing* [my italics].⁴³⁷ There must be no artificial separation between a personal transformation and the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God. The transformation of the world is effected through the transformation of individuals. There will be no miraculous transformation of the world by divine action breaking into history apart from the divine action of the transformation of individual lives.

In cutting itself off from its Hebrew roots and embracing Platonic thought Christianity lost its eschatological hope for this world and surrendered its apocalyptic alternative

⁴³² Moltmann 1992:103

⁴³³ Moltmann 1992:112 tells of Pope John Paul II in a sermon preached in Nicaragua in 1983 in which he said that the priests of the church must not participate in the people's struggle for liberation, or in the building of the free Nicaragua, since their function was 'to prepare the people for eternal life.'

⁴³⁴ Longenecker 1999:36

⁴³⁵ Gaybba 1987:216

⁴³⁶ Walter Wink quoted in Myers 1995:49

⁴³⁷ Bruton 1967:76ff

which has ultimately resulted in the present misunderstanding of Christian eschatology, hope and faith. With the acceptance of Platonic thought 'God's eternity' came to supplant 'God's future', 'heaven' replaced 'the coming kingdom'.⁴³⁸ 'God's eternity' leads us to an understanding of the Parousia that is the earthly return of that part of heaven (Jesus) that visited us for a while. 'God's future' would understand the Parousia as the fulfilment of the incarnation in all people and all of society combining what Paul says, "that day when we all reach to the full stature of Christ" (Ephesians 4 v13), and what John sees, when the 'dwelling place of God is with man' (Revelation 21v3).

In speaking to the differing understandings of what the life everlasting is about, we must remember what Ernst Bloch, the Marxist philosopher said, "Nothing serves as an answer, which has not previously been asked. That is why so much that is clear remains unseen, just as though it were not there."⁴³⁹ The more Platonic understanding of the immortality of the spirit is the answer seen from the perspective of having more worries about mortality (and martyrdom) than life in this world. The coming kingdom as the transformation of this world is the answer relevant to those struggling on the receiving end of society, and those hoping for the transformation of this world. 'Believing in the life everlasting' is the answer to the question of why I would lay down my life, my wealth, prestige or status, for something that I might not participate in. Nevertheless the answer for theology lies in the amalgamation of the two ideas "Anyone who sees this world and the next in the Christian hope as an either-or is robbing that hope of both the courage to live and consolidation in dying."⁴⁴⁰

William Barclay uses a very modern,⁴⁴¹ teleological argument against the common understanding of ideas like apocalypse, rapture and the ultimate destruction of the earth.⁴⁴² He says that the universe is reasonable, has a telos (end) and therefore a purpose, and therefore progress, potentials and aspirations must be for a reason other

⁴³⁸ see Moltmann 1992:89 for a complete handling of this.

⁴³⁹ Thielicke 1968:245

⁴⁴⁰ Moltmann 1992:112 Quite apart from what is 'scientifically', 'historically' or 'factually' true. The truth lies in the ability to work, motivate, experience and arrive at the eschaton, providing hope and meaning for people.

⁴⁴¹ 'Modern' understood as distinguishing from post-modern, not as meaning up-to-date. Of course this was written in the late 1960s.

⁴⁴² 'Common' albeit modern, the most common ideas of eschatology cannot be traced back further than Darby and Scofield. They were not the church's understanding of eschatology for the first 1800 years of its being. For a complete study of this see Craig Hill's *In God's time*

than destruction.⁴⁴³ There are however a host of more solid reasons to debunk these extremist views of eschatology.⁴⁴⁴ Any idea of time table is a gross misinterpretation of biblical texts (and even some biblical texts point to that).⁴⁴⁵ The rapture is quite un-Christian using greed, fear and triumphalism to manipulate people. The tribulation uses fear similarly in what Migliore terms “apocalyptic terrorism”.⁴⁴⁶ None of this has any theology of the cross and none of it calls people to any real form of responsibility for their actions towards other people and the planet. They are a gross misrepresentation of the Christian hope.

