“Poverty, Wealth and Ecology”: A Critical Analysis of a “World Council of Churches Project (2006-2013)”

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ABSTRACT

Long-standing ecumenical debates on the relationship between "Faith and Order" (what the church is) and "Life and Work" (what the church does) exist. Although these dimensions are inseparable, the emphasis is often placed on either the one or the other, such as either on Christian identity or on social responsibility. Similar tensions may be found in ecumenical discourse on "spirituality and society", between "ecumenical vision" and "social transformation", "Christianity and culture", or "faith and science".

This "relationship between ecclesiology and ethics" was investigated through a study process commissioned by the WCC at the Seoul convocation on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in 1990. This study was jointly conducted by Faith and Order (Unit 1) and Justice, Peace and Creation (Unit 111). Best and Robra (ed.) (1997:vii-x) observe that the aim of the study was to "heal the division between the Faith and Order and the Life and Work movements", i.e., "to explore the link between what the church *is* and what the church *does*" (cf. Conradie (ed.) 2013:40). The ethical dimension and assignation of the church is explored, as part of the church's "worship", its "confession of faith", and its "witness and service" in the world. The study process was based on two convictions, namely: (a) "that ethical reflection and action are intrinsic to the nature and life of the church" and (b) that "ecclesiology and ethics need to stay in dialogue by honouring and learning from the distinctive language and thought forms of each other" (Conradie (ed) 2013:40).

KEY WORDS

Changing Landscape

Church

Climate change

Development

Disunity

Domination

Ecclesiology

Ecological degradation

Ethics

Eucharist, communion

Exploitation

Faith

Indigenous people

Injustice

Justice

Koinonia

Liberation

Life

Order

Pollution

Poverty

Prosperity gospel

Tension

Unity

Visible Unity

Women

Work

Youth

ABBREVIATIONS

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
AGAPE	Alternative Globalisation Addressing Peoples and Earth
APRODEV	Association of Protestant Development
BEM	Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry
BUSA	Baptist Union of Southern Africa
CCA	Christian Conference of Asia
CCT	Christian Council of Tanzania
COP	Conference of Parties
CWM	Council of World Mission
CWME	Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
EA	Ecumenical Affirmation
EFSA	Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
FOCCISA	Fellowship for Christian Councils in Southern Africa
IMC	International Missionary Council

JPIC	Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCC	Pacific Conference of Churches
PROMCURA	Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa
PWE	Poverty, Wealth and Ecology
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SAFCEI	South African Faith Communities' Environment Institute
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TCTCV	The Church Towards a Common Vision
TTL	Together Towards Life
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC	World Council of Churches

WSCF	World Student Christian Federation
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO	World Trade Organisation

DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions. The work was done under the guidance of Professor Ernst Conradie, at the University of the Western Cape, Bellville Cape Town.

Jerome Edgar Bailey .....

In my capacity as supervisor of the candidate's thesis, I certify that the above statements are true to the best of my knowledge.

Professor Ernst Conradie ……..

Date: December 2020

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Chapter 1

"Poverty, Wealth and Ecology": A Critical Analysis of the World Council of Churches Project (2006-2013)

1.1 Introduction

This study will contribute to the ongoing discourse on the "relationship between ecclesiology and ethics". One may identify at least five dimensions of the modern ecumenical movement, namely, (a) mission, (b) "Life and Work"/"church and society", (c) "Faith and Order", (d) theological education, and (e) Christian worship. This relationship between ecclesiology and ethics prompted a project by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in the 1990's (cf. Best & Robra (eds.) 1997). The significance of this relationship was also the theme of a recent conference on the "state of ecumenical theology in the African context" hosted at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in June 2015 (cf. Conradie, Engdahl & Phiri 2015). This study endeavours to contribute to the ecumenical discourse on ecclesiology and ethics by offering a critical analysis of a study process on "Poverty, Wealth and Ecology" initiated by the Justice, Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation and Peace office of the WCC between its Porto Alegre (2006) and Busan (2013) assemblies.

The WCC's Poverty, Wealth and Ecology project addresses the relationship between two core aspects of the social responsibility of the church, namely – "*economic justice* and *environmental sustainability*". This has been captured in phrases such as "Towards a Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society" (at the Nairobi Assembly of the WCC in 1975) and "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation" (at the Vancouver Assembly of the WCC in 1983). It also builds on a document entitled, *Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth* (AGAPE), which served at the Porto Alegre Assembly in 2006. The connectedness between concerns over poverty, inequality, and economic injustices vis-à-vis, concerns over environmental degradation. These concerns are widely recognised in secular as well as ecumenical debates, including the South African context. However, there is often a tendency to emphasise the one over the other, i.e., a concern over population versus a concern over consumption, "feeding people" versus "saving nature", or the so-called "green" agenda (nature conservation) versus the "brown" agenda (social justice). How, therefore, should concerns over poverty, wealth, and ecological destruction be discussed together?

The research problem that will be addressed in this study is how this relationship between "ecclesiology and ethics" is expressed in observance of a series of booklets on "Poverty,

Wealth and Ecology", including perspectives from Latin America and the Caribbean (2009), Asia and the Pacific (2010), Europe (2011), Africa (2012), and North America (2012). More specifically, how this relationship between "ecclesiology and ethics" complements this set of documents, it will be compared with two other documents produced within the context of the WCC between its Porto Alegre (2006) and Busan (2013) assemblies, namely, *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (the product of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism) and *Towards a Common Vision of the Church* (the product of the Faith and Order Commission).

This comparison will be administered based on a close reading of the relevant ecumenical documents mentioned above and selective secondary material. The purpose of the project is therefore to assess whether the series of booklets on "Poverty, Wealth and Ecology" managed to maintain an appropriate balance between ecclesiology and ethics.

Having introduced the study in the discussion above, the next section provides the context and rationale for conducting this study.

1.2 Context and Relevance

Long-standing ecumenical debates on the relationship between "Faith and Order" (what the church is) and "Life and Work" (what the church does) exist. Although these dimensions are inseparable, the emphasis is often placed on either the one or the other, such as either on Christian identity or on social responsibility. Similar tensions may be found in ecumenical discourse on "spirituality and society", between "ecumenical vision" and "social transformation", "Christianity and culture", or "faith and science".

This "relationship between ecclesiology and ethics" was investigated through a study process commissioned by the WCC at the Seoul convocation on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in 1990. This study was jointly conducted by Faith and Order (Unit 1) and Justice, Peace and Creation (Unit 111). Best and Robra (ed.) (1997:vii-x) observe that the aim of the study was to "heal the division between the Faith and Order and the Life and Work movements", i.e., "to explore the link between what the church *is* and what the church *does*" (cf. Conradie (ed.) 2013:40). The exploration of the ethical dimension and assignation of the church are part of the church's "worship", its "confession of faith", and its "witness and service" in the world. The study process was based on two convictions, namely: (a) "that ethical reflection and action are intrinsic to the nature and life of the church" and (b) that "ecclesiology and ethics need to stay in dialogue by honouring and learning from the distinctive language and thought forms of each other" (Conradie (ed) 2013:40).

It explored the ethical dimension and engagement of the church, not as separate to the life of the church, but as part of its worship, its confession of faith, and its witness and service in the world. The study process was based on two convictions, namely: (a) that ethical reflection and action are intrinsic to the nature and life of the church, and (b) that ecclesiology and ethics need to stay in dialogue by honouring and learning from the distinctive language and thought forms of each other.

1.2.1 Ecumenical Discourse on Ecclesiology and Ethics

In this introductory chapter, a brief description of the ecumenical discourse on ecclesiology and ethics is provided. The study process was structured in the form of three consultations leading to three reports entitled, "Costly Unity" (hereafter referred to as CU) (Rønde, 1993), "Costly Commitment" (hereafter referred to as CC) (Tantur, 1994), and "Costly Obedience" (hereafter referred to as CO) (Johannesburg, 1996). The results of this study process were documented in an edited volume by Thomas Best and Martin Robra (1997) entitled, *Ecclesiology and Ethics: Ecumenical Ethical Engagement, Moral Formation and the Nature of the Church.* This will be expanded further in Chapter 2 under the heading: 'Ecumenical Discourse on Ecclesiology and Ethics', along with a brief history of the Faith and Order (hereafter referred to as F&O) and Life and Work (hereafter referred as L&W) movements under sub-heading 2.2.1. A discussion on CU, CC, and CO will also be provided. The three reports, the stages thereof, and how they contributed to the discourse on ecclesiology and ethics (section 2.2) are also described in more detail. This discourse attempted to integrate ecclesiology and ethics. The question remains whether such integration was successful?

Chapter 2 will also discuss South African discourse on ecclesiology and ethics (section 2.3). It is further argued that amidst the struggle against apartheid, a long-standing emphasis on "ethics" is observed, whilst concerns on the unique identity and vocation of the church (thus "ecclesiology") are expressed in its social responsibility beyond 1994. This concern was addressed in a more detailed project themed: "Ecumenical Studies and Social Ethics" registered at UWC (2012–2015). The project presented a series of workshops and conferences, it concluded with an international conference on "Ecclesiology and Ethics: The State of Ecumenical Theology in Africa", hosted in June 2015 at UWC. These "ecumenical" and "social ethics" studies form part of a larger project in the Department of Religion and Theology at UWC on Ecclesiology and Ethics.

A discussion on how the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics is understood is still ongoing. The arising concern is, will the church ever reach its desired unity and balanced

understanding of F&O and L&W?

1.2.2 Wider Ecumenical Discourse on Poverty and Ecology

Chapter 3 of this study offers a broad survey of a wider ecumenical dissertation on *life and work* in general, and on *poverty and ecology* in particular. A brief summary under the heading: 'Wider ecumenical discourse on poverty and ecology' on important events and conferences is offered. The ecumenical focus is on "ethics", and the Justice, Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation and Peace office of the WCC pioneered this study process between its Porto Alegre (2006) assembly and the Busan (2013) assembly.

The first section "Ecumenical discourse on ethics" (see section 3.1) offers a survey. This survey highlights issues around trade, finance, and the role of investments. These issues are presented in various ecumenical statements as observed in the study process on "Poverty, Wealth and Ecology" (see section 3.2). It becomes important for churches to reflect on the issues identified and propose a "greed line" vis-à-vis a "poverty line" definition (this is discussed in Chapter 4).

1.2.3 A Wider Discourse on Poverty and Ecology

The following section 'Wider discourse on poverty and ecology' (section 3.2) offers a brief historical survey of international developments on poverty and ecology with specific reference to the United Nations (UN) conferences on sustainable development. Against this background, a brief survey of theological literature on poverty and ecology is offered (section 3.3). This section investigates a theological discourse on poverty and ecology. This investigation is against the background of wider debates on poverty and ecology and UN processes regarding sustainable development. The discussion in this section (sub-section 3.3.1) focuses on selected theologians from Latin America (Leonardo Boff), India (Aruna Gnanadason), and Africa (Jesse Mugambi) who offered contributions on poverty and ecology. The following section: 'South African theological discourse on ethics (poverty and ecology)' (sub-section 3.3.2) investigates the theological discourse on poverty and ecology. This section offers valuable contributions by South African theological institutions i.e: The Ecumenical Foundation of South Africa (hereafter referred to as EFSA), and different church councils in South Africa. Attention then shifts to individual contributions by three South African theologians – Klaus Nürnberger, Nico Koopman, and the late Steve De Gruchy.

1.2.4 A Brief Summary

The study project on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology (hereafter referred to as PWE) has to

compete against a background of an international discourse on sustainability as well as the theological discourse on poverty and ecology. The study process may also be understood as an attempt to offer ecumenical inputs to and thus influence the current discourse, as well as ensure that issues around economic injustice and environmental destruction are addressed altogether. The question that has to be raised here is whether ecumenical discourse can make a distinctive contribution in this regard, one that cannot be offered by other role players in the secular sphere, or even by other faith-based organisations (FBO's). This observation indicates the scope of the problem in which this study is situated, particularly regarding ethics and ecclesiology. In other words, how is the relationship between poverty and ecology understood, especially in Christianity as a world religion? The next section provides the scope of the study.

1.3 Delimitation

In light of the above, the question that arises is how the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics is understood in the series of booklets on PWE, including perspectives from Latin America and the Caribbean (2009), Asia and the Pacific (2010), Europe (2011), Africa (2012), and North America (2012). Given that the study focusses on the social agenda of the church, one may expect that a focus on "ethics" will prevail in its outcomes. In order to profile the "ecclesiology" embedded in this series of booklets, it may be helpful to compare this with two other documents produced within the context of the WCC between its Porto Alegre (2006) and Busan (2013) assemblies, namely: *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (hereafter referred to as TTL) (the product of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism) (WCC 2013b) and *The Church Towards a Common Vision* (hereafter referred to as TCTCV) (the product of the F&O Commission) (WCC 2013a) (see Chapter 4).

Given these wider debates on ecclesiology and ethics, it would be interesting to compare the documents on "Poverty, Wealth and Ecology" with these two other WCC documents from the same period. To this end, a brief background of these two ecumenical documents is provided.

1.3.1 The Church Towards a Common Vision: Faith and Order Paper 214 (TCTCV)

This study document generated by the WCC's Faith and Order Commission addresses issues faced by the church and how to overcome any obstacles by lifestyle that express the Lord's gift of communion. TCTCV (WCC 2013a:1) attempts to serve the calling of the church to a

visible unity noticeable through one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship. This is also further expressed in worship and a common life in Christ through service and witness to the world, advancing towards unity so that the world might believe. This document shows how Christ loves the church and shares His mission, bringing light and healing to humanity and the environment until He reappears. This study document is the final outcome of a process that entailed years of study and dialogue. It addresses an extended trajectory of F&O reflections on the church. A fresh driving force was added at the 5th World Conference on F&O in 1993 when the initial outcome of this study process was published in *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*. At the 2006 WCC Assembly in Porto Alegre, a revised version of this document was presented under the title, "The Nature and Mission of the Church". This current study document, TCTCV (WCC 2013a) brings the F&O reflections on the church to a provisional completion. The commission was confident that these reflections reached maturity and it can be acknowledged as a convergence text. At the WCC's central committee meeting in Greece (2012) received this study document and recommended it to its member churches to study and provide feedback (WCC 2013a:43-46) (cf. Chapter 5). The link between ecclesiology and ethics as expressed in this document will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 (section 5.3).

1.3.2 Together Towards Life (TTL)

Ever since the integration of the IMC and the WCC in New Delhi in 1961, there has only been one position statement on evangelism and mission, a document entitled, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* which was approved in 1982 by the central committee. Since the WCC Porto Alegre in 2006, The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) has been working toward the construction of a new ecumenical mission affirmation. After an extensive study process, the WCC central committee at its meeting in Greece in 2012 approved a new ecumenical mission statement entitled, "Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes" which was presented to the 10th WCC Assembly in Busan in 2013.

This document seeks a renewed vision, appropriate concepts, and a sense of direction to understand and practice mission and evangelism in changing landscapes (WCC 2013b:3). It provides an important hermeneutical key in the church's prophetic witness towards society and its participation in good governance. Ecclesiology and good governance are discussed in the context of a missional church (cf. Chapter 6).

In this study, a comparison of the way in which the relationship between ecclesiology and

ethics is understood in these three ecumenical documents will be provided. The significance of the study in widening circles (WCC discourse on these documents and for the discourse on ecclesiology and ethics) will also be enunciated. This is followed by a conclusion (cf. Chapter 7).

A description of the problem that this study seeks to address is presented next.

1.4 Research Problem

This study focuses on the way in which the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics is understood in the series of booklets on "Poverty, Wealth and Ecology", including perspectives from Latin America and the Caribbean (2009), Asia and the Pacific (2010), Europe (2011), Africa (2012), and North America (2012). The relationship between ecclesiology and ethics can best be understood through a comparison with two other documents produced within the context of the WCC between its Porto Alegre (2006) and Busan (2013) assemblies, namely: *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (the product of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism) and *Towards a Common Vision of the Church* (the product of the Faith and Order Commission).

On this basis, the problem statement of this study is formulated as follows:

> How is the relationship between "ecclesiology" and "ethics" understood in the series of booklets on "Poverty, Wealth and Ecology" initiated by the office of the WCC for "Justice, Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation and Peace" in comparison with two other ecumenical documents produced by the World Council of Churches between its Porto Alegre (2006) and Busan (2013) Assemblies, namely *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* and *Towards a Common Vision of the Church.*

This research problem requires an identification of similarities and differences in the ways in which the tension between ecclesiology and ethics is maintained in the three documents produced by the WCC. Given the nature of these three documents, one would expect that the tension between ecclesiology and ethics is at least acknowledged in all the documents. Each document would need to attend to contemporary ethical concerns as well as to the nature and mission of the church, to what the church is and what the church does. However, one would also expect some differences in how this tension between ecclesiology and ethics is maintained. The task of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC is to call the church to "visible unity – one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common

life in Christ, through witness and service to the world advancing towards unity so that the world may believe". One would therefore expect the study document *Towards a Common Vision of the Church* to maintain an emphasis on ecclesiology. It would acknowledge ethics but may well tend to bracket its significance and avoid any detailed ethical implications. By contrast, one may expect that ecclesiology will be bracketed in the set of booklets on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology, so that the emphasis will be on ethics. The question is then whether the missiological text of *Together Towards Life* is able to maintain a better balance in this regard. Wherever this balance is distorted, this will have significance for theological reflection, ethics, and ecclesial praxis alike. More specifically, to underplay the significance of ecclesiology may undermine the specific contributions that churches could make in addressing the poverty and ecology nexus, contributions that no other institution can make. Instead, there may be a tendency to repeat what is said in a secular context.

The next section unpacks the research procedure and steps followed in this study.

1.5 Procedure

The procedure in this study involves a reading, description, interpretation, and critical analysis of the relevant literature as indicated below:

- **Step one**

A first necessary step offers a brief description of the ecumenical discourse on ecclesiology and ethics. The primary literature includes official publications of the World Council of Churches on ecclesiology and ethics, three reports on "Costly Unity" (Rønde, 1993), "Costly Commitment" (Tantur, 1994), and "Costly Obedience" (Johannesburg, 1996) included in an edited volume by Best and Robra (1997). Some supplementary literature will include Conradie (2013, 2005), and the Ecumenical Review (2015). This brief description of ecumenical discourse on ecclesiology and ethics will be documented in Chapter 2.

- **Step two**

The next step in this study offers a broad survey of the wider ecumenical discourse on "life and work" in general, and on "poverty and ecology" in particular. In this regard, the following contributions are reflected on: Rasmussen (1993); Mugambi (1987; 2001); Rolston (1996); De Gruchy (2007a; 2007b); Ki-Moon (2015a, 2005b); Boff (1995; 1997; 2012; 2014; 2015); Gnanadason (2005); Koegelenberg (1993; 1994; 1995; 2001); Conradie, Mtetwa and Warmback (eds.) (2002), Nürnberger (1998; 1999; 2011); Koopman (2015); and De Gruchy (2007a, 2007b). The results are provided in Chapter 3.

- **Step three**

Against this background, the study then focuses on a detailed critical analysis of the ways in which the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics is understood.

The investigation will commence with the series of booklets on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology initiated by the WCC's Justice Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation and Peace office. This study process includes five regional consultations that build on a global consultation of Poverty, Wealth and Ecology. These booklets deal with structural causes that are intertwined with problems that escalate poverty, inequality, and environmental destruction globally. The booklets edited by Mshana (2009; 2012); Peralta (2010); Pavlovic (ed.) (2011); and Kennedy (ed.) (2012) serve as the primary source, supported by supplementary literature referred to in Chapter 3. This critical analysis will be documented in Chapter 4.

- **Step four**

The next step explores the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics as expressed in the study document by the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (TCTCV) (WCC 2013a). This will be done against the background of a long trajectory of Faith and Order reflections on the nature of the church (cf. Best & Robra (eds.) (1997); Raiser (1996); Forrester (1997). Supplementary literature in this step will include reflections by individual theologians on the significance of these specific Faith and Order texts. The results will be documented in Chapter 5.

- **Step five**

This will be followed by a similar step in which the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics as expressed in the study document by the CWME, *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (WCC, 2013b) will be investigated. This will be done against the background of similar mission documents produced by the CWME, supplemented by critical reflections on the significance of *Together Towards Life* (cf. Keum (ed.) 2013; Niemandt 2015). The findings of such a critical analysis will be documented in Chapter 6.

- **Step six**

On the basis of these three core steps of the study that offers a detailed critical analysis of the ways in which the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics is understood in these three ecumenical documents produced between the 2006 Porto Alegre and the 2013 Busan assemblies of the WCC, a comparison of the similarities and differences between these three documents is then provided. This will address the research problem as stated above, namely,

whether a proper balance between ecclesiology and ethics is maintained in these three documents. No additional material will be considered in this process. This comparison will be documented as Chapter 7 of the thesis, serving as the final discussion with a concluding remark.

As with all studies, there are certain limitations. The next section thus acknowledges the limitations of this study.

1.6 Conclusion

This research project will focus on relevant literature by selected authors on ecclesiology and ethics published since 1993 to 2017 in English and Afrikaans (given their language abilities), including books, journal articles, online articles, essays in edited volumes, church documents, etcetera. Due to the vast amount of available writings on this topic, an exhaustive study in this regard is beyond the scope of this research project, as only a limited selection of texts can be reviewed. It is important to note that this study will focus on ecclesiology and ethics in Christian theology only, and not on theological reflections in the context of other religious traditions.

Chapter 2

Ecumenical Discourse on Ecclesiology and Ethics

2.1 Introduction

For many years, ongoing efforts were directed at overcoming the deep tensions within the ecumenical movement. These tensions paved the way for the WCC's study on ecclesiology and ethics. The trajectory of the study was geared towards unity in the traditional F&O approach, primarily through doctrinal agreement. Ethical issues (the traditional Life and Work approach) were secondary. The ecumenical church continuously wrestled with the relationship between the nature and mission of the church as well as social concerns. It was crucial to keep all these aspects together. Forrester (1997:92-93) notes a few examples, including the theological declaration of Barmen (1934), and the South African struggle against apartheid (cf. Conradie (ed.), 2013:39-40).[1] These examples explain that the support for evil structures is warranted through heresy. The prophetic witness against such structures however requires an authentic Christian stance and a liberating praxis. In kind, the divisive issues in society are also divisive issues within the church. This notion exposes that domination in the name of gender, race, class, culture, or sexual orientation is indeed an ecclesiological and not only an ethical issue. Similar tensions are of note amid the ecumenical discourse on spirituality and society, between ecumenical vision and social transformation, Christianity and culture, and faith and science.