...unless they are understood as symbolic. All the graphic images of power (e.g. stars, sun, darkness, ‘falling from the sky’) and violence (e.g. wars, rumours of wars, earthquakes) contained within the apocalyptic genre convey to us that the transformation from this world to the new⁴⁴⁷ world is not going to come easily or without great cost. Those living by the values of the new world, within the old, do so at great cost to themselves (here is the cross at the centre of our discipleship), but in the belief that it is nether meaningless, nor hopeless (here is the resurrection and the hope of life everlasting).

Apocalyptic discourse is not deterministic. It does not provide a road-map of the future or an eschatological timetable. Its very nature is to show that, despite the certainty of ‘the light burning in the darkness’ history is open.⁴⁴⁸

Apocalyptic has nothing to do with holding the carrot of eternity before the believer’s nose.... The precise *raison d’être* for apocalyptic is to deny the imminence of easy victory, to force Jews and Christians alike to accept the agony of history, the birth pangs of creation... the total effect of the ever-retreating horizon of fulfilment is to support a mood of genuine hope amid frustration... Mature faith accepts the enduring struggle that historical existence entails... Genuine apocalypse has always functioned as a warning against the presumption of man”⁴⁴⁹

The Holy Spirit is intimately linked to our future and what we can become, and that future is represented in the creed as the life everlasting. So much so that Tilby can assert that, “The greatest threat to belief in the Holy Spirit is the conviction that our

⁴⁴³ Barclay 1969:365

⁴⁴⁴ For a more complete handling of this (which is beyond the scope of this work) see *In His Time* by Craig Hill, a very readable and thorough look at eschatology.

⁴⁴⁵ See Ched Myers’ *Binding the Strong Man* for a more complete handling of this in terms of Mark 13.

⁴⁴⁶ Migliore 1991:235

⁴⁴⁷ “new’ here can be understood as being fundamentally different in nature, and does not necessarily mean that there is no continuity with the old, nor that the old has been destroyed and replaced with a completely separate entity. Think ‘Old South Africa; New South Africa’.

⁴⁴⁸ Myers 1988:340

⁴⁴⁹ Quoted in Myers 1988:340,341

fate is already sealed.”⁴⁵⁰ Believing in the life everlasting means that, “our future is still genuinely open. It is still being worked out and we are a part of the working... What is important is that we remain open to the transformation going on within humankind.”⁴⁵¹

The Spirit and the Life Everlasting

To understand ‘believing in the life everlasting’, it is imperative to have a fuller understanding of the Holy Spirit. The statement is after all placed within the third article of the creed.

The kingdom more than being a place was a metaphor for where the values of God held sway, “a mode of being, a quality of existence, a condition of life that is the consequence of the intersubjectivity the Spirit authored first and foremost between son and father.”⁴⁵² We could use the same definition for ‘the life everlasting’. Critically though he unpacks the relationship between the Spirit and freedom, “Freedom is not only a gift of the Spirit; *it is what the Spirit is*. [my italics] It recreates its own traits in those who welcome it. So as Paul notes ‘where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.’ 2Cor 3:18.”⁴⁵³

This freedom can be found both in the church and the world, and can be absent from both. It is a freedom both to act within the law, and where necessary to break the law. It is a freedom from guilt, from death, for peace, for hope and for justice. It is a freedom that can thrive despite opposition, failure and deficiencies. Consequently it brings courage and comfort, empowering and encouraging people to be involved in the turmoil of making all the world also share in that freedom.

It is the very experience of the Spirit that causes,

the eschatological longing for the completion of salvation, the redemption of the body and the new creation of all things. Impelled by the Spirit; Christians cry ‘Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus!’ (Rev 22v20) It is the experience of the Spirit which makes

⁴⁵⁰ Tilby 1985:97

⁴⁵¹ Tilby 1985:98

⁴⁵² Haughey 1973:18

⁴⁵³ Haughey 1973:75

Christians in every society restless and homeless, and on the search for the kingdom of God (Heb 13v14) for it is this experience of God which makes them controvert and contravene a godless world of violence and death.⁴⁵⁴

This should be the longing of everyone who calls themselves Christian. It is the heart of true development. Moreover, “the more deeply the presence of this Spirit is experienced in the heart and in fellowship with one another, the more certain and assured the hope for the Spirit’s universal coming will be.”⁴⁵⁵

It is the *present* experience of the Spirit, however incomplete, that convinces people of the certainty of their hope in the universal coming of the Spirit.⁴⁵⁶ “When freedom is close the chains begin to hurt.”