The dominance of the social agenda of the church provoked responses that called for reflection on the distinctive contributions of churches. The primary source that will be used in this chapter is a final report published under the theme: *Ecclesiology and Ethics*: *Ecumenical Ethical Engagement, Moral Formation and the Nature of the Church.* This is an edited work by Best and Robra (1997), providing the results of three consultations between 1992 and 1996. The significance and developments of these consultations are also described in this chapter.

[1] According to Conradie (ed) (2013:39), the support for evil structures is legitimised through heresy, while prophetic witness against such structures requires an authentic Christian stance and a liberating praxis. He argues that the ecumenical reflections on the mission of the church identify a tendency to underplay distinct contributions the church can make. Similarly, in relation to the reflections on the nature of the faith and order of the church – a tendency to avoid decisive controversies on what the mission (social agenda) of the church in society is, are observed.

2.2 Ecumenical Discourse on Ecclesiology and Ethics[2]

The Seoul convocation on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in 1990 discourse on ecclesiology and ethics has a long history (Conradie 2013:40). According to Ernst Conradie (2013:40), ecclesiological assumptions of the conciliar process became a bone of contention. These tensions warranted the WCC to commission a study project on "ecclesiology and ethics". This study project (ecclesiology and ethics) was jointly conducted by F&O (Unit I) and Justice, Peace and Creation (hereafter referred as JPIC) (Unit III). This joint venture explored the link between *what the church is* and *what the church does*. The ethical dimension and engagement of the church was explored, not as separate to the life of the church but as part and parcel of its worship, its confession of faith, and its witness. This study attempted to heal divisions between the F&O and L&W movements (Best & Robra (eds.), 1997:vii). The *Church and World* study document thereto provides a good theological foundation on how ecclesiology relates to ethics. This study document (*Church and World*) illustrates that the unity of the church cannot be separated from its witness and service. It further argues that the calling of the church is tightly connected to its vocation. This supports the idea that the unity of the church has a positive role to play in society.

Some key issues relating to justice and peace in human communities have been raised in the study document. The notion of *koinonia* appears central, as it attempts to bring ecclesiology and ethics together. This emphasises that the church cannot be the church without ethics. From an ecclesiological perspective, the study process on *Ecclesiology and Ethics* reveals a language of *koinonia*, of hope and memory, Eucharist, and Baptism in the church. In addition, *koinonia* from an ethical perspective involves the notion of the church as that of a "moral community" (cf. Best & Robra (eds.), 1997:vii-ix). Voiced during the 1990's grew stronger (from both sides) that these two (ecclesiology and ethics) belong together. There is as strong argument that the tension between the struggles for unity and justice should be overcome. Different sides opine that the notion of *koinonia* be cultivated strongly. The foci of *koinonia* is therefore an attempt to fruitfully bring ecclesiological and ethical concerns together. The next few paragraphs offer a brief history on the F&O and L&W movements,

[2] Mahokoto (2014:9) holds that the term "ecclesiology" refers to the church and its doctrines pertaining to unity, *koinonia*, hope and memory, Eucharist, and Baptism. Furthermore, "ethics" refers to or involves particularly the notions of the church as a "moral community" (one which necessarily struggles, in the light of the gospel, with issues of moral import) and of "moral formation", that includes the training in ethical decision-making and discernment which comes through formal church teaching, but more pervasively, through the whole array of church life, and not least through its worship. Among a range of other ethical concerns addressed are reconciliation and justice issues in church and society.

which is crucial in understanding the trajectory in the study project.

2.2.1 The Faith and Order[3] and Life and Work[4] Movements

The following sections cover F&O and L&W movements.

a) The Faith and Order movement

The F&O movement was integrated into the WCC as a commission with representatives that were not necessarily member churches of the WCC. The world conferences of the F&O movement were held in Lausanne (1927), Edinburg (1937), Lund (1952), and Montreal (1963). The fifth world conference was held thirty years later in Santiago de Compostela (1993). The commission in the interim worked on three themes, namely: (a) an understanding of the apostolic faith, (b) mutual recognition of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, and (c) common ways of decision making. Reports thereof were served at meetings of the full plenary commission in Louvain (1971), Accra (1974), Bangalore (1978), Lima (1982), Stavanger (1985), Budapest (1989), Moshi (1996), and Kuala Lumpur (2004) (Conradie 2013:25-27). Conradie (2013:26) states that the major achievements of these commissions are undoubtedly the publication of two brief documents, namely: *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Lima, 1982) and *Confessing the One Faith* (1991). It challenges the widespread perception that "doctrine divides" but a common service might unite churches worldwide (cf. Conradie (ed.) 2013:40; Smith 2007:240-241).

b) The Life and Work movement

Amidst some dramatic social challenges in Europe, two conferences on L&W took place in Stockholm (1925) and Oxford (1937). Conradie (2013:27) notes that the phrase "life and work" expresses the determination of the organisers[5] of these early conferences to propose the Christian "way of life" as a response to the world's "greatest needs". Paul Albrecht (cf. Conradie 2013:27) affirms that the strength of Stockholm (1925) was its recognition that "the world is too strong for a divided church" and its weakness was its deliberate avoidance of theological differences, with its assumptions that "doctrine divides while service unites".

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[3] The focus of F&O has been on the visible unity of churches in the whole world (globally and locally). Faith and order always understand that "efforts toward manifesting the unity of the church and "efforts towards common witness and service in the world" "should be held together" (Smit 2007:240).

[4] L&W relates to furthering justice in the world. For those involved in L&W, ecclesiological issues, including the visible unity of the church, were often regarded as irrelevant, and in some cases, even obstructive, but in any case, secondary. At the most, ecclesial unity is regarded as necessary for practical reasons to make the collective efforts of the churches stronger – in the face of enormous social, political, and economic challenges (Smit 2007:240).

[5] These conferences were organised under the leadership of Nathan Söderblom.

Conradie (2013:27) indicates that these weaknesses were rectified by the time of the Oxford (1937) conference. This rectification was caused through valuable input by Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Reinhold Niebuhr, William Temple, and Joseph Oldham. This valuable scholarly input integrated both an ethical focus and theological reflection.

The project on Ecclesiology and Ethics explores the link between what the church is and what the church does. This was prompted by the situation that the ecumenical discourse on F&O and Life and Work became disjointed.[6] This project was structured in the form of three consultations; each consultation produced a report known as "Costly Unity", "Costly Commitment", and "Costly Obedience", respectively. The next section provides a brief description of each report.

2.2.2 "Costly Unity", "Costly Commitment", and "Costly Obedience"

Best and Robra (ed.) (1997:ix) offer all three reports, namely, on CU, CC, and CO, in one convenient volume. This volume is a ground-breaking study on ecclesiology and ethics, motivated and published by the WCC. This ecumenical enquiry explores the relationship between what the church *is* and what the church *does*. This "litany of the costlies" offers fresh insights into critical issues, especially for those seeking a renewed vision of the ecumenical movement. The next few paragraphs offer insights into the three reports, and their stages and contributions to the discourse on ecclesiology and ethics.

- **"Costly Unity"**

Best and Robra (eds.) (1997) discuss the notion of "costly unity" at length. To remain within the scope if this study, this section will, however, not reflect on all the material covered in the primary source but offer a brief descriptive overview.

Best and Robra (eds.) (1997:2-19) note that the first consultation was hosted from 24-28 February 1993 in Rønde, Denmark, under the theme CU. The purpose of this consultation included the need to address "long lived tensions and divisions" (cf. Smit 2007:241) within the ecumenical movement and churches. This consultation links two separate wings of the ecumenical quest, as represented in the F&O and L&W movements. CU affirms that from its very beginning, the unity movement wrestled with issues of ecumenical social witness and action. It states that the being of the church is at stake in the JPIC process. The *Costly Unity*

[6] The Vancouver assembly of the WCC (1983) stated the problem: "For some, the search for unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship seem, at best secondary, at worst irrelevant to the struggles for peace, justice and human dignity; for others, the church's political involvement against the evils of history seems at best secondary, at worst detrimental to its role as Eucharistic community and witness to the gospel" (quoted in Kinnamon 2003:37-38).

report identifies an interconnection between a visible unity of the church and the quest for justice, peace, and caring for creation. These are observed and illustrated as follows:

> The church as *koinonia* is called to share not only in the suffering of its own community but in the suffering of all; by advocacy and care for the poor, needy and marginalised; by joining all efforts for justice and peace within human societies; by exercising and promoting responsible stewardship of creation and keeping alive hope in the heart of humanity.[7]

The first section of the report, CU, engages the JPIC process, and pays specific attention to the church as a "moral community". This report states that the being of the church is at stake in the JPIC process. According to the CU report, the moral thrust of JPIC is not only related to the nature and function of the church, but it can be described from the experience of the church's own nature. *Koinonia* is coined as an appropriate term for both ecclesiology and ethics. This report argues that the church not only *has* but *is* a social ethic and a *koinonia* ethic. The major part of the document consists of an exposition under different headings on the nature of such *koinonia* and its implications. The report states that "cheap unity" avoids morally contested issues as it disturbs the unity of the church. CU, therefore, discovers church unity as a gift of pursuing justice and peace. This unity can only be acquired at a price as the JPIC process often borne testimony to CU and its enemy – *cheap unity*[8] (e.g., repentance without forgiveness, baptism without discipleship). CU discovers the churches' unity as a gift of pursuing justice and peace. The CU report states that the church in its whole being as a community helps to foster a sacramental orientation towards life. As the church understands itself, its being, its mission and witness, there is no better way to begin than with the moral meaning of the sacraments themselves. The bridge between ecclesiology and ethics was to be found in the experience of worship and the deepening of spirituality. This report insightfully contributed (a few months later at Santiago de Compostela) to the role *koinonia* would play in the life of the church, its congregations, and the ecumenical movement. A second joint meeting has been planned, as the idea of the church as a moral community was unclear and led to many questions and criticisms (Best & Robra (ed.) 2007:18-19). The CU report accentuates the interconnection between the visible unity of the church and the quest for justice, peace, and caring for creation as articulated in the so-called *Koinonia in Faith, Life and Witness* discussion paper that states:

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7 cf. Best and Robra (eds.) 1997. *Ecclesiology and Ethics: Ecumenical Ethical Engagement, Moral Formation and Nature of the Church.* Geneva: WCC. p. 3.

8 "Cheap Unity" – avoids morally contested issues, as it will disturb the unity of the church. Their reflection is forgiveness without repentance, Baptism without discipleship, life without daily dying and rising in a household of faith (the *oikos*) that is to be the visible sign of God's desire for the whole inhabited earth (the *oikoumene*). See Best & Robra (1997:6).

> The church as *koinonia* is called to share not only in the suffering of its own community but in the suffering of all; by advocacy and care for the poor, needy and marginalised; by joining all efforts for justice and peace within human societies; by exercising and promoting responsible stewardship of creation and keeping alive hope in the heart of humanity.[9]

The term *koinonia* in the New Testament is used in reference to the interaction and sharing of believers within the local community as it references a concrete community of obedience. In belonging to this community of obedience and our continual baptism, one is constantly reminded to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. The choice of belonging to this community implies constant moral choices. Churches and the ecumenical movement and other religious communities have become moral agents that direct and steer moral communities to be morally good citizens (Best & Robra (ed.) 1997:8-9). American theologian Larry Rasmussen (1995:182) holds that one of the church's vocational tasks is to form moral character. He argues that this is not the only task, but it is a crucial one for the church. Rasmussen identifies that when the church assists in the formation of moral character and shapes moral judgments and actions, it then functions as a moral community.

The CU report identifies the significance of the church unity and social context with reference to *koinonia.* Emphasised is the notion of *koinonia* with no boundaries. This report assists the church to understand that the unity it seeks is costly and that it must express itself in a social context, its witness, and thereby respond to JPIC issues. With this in mind, churches are reminded to engage themselves in witness in social contexts.

- **"Costly Commitment"**

CC, as noted by Best and Robra (eds.) (1997:24-48), was the second consultation that took place at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Israel in November 1994. At Rønde in Denmark, the church was affirmed as a "moral community". This affirmation led to more debate and concerns, and at Tantur, the description of the church as a "moral community" was revisited. Emphasis was placed on the calling and vocation of the church as well as the notions of "moral formation" and "discernment." Jointly, both the ecumenical movement and churches have learned to reflect and act together. Together through the gospel message and witness of that coming kingdom which God offered to the whole world and creation, hope is promised. It is noted that continued divisions on important matters of faith, order, life, and work have often prevented the churches from offering a unified witness on crucial ethical issues. The divisions among churches reveal their "broken" *koinonia* as it hampers its prophetic mission

[9] cf. Best and Robra (ed.), *Ecclesiology and Ethics*, p. 3.

and service in the world. Historically, from the 1930's, the ecumenical movement was unable to unite the European churches; this was up to the establishment of the World Council of Churches in 1948. The Third World Conference on F&O in Lund issued the following challenge:

> Should not our churches … act together in all matters except in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately?[10]

According to Best and Robra (eds.) (1997:3), the church and society in the Middle East, in Western Europe, and in North America have diminished in their moral influence that resulted in a breakdown of values necessary for a healthy "civil society". It is expected that churches commit themselves to one another and to a road of *costly unity,* which leads through a *costly commitment* of churches to one another. This commitment, on the one hand, has been expressed in a growing consensus on the need to affirm and emphasise the ethical character of the church over and against those who were previously wary of "moral reductionism". This commitment is further expressed by a concern for an *ecclesial* renewal among those deeply engaged in ethical praxis. One may say that the struggle for both unity and justice is best captured in the term *koinonia.* Hoedemaker (1993:6) notes that the question is not only which ethical issues are causing divisions (from a F&O perspective), but under what conditions ecumenical encounters on ethical issues can generate *koinonia* (from a L&W perspective). Those who have previously been wary of "moral reductionism" had to commit themselves to the ethical character of the church. Those deeply engaged in ethical praxis only had to commit themselves to ecclesial renewal (cf. Hoedemaker 1993:7; Smit 2007:241).

As noted by Conradie (ed.) (2013:43), both ecclesiology and ethics have to engage with the hard realities of injustices, violence, and destruction in a world that confesses to be the triune God's beloved creation. Where the narrowed focus is on soteriology or ecclesiology alone, or where ethics is approached on the basis of social analysis alone – the transforming power of the gospel will indeed be lost. There is clearly a need for the ecumenical movement and churches to unite, and commit to the call, but unfortunately it is costly (a narrative of consensus is required). Obedience is therefore required – a costly obedience.

- **"Costly Obedience"**

The CO consultation took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 19 to 23 June, 1996, and was the third and final meeting. The theme of "moral formation" was pursued by asking: "What does it mean to speak of the church as a global communion of moral witnessing?"

[10] Best and Robra (ed.), *Ecclesiology and Ethics*, p. 25.

Best and Robra (ed.) (1997:50-87) acknowledge that obedience can be costly. This statement affirms that the obedience to which the churches have been called to may require a positioning to the issues of times and places, thereby calling for courage, perseverance, and sacrifice. Such faithfulness can be closely linked to martyrdom. The consultation found it necessary but difficult to interpret the particular times and places, and did that in terms of globalisation. The document discusses at length the meaning of moral formation[11] in the world; the churches' moral formation and ethics[12] in the face of nationalistic, ethnic, and economic violence; and the grounding of the churches' moral formation[13] in the Eucharist[14] and baptism[15]. Finally, it presents the idea of an ecumenical moral communion.[16]

As stated by Best and Robra (ed.) (1997:87), the WCC, if possible in concert with other ecumenical bodies, should continue to promote the mutual development of such a visible moral community, thereby moving towards a vision of the church as "moral household of life". They note that, for this purpose, an enhanced communication system amongst churches, congregations, and persons committed to the vision is needed. A network of moral communication among the churches could begin to function as a kind of "third force" to counter the domination of purely economic and political energies. Such an initiative includes critical, provisional alliances with others that seek these compatible goals. According to Best

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11 Moral formation is a nurturing process in which a certain sense of identity, a certain recognition of community, and a certain pattern of motivation evolve. Such formation can be the gradual work of culture and upbringing, or it may be self-conscious and intentional (Best & Robra (ed.) 1997:53).

12 Best and Robra noted that "morality" and "ethics" are close synonyms. "Morality" refers to patterns of actual conduct, whereas 'ethics' refers to systematic, often academic reflection on the conduct. "Moral reflection" or "moral reasoning" can refer to the thoughtful formulation of rules of conduct in the context of given traditions of life or spheres of communal experience. Ethics, on the other hand, is a field of study which seeks conceptual models for reasoning about the perennial moral questions of human existence, as well as dilemmas emerging in our century for the first time (Best & Robra (ed.) 1997:53).

13 Moral formation in the church is a distinctive kind and seeks to generate communities in touch with the world and all its problems yet shaped in the daily telling and re-telling of the Christian story. Such formation creates a generation of disciples. Discipleship finds resources in many complexly interacting elements of churchly life: the education of laypersons, the preparation of pastors, moral discourse in family and congregation, and the experience of seeking to serve the wider community (Best & Robra (ed.) 1997:53).

14 Eucharist is a representative act of thanksgiving offered on behalf of the whole world. "All kinds of injustice, racism, separation and lack of freedom are radically challenged when we share the body and blood of Christ". "Communion" means recognition that we are living the same stories in form, both liturgical and moral, which manifest the mystery, the transcending ground, of what historically manifest. "To be in communion" means to be willing to share the liturgy in both its senses: *as worship* and *as work*. Communion, therefore, is a readiness to celebrate the same liturgy (Best & Robra (ed.) 1997:36-39).

15 Baptism is a local event with ecumenical implications. It is at once the rite of entry into membership in the local congregation and into membership in the universal church. Those baptised are led into a life of moral witnessing. Baptism identifies the lived reality of the new life in Christ, a community in which the gifts of faith, hope, and love are received and practiced. Therefore, unity in baptism can have a visible moral form, even if it does not yet have a visible ecclesiastical form (Best & Robra (ed.) 1997:70-71).

16 Ecumenical moral communion is a community of churches praying to receive the spiritual gifts which such communion in moral witnessing will require (Best & Robra (ed.) 1997:81-82).

and Robra (ed.) (1997:87), the emergence of this very idea will add new energy and substance to the ecumenical movement. However, the issue at stake is not merely the future of a particular ecumenical organisation, but the future of the church itself. This clarifies that urgent attention in churches is needed, as the renewal of moral formation in obedient discipleship and ethical witness in the world depends on it. Our reading of the signs of the times ought to open our eyes to the immediate opportunities for moral witness in a relevant social context, especially in our witness and service to the world. We have a local and global need for a reconstructive *oikoumene.* In terms of *costly commitment,* Rasmussen (1995:185) maintains that, "In the living Christian community there can be no ecclesiology without ethics and no ethics without ecclesiology".

2.2.3 A Brief Summary

This study process was partly caused by the impact and challenge of globalisation on ecumenism and sought to explore the link to what the church *is* and what the church *does*. In doing this, both these aspects have come under scrutiny and critical reflection. The *koinonia* to which the *oikoumene* is called, which involves communion in faith, in life, and in witness, takes the form of *costly unity*, meaning that faith involves discipleship, and therefore calls the church to *costly commitment* to one another. Thereafter, the call is to *costly obedience*, facing the struggle for life of every age. CO identifies that in the face of globalisation, the ecumenical movement is challenged to consider four sets of questions anew. These are: *the calling of the ecumenical church*; *the nature of the church; the nature of ethics; and the theological competence of the church,* respectively. This study process remains open on the question whether the attempt to integrate ecclesiological and ethical concerns has been successful. It reflects that the three consultations bring ecclesiology and ethics together and the "costlies" cannot be disconnected from each other when we speak of the unity of the church and its witness to society. The relationship between ecclesiology and ethics, however, remains an ongoing discussion and requires more attention to the relationship between identity and responsibility.

2.3 South African Discourse on Ecclesiology and Ethics

The debate on ecclesiology and ethics was subsequently addressed in African, more specifically, South African literature (cf. Smit 2003; 2007; Conradie (ed.) 2013; 2015). Amidst the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, there has been a long-standing emphasis on "ethics". The concerns about the unique identity and vocation of the church (thus "ecclesiology") were expressed and addressed in their social responsibility after 1994.

The danger is that the church is an important role player in civil society but is regarded in a functionalist way only. How can the church in South Africa redefine its identity given the challenges posed by the new dispensation (cf. Mgojo 1995:9)? At a conference co-hosted by the South African Council of Churches (hereafter referred to as SACC) and the WCC in Vanderbijl Park, 19-23 March 1995 focussed on "South Africa in Regional and Global Context: Being the church today". This conference was hosted by some South African scholars who have participated in the F&O commission. This work, according to De Gruchy, often appears to be irrelevant to the burning socio-political and ethical issues in South Africa. He explains with remarkable clarity that the "separation of ecclesiological issues and ethical concern is one of the reasons why (with the ending of the church's struggle against Apartheid) we have seen a decline in the ecumenical commitment" (De Gruchy 1995:13-14). This conference was followed by the Johannesburg conference of the WCC from the 19-20th of June 1996 on CO (see the previous section on "costly obedience").

Conradie (ed.) (2013:522) notes that in 2006 the Department of Religion and Theology at UWC registered three collaborative research frameworks[17] that describe the parameters within which the research of staff, extraordinary staff, and postgraduate students are situated. It is on this basis that a second round of research frameworks on the initiative to establish a Desmond Tutu Chair of Ecumenical Theology and Social Transformation in Africa was launched. The chair was a rotating chair, established (after a period of initial fundraising) in 2012. Professor Christo Lombard, as from 2012, was appointed the first incumbent.[18] A three-year project on Ecumenical Studies and Social Ethics was launched in 2012 with financial support from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The foci of this project were on the tension between ecclesiology and ethics. The fundamental question is how ecclesiology and ethics, spirituality and society, and ecumenical vision and social transformation, Christianity and culture, faith and science are connected. Conradie (2015:522) notes that in all ecumenical reflections on "ecclesiology and ethics", it recognises a particular moral vision that provides the source of inspiration necessary to the processes of social transformation amidst the many obstacles thwarting such work. However, the tension between ecclesiology and ethics in the ecumenical movement is undeniable. Often, either matters of F&O or of

[17] These research frameworks are: "Moral Education: Towards a Human Rights Culture," "Ecumenical Theology and Social Transformation in Africa," and "Christian Ecological Theology." A fourth research framework on "Biblical, Theology and Contextual Hermeneutics and Rhetoric" is also recognised (see the Department's website at http://wwww.uwc.ac.za/faculties/ART/RandT/Pages/Research-Frameworks.aspx for annual reports in this regard).

[18] See http://www.uwc.ac.za/Faculties/ART/RandT/ Documents/ DRT%20Research%20report%20%20for%202016%20plans%20for%202017%2020March.docx

"Church and Society" dominate ecumenical agendas (cf. Best and Robra (ed.) 1997:vii).