Gaybba believes that the Spirit’s primary purpose is not to equip for mission, but to be the eschatological gift, the gift of the end times, through which God and Christ are present to us.⁴⁵⁷ This gift and presence are however missional in nature, because they tend to induce their own traits in those who encounter (and nurture) them. To stress mission creates the misunderstanding that the purpose and the end are somehow external to the Spirit. As Gaybba points out that similarly Paul’s pneumatological emphasis is on the unity the Spirit creates between God, Christ and us. The Spirit indwelling in individuals brings about their sanctification, and through them the world’s. “The Spirit’s mission is to be the love that unites, and by uniting transforms all it unites.”⁴⁵⁸

While the world’s eschaton is pledged and therefore sealed, the working out of that is not. God, through the Holy Spirit draws people into to it through the loving, healing and transforming experience that it is.

The Interface of Christianity and Development

The Significance for Christianity

⁴⁵⁴ Moltmann 1992:73

⁴⁵⁵ Moltmann 1992:74

⁴⁵⁶ Moltmann 1992:75

⁴⁵⁷ Gaybba 1987:144

⁴⁵⁸ Gaybba 1987:141

There are a number of significant shifts in the predominant Christian thinking that are required to fully declare faith in the life everlasting. Principally these are returning to original understandings which have been lost through the influence of culture, and to a lesser extent theology building on theology and losing sight of its roots.

Michael Taylor is forthright in his assessment that a new theology, one that goes beyond existing classical, Western, evangelical and even liberation theologies is necessary.⁴⁵⁹ Essentially he sees that this new theology will not begin with a world fallen or ordered and in need of protection, but primarily with a, “chaotic, threatening, unformed and frightening disorder which has yet to be “created” or fashioned into a human world by inventive and creative women and men in collaboration with an inventive and creative God”⁴⁶⁰ This theology will centre on imagining what kind of a world is possible and how it can actually be effected from the given materials. “It will view with a new seriousness not the moral obligation to serve the poorest, but the creative strategy of starting at the most neglected and unpromising point with those regarded as unnecessary for any constructive enterprise.”⁴⁶¹

First and foremost we need to acknowledge the nature of God as “becoming not just being”,⁴⁶² and to recapture the idea of God as being in covenant partnership with people in the creation of the world. Both of these things point to the bigger issue that “being must not be separated from doing when addressing the question of identity,”⁴⁶³ in other words we should not try to ask, “Who is God?” but rather “Who is God and what is God doing?” The first question leads to simplistic answers of God’s omnipotence and omniscience, and critically to the problem of theodicy. “If there isn’t more to God, then there isn’t enough”.⁴⁶⁴

Given a corrupt, unjust and violent world, who God is can only be understood adequately if we understand God to be acting for the salvation of the world through the lives, choices and decisions of people. God is not permitting events such as tsunamis and the holocaust so much as working to prevent their reoccurrence and

⁴⁵⁹ Taylor 1995:157

⁴⁶⁰ Taylor 1995:157

⁴⁶¹ Taylor 1995:157

⁴⁶² Knight 1953:61

⁴⁶³ Myers 1995:24

⁴⁶⁴ Myers 1995:24 Myers covers this issue in some detail.

bringing healing in their wake.⁴⁶⁵ Consequently we cannot separate being Christian from doing Christian work (James 2 v26, 'faith without works is dead'). Acts of justice, healing and establishing the kingdom 'on earth as in heaven' are intrinsic to the Christian life.