The Department of Religion and Theology at UWC through a project on "Ecclesiology[19] and Ethics[20]" in early 2010 identified key areas to reflect on the link between ecclesiology and ethics in both the South African and wider African context. The idea was to stimulate reflections on these areas and to provide ecumenical leadership in the debate through a series of carefully planned publications in order to take the debate on ecclesiology and ethics forward. This project was structured in the form of a series of workshops and conferences, culminating in an international conference on "Ecclesiology and Ethics: The State of Ecumenical Theology in Africa", hosted at UWC from 2–5 June 2015. These think tanks offered profound insights and discussions related to ecclesiology and ethics.[21]

"Notions" in addition to "Forms of Ecumenicity" was one of the workshops with a primary focus on the tension between ecclesiology and ethics. This led to the publication of *South African Perspectives on Notions and Forms of Ecumenicity* edited by Ernst Conradie (2013). Conradie (ed.) (2013:39) argues that the ecumenical movement continuously wrestles with the relationship between the nature, mission, and the social agenda of the church. It becomes clear that divisive issues in society are also divisive issues in the church – domination in the name of gender, race, class, culture, or sexual orientation is indeed an ecclesiological and not merely an ethical issue. He identifies a need to recognise the interplay between moral formation/deformation in the church and in the world.

The papers from the conference on "The State of Ecumenical Theology in the African Context" were published in a special edition of *The Ecumenical Review* (edited by Conradie, Engdahl & Phiri 2015). The article by Conradie (2015) was entitled, "The UWC Project on Ecclesiology and Ethics". This article describes the legacy of the Belhar confession that kept ecclesiology and ethics together in a remarkable way (cf. Mahokoto 2014). This article also

19 F&O

20 L&W

21 Conradie (2015:523-530) offers a brief description of the think tanks and conferences hosted at UWC within the context of this project. The titles of these workshops are noted below. See Conradie (2015:523-530) for further details.

- "Guiding visions for a post-apartheid society (9 November 2012)"
- "A critical assessment of 'reconciliation' as one of the guiding visions during and beyond the transition period in South Africa (26 October 2012"
- "Notions and forms of 'ecumenicity' in South Africa (22 February 2013)"
- "The quest for identity with so-called mainline churches in South Africa (24 May 2013)"
- "Ecumenical engagement in the form of NGOs and FBOs as dynamos for social transformation in the Western Cape (2 August 2013"
- "Religion and moral formation toward responsible citizenship (30 August 2013)"
- "Recognising current ecclesial reform/deform movements in South Africa (20 March 2014)"
- "The Pentecostal movement and the ecumenical movement in Africa (30 May 2014)"
- "African notions of ethical leadership (2 December 2014)"

provides an overview of the UWC project on Ecumenical Studies and Social Ethics, as it outlines current post-graduate projects related to the tension between ecclesiology and ethics. These projects are:

- "South African discourses on reconciliation" (project completed in 2017) - Demaine Solomons,
- Allan Boesak and Desmond Tutu's notions of reconciliation (project completed in 2014) - Lerato Kobe,
- The aims of South Africa's National Development Plan (project completed in 2016) - Rochelle Davids,
- Economic Inequalities and Restitution (project completed in 2016) - Mbhekeni Nkosi,
- The concept of "Dead aid" (project completed in 2020) - Rethabile Leanya
- Ecclesiology and Ethics in the context of the All Africa Conference of Churches 1963–2013 (project completed in 2017) - Teddy Sakupapa.[22]

These are samples of UWC projects on ecclesiology and ethics that are ongoing. The discourse on ecclesiology and ethics is ongoing, especially within the South African and global context.

Some concluding remarks are provided next to wrap up the chapter.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter identifies that the WCC commissioned a joint study project on Ecclesiology and Ethics that was conducted by the Faith and Order Movement (Unit I) and Justice, Peace and Creation and Integrity of Creation Movement (Unit III). This study attempted to correct the disunions between the two movements (F&O and L&W). The study document concludes that there can be no separation from the church's witness and its service; the calling of the church is tightly connected to its vocation. It further clarifies that if the church is unified on these fundamental contentions, it will play a positive role within society. The attempt of integration, according to Best and Robra's study on ecclesiology and ethics with a specific focus on the "costlies" (*costly unity*, *costly commitment*, and *costly obedience*), remains an open-ended question on whether the attempt to integrate ecclesiological and ethical concerns have been successful. As observed within the study documents and the South African discussion on the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics, a discussion on the identity

[22] cf. Conradie (2015:530).

and responsibility of the church is still ongoing. Chapter 3 will investigate the wider ecumenical discourse on ethics.

Chapter 3

Wider Ecumenical Discourse on Poverty and Ecology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the ecumenical discourse on ecclesiology and ethics. Building on these insights, this chapter offers a survey of the wider ecumenical discourse on life and work, focussing on poverty and ecology in particular. The study process on "Poverty and Ecology" has to be understood against the background of a long history of ecumenical discourse on "Life and Work". Any engagement with social issues requires clarity on the distinctive contribution churches can make relating to international diplomacy and the various spheres of society, including the different levels of government, namely: agriculture, industry, business jurisprudence, education, health, the media, culture, sport, and etcetera.

Conradie (ed.) (2013:36) poses a question: "What is it that the church can contribute to the discussion on social issues of wider significance that others cannot?" In response to the question, he maintains that ecumenical engagement is reduced to a running commentary on political events. He opines that the role of guardianship over the moral fabric of society is assigned to Christianity but that churches are however treated as non-governmental organisations (NGO's) with which other sectors may cooperate to address issues around education, health, service delivery, or social development. This argument according to Kinnamon (2004:51-58) is precisely the way in which the ecumenical movement has been impoverished. Unity thereby becomes an imperative rather than a gift from God. He states that unity in church and society is possible if a particular social-political struggle is shared. Christians engaged in some or other struggle for liberation often find themselves closer to non-Christians involved in the same struggle than to other Christians not committed to it. This tolerant cooperation requires an underplaying of differences or the toning down of an aggressive justice-seeking agenda that may cause unwanted division. These developments are best surveyed in the ecumenical engagements of church and society of the WCC. The following section offers a brief discussion that specifically highlights important events and conferences on the ecumenical discourse on "ethics".

3.2 Ecumenical Discourse on Ethics

This section provides a historic survey of the ecumenical discourse on "church and society", highlighting important conferences and assemblies by the WCC.

The Stockholm Conference (1925) on "Life and Work – A New Social Vision for the Churches" addressed the application of the gospel in all facets of life. The church's conscience was incited toward contestation of a modern industrial society. This argument perceived that the Christian faith in addition to economics are not separate categories but necessitate the application of the spirit and teaching of Christ to economic and industrial life (Oikoumene.net 2016; Mugambi 1987:1-2; Mugambi 2003:99).

At the Oxford Conference on L&W (1937), the general feeling was that the church faces challenges in exemplifying the unity of humankind under God. The logic was that the unity of humankind could not be achieved through human efforts alone but through human dependence on the Creator God (cf. Mugambi 1987:2).

"The first assembly of the WCC in Amsterdam (1948) addressed the issue of the 'disorder in society' and called for a 'responsible society' in the aftermath of World War II, amidst contested ideological assumptions and competing economic systems" (Mugambi 1987:2; Conradie (ed.) 2013:36).

"The 'Cold War', the tension between East and West, and the related wars in Korea, Vietnam, and elsewhere, dominated ecumenical agendas for two decades. A world conference on Church and Society was held in Geneva (1966) with the theme: "rapid social change" that characterised the decolonisation process, nation building, issues around socio-economic development and industrialisation" (Mugambi 1987:5; Conradie (ed.) 2013:36).

"The next three decades saw a radicalisation of the ecumenical commitment to justice in various spheres. The WCC central committee mandated the establishment of the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) in 1969" (Mugambi 1989; Gnanadason 1994). This programme draws attention to an inclusive society, especially on apartheid in South Africa, and is extended to many other spheres of life, including sexual orientation.

"The Nairobi assembly of the WCC (1975) crystallised the social agenda of the ecumenical movement through a programme emphasis on a 'Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society'". Within this framework, the question was raised regarding the extent to which racism within the church had to be considered as a fundamental challenge to the unity of the

church.[23] This language motivated the working group to respond to emerging technical data about the human impact on the environment and society through normative claims on what could be done (Mugambi 1987:5-6; Conradie (ed.) 2013:37).

"Concerns over 'Faith, Science and the Future' were addressed at a WCC world conference held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston (1979). This conference warned against the danger that the agenda items may become separated in such a way that justice is emphasised by the third world, participation is prescribed for the second world, and sustainability recognised in the first world" (cf. Conradie (ed.) 2013:37).

Although the multiple connections between the three themes recognised at the Nairobi assembly should be clear, keeping them together proved very difficult. The same three themes were captured at Vancouver (1983) under the motto of "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation" in order to address economic injustices, various forms of violence and ecological destruction in an integrated way (cf. Conradie (ed.) 2013:38).

The JPIC process culminated in a World Convocation on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation held in Seoul, Korea (1990), at which a series of ten theological affirmations and specific covenants for action were approved. This JPIC process provided a description of inter-relatedness of economic inequity, militarism, ecological destruction, climate change, and racial injustice, and the theological, ethical, and spiritual basis for affirming and sustaining life in its fullness. After the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the WCC refined the concept of "sustainability" in terms of "just and sustainable communities" (Raiser 1996; Conradie (ed.) 2013:38).

Conradie argues that since 1975, issues around sexism and patriarchy, culminating in an "Ecumenical Decade" on "Churches in Solidarity with Women" (1988–1998) receive attention. The Jubilee 2000 movement called for an end to the international debt crisis (Conradie (ed.) 2013:38).

The call at the Harare Assembly (1998) was for a more coherent approach to globalisation staged due to inequality and injustice with an aggressive presentation. A question, "How can the churches and the wider ecumenical family respond to the human tragedies?" was raised at this assembly. This led to a project rooted in economic globalisation entitled, *Alternative*

[23] As Raiser (1996:6) puts it, this study "considered whether poverty ... must not be elevated to the status of a constitutive mark of the being of the church". In this vein, a critical question emerged regarding the tension between rich and poor in the church. Questions arose concerning the implications of such a tension on the credibility of ecumenical efforts to manifest the unity of the church.

Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth (AGAPE)[24] that was prepared for the 2006 Porto Alegre assembly (Conradie (ed.) 2013:38).

The Porto Alegre assembly proposed a study process on the intrinsic links between poverty, wealth, and ecology. The document indicates that two main views emerged on the dominant market-driven and money-centric development paradigm. The first emphasised practical reform within the paradigm, while the second regarded the development paradigm as the main course of poverty and extreme wealth for a few, and also demanded a radical change of the paradigm in order to achieve poverty eradication, equitable resource sharing, and ecological sustainability. Since then, issues around trade, finance, and the role of investments have been addressed in numerous ecumenical statements as these creative tensions are not new, and therefore, a study process on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology was commissioned at this assembly to be presented at the Busan assembly in 2013 (Kennedy (ed.) 2012:7-8).

The commissioned study process on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology must be understood against the background of the above-mentioned ecumenical discourse on "ethics". The following section provides a more detailed discussion of wider ethical discourse on poverty and ecology.

3.3 Wider Discourse on Poverty and Ecology

This PWE study process was influenced by wider theological debates on the relatedness of concerns over poverty, economic inequality, economic injustices, and environmental degradation. Such theological discourse is influenced by secular debates on poverty and ecology. Although the connectedness between these concerns is widely recognised, there are tendencies to emphasise the one over the other, i.e., a concern over population versus a concern over consumption; "feeding people" versus "saving nature" (cf. Rolston 1996:248-267); or the so-called "green" agenda (nature conservation) versus the "brown" agenda (social justice) (cf. De Gruchy 2007a:333-345). How, therefore, should concerns over poverty, wealth, and ecological destruction be addressed together?

The following discussion offers a brief historical survey of international developments on poverty and ecology with specific reference to UN conferences on sustainable development. Against this background, a brief survey of theological literature on poverty and ecology is offered in the next section, with specific reference to the Latin American, Indian, and African

[24] This drafted AGAPE document included a small group of contributors inclusive of churches and related organisations. Its text is based on a series of church consultations and studies on globalisation organised by the WCC and other ecumenical organisations over the period since the 1998 assembly in Harare hoping that this process will produce an AGAPE, a "call to action" at the Porto Alegre Assembly 2006.

contexts.

In 1972, the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm reached agreement that there is an urgent need to respond to problems of environmental deterioration. Twenty years later at the UN Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (the "Earth Summit", 1992), an agreement based on the protection of the environment and social and economic development fundamental to sustainable development was reached and was constructed on Rio principles. This led to the adoption of a global programme entitled "Agenda 21".[25] The Rio conference was a significant milestone as it set a new agenda for sustainable development.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), hosted in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September in 2002, followed the conference held at Rio de Janeiro. Representatives of governments, international organisations, NGO's, churches, and other faith communities were present at this summit. A deep concern over a failure to implement recommendations was raised here which led to the adoption of a declaration on Sustainable Development on the 4th of September 2002.

A Millennium Summit hosted by the UN in September took place where world leaders signed the UN Millennium Declaration as they jointly committed to reducing extreme poverty, setting targets until 2015. Five years later in September 2005, world leaders made bold decisions related to development, security, human rights, and the reform of the UN. At a high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) (September 2008), governments, foundations, and business and civil society groups rallied around the call to slash poverty, hunger, and disease by 2015. These new commitments indicate a need to meet these MDG's. The 2010 Summit on MDG's concluded with the adoption of a global action plan and three years later in September 2013 the UN General Secretary Ban Ki-Moon hosted a special event to follow up on efforts made towards the achievement of the MDG's. A report entitled, "A life of dignity for all" was presented at the event. An outcome document was adopted by member states with a renewed commitment by world leaders to meet the targets as expressed in the MDG's at this event (Ban Ki-Moon 2015a:7).

A report at the summit in September 2015 was released indicating "eight aspirational goals"[26] as set out in the Millennium Declaration of 2000 that was largely successful across

[25] "Agenda 21" offers resolutions adopted by the UN Conference on the Environment and Development at Rio de Janeiro on 3-14 June 1992 (Ban Ki-Moon 2015a:7).

[26] The eight MDG's are as follows: Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty; Achieve universal primary education; Promote gender equality and empower woman; Reduce child mortality; Improve maternal

the globe, although acknowledging a remaining shortfall. This worldwide progress has been uneven across regions and countries, leaving significant gaps. The argument is that millions of people are left behind, especially the poorest and those disadvantaged. This final report, however, confirms that these goals could lift millions of people out of poverty, empower women and girls, improve health and well-being, and provide vast new opportunities for better lives (Ban Ki- Moon 2015a:7).

The MDG's were formulated and proposed with targets and indicators in 2002 at the WSSD, with the objective were that these goals must be met by 2015. The African people were not involved in the formulation of these goals, and thus, the aims of North American and European countries dominated the debate. Mugambi (2007:80-81) argues that in 2002 the goals were to alleviate poverty while the goal in the 1960's was to eradicate poverty. Is this an indication that the developed countries have given up on their first attempt to eradicate poverty? Mugambi claims that the second attempt, which is to alleviate poverty, can only be a success if the rich countries are willing to contribute 0.7 % of their GDP. He then goes further to state that the Development Goals can never be achieved, it is a dead letter before it was started because it was never met in the 1960's. Based on the above, he concludes that it can thus not be achieved this time around (Mugambi 2007:80-81). The next paragraph insightfully includes a list of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

These SDG's are listed as:

1. "Poverty – End poverty in all its forms everywhere";
2. "Food – End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture";
3. "Health – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages";
4. "Education – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all";
5. "Women – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls";
6. "Water – Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all";
7. "Energy – Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all";
8. "Economy – Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all";
9. "Infrastructure – Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation";
10. "Inequality – Reduce inequality within and among countries";

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health; Combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; Global partnership for development.

11. “Habitation – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable”;
12. “Consumption – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”;
13. “Climate – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”;
14. “Marine-ecosystems – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development”;
15. “Ecosystems – Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”;
16. “Institutions – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels”;
17. “Sustainability – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development”.[27]

These SDG’s are meant to lift millions of people out of poverty, and empower woman and girls, improve health and well-being, and provide vast new opportunities for a better life for all. The question arises, have these goals been attended to by governments globally, especially in developing countries? Leitner and Tilleman (2017) in their article entitled, ‘Why are the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals stalling?’ indicate that the SDG’s are defective within a postmodern, reconstructed era. These authors further maintain that the SDG’s are a Jackson Pollock-version of a to-do list. The SDG’s, according to Leitner and Tilleman, must offer clearer direction on international aid, international development, philanthropy, and impact investment. Though being successful, the SDG’s require a promise of non- inefficient spending and or waste, as poverty and inequality currently pre-exist. They describe the SDG’s as a statement of aspirations: a voluntary agreement rather than a binding treaty. The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon (2015a) affirms that 193 countries agreed to a set of development goals. He explains that the 17 SDG’s form part of a wider 2030 agenda which builds on the MDG’s that battled some critique on grounds that poverty, injustice due to gender, age, disability, and ethnicity as institution donor funds bypass the marginalised and needy in developed and developing countries (cf. UN:2016) . Ki-Moon (2015b) contends that the SDG’s motivate a multi-year process involving civil society, governments, the private sector, and academia. The SDG’s, therefore, tackle a whole range of issues, ranging from gender inequality to climate change, whereas the MDG’s were too narrow in focus. In recognition of the MDG’s failure to certain people and countries, they offered a 2030 agenda by stating, “reach the future behind first”, and concluded with a pledge: “no one will be left

[27] See United Nations. (n.d.). *The sustainable development agenda.* Viewed from http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/ (accessed 25 January 2016).

behind". Jonathan Glennie (2015) maintains that the inclusivity of developed and developing countries could be one of the reasons why the SDG's could be successful. It is Glennie's view that the SDG's are fully negotiated by all institutions and participants across the board. He asserts that the SDG's are actions that matter and not just mere words. He further holds that the SDG's are visionary and inspiring, therefore, the attention needs to be turned to action and accountability, which he observed was lacking in the MDG's.

3.4 Wider Theological Discourse on Poverty and Ecology

This section considers the viewpoints of three leading theologians on the topic of poverty and ecology (sub-section 3.4.1). These include Leonardo Boff, Aruna Gnanadason, and Jesse Mugambi. Thereafter, the viewpoints of a number of South African contributors are reviewed (sub-section 3.4.2). These include the Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa (EFSA), a number of church councils, and some insights from Klaus Nürnberger, Nico Koopman, and the late Steve De Gruchy.

3.4.1 Three Theological Voices on Poverty and Ecology

Against the background of such wider debates on poverty and ecology and the UN processes regarding sustainable development, it is also necessary to consider the theological discourse on poverty and ecology. The discussion below focuses on selected theologians from Latin America, India, and Africa who have offered contributions on this topic. Given the wealth of literature available, this review will be limited to these selected voices only.

a) Leonardo Boff

Leonardo Boff is a Latin American professor who worked in the academic fields of theology, ethics and philosophy. He authored several books in his mother tongue (Spanish), many of which were translated into English. This section includes Boff's earlier and recent work translated in English (cf. 1995; 1997; 2012; 2014; 2015). In his earlier work *Ecology and Liberation* (1995:1), Boff wrote extensively on eco-theology and presents the earth as the "great poor" (*el gran pobre*); he argues that the earth, together with humanity, are in need of liberation. Boff (1995:70) identifies a form of exploitation, especially through social mechanisms, producing rich and poor, participants and the excluded. Boff (1997:1-2) states that humanity faces two types of injustices, namely: *social injustices* and *environmental injustices.* In his later work, Boff (2014:163-166) argues that the "Spirit is on the side of the poor" and calls the church to create conditions of life for the poor, and for those whose innocent sons and daughters are condemned to die of hunger and disease. He holds that the great majorities of the African Diaspora, oppressed women, indigenous communities, and the

poor are deprived of the most fundamental freedom, i.e., "the freedom of survival" (food and housing security, safety from environmental disasters). Boff (2012) explains that industrialisation, capitalism, and consumerist greed, which are linked to development, is exploitative, anthropocentric, and thus wrong. According to Boff, the poor women and the indigenous people of Latin America suffer social and economic injustices based on unconventional competition. He dismisses the concept of "sustainable development" and observes that development and sustainability obey opposing logistics – development is lineal and increasing, it exploits nature and increases private accumulation (Boff 2012). Sustainability originates from sciences of life and ecology; it represents ecosystems that promote interdependency and cooperation. These contrasting logistics explains how one favours the individual and the other favours the collective; one promotes competition and the other favours cooperation. Development of this kind, according to Boff, causes degradation; it degrades nature, pays low salaries, and produces poverty. Boff (2015) therefore calls for a "sustainable society", a trajectory that is inclusive, produces agents of change with possibilities to resolve problems, and presents kindness, dialogue, agreement, and forgiveness.

b) Aruna Gnanadason

Aruna Gnanadason is the Ex-Executive Director for Planning and Integration in the General Secretariat of the WCC and member of the Church of South India. Her work mainly covers eco-feminist theology, Indian feminist theology and the church, and violence against women, especially within the Indian context. Gnanadason holds a MA in English, a bachelor's degree in Theology, and also completed her Doctorate in Ministry in 2004 (Gnanadason 2001).

Gnanadason (2005a:2, 107) appeals to the church and the ecumenical movement to construct an ethic of prudent care for the earth. She argues that the prevalent growth paradigm in development, promoted by multi-national companies as well as governments, caused "mal-development" as they exploited the livelihoods of indigenous people, especially *Dalits* and women.[28] Gnanadason (2005a:2, 107) contends that the poor suffer at the hands of economic oppressors who are responsible for the depletion of India's natural resources. She further states that the poor are also responsible for the plundering of resources as they are forced to be involved in ecocide because of utter poverty and alienation from the forests which have been their livelihood for centuries. Gnanadason (2005a:65-66) takes a strong stance against

[28] For a more comprehensive discussion on Gnanadason's views, see (2005a:159-170); (2005b); (2004a: 97-119); (2004b:73-87); (1991:29-41). *Dalits*: They are the outcasts of India – a dehumanised and subjugated group of people who are challenged with oppression, injustice, humiliation, and violence on a daily basis (Gnanadason 2005a:107).

the concept of "sustainable development" and finds the concept "sustainable community" more appropriate. According to Gnanadason (2005a:107), the concept of "motherhood" as an ethic of care needs further examination and dialogue to bring healing and end the destruction of the earth. Gnanadason (2005a:107) argues that creation needs humankind's motherhood; this idea of motherhood offers nurturing, protection, and prudent care for both the poor and the earth.

c) Jesse Mugambi

Jesse Mugambi is a professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Nairobi. He completed his MA in 1977 and his Ph.D. in 1984 at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. He has covered numerous areas throughout his career, including ecumenical studies, missiology, liberation theology, reconstruction theology, ecotheology, ethics, philosophy, and hermeneutics.

Mugambi (1987:1; 1996:210-225; 2003b:178-199) argues that Africa continues to suffer from poverty, civil strife, and the debt crisis. These challenges continue to cripple most economies in Africa despite the fact that Africa continues to supply natural resources to the world economy. Africa produces a huge percentage of resources like diamonds, gold, and petroleum that are utilised in world trade, but Africa contributes less than 2 % to world trade. Luxury goods like "coffee, cocoa, palm oil, etc., are produced in Africa, but they are consumed by the developed countries" (Mugambi 2003b:181).

Mugambi (2001:36-41) maintains that humanity and the environment was not given much thought under the rubric of macro-economics, as its focus was on labour and capital that enhances a return on investment. Mugambi further pronounces that OECD[29] countries benefit from the natural resources of countries that are non-OECD members. He argues that the developed countries have the capital and the technology to exploit Third World countries (Africa, Asia, and South America) without consideration for their citizens and the next generation; thus, the rich determine the fate of the poor. Offering a solution for sustainability, Mugambi suggests that the first world leaders should be leaders with moral and theological sense. The fact that African leaders still allow the OECD countries to invest in Africa means that they condone pollution, exploitation, marginalisation, and the destruction of humanity

[29] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – 20 Countries signed the convention on the 14th of December 1960. These countries included: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latavia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zeeland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States. Accessed on 12 January 2018 from www.oecd.org/about/membersandpartners/list-oecd-countries.html

and the environment albeit (2001:43-44).

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has rules in place that force developing countries like Africa to open their markets to the rich industrialised countries. But when the poor developing nations also want to become part of this global market, ridiculous levies are placed on their manufactured goods. In turn, this unequal trade by the rich, ultimately makes the charity payments to the poorer nations possible (cf. Mugambi 2001:43-44).

The above sub-section offered a survey of the contributions of three selected theologians to the ethical discourse on poverty and ecology, namely: Leonardo Boff, Aruna Gnanadason, and Jesse Mugambi. In their writings, Boff and Gnanadason promote the concepts of "sustainable society" (that produces agents of change) and "sustainable livelihood" (that promote a unique bond of humanity with the earth – "motherhood") rather than "sustainable development". The next sub-section reviews a number of South African contributions to the ongoing discourse.

3.4.2 South African Theological Discourse on Ethics (Poverty and Ecology)

A significant number of South African contributors mirror this theological discourse on poverty and ecology. These contributions include important documents released by various ecumenical organisations as well as publications by individual scholars. It is important to note that F&O discussions did not attract much attention compared to other dimensions of the modern ecumenical movement like L&W. This might be because several South African figures, including Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, served as members of the Faith and Order commission. The main focus, however, has been on faith and society. A reason might be that doctrinal differences underlying denominational schisms were mainly imported from Europe. There is always a tendency to emphasise the one over the other, especially the connectedness between concerns over poverty, inequality, and economic injustices, on the one hand, and concerns over environmental degradation, on the other hand. These challenges are widely recognised in secular as well as ecumenical debates within the South African context. How, therefore, should concerns over poverty and ecology be addressed together?

This section investigates the theological discourse on poverty and ecology. It offers valuable contributions of South African theological institutions, such as the EFSA; different councils of churches in South Africa; and individual contributions by three South African theologians, namely, Klaus Nürnberger, Nico Koopman, and the late Steve De Gruchy.

a) The Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa (EFSA)

The EFSA is an independent ecumenical institute and network of participating institutions.[30] Under the leadership of Renier Koegelenberg, the EFSA produced a number of edited volumes and booklets on church and development[31], following a series of conferences on church and development in the mid-1990's. This period in South African history displayed devastating violence, paralysing fear, and debilitating unemployment. A series of conferences was hosted by the EFSA which confirmed a human-centred approach to development in South Africa. Participants in these discussions at the various conferences were grassroots and community organisations, national development agencies, parastatal agencies, NGO's, ecumenical bodies, and international partners. This highlights that the church has a transformative role to play in society, and that the strength of the church lies in the diversity of talents and networks (cf. Koegelenberg 1994; 1995).

In preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in August 2002, the EFSA hosted a workshop to prepare a statement from church leaders on the interplay between Christianity, environmental justice, and development policy in South Africa. This was published as a booklet entitled *The Land is Crying for Justice: A Discussion Document on Christianity and Environmental Justice in South Africa* (2002). This document notes the historical struggle (for political liberation, democracy, social reconciliation, and economic reconstruction) of the church in South Africa. It argues that despite all the social and institutional problems as described in the document, a much bigger challenge awaits South Africans – "environmental degradation". This discussion document calls for a re-examination of current theologies, a re-affirmation of faith, and the recognition of the churches' responsibility and commitment to address numerous environmental issues at a personal, community, national, and macro-economic level (Conradie, Mtetwa & Warmback (eds.) 2002:1-22). Furthermore, the EFSA more recently hosted a number of high-profile consultations on Economic, Social and Environmental Challenges in Stellenbosch (2012), at Arabella (2014), and in Franschhoek (2016) to explore policy guidelines on addressing poverty and ecology together.

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30 Participating institutions in the EFSA include representatives of the Department of Religious Studies of the Universities of the Western Cape (UWC), Cape Town (UCT), and Stellenbosch (US), and the Western Cape Council of Churches (WCPCC).

31 These volumes and booklets on church and development include: R.A. Koegelenberg (ed.). 1992. *Church and development. An interdisciplinary approach: Perspectives from Sothern Africa and Europe.* Bellville: EFSA; R.A. Koegelenberg and S. Govender (eds.). 1995. *The Reconstruction and development program* (RDP): *The role of the Church, Civil Society and NGO's: Report to the third church and development Conference.* Bellville: EFSA.

b) Councils of Churches in South Africa

Since 2000, a number of noteworthy documents on poverty and ecology have been published by ecumenical bodies. The following that relates to the study are mentioned:

The Oikos study group (including members of the Diakonia Council of Churches in Kwa-Zulu Natal, other ecumenical organisations and churches) published a document entitled *The Oikos Journey*: *A Theological Reflection on the Economic Crisis in South Africa* (2006). This document challenges church, state and society. It serves as a public and ecumenical manifestation of theological discourse among theologians in South Africa.[32]The Climate Change Committee of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) drafted a document entitled *Climate Change – A Challenge to the Churches in South Africa*[33] that was published in 2009. This was a product of ongoing consultations over a period of two years following a conference on climate change held at UWC in 2007. This document offers a challenge to local churches and church councils, dioceses, and synods. It further complements similar ecumenical processes on climate change from other regions of the world. In terms of the African continent, the document also draws on the call from the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) to the UN Climate Change conference held from 13 to 19 December 2007 in Bali, Indonesia, entitled "Responsible church leadership to reverse global warming and to ensure equitable development"; the African Church leaders' statement on climate change and water (3-5 June 2008); a report on an Ecumenical Consultation on Climate Change (Africa) held in Nairobi, 3-5 June 2008; as well as a declaration of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA) on ecological debt and climate change (27-29 July 2009) (Conradie 2010:159-169).

The challenges related to climate change led to discussions by faith leaders at a conference hosted by South African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI), the AACC, and the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) held in Gigiri, Nairobi, on the 8th of June 2011. The delegates at the conference explored a renewed moral vision as vital to progress in climate talks. The outcome of these talks by African faith leaders led to a message to the 17th Conference of Parties (COP 17) at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held from 29 November to 9

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32 Some major participants in this discourse have been the late Steve de Gruchy and Andrew Warmback.

33 This document (2009: v-76) exists due to ecumenical consultations and conferences on climate change within the South African context. It follows on a series of similar theological statements on social issues emerging over the last few decades from within the (South) African region – including the Message to the People of South Africa (1968); the Belhar confession (1982/1986); the *Kairos Document* (1985/1986); The *Road to Damascus* (1989); *The Land is Crying for Justice* (2002); the Accra Declaration (2005); and *the Oikos Journey* (2006).

December 2011 in Durban, South Africa, entitled "Climate Justice for Sustainable Peace in Africa".

c) Klaus Nürnberger

Klaus Nürnberger is emeritus professor and senior research associate at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. He is a Christian theologian and prolific writer who has authored numerous books and articles (cf. 1983; 1987a; 1988; 1989; 1990; 1991a; 1991b; 1991c; 1994; 1995; 1998; 1999; 2011) challenging socio-economic injustice and ecological degradation together.[34]

In several earlier publications, Nürnberger explores conflicting ideologies that influence the economic order in South Africa, with specific reference to capitalism, socialism, and Marxism. This culminated in the publication of a book entitled *Beyond Marx and the Market: Outcome of a Century of Economic Experimentation* (1998) in which he proposes a new economic order. In this book, it is observed that humanity is faced with what he calls overdevelopment and underdevelopment, marginalisation and poverty, the depletion of resources, and the destruction of the biosphere. Nürnberger states that one should ask relevant questions concerning the purpose and meaning of human life, whether in the science of economics or in practice of economic politics. Widely accepted values by different groups in society include freedom, power and prosperity, economic sufficiency and equity, long term sustainability of the economy, and respect for nature. According to Nürnberger, these values seem to entrench themselves in social systems and its variations. Nürnberger argues that one cannot do without ethics, as he based his arguments on a set of ethical assumptions. Furthermore, he is of the opinion that economics can never be a "value free science" as it must account for its presuppositions, its goals, and its procedures.

In *Prosperity, Poverty and Pollution: Managing an Approaching Crisis*, Nürnberger (1999:23) explores the distinction between the economic centre and the economic periphery. He explains that those in the economic centres have access to resources, capital, and economic opportunities. Those at the periphery have fewer economic resources and opportunities (1999:39-69). Nürnberger draws a correlation between economics and ecology:

> Since the advent of the industrial era this impact has begun to assume frightening proportions. Industrial growth leads to accelerating depletion of non-renewable resources, over-exploitation of renewable resources and pollution of nature in general.

[34] Nürnberger (1999:2-17) opines that all human communities are plagued by different forms of poverty, pollution, and ecological degradation, all in the name of economic development.

> Population growth increases the pressure on the land, overgrazing, erosion, deforestation, slum settlements, and so on. When the periphery begins to develop in the direction of industrialisation and urbanisation its ecological impact increases. Accelerating growth cannot continue indefinitely in a limited world. Sooner or later a peak must be reached; the only question is how close we are to this peak (Nürnberger 1999:72).

The earth cannot cope with the current levels of North Atlantic consumption and waste, it is naïve to imagine that Africa's salvation lies in becoming "developed" in this way (De Gruchy 2007a:336). In his popular booklet, *Making ends meet: Personal money management in a Christian* (2nd edition, 2007), Nürnberger offers helpful advice to individual South Africans of various levels of income. In *Regaining Sanity for the Earth* (2011), Nürnberger states that science and technology is the epitome of the modern thrust towards human emancipation, mastery, ownership, and entitlement. He explains how faith and science has drifted apart due to modernity and argues that science has lost its transcendent foundations and faith, its credibility. Nürnberger identifies a need for science and faith to find each other and together lead humankind towards a vision of comprehensive optimal well-being. He suggests that faith may help to look at phenomena from a transcendent perspective, whereas science may look at the same phenomena from an immanent perspective. In this way, Nürnberger (2011:36-42) aims to integrate science with faith for the sake of human survival and well-being.

d) Nico Koopman

Professor Nico Koopman currently holds the position of Vice-Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel at the University of Stellenbosch. He is also a church leader and academic with national and international acclaim. As a theologian, Professor Koopman has published broadly on various topics. From the perspective of Trinitarian thinking, he deals with various themes in ethical life (political, economic, medical, and sexual) and public life (spheres of politics, economics, public opinion formation, and civil society – including churches and academic institutions). He is a theologian in the Reformed tradition that draws from contemporary ecumenical systematic theological and ethical discourses.[35] For the purpose of this discussion, I will review his 2007a; 2008; 2015 and 2018 work.

Koopman (2015:559) avers that billions of people globally experience socio-economic exclusion in both the so-called developing and developed countries. Koopman (2018) professes that despite the transition to democracy 25 years ago, as well as the positive political and macro-economic changes, millions of South Africans are still excluded from

[35] cf. Koopman 2002; 2007; 2008; 2013; 2015; 2017; 2018.

basic necessities and goods of life, and from the opportunities to participate in building a new society. He claims that the levels of poverty and inequality have increased – white people still enjoy more socio-economic privileges, although the gap between the rich and poor is no longer split along racial lines. Koopman (2018:250) asserts that the challenge of poverty and socio-economic exclusion constitutes a human dignity and human rights challenge. He further maintains that acknowledging, affirming, advancing and actualising dignity and human rights, especially socio-economic rights, assists immensely in overcoming poverty within a sustainable way (as observed in Koopman's vulnerability outline on basic needs). Koopman contends that that the implicit solution to Human life in Africa lies in his Trinitarian interpretation of the *imago Dei* as a relationship of love.

> It is a dignity that is imputed to us by the love of God for us as expressed in our being created in God's image. Through sin this image was violated but, through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, God remembers us and draws us back into a relationship of love. This relationship of love with God constitutes the image of God. Christ embodies this image perfectly and through his work of redemption we are again image of God, i.e., we are living in a relationship of love with Him and other humans and even with the rest of creation (Koopman 2007a:180).

Koopman's (2008:241) understanding of vulnerability[36] is not inspired by the perplexities of church life, but by a strong conviction with regard to the mission of the church.[37] His point of departure is in the church as the church of the triune God: "Faith in the triune God is faith in the vulnerable God". In speaking of the vulnerability of the triune God and of the church, Koopman highlights and radicalises aspects of ecclesiology. He contends that vulnerability is "part of the essence of the church". This observation by Koopman (2008:46) illustrates that the vocation, mission, ethics, and public theology of the church is determined by the notion of vulnerability. The church, therefore, is called to stand with the vulnerable – the poor, the destitute, and the wronged. Koopman (2015:571) continues that ecclesiology and ethics

[36] Koopman in his 2013 article 'Hope, vulnerability and disability: A theological perspective' explains that vulnerability derives from the Latin word "*vulnerare*", meaning: "to injure and harm, and to be open to be wounded". *Vulnerability*, as understood by Koopman, means to be under the threat of, and predisposed to, being hurt and wounded. The notion of vulnerability, firstly, means that we are at risk of or face the threat of suffering, and are predisposed to various forms of suffering. Secondly, vulnerability refers to our actual and concrete suffering in a variety of forms. Koopman identifies three basic needs of humanity to flourish: (1) our physical needs – need for goods, housing, water, clothing, medical care, and education (this vulnerability, according to Koopman, is identified as *physical vulnerability*); (2) the need for safety and security, and the need to participate in different spheres of life, including the political and economic domains (Koopman calls this need, *social vulnerability*); (3) this need identifies the quest for freedom to actualise our potentialities and to render meaningful service to others (Koopman calls this need *teleological vulnerability*). He contends that if these needs are not met, human beings experience suffering in a variety of forms (Koopman 2013:44).

[37] These ecclesiological insights are observed in the Faith and Order study document *The Nature and Mission of the Church-A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement* (Faith and Order Paper 198, 2005).

should complement each other. He emphasises that the theological notions of the church as catholic and of baptism as the celebration of inclusivity should reflect ethics. Koopman asserts that the ethic of the church should reflect catholic and baptismal inclusion. Koopman (2015:571) remarks that churches are called to witness in society due to this catholic and baptismal inclusivity. He states that in a pluralistic public domain, churches should, however, use a language that is intellectually and rhetorically accessible to those outside the tradition.

Koopman (2015:571) explains that ecclesiology and ethics in ecclesial practices on all levels of church life – from the local to the global – an ethic that corresponds with an ecclesiology of catholic and baptismal inclusivity is required. He further holds that these so called daily ecclesial practices like *leitourgia, koinonia, diaconia, kerugma, marturia,* and *catechesis* have an impact upon the congregation and society. In conclusion, the attempt continues to bridge the gap between ecclesiology and ethics; the ethical and public significance, implications, and impact of ecclesial practices necessitate further investigation.

e) Steve de Gruchy

The late Steve De Gruchy was professor of theology and development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg and was editor of the *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. He wrote many articles that are relevant to this discussion on poverty and ecology, including 'An olive agenda: First thoughts on a metaphorical theology of development' (2007a), and 'God, oikos and the olive agenda: Theological reflections on economics and environment' (2007b). In these articles, he analysed conflictual interactions between ecology and economy, and placed current South African challenges within a world economy that generates wealth and prosperity for developed countries (OECD countries) but creates incredible poverty and injustice for the Third world countries. De Gruchy (2007a:333-345) discusses the differences between the so-called "brown agenda" (poverty) and the "green agenda" (environment), and notes that this distinction emerged from debates on social development:

> The choice between the brown and green agendas is thus not an either/or, but very definitely a both/and, and it is the blending of the two that we bring to the foreground when we speak of the need for an olive agenda. Yet in blending these colours together we intentionally do more that – we are opening the door for a *metaphoric theology* (De Gruchy 2007a:337).

De Gruchy seeks to blend together the green and the brown agenda towards what he labels an "olive agenda". He convincingly argues that commercialisation, industrialisation, science, and technology generate pollution and the privatisation of "commodities" such as air, water,

and land. These issues De Gruchy pins as real issues, but he suggests items on the olive agenda, an agenda that calls for our attention. De Gruchy holds that if we pay attention to the olive agenda, we care for people and for the earth.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter offered a survey of the ecumenical discourse on ethics, which included contributions by theologians from Latin America, India, Africa, and specifically, South Africa, offering valuable insights on the topic under study, namely, ethics. This chapter further reflected on ecumenical inputs by selected theologians and organisations that have significantly influenced this discourse, thereby ensuring that issues around economic injustice and environmental destruction are addressed together. The question that has to be raised is whether ecumenical discourse can make a distinctive contribution in this regard, one that cannot be offered by other role players in the secular sphere, or even by other FBO's.

The next chapter, building on the insights of this chapter, reviews additional contributions – booklets compiled by the WCC – which reflect on discussions by the church, government, organisations, and local communities addressing issues related to the topic of poverty, wealth, and ecology.

Chapter 4

The WCC series on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the wider ecumenical discourse on poverty and ecology. This chapter offers a detailed description and critical analysis of the ways in which the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics is understood. The primary focus is to investigate a series of booklets on poverty, wealth and ecology introduced by the WCC's Justice Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation and Peace office. This study process includes five regional consultations that built on a global consultation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology. These booklets deal specifically with the structural causes of poverty, inequality, and environmental destruction globally and the problems that escalate the latter. They were compiled and edited by Rogate Mshana (ed.) (2009; 2012); Athena Peralta (ed.) (2010); Pavlovic (ed.) (2011); and Kennedy (ed.) (2012) and published by the WCC. The analysis in this chapter is supported by supplementary material and those referred to in chapter 3. Included is a brief discussion of the related study on the greed line, entitled *The Greed Line: Tool for a Just Economy*, edited by Peralta and Mshana in 2016 and published by the WCC.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. After a brief introduction (section 4.1), the first section focuses on the study process on poverty, wealth and ecology (section 4.2). Thereafter, various perspectives are provided: African perspectives (section 4.3); Latin America and Caribbean perspectives (section 4.4); perspectives from Asia and the Pacific (section 4.5), European perspectives (section 4.6); and finally, North America perspectives (section 4.7). The chapter closes with a brief summary highlighting the main points of the chapter (section 4.8).

4.2 The Study Process on "Poverty, Wealth and Ecology"

An ecumenical focus on "ethics" is evident in the study process on poverty, wealth and ecology initiated by the Justice, Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation and Peace office of the WCC between its Porto Alegre (2006) and Busan (2013) assemblies. After the Porto Alegre assembly (2006), the PWE project was developed to move the AGAPE process forward (Mshana 2012:7). These study processes (on poverty, wealth and ecology) included five regional consultations that built on the global consultation on PWE, which took place in

Nanjing in 2012. It produced a common message for the Busan assembly (2013) as they focussed on structural causes and ways to deal with the intertwined problems of escalating poverty, inequality, and environmental destruction (Mshana 2012:7).

Mshana (ed.) (2012:1-18) maintains that the escalating inequality between North and South and between rich and poor countries threatens global peace. These inequalities challenge churches to make the connection between poverty and wealth in response to a fundamental and ethical question: Why are millions of children dying of hunger and disease at a time of unprecedented global prosperity? (cf. Goudzwaard & De Lange 1995:77; Mshana (ed.) 2012:17). This study process dealt with questions such as: To what extent are methods and structures of wealth creation responsible for poverty and inequality? How can this trend be reversed? What are concrete examples worldwide that illustrate the depravity of the poor's entitlement by the rich? Are inequality and the lack of wealth distribution threats to peace? What, therefore, are the spiritual and ethical implications of these questions? (Mshana 2012:18). Mshana (2012:2) avers that the three themes – poverty[38], wealth[39], and ecology[40] – require theological, political, economic, and social analyses. Mshana contends that this study process might provoke a shift in the churches' understanding and actions on poverty, wealth and ecology. He further holds that churches must propose a definition of a "greed line" (Peralta & Mshana (ed.) 2016) vis-à-vis a "poverty line". Mshana (2012:7) comments that these individual reports reflect on the concrete experiences of people in their local contexts and include ethical reflections and analysis of experiences of poverty, wealth, and ecological degradation. These consultations were conducted as open discussions between religious, political, economic, and civil society role players. Contributions, suggestions, and solutions proffered during these various hearings by the participants will also be reflected on in this chapter.

38 "Poverty" is observed as a lack of entitlement of the poor. These include the entitlement of basic goods, for instance, by earning a good income; the entitlement of land, and to public provisions for health and education; and the entitlement to make free use of the services of nature, such as water (Sen 1981). If the entitlement diminishes, we can speak of impoverishment. Poverty is arguably one of the most studied problems in the world we live in. The World Bank (2005) states that nearly half (45%) of the world's population or 2.8 billion people live below the "poverty line" of USD 2 a day. This means that 2.2 billion people barely survive on less than USD 1 a day. A recent assessment indicated that the world is far from being on track to achieving the objective of halving poverty by the year 2015 under the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

39 "Wealth" has important "functional dimensions (allowing people to eat and have shelter), aesthetic benefits (allowing people to celebrate life and enjoy beauty), and a relational nature (where material items are used for self and neighbour)." Yet at the same time, wealth and its creation in micro and macro terms can be just as problematic as poverty. Wealth and wealth creation may encourage values of self-centredness, competition, materialism, and greed. According to Christopher Barett (2003:14), the essential propagating view, "human beings are valued by what they have and what they consume rather than for what they are".

40 "Ecology" refers to the underlying logic (logos) or principles according to which a household is structured.