Further the Christian concept of the trinity is one that is particularly useful in some respects, for it helps to define God as relational and God's character as fundamentally prescribed as self-giving love.⁴⁶⁶ As such it determines the starting point for all Christian action as being love, and therefore as being relational. Developmentally this is very significant for it defines each person in their own right, emphasises community over individuality, defines sin (and therefore poverty) as relational and ensures that we do not miss that *the* defining character of the life everlasting (and hence the Holy Spirit) is relational.⁴⁶⁷ The church must be heard as a clear voice within consumerist society saying that life is about community, and wholesome relationships. It must call for 'quality of life' to be redefined in terms of social, mental and spiritual development.⁴⁶⁸

Myers takes Trinitarian talk a step further in a manner that is critical to our discussion here, saying that the trinity helps us understand the doctrine of the creation more fully, "Creator and creation are in continuing relationship, distinct yet inseparably linked together in a relationship of love," concluding that, "the creation account is neither an example of the high God of traditional religion nor the blind clockmaker of the modern West."⁴⁶⁹ We are left with a God intimately connected with this world and its people, and within that relationship of love creating the kingdom and building the live everlasting as a universal experience.

It is the exodus story that provides the shape for the Old Testament, indeed for all scripture, and for this coming kingdom and everlasting life: freedom not slavery; justice rather than injustice; independence rather than dependence; freedom and their own land rather than oppression in someone else's land; fellowship instead of hierarchy and belonging rather than being owned.

⁴⁶⁵ Myers explains similarly that Jesus' identity cannot be fully understood apart from what he has done and is doing. Myers 1995:24

⁴⁶⁶ Nevertheless these points could as easily be made from a Unitarian understanding of God as love.

⁴⁶⁷ Myers 1999:24 provides some helpful insight here.

⁴⁶⁸ Korten 1990:133

⁴⁶⁹ Myers 1999:26

To talk of the life everlasting is clearly to talk eschatology, but as already discussed the eschatology peddled in for example the *Left Behind* series is seriously damaging to the life and mission of the church, unbiblical and feeding on fear and greed. The church must take the responsibility of teaching an eschatology of real depth and Christian hope, one that speaks to the life and the condition of this world. What is needed is an eschatology that feeds people's hope enabling and empowering them to continue, ever more faithfully, in the faith that they have. It must be remembered that in terms of transforming this world into the likeness of heaven Jesus and his disciples were singularly unsuccessful during that three year period of ministry. Yet, Jesus and his disciples did install the eschatological pledge of the Holy Spirit within the world, which makes the coming kingdom certain. We must do the same, build on that pledge and expand it until it is fulfilled.

The image of Jesus returning as judge at the end of time, must be consistent with the revelation that we already have of Jesus, and so we must be expecting the same Jesus who lived and died, still showing the same wounds, the same love, humility and compassion. The returning judge Jesus will not be the glorious imperial king. It is plain therefore that what will be judged, is the degree to which this world is filled with the Spirit (nature) of Jesus.

The Significance for Development

Even within development the most fundamental need is recognised as the need for just reconciliation, and the following of the teachings of love, brotherhood and tolerance.⁴⁷⁰ There has long been the recognition of the need for partnerships, good relationships and the responsible use of power, rather than hand-outs, subject-object relationships and domination. Christian thought pushes this even further to understand power as a responsibility towards the powerless, and people's finest role within society as willing, self-giving servants of others. None of this is entirely new to the field of development.

⁴⁷⁰ Korten 1990:189

Nevertheless belief in the life everlasting provides vision and encouragement through the assurance that the development dream of shalom is attainable, in this world and life.

Conclusion

As we have examined the third article of the creed we have seen that the Holy Spirit certainly bears significance for the field of development, but that there is nevertheless still a lot of theological work that needs to be done to bring the inherent developmental nature of the Christian faith to the fore.

Having said that we have identified that the church certainly has the resources, and the capabilities to effect a considerable, and perhaps decisive, contribution to the developmental work of bringing peace, justice, healing and wholeness to this life and world.

Perhaps we might address the church now and say that the 'ball is now in their court', but that would belie two things. First that there remains much research and education in ensuring that we don't end up with two streams of Christianity, the milk of popular Christianity and the meat of academically sound Christianity. Secondly, we remember that while we choose and live and decide and act, it remains the Spirit that effects, the Spirit that is like a light burning in the darkness which the darkness cannot put out, and so we can say with confidence that we believe...

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