The Mandate from the Ninth Assembly in Porto Alegre (2006)

It was proposed at the 9th General Assembly of the WCC in Porto Alegre in 2006[41] that churches and partners in the ecumenical movement should embark on a study process that reflects on wealth and how wealth creation is related to poverty and ecology. The ecological focus of the study process was narrowed down to the issue of ecological debt and complements ecumenical work on climate change. Water was included in the WCC's project on "Climate Change and Water: Caring for Creation" (Mshana 2007:3). This study process (poverty, wealth and ecology) responded to the call to further develop and sharpen the AGAPE process (Poverty, Wealth and Ecology). Mshana (2007:3) maintains that each of these three elements – poverty, wealth and ecology – requires theological reflection, as well as political, economic, and social analyses. The mandated study process led to open discussions and hearings among religious, political, social, and economic actors. These hearings and discussions took place in each continent between 2006 and 2011. The findings thereof were presented by the Central Committee at the 10th General Assembly in Busan.[42]

Various perspectives will now be offered. The first to be discussed will be African perspectives on poverty, wealth and ecology.

4.3 Poverty, Wealth and Ecology in Africa: Ecumenical Perspectives

This WCC consultation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology took place from 5 to 9 November, 2007, in Dar es Salaam in conjunction with the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the Council of World Mission (CWM), the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), and the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT).

The consultation considered some critical questions[43] and was the first in the series of regional church encounters on poverty, wealth and ecology aimed at deepening the AGAPE process (cf. Mshana (ed.) 2012). The consultation observed that this vast continent of Africa is blessed with natural resources, yet its people are mired in poverty.

This proposal was presented during the ecumenical conversation that focussed on "the scandal of poverty".

42 The full report of the Program Guidelines Committee of the Ninth Assembly of the WCC can be found at www.wcc-assembly.info/en/theme-issues/assembly-documents/1-statements-documents-adopted/institutional-issues/report-of-the-programme-guidelines-committee/report-as-adopted.html.

43 These critical questions, according to Mshana (ed.) (2012:1), are as follows: Why is the majority of Africa's people mired in poverty, even though the continent possesses abundant natural resources? In what way are impoverishment and enrichment linked? How are these two aspects of the same coin affecting African ecology negatively, and how are they related to just peace? What does theology and the perspectives of woman and youth have to tell us about these issues in the African context? What can the ecumenical family do to resolve these issues?

- **Theological hearings**

The theological hearings assisted with the framework analysis in linking poverty, wealth and ecology in Africa. These theological discussions drew from biblical (i.e., Christian) notions, such as *oikos* (household of life), and of human beings living in community with one another (Genesis 1-2; Psalm 115). The Christian notion *oikos* resonates with the African concepts of *ubuntu/botho/uzima* (life in wholeness) (Mshana (ed.) 2012:7-9). It is argued that churches often promote narrow perspectives that place ecological issues at the periphery of daily life and fail to proclaim in truth the wholesome abundance for all (John 8:32). For Mshana (ed.) (2012:7), these theological hearings grapple with the role of the African church – including the rise of a prophetic voice in a dispensation of injustice and inequality due to "greed" and contentment. South African theologian Nico Koopman (2018), on the other hand, maintains that despite the positive political and macro-economic changes, millions of South Africans are still excluded from obtaining basic necessities and goods of life, as well as from opportunities to participate in building a new society. In actual fact, according to Koopman (2018), the levels of poverty and inequality have increased – white people still enjoy more socio-economic privileges, though the gap between the rich and poor is no longer exclusively along colour lines. It is through this theological hearing that a strong call for a prophetic witness was heard – a prophetic voice that addresses systems of domination; criticises greed and manifestations of empire; condemns imperial ideologies and praxis; and disapproves of patriarchal collusion with injustices within the economy and ecology (Koopman 2018). Participants collectively (at the hearing) declared that structures of domination and exploitation based on class and gender/ethnicity is sinful. They further declared that greed and its negative manifestations are sinful (Mshana (ed.) 2012:8-9). Next, we look at the findings from the women's hearings.

- **Women's hearings**

The women's hearings assisted with the development of a woman's ethic of interconnections between PWE in Africa. At these hearings, participants discussed the collusion between patriarchy and the economic systems. The hearing revealed the injustice and the marginalisation of African woman. The participants thus devised actions and strategies to overcome poverty, to redefine wealth, and to protect the ecology. This African hearing moved toward developing a women's action plan for African woman who have historically been silent due to patriarchal domination and abuse, colonial domination and exploitation, the powers that produce and perpetuate poverty and disease – all forms of exclusion and dehumanisation. These participants highlighted their struggles of international exploitation

during the colonial and neo-colonial eras, as well as global village era (Mshana (ed.) 2012:24). It is noteworthy to mention that a number of African women theologians contributed articles, books, and performances on the injustice, abuse, and exploitation of women in Africa in the name of "development".[44] The voices of the youth are heard next.

- **Youth hearings**

The youth hearings accounted for the voices and visions of African youth. In observance, the African youth maintained that the neo-liberal economic globalisation created injustices such as poverty, inequality, and ecological degradation. In response to these disparities, the African youth at these hearings focussed their attention on identifying the relationship between poverty and migration within an African context (Mshana (ed.) 2012:1-25).

A WCC study entitled: "Wealth Creation, Poverty and Ecology in Africa" was presented and discussed at these hearings. This study illustrated how resource-based wealth creation in the region has resulted in massive poverty and ecological destruction in Africa. This was based on four case-studies: Agricultural production in Kilimanjaro (a local African case); agriculture and logging in Tanzania; copper mining in Zambia; and oil production in Nigeria. The study reveals that the methods used in Africa for wealth creation leads to poverty and subsequent ecological destruction. It recognises relationships in economics and ecology in the creation of wealth, the role of ethics, and the difference between groups in this trajectory. The study offers suggestions of the possibility of a greed line, a wealth line, and possible actions to address the issue of wealth creation more equitably within the African continent. The European panel exchanged North-South and South-South church perspectives and practices on the causes of and ways to tackle poverty, inequality, and environmental destruction. The hearing collectively offers joint church strategies and actions to address interlinked problems of poverty, excessive wealth, and ecological degradation in Africa (Mshana (ed.) 2012:42-126).

The section pays specific attention to Latin American and Caribbean perspectives on the topic.

4.4 Poverty, Wealth and Ecology: Latin America and the Caribbean Perspectives

This consultation process was organised by the WCC in Guatemala City from 6 to 10 October 2008 in conjunction with the Council of Churches in Latin America (CLA) and the ecumenical Christian Council of Guatemala. The title of the consultation was: "Linking

[44] These article contributors are: Okure, 1992; Dube, 2003; Dube, MW 2004. For Books, see: Oduyoye and Kanyoro 1990; Njoroge and Dube (eds.) 2001.

Poverty, Wealth and Ecology: Latin American and Caribbean Ecumenical perspectives". More than 50 church representatives (including the Roman Catholic Church), youth, women, and Indigenous Peoples from Latin America and the Caribbean region, as well as participants from Asia-Pacific, Africa, Europe, and North America were in attendance at this consultation. The Guatemala statement summarises the result of the hearings of the main AGAPE consultation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology in Latin America and the Caribbean. The report includes some of the presentations, i.e., research findings on poverty, wealth, and ecology. There are major social, financial, economic, ecological and wealth distribution differences between people within Latin America and the Caribbean region. The neo-liberal model[45] includes capital accumulation and increased inequality between the few who are rich and the millions who are poor. This model further attempts to destroy the earth's resources with its only goal – accumulation. This model is a producer of poverty and misery. These regions are considered among the most unequal societies globally, but despite these inequalities, the people continue to resist and provide alternatives to satisfy their goal of living well (Mshana (ed.) 2009:6-7). The next few paragraphs include discussions of the two-day hearings of the youth; women and Indigenous people held at the *La Salle* University Residence Centre in Guatemala City (cf. Rasmussen 1996).

What the young people had to say is reflected on next.

- **Youth hearings**

At these hearings, young people from Latin America and the Caribbean shared experiences of the neo-liberal economic globalisation process within their region. They identified key elements that negatively impacted young people in these regions, such as growing unemployment, decreasing access to education and health, rising individualism, and consumerism. The goal of these young people is to generate healthy attitudes, and thereby move from an attitude of protest to that of a solidarity-based proposal for action and accomplishment. The youth further promote a civilising and communitarian model of thought (Mshana (ed.) 2009:9). Gnanadason (2005a:60-63) maintains that the role of humans is to thank God for creation and everything in it. They ought to thank God on behalf of creation as it does not have a voice to speak for itself. Gnanadason (2005a:70-71) affirms that the neo-liberal form of globalisation has a detrimental effect on the earth because it

[45] The "Neoliberal model" promotes a drastic reduction of the state's role in the economy, fiscal austerity, privatisation, the adaptation of policies favourable to the free market and the opening up of the international economy. The neoliberal economic policy therefore greatly impacts women whose poverty is exacerbated by the privatisation of health and education services, unequal pay, increased working hours and the increasing price of basic goods, and the destruction of their livelihoods (Mshana (ed.) 2009:6-7).

promotes continuous economic growth. The developed countries disregard all forms of sustainability as sustainable development mainly focuses on economic growth and contributes to the exploitation of the earth and its limited resources (cf. Rasmussen 1996). She holds that governments are forced to give up their responsibility to guard public goods with the aim of keeping private corporations satisfied. Gnanadason (2005b:77) contends that alternatives to globalisation in the ecological discourse should be prioritised. She argues that relevant users should pay for the damage caused due to overuse and exploitation of natural resources by cancelling Third World economic debt. The contributions of Latin American and Caribbean women are described below.

- **Women's hearings**

At these hearings, women discussed the impact of the neoliberal economic model, and its institutions and allies as imposed on Latin America and Caribbean women. They shared their negative disproportionate experiences and identified an erosion of women's power that transforms and sustains life in harmony with the environment based on ancestral wisdom. They collectively affirmed that the Northern industrialised countries and their institutions that produce patriarchy, owe a social and ecological debt to humanity and the earth (Mshana (ed.) 2009:15-16). It is important at this stage to include a feminist view on these injustices. Gnanadason (2005a:27-34) holds that a feminist theory directly responds to how women experience suffering, exclusion, injustice, survival, and resistance. Feminism further challenges patriarchal systems and traditional dualism, and it emphasises the emancipation of woman and the oppressed. Feminism, therefore, led to the development of eco-feminism – in addition to the above, it challenges unjust economic systems as well as wasteful use of the earth's resources. Feminist theologians (cf. Gebara 1999 and Vuola 2011) therefore view the liberation of the poor and the well-being of nature as two sides of the same coin. This hearing held by the women provides insight into the Latin American and Caribbean contexts of suffering, injustice, and ecological destruction (Mshana (ed.) 2009:1, 15-16). African American eco-feminist Shamara Riley (1992:121-203; cf. Gnanadason 2005a:27-34) argues that First World eco-feminists primarily take into account the issue of gender, whereas the Third World eco-feminists include connections between classism and racism. It might be that the latter could be observed in this hearing conducted by these women. Indigenous voices are heard next.

- **Indigenous people's hearings**

At these hearings, the Indigenous people analysed the Indigenous people's cosmovision; Christianity and church structure; the dominant economy; as well as political and social

model; and how these aspects relate to PWE. The neo-liberal development model emphasises individualism and material accumulation, which increases inequities between the poor and rich. The Indigenous participants articulated an alternative indigenous cosmovision that embraces all of life and places importance on balance and harmony between people and the earth. Liberation theologian Leonardo Boff (2015:168) opines that the great majorities of the impoverished are people of the Diaspora, oppressed women, indigenous communities, and the poor in general. These people are deprived of the most fundamental freedom: the freedom of survival, which includes housing and safety from environmental disasters. Elina Vuola (2011:79) asserts that Indigenous people in Latin America are being marginalised and viewed as subordinate and less human than Europeans. She further maintains that Indigenous people inhabited the land for many centuries and have a good knowledge of nature, trees, and herbs. Vuola argues that development (new technologies) destroyed the livelihood of the Indigenous people, the poor, and the ecology.

Following these representations, the consultations by the youth, women and Indigenous people in Latin America and the Caribbean identify interconnectedness and propose the development of a "greed line". The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation as well as the draft WCC statement on eco-justice and ecological debt was part of these discussions and affirmed issues such as "just peace" and "ecological debt". These are critical issues for the church to discuss and act on. These hearings produced a consolidated Guatemala statement on PWE.

The next section reviews perspectives on the topic from Asia and the Pacific.

4.5 Poverty, Wealth and Ecology in Asia and the Pacific: Ecumenical Perspectives

This consultation was organised by the WCC and hosted in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 2 to 6 November 2009 in conjunction with the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), and the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT). This consultation took place during a global financial and economic crisis that deepened marginalisation of the vulnerable sectors of society. Structural greed is at the root of this crisis while measures and solutions offered to avoid this crisis failed. The Chiang Mai consultation benefitted from thought-provoking biblical and theological reflections from Asian and oceanic viewpoints inclusive of an interfaith panel representing Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. Also observed were stimulating presentations from representatives of civil society and the Government of Thailand on how to deal with poverty and the ecological

problems in their country. The following paragraphs provide insight into the hearings of women, youth, and Indigenous people held in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The women's perspectives are reviewed next.

- **Women's hearings**

At the women's hearing, issues related to migration, human trafficking, and gendered impact on climate change were raised. These women of the Asian and the Pacific region shared their stories and raised some issues such as the recognition and protection of migrant workers' rights, just livelihood, and decent work for women and men; recognition and support of women's central role in upholding food sovereignty; and women's right to land and water; climate justice, recognition of climate debts; and ensuring that women's perspectives are brought to bear on negotiations on climate change and strategies to migrate and adapt to climate change (Peralta (ed.) 2010). The voices of the youth are considered next.

- **Youth hearings**

The emphasis of these hearings was on youth unemployment and the heightened consumerism among young people. These hearings identified growing inequality between the rich and poor within these countries. The issue of unemployment illustrates that it is only the privileged (those who financially can afford to study) that obtain university degrees, and lucrative employment opportunities and benefits. The uneducated youth who find employment receive low salaries and their working conditions are inhuman. There is no real job security. In these countries, education is for those who are privileged and if a poor child does find the means to go to school, classrooms are overcrowded, and learning is difficult. It is found that impoverished young people migrate to other countries in search of a better life and to support their families. The unfortunate reality is that some of these young people turn out to be involved in prostitution, human trafficking, crime, and other social vices. The youth identified that the current profit-oriented economic system in the global North and South reinforces environmental racism practices. The young people at the hearings affirmed their opposition against such unjust practices and suggest alternatives to these challenges. They further commit to a continued fight against exploitive policies by their governments and corporations. Gnanadason (2005b:77) opines that environmental racism should be seriously addressed in ecological discussions as people are oppressed and the environment is being destroyed in the name of development. The WCC through its various study projects on climate change and ecological degradation have attempted to ensure environmental justice and overcome environmental racism through changing the quality of life and not only

desiring to create a cleaner environment. Gnanadason (2005b:78) affirms that the WCC has committed itself to triumph over environmental racism manifested in the expropriation of land, livelihoods, and knowledge systems. The youth at the hearing therefore pledged their continued support to social movements that uphold justice and peace.[46] The voices of the Indigenous people are considered next.

- **Indigenous people's hearings**

The Indigenous people at the hearing expressed that they have suffered historical colonisation, subjugation, and integration and assimilation by merchants, traders, and states of churches.[47] They argue that the activities of the merchants and traders have deprived and alienated them (the Indigenous people) from access to, and collected ownership of, natural resources, thereby undermining their cultures, language, and religion. Even in the modern era, the indigenous still experience marginalisation, discrimination, and exploitation. Their belief is that the ocean and the land are sacred. The Indigenous people argue that they are driven from the land and sea in the name of development, despite the sacredness of both. A question posed during this hearing was: Who truly benefits from development? (Peralta (ed.) 2010:23-26). In Gnanadason's (2005b:50-51) view, one needs to consider the connection between the Christian theology of dominion and Western science, technology, and capitalism. Western science, technology and capitalism undoubtedly inspired a faulty understanding of development, as this view fosters a culture of industrialisation that destroys the survival of the earth and its resources. Gnanadason (2005b:77) is of the opinion that the relevant users should pay for the damage caused by excessive use and the exploitation of natural resources by cancelling Third World economic debt. As per the discussion under the youth hearing's, Gnanadason asserts that environmental racism – "racist patterns in the distribution of negative economic and environmental consequences" – requires serious attention. I therefore believe that Peralta and the contributors attempted to address the issues in the Greed Line Study Group's discussions, as well as Peralta and Mshana (ed.) in their 2016 book, *The greed line: Tool for a just economy*. The next section focuses on European perspectives on the topic.

4.6 Poverty, Wealth and Ecology in Europe: Call for Climate Justice

The European consultation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology was hosted by the WCC from 8 to 12 November, 2010, in Budapest in conjunction with the youth, the Churches'

[46] cf. Gnanadason's discussion on prostitution and human trafficking.

[47] cf. Mugambi & Vǎhǎkanga (2001).

Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), Euro-Diakonia, and APRODEV (Association of Protestant Development). The European consultation was hosted at a turbulent time as Europe struggled to recover from a global financial and economic crisis caused by Northern designed financial models. The design of the European consultation was different from the other consultations as the hearings were prearranged around three themes, namely: poverty and wealth in Europe; facing up to a low-carbon economy; and an economy of sufficiency. These themes require a dialogue that challenges power structures and churches. A brief description of each follows next.

- **Poverty and wealth in Europe**

Participants at this hearing on poverty and wealth in Europe (Pavlovic (ed.) 2011:151) listened to numerous stories and testimonies of people who personally and on a day-to-day basis struggle with poverty, social exclusion, unemployment, education, housing, and social and financial services. Pavlovic (ed.) (2011:67) states that ever since the European Union's (EU) expansion in 2004–2007, Europe has been divided into two parts: the rich West and the poor East. These divides exacerbate the socio-political challenges in the EU and the disparities call for deep and intensive dialogue on the part of churches, civil societies, the EU, and political power at the national level.

- **Facing up to a low-carbon economy and an economy of sufficiency**

Participants at this hearing stated that the root cause of poverty is linked to wealth creation. These wealth creation structures function at the expense of poor people and the environment. Participants argued that the scourge of wealth vis-à-vis the poor needs urgent attention and thus recommended a low energy economy instead of a low carbon economy. Participants sensitised an urgency to reduce carbon dependency. They recommended an advocacy for climate finance as additional to development aid, global carbon – taxes, financial transaction taxes, airfare taxes (taking social criteria into account) – investments in public services, and public transport services as just compensation for developing countries in exchange for non-exploitation of fossil fuel resources. The participants committed themselves to promoting the WCC's statement on Ecological Justice and Ecological Debt; the Greenhouse Development Rights (GDR) Framework, by disseminating, translating, and availing popularised versions of the document; theological reflections on issues of sufficiency and low-energy development. They have identified a need to create more opportunities for young people to participate, contribute, and influence current work challenges, developing mechanisms to link church activities at the local level with advocacy at a structural/political level and

provide methods for this purpose. To achieve this, sustainability is required (Pavlovic (ed.) 2011:151-56).

- **Poverty, Wealth and Ecology – a dialogue: churches addressing the economic and financial crisis**

Participants had the opportunity to express their concerns related to the issues of economic and ecological justice in the North and South dialogue. Facilitators present at this hearing clarified perceptions on the economy in its social, political, and cultural contexts. The task of the church was to analyse fundamental values that characterise the way people live together irrespective of social and economic injustices. It is observed that abstract economic interest in monetary market relationships fails to do justice to Christian social ethics and sustainable development within communities. The church must advocate that every human being has inherent dignity, and they should develop their capacities to participate in and contribute to all of society. Participants recalled their common experiences and convictions and analysed the various causes and effects of poverty. Their joint recommendations were presented to the EU institutions and to the Member States as they motivated for a stronger Europe. The participants offered brief summarised outputs (Pavlovic (ed.) 2011:157-160).[48]

Next, attention is given to North American perspectives on the topic.

[48] A summarised output of the hearing (Kennedy 2012:158-159):

"The issues discussed at this hearing were complex."

1. "The term 'global transformation' was recklessly used but never defined."
2. "Participants requested churches to engage in critical analysis of the participatory democratic structures in Europe; they must decide where best to engage their time and energy."
3. "European is strategically placed to engage Transnational Corporations."
4. "European Churches must be bold in naming the powers which prevent the transition of a just, equitable and sustainable global economy. They need to highlight both, the positive benefits of a low-carbon society and also naming the injustices in which Europe has been complicit in creating perpetuating in the current global system."
5. "Participants state that the advocacy/prophetic role must be communicated within the framework of climate justice and the global kairos reflecting the result of the current economic, ecological, energy and food crisis."
6. "European Churches must be the voice for the voiceless (advocating rights and well-being on their behalf, engaging in grass-roots community empowerment programs to enable socially-excluded communities to speak for themselves on the issues that impact on their rights and well-being)."
7. "European churches are uniquely positioned to influence the education policy and agenda in Europe."
8. "Finally, it is contingent on European Churches to factor the issue of reparation for other world countries into their dialogue with power structures and with churches across Europe in response to historic and current claims."

4.7 Poverty, Wealth and Ecology: Ecumenical Perspectives from North America

The North American consultation process on PWE was hosted by the WCC from 6 to 12 November, 2011, in Calgary, Alberta, in conjunction with representatives from Christian confessions in Canada and the USA, along with representatives from other ecumenical partners. This consultation theme, a "Final call: There's a New World in the Making", requires critical reflection and action in a time of a global financial crisis, an environmental threat and resistance to unjust and unsustainable economic structures. The following paragraphs offer brief descriptions and engagements of the issues and solutions proposed by the youth, namely, aboriginal issues concerning migrant and guest workers in North America. These consultations took the form of plenary sessions. The youth hearings are reflected on next.

- **Youth hearings**

Kennedy (ed.) (2012:56-61) noted that the participants came from the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) in North America and other youth organisations. The WSCF applied a "fishbowl methodology" to invite participants into conversation. The first proposed topic centred on strategies to be used to promote topics of poverty, wealth and ecology. A case study – the Occupy movement – presented a strategy towards integration, sustainability, and a creative approach to activism on a number of topics, such as the exploitation of the marginalised within society in order to push a political perspective. The second topic illustrated an example of mining in the tar sands, which was used to illustrate that this demand bears a personal responsibility. The third topic speaks on consumption as a product of choice. Therefore, a vital question**:** "What do we fill this earth and ourselves with if we are willing to trade poison for money?**"** was posed by young people at this hearing. Leonardo Boff (1994:236), a liberation and ecological theologian, maintains that society is not built on life, common good, participation, or solidarity among human beings; it is built on the economy.[49] One cannot create wealth without the generation of poverty, "Economic development" therefore cannot be without the production of social exploitation, internally and globally. It is neither democratic because it creates a political system designed for control and dominance. Young people support an idea of *koinonia* **–** partnership – a common business venture. This partnership relates to a sharing of material goods. The youth critiqued the prosperity gospel, arguing that it is a by-product of empire. Participants are of the opinion

[49] Economy seeks unlimited growth in the shortest possible time with minimum investments but maximum profits. Economy is directed by an ideal of development which encompass two infinite quantities, namely: (1) a supply of natural resources, and (2) a wide open future of unlimited possibilities.

that transformation starts from within – this is one way to break out of the stereotypical self-righteous church person.

Omega Bula (Kennedy (ed.) 2012:60-61) sees the youth's question on systemic power as multi-facetted. She argues that consumers are complicit with the neo-liberalists and it is her opinion that both should lament and repent. Omega Bula illustrates the market as an instrument or mechanism of exploitation and not a network of human relations. She concludes by saying, "[I]f the focus is on the market as a network of human relations, more should be done on what is ethical and what is right" (Kennedy (ed.) 2012:61). Aboriginal perspectives are heard next.

- **Aboriginal hearing**

Three presenters – one from the Dene Nation in Yellowknife Northwest Territories (presenter: Daniel T'seleie), the other from the Gitga'at First Nation of British Columbia (presenter: Ha'eis Clare Hill), and the third from the Cree Nation and a United Church minister at Kipling, Saskatchewan (presenter: Janet Sigurdson) – described specific issues of poverty, wealth, and ecology located within their cultural contexts. The focus of this hearing was on energy and pipeline issues, climate change, Aboriginal rights, land claims, and cultural and spiritual issues (Kennedy (ed.) 2012:66-78).

Kennedy (ed.) (2012:71-75) makes reference to Hill who expressed that his involvement in a campaign called, "Say No to Oil Tankers on the Pacific West Coast" presented participants with maps of the planned tanker, oil, and gas pipeline routes that will negatively impact his and many other territories if this project is approved. Daniel, a member of the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition, organised the youth against the tar sands exploitation – a major contributor to climate change. The ministry of Sigurdson focusses on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal congregations and promotes understanding and healing among people and the earth, and thus calls for a National Aboriginal Day to be declared by Canada and observed every year on the 21st of June.

Kennedy (ed.) (2012:77-78) makes reference to Steve van de Hoef who on behalf of the plenary responded to the three presentations. He observes ecology, poverty, and wealth in all three presentations. He opines that all three presentations speak for the marginalised voices. Van de Hoef argues that to hear these voices compels the hearer to disseminate the information received. He exclaims that this Aboriginal hearing was one of those platforms where one could hear the voices of people with different perspectives pushing the boundaries of dialogue away from the power centres, toward those places and people who have

important perspectives to be heard. Those perspectives are the forced wage economy (presented by Daniel), idolatry and land issues (as observed in Clare's presentation) – "What are we willing to sacrifice to Mammon?" and "What was creation created for?" Janet's question, "What is Promised Land and to whom is it promised for?" These insightful presentations triggered a plethora of relevant questions, including: Can we live together on this land as Promised Land? Do we have adequate theology for that? Do we have adequate ecology for that?) (Kennedy (ed.) 2012:78).

Attention is now given to the perspectives of migrant workers and guest workers.

- **Migrant workers' and guest workers' hearing**

Kennedy (ed.) (2012:79-93) explains that the hearing for the migrant workers and guest workers in Canada was scheduled by the working committee of the WCC so that churches and society could hear their voices and understand their context. These workers are amongst the most marginalised and exploited workers in the global economy. Present at this hearing was: the coalition of Immokalee Workers (presenter: Lucas Benitez); the Temporary Foreign Workers Support Program of the Galgary Catholic Immigration Society (presenter: Jessica Juen); Larisa (Rhiza) Guevarra from the Philippines (a live-in caregiver in Galgary); Twomey Centre for Peace and Justice at Loyola University in New Orleans (presenter: Ted Quant).

Kennedy (ed.) (2012:80-93) refers to Benitez, Juen, Guevarra, and Quant who contend that the agricultural industry is stuck inside a sandwich – or a hamburger – as the agriculture companies are challenged as they struggle to purchase supplies to plant and harvest fruit, vegetables, etcetera. They have to buy from the agricultural industry and pay a higher price – they are expected to pay the price for the product needed or to leave it. When the products are harvested and ready to be sold, the corporations that buy these products dictate the price that they want to pay (in this presentation – tomatoes). These companies bow to pressure from below (all costs and inputs) and above (to produce artificially cheap products). The farm and foreign workers[50] (such as caregivers and nannies) bear the brunt of these challenges. These workers have language barriers, and they face verbal and physical abuse,

[50] The Canadian TFW programme was established in 1970 and the federal started a programme to address the employers demand for immediate labour. The programme first concentrated on seasonal agricultural workers and thereafter expanded to include live-in caregivers. Due to demographic changes, the programme started hiring highly skilled professionals such as engineers, consultants, and academics who usually came from Europe. As the population aged, the younger generation were better educated and less content working in more physical demanding jobs, so the programme expanded into hiring low-skilled workers. From 2002 to 2008, foreign workers more than doubled, and in 2009, foreign workers outnumbered landed migrants for the first time in Canadian history. In Alberta, foreign workers in 2005 numbered approximately 15,700; in 2008 it jumped to 57,700 plus (Kennedy (ed.) 2012:83).

exploitation, and marginalisation at the hand of their employers and supervisors due to demand and delivery. The migrant and guest workers are of the opinion that the government supports these abusive and exploitative systems of injustice (the government of origin and the exploiters government).Kennedy (ed.) (88-93) refers to Quant who contend that these bourgeois governments present global capital[51] against the global working class. This appears to be the overall view of the presenters at the hearing.

Kennedy (ed.) (2012:93-94) makes reference to Edith Rasell who responded on behalf of the plenary by quoting the employers: "No American will take this job". Based on this statement, a space is created for somebody else from another country who is forced to leave their homes and families and do something – anything – in order to get money to support those back home. Not only are these jobs occupied by migrant, seasonal, or contractual workers on paper, in practice, bad jobs are even worse than they appear on paper. Rasell poses two questions: firstly, what does this say to us in terms of a moral, ethical response? The second one is an economic one; not all employers are abusers but what about those employers who get away with abuse? They will create more jobs, especially the kind of jobs that Americans and Canadians do not want unless they forced to take the job as the alternative is unimaginable.

Kennedy (ed.) (2012:131-159) refers to John Dillon who in his research paper "Poverty, wealth and ecology in Canada" asserts that poverty persists in Canada amidst apparent wealth generated in particular by the petroleum (centred on Alberta tar sands) and financial industries (generate wealth for corporations but do not deliver sustainable well-being for all members of society). Dillon argues that the current trajectory of the world economy is socially and economically unsustainable. He remarks that the economy must be reoriented to live within the limits of the earth's ecological carrying capacity.

Based on all these factors and challenges faced, it is understood from this analysis that the world economy is both financially and ecologically unsustainable. Brazilian economist Marcos Arruda insightfully in a collection of studies by the WCC (an Advisory Group on Economic Matters) called *Justice Not Greed* writes that:

> The tsunami of unreal wealth that has inundated the planet is destined…to ebb. All the public monies in the world put together could not save it or cover up the speculators'

[51] Quant holds that Global capital vis-à-vis a free enterprise system simply means - competition for profit. This profit benefit only the capitalist billionaires who rape the land, increase productivity by driving down wages and the cost of production. This is achieved by exporting production to countries with the lowest paid workers and importing the lowest paid workers to high wage companies to reduce the cost of high wage labour. Workers are therefore not viewed as human beings but rather as a commodity – bought and sold (Kennedy (ed.) 2012:88).

> losses. If the authorities should try to do so, they will flood the world with another tsunami of unreal wealth, closing a catastrophic and irrational vicious circle. If they fail to change the rules of the financial game, hyperinflation or stagflation, more wealth concentration and deeper trenches between social classes will be unavoidable (Arruda 2010:140).

In observance, Arruda (2010:140) opines that the wider gap of inequality between the rich and poor is disastrous to the earth and all its creatures. Wealth causes gross injustices to both humanity and the earth. Arruda offers an alternative: "[E]ach state should act on its own initiative", with no organic agreements amongst states and with discretionary compliance in whatever compliance rules are established in disciplining financial flows. This study process finding identifies a trend of inequality and an acceleration of ecological degradation. These findings therefore bolster Harry de Lange and Bob Goudzwaard's (1995) argument in *Beyond Poverty and Affluence: Toward an Economy of Care,* stating:

> Only by defining the upper limits of consumption and thus of income for the rich can the real needs of the poor be satisfied and the impact of the economy on the environment be brought under control.

The section below provides a summation of what has been discussed so far.

4.8 A Brief Summary

This booklet on PWE provides suggestions to church communities, government, economists, and social society groups to address the scourges of injustice. A theological and ethical lens was administered in observance of social and ecological threats and destructive behaviour globally. The analysis in this chapter identified that neo-liberalism developed a deeper dependency system that is no longer acceptable. The climate crisis as a result of forms of production and consumption is a major concern. It is observed that the Northern post-industrial countries and patriarchal institutions in these countries owe a social and ecological debt to humanity and the earth. It appears that international institutions only focus on financial development and pay little or no attention to the social and environmental consequences of their deeds. These consultations that took place in different countries, it touched on issues presented by the body of Christ that are observed in society. As observed, humanity polluted and damaged the earth. A turnaround strategy is needed as irreversible harm is done to the earth. Environmental pollution, socio-economic challenges, and climate change have the greatest impact upon people who are poor and vulnerable by their poverty. These consultations and hearings therefore expose unjust systems that cause poverty, socio-economic injustice, and the degradation of the ecological environment; it further offers faith-based critique. There is acknowledgement of complicities of faith-based institutions and it

was explained how their behaviour has impacted the world.

One can observe a tension between ecclesiology and ethics based on these hearings captured in each individual booklet. One can relate to the ecclesiological nature and mission of the church, but the emphasis of these booklets is on contemporary ethical concerns. The history of the ecumenical movement may be regarded as a sequence of attempts to build bridges between ecclesiology and ethics from either of the two sides (F&O and L&W).

The next section introduces and explains the purpose of the development of the Greed Line Study Group.

4.9 The Greed Line Study Group

Marcos Arruda in an article by Brubaker and Mshana (eds.) (2010:122-148) claims that financial institutions serve a certain mode of development – they serve the ideology of neo-liberal capitalism that reduces development to endless growth – and the unlimited search for profit, regardless of the challenges faced by society and the environment. The reality is that greed manifested itself in the global economic system but causes income, race, and class inequality among and within the global world. The WCC commissioned intensive studies from 2006 to 2013 on the links between poverty, wealth, and ecology. In light of these challenges, the WCC in 2009 mandated a diverse group of scientists to compile a greed line study. This Greed Line Study Group[52] was tasked to discuss and compile a report that includes the following: how greed could be measured and monitored; an analysis on how to avert greed in production and consumption; develop theological, economic, ethical, and moral guidelines for just and sustainable production and consumption; propose how greed/wealth lines could contribute towards building alternatives to the current economic system that has proved to be both inequitable and unsustainable. The Greed Line Study Group's paper[53] offers views and a set of recommendations aimed at fighting greed at all levels and motivate just, caring, and sustainable economies.

The greed line report briefly includes:

- What is greed?
- Why is greed pervasive?

[52] The multi-disciplinary team is as follows: Dr. Lucas Andrianos (Greece/Madagascar), Prof. Edward Dommen (Switzerland), Dr. Bob Goudzwaard (Netherlands), Ms. Rosario Guzman (Philippines), Dr. Jung Mo Sung (Brazil), Mr. Clement Kwayu (Tanzania), Dr. Carlos Larrea (Ecuador), Rev. Dr. Konrad Raiser (Germany), and Prof. Michael Taylor (United Kingdom). Critical inputs were given by Dr. Hella Hoppe (Switzerland) and Dr. Apichai Puntasen (Thailand) (Peralta & Mshana (ed.) 2016:vii).

[53] The Greed Line Study Group formed discussions around five questions, namely: What is greed? Why is greed pervasive? What does our faith have to say on greed? What must churches do in response to the problem? How do we measure and monitor greed?

- What does our faith have to say on greed?
- What must churches do in response to the problem?
- How do we measure and monitor greed?

These are discussed in more detail below.

- **What is greed?**

Peralta & Mshana (ed.) (2016:8) refers to Conrad Raiser's definition of "greed"[54] He defines "greed" as the desire to have more than one's legitimate share of material goods and power. Greed is about wants which are "difficult to contain" and involve an "emotional energy that disregards limitations". Greed, therefore, is difficult to circumscribe and measure. He further holds that the concept of greed represents moral failure. Raiser (2016:57) further opines that greed is not only idolatry but is essentially a denial of Christ. He maintains that the biblical tradition recognises that human beings have a profound desire and longing for the fullness of life that goes beyond the satisfaction of basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, and so on. Life, according to Raiser, does not exist in the abundance of possessions. He further holds:

> Greed is the result of the human propensity to focus the longing and the search for a meaningful life and for wellbeing on "having" – on property, on possessions, and on the power to accumulate the means of life. But true cannot be bought accumulated and secured. All human beings are in need of living in right and suitable relationships; they search for peace and justice, for recognition, love, mutuality, and security. These immaterial needs cannot be satisfied by the accumulation of material means; immaterial point to the fact that the fullness of life depends on the wholeness of relationships within the community, with the natural world and with the ultimate reality of God. True love is being in communion and can be received only as a gift, like love.

True life is observed in communion, communion relates to the Greek word *koinonia*[55] – true life, therefore, means living in an earth community where the whole of creation is considered. Larry Rasmussen (2008:499) asserts that greed is associated with consumerism. He draws from Wordsworth (2008:499) in saying that a consumerist world is so "much with us" that nature "moves us not". He further expresses that the political economy is more than production and exchange; it is the phantom cosmology of our time, with consumerism as a daily dose attested to a consumerist world. Rasmussen offers an alternative to consumerist

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54 Greed, at its core is a moral and spiritual issue. The dynamic of greed – it is not limited to material possessions but an expression of the thirst for power, the temptation to outdo or take advantage of others (1 Thess 2 4:4). Therefore, churches and other faith-based institutions and movements have a special role to play in countering greed at all levels.

55 *Koinonia* is derived from the Greek word *koinon*, meaning "in common" or "communal". The tern is used in contrast to "private" (Best & Gasman 1994:40). Translated into English, it has multiple meanings, such as: "communion", "commonality", "fellowship", "mutuality", "partaking", "participating", "reciprocity", "relief", "sharing", "society", "solidarity", "togetherness", "union" and "unity". *Koinonia* is a Greek concept in origin and biblical in its religious usage (Ayre & Conradie (eds.) 2016:74).

greed – "asceticism"[56]. Rasmussen propounds that asceticism speaks to something deep in the human spirit and requires authenticity.

Raiser (2016:8) mentions the notion of "legitimate share". According to Raiser, the notion of "legitimate share" is constructed according to an understanding of what is appropriate for an individual and for a community to have or own. According to Raiser, more than one's "legitimate share" implies a violation of a limit. The benchmarks for recognising when and where to draw the line could be derived from different frameworks of assessment. Raiser (2011; 2016:8) states that, firstly, it comprises moral obligations – "legitimate share" forms part of different religious and cultural traditions. Secondly, it is based on a human rights framework, especially economic, social, and cultural rights, which specify minimum standards as a basis for political action. Thirdly, it considers the socio-economic and ecological consequences of processes of accumulation where the limit can be determined on the basis of empirical measured indicators. Raiser (2011; 2016:8) postulates that the context of limit ought to be approached when the generation and accumulation of wealth and power adversely affect other individuals' and societies' capacity to support themselves; when it undermines the common good or threatens the global commons including the atmosphere, oceans, and forests.

- **Why is greed pervasive?**

It seems that greed is officially sanctioned and entranced in our economic system – the intrinsic goals of which are to grow limitlessly, to generate the highest return in the shortest timeframe, and to maximise utility from the consumption of material goods (Peralta & Mshana (ed.) 2016:12). Raiser holds that the term "neoliberal consumption" deals with humanity's inherent selfishness and greediness (Peralta & Mshana (ed.) 2016:12; Merton 1968). Raiser (2016:12) draws from Apichai Puntasen stating that greed is rooted in our monetary system. It becomes institutionalised with the evolution of money from merely being a medium of exchange to a store of value. A source of capital that could be invested to increase profits, a measure of gross domestic product, and more recently, a commodity subjected to speculation for further financial gain. Raiser in Peralta and Mshana (ed.) (2016:13) affirms that the economic order of capitalism is based on the individualism of *homo œconomicus* and the pursuit of "rational" self-interest – greed is not fostered alone but depends on the unlimited desire of greed. Greed, therefore, originates from a sense of

[56] *Ascetism* – According to Rasmussen (2003:505), "asceticism" is a communal attitude of mind and way of life that leads to the respectful use, and not the abuse of material goods. "Many human beings come to behave as materialistic tyrants;" they "commit crimes against the rural world" that would be considered anti-social and illegal behaviour if done to other humans.

insecurity more than perversity (Peralta & Mshana (ed.) 2016:14; Taylor 2011). Raiser (2016:16) remarks that people living in poverty can be greedy too.

- **What does our faith have to say about greed?**

Peralta & Mshana (ed.) (2016:16) refers to Raiser as he asserts that there is an abundance of biblical teachings on greed or the excessive accumulation and misuse of wealth, and these are mainly founded on the conviction regarding God the Creator who provides for all living beings what they need in order to live fully. They (Peralta & Mshana (ed.) 2016: 51-51) that Jong Mo Sung in his contribution entitled 'Greed, Desire and Theology' that humans have sought to satisfy their desire to "be" by possessing other people's belongings since ancient times. He declares that the Decalogue teaches us that the fulfilment of the desire to "be" is not to be found in the constant pursuit of consumption, or in owning things that others desire, which is idolatry. Jong Mo Sung (Mshana & Peralta (ed.) 2016:53) claims that our being is not to be found in an object of desire external to ourselves but within ourselves, just as God is not to be found in material objects or in temples but within us. Raiser explains that a desire to "be" can only be fulfilled in love for God, who freed the oppressed from slavery, and in love for our neighbour. Raiser (Mshana & Peralta (ed.) 2016:17) states that the teaching of Calvin identifies the rich and poor as part of one system where the rich bear a social responsibility to the poor.

Conradie (2009:79-81) opines that market capitalism is an attractive First World religion; it binds all corners of the world tightly toward a worldview and values. The church unfortunately observes market capitalism as secular, but it is aggressively challenging our Christian faith. Conradie further believes that consumerism in the Christian discourse is idolatry and faith in the Triune God is functionally being replaced. God (or Jesus) is merely a marketing object being used, which is easily replaced by another product – consumerism. This replacement of market capitalism within the church sadly masquerades in the name of Christianity. Conradie strongly argues that the theological legitimation of consumerism, for example, the "prosperity gospel", must be denounced as heresy.[57] This argument therefore concludes that the desire for what money can buy has functionally replaced faith in God (cf. Conradie 2009:73). Conradie (2009:87) opines that our functionality as the church must be

[57] It is noted that this theological legitimation of modernity, neo-liberal capitalism, and globalisation seems to be thriving in Africa, especially amongst new Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches (PCC's) (cf. Meyer 2004:447-474; Conradie 2019:73). It is Meyer's opinion that the "prosperity gospel" is the main attraction of the PCC's. These followers feel that their needs must be met but the promises of prosperity fail to materialise amongst ordinary believers. This, however, is the main weakness of the prosperity gospel. Conradie (2009:73) contends that such prosperity may be understood as God's blessings, but when the prosperity gospel is legitimised upwards, social mobility it observed to be heretic.

observed within our proclamation (*kerugma*), our service as church in the world (*diakonia*), and the fellowship of believers (*koinonia*). These tenets assist the church in maintaining a sense of direction amidst all temptations and diversions of this consumerist culture.

- **What could churches do in response to the problem of greed?**

Churches engaged the issue of greed primarily as an individual impulse that is largely delinked from the prevailing economic environment and culture. A tendency not to advocate against greed and the implementation of an anti-greed measure at a structural level was observed. Peralta & Mshana (ed.) (2016:22) agree with Jung Mo Sung and Raiser that theology and churches have an important role to play in uncovering the falsehood disseminated by the current capitalist regime. It is suggested that a greater consumption and economic success lead to complete self-fulfilment. This clearly brings a question to light – when is humanity satisfied with enough? In an article titled "Justice not greed: Biblical perspectives on ethical deficits of the present financial system", Musa Filibus (2010:53) maintains that the transformation of the economy requires the nurturing of a culture and ethics of "enough for all". A theological starting point is the view that the God we serve is a God of abundance and not scarcity. God has created enough to go around, "sufficient for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed". Filibus reckons that the principle of enough is "sufficiency" (cf. KAIROS). Exodus 16:16-21, according to Filibus (2010), clarifies the folly of gathering, hoarding, and having too much confidence in wealth as a guarantee of security. The economy based on the ethic of enough raises the question of how much wealth each person really needs. Moses warns the children of Israel to gather only as much as they need for the day. Likewise, Jesus teaches His disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread". These words not only urge us against gluttony but point beyond ourselves to God who cares for all, including the sparrows. Peralta & Mshana (ed.) (2016:109) refers to Lucas Andrianos who opines that many people live in abject poverty while others have adequate food, shelter, and warmth. He further maintains that human sin and the monetary systems introduced alienation between God, humans, and the rest of creation. Andrianos quotes Matthew 22:37-39: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with your entire mind." This is the first commandment; the second commandment is: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself". Peralta & Mshana (ed.) (2016:111) is of the opinion that Lynn White view greed is a sin against God and our neighbour. White is convinced that the church is assigned to restore the human image of God and contends that the two terms – "dominion" and "image of God" – are often misinterpreted. She then argues that Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion whilst quoting Genesis 1:28.

Father John Chryssavgis (ed.) (2003:31, 202-225) offers a solution to poverty, wealth, and ecology – "ascetism". He illustrates that asceticism relates to refinement; it does not destroy nor destruct. He claims that moderation is the solution and argues that moderation is positive rather than negative. Ascetism, according to Chryssavgis, motivates a servant mentality – it is understood from this view that humans must not lord themselves over other humans, creatures, and the earth (no selfish intent). He avers that "without ascetism none of humanity is authentically human". This summation by Chryssavgis is generally intended for any time and place as a lot of humanness is crafted in consumerism – "The spirit of our age and shaper of our souls". A question arises: Can we be human now without ascetism? Schaffer in Peralta and Mshana (ed.) (2016:112) state that Christians exercised dominion in the wrong way after the fall. It is his view that Christians ought to exercise dominion without being destructive. Peralta & Mshana (ed.) (2016:109) state that Andrianos motivates a drastic shift in Western theology – both traditional and modern. He argues that traditional theology did not offer much criticism of science and technology related to pollution. He asserts that churches must adjust their attitude toward the human aspect of theology. In other words, this not only includes examining sin and salvation, but also social and ecological problems too. Their focus, according to Andrianos, should be on three interrelated responsibilities: evangelism, social responsibility, and ecological awareness. These contributions by Schaffer and Andrianos support the ascetic view offered by Chryssavgis.

- **How do we measure and monitor greed?**

Peralta and Mshana (ed.) (2016:24) argue that the measurement of greed and poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon. Greed has to do with the desire for unlimited accumulation of money, goods, resources (material, natural, symbolic and cultural), as well as status and power that manifests itself not merely in terms of unwarranted growth in income, but also disproportionate consumption. It is observed that wealth and wealth accumulation have harmful consequences, and are therefore considered as greed. Peralta & Mshana (ed.) (2016:25) alludes that Bob Goudzwaard suggests that the neglect of the economic claims of the poor by the rich can be interpreted as a manifestation of collective greed. He maintains that enrichment shows how wealth generation and accumulation results in impoverishment. Greed penetrates socio-political and economic systems and therefore needs to be interrogated, as indicated by Peralta and Mshana (eds.) (2016:36), individually, institutionally, structurally, and culturally. They argue that the establishment of a greed line and greed indicators are twofold: firstly, exposing the collective and structural manifestations of greed and its economic, social, and ecological consequences. Secondly, it serves as alarms

or “red lights” that signals to the public and policy makers that critical limits are overstepped with disastrous effects. These measures are just tools for advocacy, awareness, and critical discernment; it is not a solution to the greed problem. The understanding is that the development of a greed line is not simple due to the complexity and devastating effects globally. Despite these challenges that cause disparities, a process that measures and monitors greed is required. The recognition of a greed line and the formulation of greed indicators with a view to illuminating limits form part of a process of spiritual discernment. This, however, encourages discussions in churches and society at large that will lead to the formulation and implementation of anti-greed measures and policies within churches. This will be a significant accomplishment (Peralta & Mshana (eds.) 2016:36).

The findings of this study process offer a set of recommendations to churches and the WCC to motivate just and responsible societies that seriously considers the life – situations of humanity globally and the health of the earth. The study group recommends that churches must participate in the further development, refinement, and monitoring of greed indicators as part of some broader efforts to foster public awareness of the economic, socio-political, and ecological consequences of greed. Peralta and Mshana (eds.) (2016:36) suggest that methodologies needed to scrutinise corporate greed require further exploration. On the dynamics of greed, the study group recommend that churches should engage in follow up research into the relationship between the ideology and practice of free market capitalism and a culture of greed. The group proposes some questions for further consideration[58].

Based on the recommendations, it is observed that the study group requires the church to do the monitoring and evaluation, but there is a role that the UN has to play concerning global governance in relation to the SDG’s (Brubaker & Mshana (eds.) 2010:140-141). The church should refine, not detach or destroy, and discipline her members and community to operate in moderation and not domination. A disciplined human race that cares for each other and the earth’s resources will have a healthy lifestyle and a healthy earth. The lack of moderation will result in the destruction of humanity, creatures, and the earth. *The Greed Line Study: Tool For a Just Economy* is an edited volume by Athena Peralta, Economy of Life Project Consultant for WCC and Rogate Mshana Programme executive for Economic Justice, 2001–2013 for the WCC. It contains the Greed Line Study Group discussions, analyses, and findings. This book, therefore, builds on previous work done by the Association of WCC-related Development Organisations in Europe (APRODEV – now part of ACT Alliance) in

[58] Can the capitalist system function if the underlying culture of greed is radically changed or if serious anti-greed measures are introduced? Does a culture of “enough,” of sharing and caring, imply a different type of economic order altogether. Can one be envisaged carrying neither the capitalist nor the socialist label?

conjunction with the WCC on Christianity, Poverty and Wealth (Taylor 2011). This book has good contributions and recommendations, but it requires a relentless pursuit, deeper research, and visible action by the church as economic, social, and ecological injustice continues globally.

In the series of booklets on *Poverty, Wealth and Ecology* and *The Greed Line: Tool For a Just Economy*, it is observed that ethics dominates the discussion. One observes that consumerism and wealth accumulation is tied to idolatry and a functional trust is on wealth instead of God. The study process discussed under section 4.1 on "poverty, wealth and ecology" (see 4.1.1-4.1.5) reveals escalating inequalities between rich and poor countries, which is threatening world peace. Despite positive economic changes, millions of people are still excluded from basic necessities and goods of life. The booklets expose systems of domination, critique greed and manifestations of empire, condemn imperial ideologies and praxis, condemn patriarchal collusion with injustices within the economy and ecology; these matters strongly relate to ethics, which is observed in all five booklets. Participants are of the opinion that domination and exploitation is sinful. Some contributors in *The Greed Line* volume push beyond the ethical surface to issues of the church's identity and even deeper to its understanding of God. What, then, is the role of the church in light of these injustices and ecological degradation? The church needs to fulfil its calling as well as be a sign of God's reign, and acknowledge itself as an ecumenical moral community. The greed concept, however, presents moral failure. Raiser and Jung Mo Sung (2015:22) assert that greed is not only idolatry but essentially a denial of Christ. They further contend that theology and churches have an important role to play in uncovering falsehood disseminated by current capitalist regimes. White (Peralta & Mshana (ed.) 2016:111) states that the term "dominion" and "image of God" are often misrepresented. She continues saying that Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion as she quotes Genesis 1:28. The studies illustrate that within our modern world, ethics can easily exist without ecclesiology, but the reverse is not true. Best and Robra (eds.) (2007:ix-x) affirm that ecclesiology and ethics must be in close dialogue with each other; this, however, was unfortunately not observed in these projects.

In this penultimate section, some ethical reflections are provided next.

4.10 An Ethical Reflection: Ecclesiology and Ethics in Close Dialogue

The WCC study process from 1992–1996 on Ecclesiology and Ethics (Best & Robra (eds.) 1997:ix-x) explored the link between what the church *is* and what the church *does*. This exploration clarified that the ethical dimension is not a separate "department" of the church's

life, but is integrally related to its worship, its confession of faith, its witness and service in the world. This study process identified two overarching themes that were guided by ethical reflection and action (intrinsic to the nature and life of the church). Ecclesiological and ethical reflection ought to be inseparable: Christian ethics expresses deep ecclesiological convictions; our ecclesiology must be informed by our experience of ethical engagement and our living out of the gospel in the complex situation of the world. The second theme: Ecclesiology and ethics is in close dialogue (from the side of ecclesiology this meant – the language of *koinonia*, of hope and memory, Eucharist, and baptism of the church). For ethics, the notion of the church as a "moral community" and of "moral formation" does not only reflect in the church's teachings but through the whole life of the church (Best & Robra (eds.) 1997:ix-x). This study processes requires more engagement to bring ecclesiology and ethics together. Some concluding remarks follow below, highlighting the main points of the chapter.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter investigated the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics as observed in the WCC series on *poverty, wealth and ecology* and *The Greed Line: Tool For a Just Economy.* The foci of the first set of booklets were related to the structural causes of poverty, inequality, and environmental destruction globally. This work exposes how environmental pollution, socio-economic challenges, and climate change greatly impacted poor people and the ecological environment. These consultations further exposed unjust systems that caused poverty, socio-economic injustice, and the degradation of the ecological system. These systems of injustice were created due to greed by humanity itself. Greed, therefore, is a major contributor to disparities among humans, creatures, and the earth. The edited volume offers a greed line tool which motivates a just economy, a balanced community, and a healthy earth. This section, however, concludes that both study processes strongly support ethics and motivate a greed line tool because of disparities and injustice. A relationship between ecclesiology and ethics in these study processes could unfortunately not be observed. Both study processes presented good contributions and recommendations. Further discussions, more in-depth research, and visible action by both church and society are required as the demon of greed is still hard at work to separate systems and people. The nature and mission of the church is to create a balance between ecclesiology and ethics, motivate unity, and combat age old and new demons that divide and separate. The next chapter offers a discussion and critique of a WCC study process: TCTCV and investigates how ecclesiology and ethics is understood and whether such a relationship exists in this document. The next

chapter offers a comparison of the similarities and differences on ecclesiology and ethics as observed in the three documents (PWE, TCTCV and TTL).

Chapter 5

The Church Towards a Common Vision: Faith and Order Paper 214

5.1 Introduction

The study document, *The Church Towards a Common Vision* (hereafter referred to as TCTCV) was produced by the WCC's Faith and Order Commission. Both the Faith and Order Commission and the WCC aim to serve the churches as they call one another to visible unity in one *Faith* and one *Eucharist* fellowship. This document is the fruit of many years of work by the WCC's Commission on F&O that stems from *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982) (hereafter referred to as *BEM*) and the churches' responses to it. The TCTCV was received by the central committee in 2012 and distributed to churches for reflection and feedback. The then General Secretary of the WCC, Olav Fykse Tviet (WCC 2013a:vi), maintained that the church proclaims,

> The Kingdom of God which Jesus preached by revealing the Word of God in parables and inaugurated by His mighty deeds, especially by the paschal mystery of His death and resurrection, is the final destiny of the whole universe. The church was intended by God, not for its own sake but to serve the divine plan for the transformation of the world.

The Faith and Order Commission was confronted with a difficult task, namely, to assist churches to understand each other better and to identify church-dividing aspects, and to investigate why they are causing division.

The TCTCV study document has four chapters, namely: Chapter 1 – includes a discussion of "God's Mission and the Unity of the Church"; Chapter 2 – discusses the "Church of the Triune God"; Chapter 3 – discusses "The Church: Growing in Communion"; and Chapter 4 – the final chapter, discusses the "Church: In and For the World". These chapters are described in more detail later on in this chapter.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. This chapter begins with a brief introduction (section 5.1); this is followed by the process leading up to the convergence document – TCTCV (section 5.2); a descriptive and critical analysis of the TCTCV document (section 5.3); a consideration of some scholarly viewpoints (section 5.4); and a discussion on how the relationship is expressed between ecclesiology and ethics as observed in this document (section 5.5). This is followed by a few concluding remarks to wrap up the chapter (section 5.6).

5.2 The Process Leading to The Church: Towards a Common Vision

History affirms that the journey leading to TCTCV originated in Edinburg in 1910 when Bishop Brent called for a world conference to explore the points of agreement and disagreement that originally caused the separation of churches and which continued to perpetuate their segregation. In light of these challenges, the mission of the church requires unity. This idea took seventeen years before the first world conference on F&O took place in Lausanne in 1927.[59] The commission was compelled by the ecumenical vision "all in its place" and motivated through the Holy Spirit into full visible unity in apostolic faith, sacramental life, ministry, and mission. A significant moment in F&O aroused in the years after the 1961 New Delhi Assembly as it presented a convergence text on *Baptism Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) (WCC 2013a:43). Significant to ecclesiology was the 5th World Conference of 1993 at Santiago de Compostela, Spain.[60] The theme: "Towards Koinonia in Faith, Life and Witness" with a number of discussions shaped this World Conference. The first discourse included the interpretation of the churches' responses to BEM (cf. WCC 2013a:43). The second discourse included the Faith and Order study processes "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today". The third discourse included the study process on "The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community" (cf. Faith and Order Paper 153, 2010, WCC 2013a:43). The fourth discourse included the ecclesiological challenges raised at the conciliar process on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (WCC 2013a:43). The movements in the 1980 have converged in the decision by the Faith and Order Plenary Commission in 1989 to launch a new study, namely: The Nature and Mission of the church – Ecumenical Perspectives of Ecclesiology (WCC 2013a:43).

TCTCV is a compilation of a long trajectory on F&O reflections on the Church and at the 5th World Conference in 1993. Due to several years of F&O study and dialogue, an initial study on Ecclesiology was published in 1998 under the title *The Nature and Purpose of the*

[59] "This agenda of Lausanne was foundational in the establishment of the World Council of Churches in 1948. The Function of the World Council of Churches is for churches to call one another to visible unity in one Faith and one Eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in common life in Christ" (Love 1991:107-119).

[60] A number of factors shaped the theme of this world conference: "Towards *Koinonia* in Faith, Life and Witness". Particularly influential was the interpretation of the responses of churches to BEM with its six published volumes of official responses (*Churches respond to BEM* 1986-1988, Volumes 1-V). The list of major ecclesiological themes that were requested for further studies included: "the role of the Church in God's saving purpose"; *koinonia* "the Church as a gift of the word of God (*creatura verbi*); the Church as mystery or sacrament of God's love for the world; the Church as the pilgrim people of God; the church as prophetic sign and servant of God's coming kingdom" (BEM 1990:147-151).

Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement.[61] This text received numerous responses from churches, ecumenical organizations, regional council of churches, academic institutions, and individuals. Sufficient time was allowed, and good responses and critique were received which motivated the Commission to revise its ecclesiological text. A new draft text entitled: *The Nature and Mission of the Church*[62] was produced and presented at the 2006 WCC Assembly held in Porto Alegre, Brazil (WCC 2013a:v-vi).

The final text was presented to the Standing Commission which unanimously approved a convergence statement entitled: *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* on 21 June 2012 in Penang, Malaysia. This study document, TCTCV, brings the F&O reflections on the church to a provisional completion. The Commission was confident that these reflections reached a level of maturity that it can be identified as a convergence text. TCTCV brings to completion a particular stage of F&O reflection on the church and can be recognised as a convergence text (a text with the same status and character as the 1982 BEM). The Central Committee of the WCC at its meeting in Crete, Greece, in early September 2012, received TCTCV and recommended it to the member churches and was accepted and published in 2013 (WCC 2013a:43-46).

5.3 Review and Critique of The Church Towards a Common Vision

What is meant by church? Before we embark on the trajectory of TCTCV, let us observe Dirkie Smit's (1996:190-204) discussion on the six manifestations of forms of the church.[63] In observance of these manifestations, the word "church" can be used in many ways, which can lead to confusion. The assumption is that people might be talking about one thing related to manifestations that are important to the individual but actually have something else in mind. Noteworthy, one ought to identify which manifestation of the church a person has in

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61 This study on ecclesiology has six chapters, namely: "The Church of the Triune God"; "The Church in History"; "The Church as *Koinonia* (Communion)"; "Life in Communion"; "Service in and for the World"; and "Following Our Calling: From Converging understandings to mutual Recognition".

62 *The Nature and Mission of the Church* comprises four chapters, namely: "The Church of the Triune God"; "The Church in History"; "The Life of Communion in and for the World"; and "In and For the World".

63 Dirkie Smit (1996: cf. Conradie 2005a:27) observed insights from Huber and Hanson and identifies six manifestations of forms of the church, such as:

- The church as worshipping community (e.g. "We are going to church on Sunday").
- The church as local congregation (e.g. "You are an active member of the church").
- The church as denomination (e.g. "To which church do you belong?").
- The church as ecumenical and regional organisation (e.g. "what does the church say about unemployment in South Africa?").
- The church as Christians working in voluntary organisations, movements, societies, action groups (e.g. "Is the church involved in earthkeeping?").
- The church as individual believers functioning as Christian in their daily lives and work (e.g. "The church is called to be the light of the world").

mind (cf. Conradie 2005a:27). We will address the TCTCV and look at the church as an ecumenical and regional organisation, the church as Christians working in voluntary organisations, movements, societies, action groups, and the church as individual believers functioning as Christian in their daily lives and work. This will assist the investigation of whether TCTCV supports a relationship between ecclesiology and ethics, and if so, how is this a relationship expressed in the document?

The church plays an important role in the design of God and is centred and grounded in the Gospel, the proclamation of the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ – Son of the Father. The church's mission is contextual, and it is important that the reader should grasp the implications of the concept, *missio Dei. Missio Dei* offers local churches the freedom to develop their own interpretation of the will of God and to discern what the Spirit is up to. The discussion below briefly reflects on the four chapters of TCTCV, namely: "God's Mission and the Unity of the Church"; "The Church of the Triune God"; "The Church: Growing in Communion"; and "The Church In and For the World" (WCC 2013a:8-13). This brief review is followed by an engagement with some external sources that critically discuss TCTCV.

The document under study – TCTCV document (WCC 2013a:5-8) – consists of four chapters and 69 paragraphs, structured as follows:

Chapter I – God's Mission and the Unity of the Church

- The Church in the Design of God (Paragraphs 1-4)
- The Mission of the Church in History (Paragraphs 5-7)
- The Importance of Unity (Paragraphs 8-10)

Chapter II – The Church of the Triune God

- Discerning God's Will for the Church (11-12)
    - The Church of the Triune God as Koinonia (13-24)
    - The Initiative of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (13-16)
    - The Prophetic, Priestly and Royal People of God (17-20)
    - Body of Christ and Temple of the Holy Spirit (21)
    - The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church (22-24)
- The Church as Sign and Servant of God's Design for the World (25-27)
- Communion in Unity and Diversity (28-30)
- Communion of Local Churches (31-32)

Chapter III – The Church: Growing in Communion

- Already but Not Yet (33-36)
- Growing in the Essential Elements of Communion: Faith, Sacraments, Ministry (37-57)
    - Faith (38-39)
    - Sacraments (40-44)
    - Ministry within the Church - Ordained Ministry (45-47)
    - The Gift of Authority in the Ministry of the Church (48-51)
    - The Ministry of Oversight (Episkopé) (52-57)

Chapter IV – The Church: In and for the World

- God's Plan for Creation: The Kingdom (58-60)
- The Moral Challenge of the Gospel (61-63)
- The Church in Society (64-66)

The following paragraphs highlight important discussion points as observed in TCTCV document. The first chapter discusses the mission and unity of the body of Christ as it consists in the gift of *koinonia* or communion that God graciously bestowed upon human beings. Chapter two addresses God's will for the church – *koinonia,* and the church as sign and servant. Chapter three discusses a growing consensus that *koinonia,* as communion with the Holy Trinity, is manifested in three interrelated ways: unity in faith, unity in sacramental life, and unity in service (in all its forms, including ministry and mission). The fourth chapter addresses the "Church: In and For the World". It includes: the kingdom, God's plan for creation, the moral challenges of the gospel, and the church in society.

The liturgy, especially the celebration of the Eucharist, serves as a dynamic paradigm for what such *koinonia* looks like in the present age. In the liturgy, the people of God experience communion with God and fellowship with Christians of all times and places. They gather with their presider; proclaim the Good News; confess their faith; pray, teach, and learn; offer praise and thanksgiving; receive the Body and Blood of the Lord; and are sent out in mission. The church is requested to continue the life-giving mission of Christ in prophetic and compassionate ministry to the world and struggle against every form of injustice and oppression, mistrust, and conflict created by human beings. The ecumenical movement have been blessed with the discovery of the many aspects of discipleship shared by churches, although they do not yet live in full communion (Keum (ed.) 2013; cf. Tanner 2015:171-172).

TCTCV holds that our brokenness and division contradict Christ's will for the unity of his disciples, and thus hinders the mission of the church. This is specifically why the restoration of unity between Christians, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is an urgent mission. Growth in communion unfolds within that wider fellowship of believers that extends back into the past and forward into the future to include the entire communion of saints. Chapter four of the TCTCV document holds that the final destiny of the church is to be caught up in the *koinonia*/communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This allows the church to be part of the new creation, praising and rejoicing in God forever (Rev. 21:1-4; 22:1-5). "God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17). The New Testament ends with the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, transformed by the grace of God (Rev. 21:1-22:5). This new cosmos is promised for the end of history but is already present in an anticipatory way even now, as the Church, upheld by faith and hope in its pilgrimage through time, calls out in love and worship, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). Christ loves the church as the bridegroom loves his bride (Eph. 5:25) and, until the wedding feast of the lamb in the kingdom of heaven (Rev. 19:7), shares with her his mission of bringing light and healing to human beings until He comes again in glory (Keum (ed.) 2013; cf. Tanner 2015:171-172).

Some scholarly viewpoints on TCTCV document are considered next.

5.4 Scholarly Contributions: A Critical Analysis of TCTCV Convergence Document

Mary Tanner[64] (2015:174) identifies two important characteristics of TCTCV, namely: (1) it is a convergence document, and (2) it references other dialogues. She maintains that God's intent was to establish communion with his people, but this idea was disenchanted by sin; it, however, became a possibility through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Tanner (2015:175) argues that it is only in the context of God's grand design in creation that we can understand the church as called to continue the life-giving mission of Jesus in prophetic and compassionate ministry. This can be achieved through participation in God's work of healing in a broken world.

[64] Mary Tanner served as President (for Europe) of the WCC and was Moderator of the Faith and Order Commission from 1991-1998. She has also been involved in various ecumenical conversations on behalf of the Anglican Church (Tanner, 2015:171).

Susan Durber[65] (2015:193) states that TCTCV wrestles with unresolved ecclesiological issues related to the journey towards the visible unity of the church. Durber (2015:198) is of the opinion that the church seeks to address the difficult issues which present the remaining obstacles to our living out of the gift of communion. Amidst the challenges of widening horizons and different cultures, Durber holds that the experience of the church is often one of decline, frustration, or dislocation from culture. One often observes critique of the church as an institution and its participation or collaboration with things such as: patriarchy, colonialism, and class structures. Durber (2015:199) contends that such discourses must be radically challenged as the church however is God's creation and gift.

Durber (2015:200) asserts that the church as God's design cannot be "in decline". She argues that the church is more than a social institution, or cultural phenomenon, or historical entity; it is part of God's design for creation. The language of the church reminds us that the church is not only what we see or know – it is more than a historical institution. She concludes by saying that TCTCV has revived within her a deeper sense of the church as God's creation and design. Tanner (2015:171-175) argues that mission is not easy; it was not easy in the early church nor is it today. She reckons that the ecumenical church faces new challenges, such as the claim of other faiths; the communication revolution; emerging churches that propose new ways of being church; a global secular culture that questions the possibility of faith at all; and the radical decline of membership.

Tanner (2015:171-175) opines that the biggest challenge is unity; the unity of the church is vital for the church's mission. Visible unity requires of the church to recognise in one another what the Nicene Creed calls – "the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church".[66] Conradie (2005:29) states that these characteristics provide us with an enunciation of what the church believes about itself, and therefore, functions as a form of self-critique. Conradie (2005:29) articulates that the characteristics of the church are closely related to the doctrinal dimension rather than to the institutional dimension of Christianity. Tanner (2015:175) is of the opinion that *koinonia* is the key for understanding the nature, unity, and mission of the church.

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65 Revd Dr Susan Durber is a member of the Standing Commission for Faith and Order of the WCC. She is a minister of the United Reformed Church in the UK, a former Principal of Westminister College and presently as Theology Co-ordinator for Christian Aid. She is a biblical scholar with an interest in preaching, communication, and has written and edited collections of sermons and prayers (Durber 2015:193).

66 The Nicene Creed confesses that the Christian faith is "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church". This identifies four "characteristics", "traits" or "marks" of the church (*notae ecclesiae*). These characteristics, however, do not provide a social description of the church (Conradie 2005:28-29).

Tanner (2015:177) highlights that each local church contains within itself the fullness of what it is to be the church – "It is wholly church but not the whole church". Communion ecclesiology, however, entails belonging to the whole church across space and time. The observation in chapter two presents advancement in handling diversity in unity and the relation to the local churches across the world and through time. It clearly portrays – visible unity. Durber (2015:201) states that the New Testament offers a vast variety of ecclesiological insight and its variety is compatible with Christian unity. It is her opinion that the text does not dwell long and patiently enough on reflection on those images and what is suggested for today's church. Durber states that the chapter shifts quickly to scriptural images only to land on some of the classic questions that the church has debated, rather than to search for the gift in the Scriptures of a possible renewed sense of unity. She is of the opinion that the text moves too quickly to discuss the ministry of the church.

Durber (2015:202) argues that not much attention is given to the ways in which a discovery of the significance of the *laos* - the church, or the church as "body" and "fellowship" have raised questions about the place and purpose of ordination. In Durber's view, the text does not seriously consider the "turn" taken since BEM towards an understanding of the church as "all the people". She argues that speaking of "servant" suggests something much more rational, personal, and humble than the language of "instrument". She states that the text calls for common discernment and says that the work moves slowly and painfully, but it is important for our journey toward a visible unity.

Durber (2015:203) explains that the text summarises significant achievements in unity of faith both through the work of the WCC and bilateral dialogues. It highlights significant agreements on the sacraments. On the question of authority in the church, a long explanation is presented but is interestingly framed as a "gift". She argues that this idea of authority came under scrutiny. The church is not called by God for its own sake but for the transformation of the world. It is the mission of the church to proclaim the Good News through evangelism and bearing witness, exposing God's reconciling and transforming love, thereby promoting justice and peace. She holds that chapter four of TCTCV invites the church to think further about how it might discern together what it means to follow Christ with thankfulness.

Durber (2015:209) opines that the section on church and society affirms that the church is called to respond to the needs of the world, to economic inequalities, and the need for peace. This statement identifies that the church is called not only to bring relief to the suffering, but to transform the world. Durber clarifies this by saying that the church is not called to be the "church for the poor" but that both rich and poor are in need of salvation, which only God

offers. Gideon Goosen[67] (2015:276) identifies some ecclesiological issues related to the unity of the body of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:1-16). He references Christ prayer "*Ut unum sint*" – the body of Christ, in his view, should be one, but is tolerant of disunity. He is of the opinion that Christian unity is not peripheral but integral to the gospel. Goosen (2015:276) maintains that Christians are responsible for the current disunity (West-East Schism and the Reformation). Furthermore, he claims that the disunity is our fault and needs urgent attention and consultation. To illustrate this, he uses the example of Evangelical Christians who believe that they are united by baptism, and therefore, form one church in Christ – they therefore do not need to seek unity.

Goosen (2015:284) explains that unity must never be confused with uniformity, as unity based on baptism is not full unity. Full unity requires a degree of commitment in the Eucharistic unity. Tanner (2015:177) alludes that full communion is required for visible unity. The realisation of God's gift of communion requires of Christians to agree about these fundamental aspects of the life of the church (WCC 2013b:§37). This statement challenges every tradition to ask, "Is this really what we believe?" The Faith and Order Commission, based on these challenges, provided churches with a more complete ecclesiological portrait of visible unity and its essential characteristics to consider for future development.

Tanner (2015:180) further articulates that TCTCV ends by returning to the beginning – a relationship between the church and the world. We are reminded that the church has a responsibility to help those without power to be heard. Tanner (2015:209) exclaims that the church ought to respond to human suffering, HIV and AIDS, violence, and the threats of war, by promoting justice, peace, and the care of the environment. Tanner concludes with a statement that visible unity in light of these challenges is imperative and can never be an optional extra.

Catherine Clifford[68] (2015:197) opines that the previous versions of the church document (such as BEM and *The Nature and Purpose of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*) explored areas of remaining disagreements between churches but argues that such marginalia are not to be found in the TCTCV. This is a desire of the F&O Commission to place a text of mature theological and doctrinal convergence before churches. Clifford (2015:199) argues that central to the growing consensus on the nature of the church is the

[67] Gideon Goosen is a Sydney based theologian who taught Theology at the Australian Catholic University. He worked at the NSW Ecumenical Council for thirty years and authored various books and articles (Goosen 2015:270).

[68] Catherine E Clifford (2015:192) is a Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at the Saint Paul University, Ottawa. Her teaching and research interest is ecclesiology and ecumenism.

affirmation of a communion grounded in a Trinitarian confession of faith. She remarks that the TCTCV document reflects on biblical images, such as the church as the people of God – Body of Christ, and Temple of the Holy Spirit. She thus expresses that the church is a communion of diverse local churches and provides fuller appreciation of the unity of the church as a unity in diversity rather than a fusion or uniformity that will distinguish the many gifts reflected in the ethos and diverse spiritual, liturgical, theological traditions of Christianity. Clifford (2015:199) is of the opinion that the TCTCV places greater emphasis on the missional nature of the church (cf. WCC 2013a:§47).

Best and Robra (eds) (2005:80) proclaim that the liturgy lived out morally makes us participants in the Christian story in a way that we are drawn into God's presence. Communion, therefore, is the readiness to celebrate the same liturgy together. The communion that we have with one another today is real but imperfect.

In light of what has been said so far, I concur with these scholars that visible unity is never an optional extra but that it is up to the church to respond to the challenges of human suffering, violence, corruption, inequality, injustice, poverty, and ecological degradation, offering salvation of humanity and the earth's resources. The heart of our Christian moral formation lies in worship through which the story of salvation is re-enacted in the modes of prayer, proclamation, and sacrament (cf. Best and Robra (eds) 1997:66-67). Best and Robra (eds) (1997:66-67) add that worship involves focal action intrinsic to the shared life of faith. The Greek word *leitourgia* or "liturgy" is used, and this word itself has a moral sense. It refers to a public charge to perform a particular public service or *diakonia*. Liturgy in its structure combines memory and hope. It ties memory and hope to our participation in the story of Jesus. It effects and enacts a transfiguration of our lives, the Holy Spirit in the church, the human world, and all creation understood as participating in the historic economy of the Trinitarian life. Best and Robra (eds) (1997:69) propound that single Christian traditions cannot exist in isolation. They argue that all traditions of life grow and change. They advance that ecumenical relationships can help churches recover the moral marks of apostolicity and catholicity that they have lost.

The next section deliberates whether a relationship between ecclesiology and ethics can be found in TCTCV document.

5.5 An Ecclesiological Reflection: Ecclesiology and Ethics in Close Dialogue

This section discusses whether there is a relationship between ecclesiology and ethics in TCTCV, and if so, how is the relationship understood? The WCC study process from 1992–

1996 on Ecclesiology and Ethics explored the link between what the church *is* and what the church *does*. In exploring the TCTCV, it is noted that the ecclesial dimension is not a separate "department" of the church's life, but an integral part of both life and work that relates to its worship, its confession of faith, and its witness and service to the world. The ideal is that ecclesiological and ethical reflections ought to be inseparable, but this text presents that this is not the case. Best and Robra (eds) (1997:vii-x) argue that the study process on ecclesiology and ethics are based on two convictions: (1) that the ethical reflection and action are intrinsic to the nature and life of the church, and (2) that ecclesiology and ethics need to stay in dialogue by honouring and learning from the distinctive language and thought of each other. TCTCV primarily offers an ecclesiological reflection, discussing the mission and unity of the church; the church of a Triune God; God's will for the church, and lastly, the church in and for the world. This text, however, clarifies that the ecumenical movement still wrestles with the relationship between the nature, mission, and social agenda of the church. Domination in the name of poverty, socio-economic challenges, ecological degradation, pollution, gender inequality, and so on, are indeed an ecclesiological and not merely an ethical issue (cf. Conradie (ed.) 2013:39). Our ecclesial convictions should, however, be informed by our ethical engagement, as we are compelled to live out the gospel in the complexity of the world. TCTCV presents a language of *koinonia*, that of hope and of memory, and that of Eucharist and baptism of the Church. Ethics, however, is minimally observed (in the section, 'The Church In and For the World'), and the findings of this investigation reveal that a clear relationship between ecclesiology and ethics is absent in TCTCV.

Some concluding remarks follow next to wrap up the chapter.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided a historical background of TCTCV – grounded on the earlier convergence text on BEM and *The Nature and Purpose of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Purpose.* This was followed by a review and critique of TCTCV, concluding the exploration of the relationship between Faith and Order (ecclesiology) and Life and Work (ethics) in TCTCV document.

TCTCV presented results by the Faith and Order Commission on the church published in 2013. The foci of this document are primarily on ecclesiology. This chapter concludes that TCTCV strongly supports ecclesiology. The document presented good contributions and recommendations on matters relating to the church, but lacks strong motivations related to

ethics. The Commission, however, needs to engage in further discussions on ecclesiology and ethics as well as conduct more in-depth research. In addition, visible action by both the church and society are needed. An appropriate language that expresses the link between what the church is and what the church does is absent in the document. Continuing the investigation, the next chapter offers a discussion, critique, and reflection of the WCC study process: 'Together Towards Life'.

Chapter 6

Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes

6.1 Introduction

The document TTL includes a Preface that connects the 1982 Mission Statement to the current one. The world changed dramatically since 1982, and therefore, a new statement was needed. The latter statement endeavoured to provide vision, concepts, and direction for a renewed understanding and practice of mission and evangelism in changing landscapes. The Preface also notes that a wider audience is addressed other than just the WCC members and affiliates. Towards the end of the document's Introduction, we are presented with a fourfold division of the statement itself, built around several key developments in understanding the mission of the Holy Spirit within the operations of the Triune God. The four developments enable us to embrace dynamism, justice, diversity, and transformation as key concepts of mission in changing landscapes.

This chapter includes a critical analysis of the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics as reflected in this document and begins with an historical account (section 6.2), followed by a critical analysis (section 6.3), some reflections (6.4), and a conclusion (section 6.5) based on the 2013 publication by the CWME of TTL, together with other scholarly contributions. Findings of the investigation, when compared with two other documents, i.e., PWE (Chapter 4), and TCTCV (Chapter 5), will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

6.2 A Brief History – Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes

Since the integration of the IMC into the WCC in 1961, the 1982 document *Ecumenical Affirmation: Mission and Evangelism* had been the only official "position statement" on mission.

Following the 9th Assembly of the WCC in Porto Alegre in 2006, the CWME decided to develop a new affirmation on mission and evangelism (cf. Bosch 1991:369; Kim 2009:23-27). Four working groups from the CWME and three WCC mission-related networks were engaged in a study that included the following themes:

- Transformative spirituality and mission;

- The missional church and *unity between church and mission*;
- The CWME Working Group on Evangelism and Unity on the issues surrounding *authentic evangelism, dialogue and prophecy*;
- The CWME Working Group on Health and Healing – *healing and wholeness for all*;
- The WCC Network of Just and Inclusive Communities on *mission from the margins* and the Ecumenical Network for Multicultural Ministry and Mission (ENFORMM) on *migration and multicultural churches* and,
- The Oikotree Movement on *economic globalization and eco-justice* (Keum (ed.) 2013:2).

After the CWME finalised the newly constructed document, it was approved by their executive group in Geneva on 22 January 2012 and presented to the CWME Pre-assembly Mission Event in Manila (which took place from 22 to 27 March 2012). Thereafter, it was revised and significantly shortened. The revised document was unanimously approved as the official statement of the WCC by its Central Committee at its meeting in Crete on 5 September 2012 and presented again at the 10th Assembly of the WCC in Busan (Republic of Korea) in 2013 (Niemandt 2015:84-85). Niemandt (2015:85) asserts that the document positions itself as a continuation of the many mission conferences of the IMC and CWME as part of the WCC. He claims that the reflections in the TTL document are the furtherance of the ideas of giants such as Karl Barth, Lesslie Newbigin, Hans Hoekendijk, and David Bosch. The main focus of this chapter is not to provide a description or summary of the ideas and thoughts of these theologians, but more specifically, to reflect on the TTL document itself. The following background information is important.

The *Ecumenical Affirmation* (*EA*) document reflects on eschatology and human sinfulness. Its opening lines position mission as a response to the biblical promise of a new earth and a new heaven. This vision contrasted with today's reality of the indignation of human sin, the evil unleashed by the rejection of God's liberating will for humankind. The document illustrates that the church is sent into the world to call people and nations to repentance – to announce forgiveness of sin and a new beginning in relation to God and with neighbours through Jesus Christ (cf. *EA* 1982:427-447; Bevans 2014:195-196).

The TTL document begins with a quote on creation: "[W]e believe in the Triune God who is the creator, redeemer and sustainer of all life" (cf. WCC 2013b:1; Bevans 2014:194-196). Sin and its life destroying forces are identified in the document both explicitly and implicitly, but the basis of mission is toward working with God and the continuation of bringing life to

creation.

Whilst the EA document manifests an anthropocentric perspective, the TTL document offers a more cosmic viewpoint; it embraces ecology as a primary focus (cf. WCC 2013b:4; Bevans 2014:195-196). Bevans (2014:195-196) is of the opinion that both documents reflect the *missio Dei* tradition of the WCC that can be traced back to the Willingen Conference of 1952. The TTL document has a stronger Trinitarian focus, especially in its emphasis on the mission of the Holy Spirit within the context of the Trinity's mission. The entire TTL document is organised around the Spirit's mission in the world and the church's participation in that mission – this document prominently speaks of "missions from the margins". Bevans (2014:195-196) ensues that the newer statement of the TTL document is built on the older statement of the EA document and in certain areas goes beyond it in breadth and depth.

6.3 Critical Analysis: Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes

As mentioned above, this document seeks a renewed vision, appropriate concepts, and a sense of direction to understand and practice mission and evangelism in changing landscapes (WCC 2013b:3). According to Bevans (2013:195-196), this document provides an important hermeneutical key in the church's prophetic witness towards society and its participation in good governance. Ecclesiology and good governance are discussed in the context of a missional church. The document starts with paragraph 1 to 11; it introduces major themes and provides a summary of the entire document. Mission is rooted in the mission of the Triune God who is the God of life; mission is carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit – it is the Spirit that moves the church to protect the entire creation. The most important co-operators in mission are Christians from the Global South and on the margins of society. This section includes a brief survey of TTL, followed by a critical analysis thereof.

Bevans (2015:195) maintains that the first concluding affirmation speaks of the mission of the church as preparing "the banquet" and to invite "all people to the feast of life" (cf. TTL 2013:101). The next affirmation reads, "We affirm that the purpose of God's mission is fullness of life (John 10:10) and that this is the criterion for discernment in mission" (cf. WCC 2013b:102). Bevans (2015:195) divulges that under the umbrella of "Life", three other key words such as "Spirit", "creation", and "margins" take on meaning. He states that the document is built around four significant developments in understanding the Holy Spirit's mission within the context of the mission of the Triune God (WCC 2013b:11), which Bevan (2015:146-159) identifies as follows: The first development, 'Spirit of Mission: Breath of

Life,' is paired with the notion of 'dynamism'. According to Bevans (2015:148), the church is called into being by 'dynamism', which is the Spirit. The church in today's landscape is given direction by the Spirit in a specific way to care for the whole created cosmic order. Christians are given strength by the Spirit to carry out the life-giving transformation – the mission's goal. The second development, 'Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins,' is linked with 'justice' (Bevans 2015:148). Coorilos Geevarghese (2013b:5-16), CWME Moderator, refers to this development as "the defining perspective" of the statement. Mission is, however, understood as the work of those on the margins who are empowered by God's Spirit and not as a rich, powerful 'centre' going to the periphery (see Bevans 2015:148). In this manner, mission seems to bring together life by working for inclusivity and justice that provide healing and wholeness. The third development, 'Spirit of Community: Church on the move', is connected to diversity. According to Bevans (2015:148), the ecumenical task is essential to mission and Christians are called to a wider understanding of unity, including the unity of humanity and God's entire creation (WCC 2013b §61). This part of the statement and understanding hospitality are central for mission. It further calls for communities to also be called missionaries in their own context and to also develop a global vision. The final development, 'Spirit of Pentecost: Good news for all,' is linked with the missionary activity of transformation and evangelism. The latter implies the suffering, resurrection, and incarnation of Jesus Christ, without setting limits to the saving grace of God (WCC 2013b §80; see also Bevans 2014:195-196). Bevans (2014:195-196) further points out that 'proselytism' is not an authentic way of practicing evangelism. He believes that the church calls humans to transform which leads to the fullness of life. This includes transformation at a personal, communal, cultural, and institutional level.

The major themes, as captured by Bevans (2015:146-159), include 'the Holy Spirit, 'spirituality', and 'mission from the margins'. The first theme is rooted in the mission of the Spirit. According to Keum (WCC 2013b §112), the Spirit has always been present from the beginning of creation and has lead Israel, empowering them with wisdom and prophecy, prompting them with dreams and offering renewal. This is the same Spirit who participated in conception, empowerment, and finally, the commission at Jesus' baptism. John 20:21-22 also states that the disciples were commissioned by Jesus breathing the Spirit on them and afterward sent them out in the same way that He was sent by the Father (John 20:21-22). The community is inspired by the promise of a new heaven and a new earth, and is tasked as witnesses in the church's mission. The works of the Spirit are unknown, mysterious, and beyond human comprehension, and cuts across limitations (TTL undermines the plans of the

powerful and works through people who are considered unimportant and the least in the world (WCC 2013b §15, §25, §35). Christians can confidently proclaim that God is with them. The claim that the Spirit is with us, is for others to recognise it in the life that we lead (TTL 28, Bevans 2015:148). Kim (2011:263) states that the theological concept of *missio Dei* was redefined and expanded along the lines that mission determines the place and the work of the Holy Spirit, and the key role of the Holy Spirit within the mission of the Triune God is therefore emphasised. Keum (2013:4) states that the essence of mission is a life in the Holy Spirit, and furthermore maintains that this affirmation makes a clear association between the overarching issue of 'life in fullness' and the work and presence of the Holy Spirit in creation and the church. Revealed in Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Lord, the Holy Spirit's powerful presence initiates us into God's gift to all – the fullness of life (see also Niemandt 2015:85)[69]. The Spirit is the guide, reminding us that we can find the Father's Son among the least and the marginalised – in the "shadow stories of the community" (Meylahn 2012:65). This TTL document signifies that God's Holy Spirit is ever present, pervasive, and illusive. It is thus quite enlightening and reassuring to know that the Spirit is at work in the world and in creation.

Considering the second theme, The TTL statement includes spirituality as a focus area, promoting transformation. It includes the individual and serves humanity and all of creation through humility and wisdom. The TTL statement further holds that "we cannot belong to God without belonging to our neighbour and [we] need to avoid the kind of spirituality that simply makes us feel good while other parts of creation hurt and yearn" (WWC 2013b §21). The connection with creation is a source of spirituality. The document addresses a need for a conversion interrelated with the work of the Spirit leading to a 'new humility' with regard to creation. It further holds that life in the Spirit is the essence of mission and that mission includes all creation. Paragraph 33 of the TTL document states that in many ways creation is in mission to humanity, for the natural world has a power that can heal the human heart and body. Mission, therefore, is spirituality flowing from worship and liturgy, connecting us to one another and to the wider creation (See WCC 2013b §104, Bevans 2015:148-149). Spirituality, according to Bosch (1979:13), does not imply contemplation over action, and neither entails a flight from the world. It reflects the opposite – that involvement in this world should lead to a deepening of our relationship with and dependence on God. A deeper

[69] An entire section is devoted to "The Mission of the Spirit" (paragraphs 12-18): The Spirit as the source of life and the breath of humankind – "… the universality of the Spirit's economy in creation …" (Keum 2013:8); the Spirit's role in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ; the Spirit as gift to the church; the Spirit's redemptive work; and the Spirit's missionary role. The section concludes that, through the Spirit, we participate in the mission of love that is at the heart of the life of the Trinity (Keum 2013:9).

relationship with God leads to increasing involvement in the world (see also Niemandt 2015:98). This theme clarifies that God's mission must be present in communities and in the daily lives of members. 'Mission from the margins' recognises that God chooses the vulnerable and alienated – those on the margins – to fulfil His mission of establishing justice and peace. Marginalised people are the primary agents of God's mission of affirming life in its fullness (cf. TTL 17). These include Christians in the poorer parts of the world, to which the "centre of gravity" of Christianity has shifted, *Dalits*, women, farm workers and farmers, fisher folk, sexual minorities, disabled persons, and people with HIV and Aids. In essence, it refers to those who are victims of greed at the hands of the rich and powerful, the ones who recognise that mission today has to be a movement of struggle and resistance (cf. TTL 40,43). Bevans draws from Geervarghese Coorilos (2014:5-16) who states that the defining standpoint of the TTL document is its strong conviction that mission is no longer from the affluent centre to the poor or pagan periphery, but it is done from the margins by the marginalised (cf. Bosch 1991:368-510).

To elucidate further, the entire TTL document is organised around the Spirit's mission in the world and the church's participation in that mission. TTL prominently speaks of mission from the margins. 'Mission from the margins' means that the West is no longer its primary agent. Niemandt (2015:98) states that the missional church identifies and proclaims Christ and the Cross in these cracks. In this process, the story of Christ's incarnation is proclaimed through the church's identification with the marginalised. Meylahn (2012:37) argues that the church needs the marginalised, for through the church, they reveal the cracks and wounds in its context; the very places for revelation and creativity where fresh expressions of church can break through. It is through the service of those that are powerless that the West can enjoy the power of the gospel and be converted afresh to the power or grace of the gospel.

Critical analysis of TTL

Missio Dei, according to Niemandt (2015:86), is born out of the realisation that mission belongs to God (cf. Kim 2011:259). Newbigin (1995:29) articulates that mission is "proclaiming the kingdom of the Father ... sharing the life of the Son ... and bearing witness of the Spirit". This clarifies the "reign of God" (i.e., the kingdom of God) "over all things"; the church, therefore, believes that God is ruler over all. Newbigin (1995:65) exclaims that the Holy Spirit, as the "preview" of God's kingdom, directs the church into the world, often in mysterious ways. Keum (ed.) (2013:26) opines that each local congregation is led by the Spirit to respond to its own contextual realities. Today's transformed societies call on the

church to take new initiatives as mission emphasises the activity of the *missio Dei* in the public arena (Niemandt 2015:96-97). The church ought to find out what God is doing in the world beyond the confines of its walls and immerse itself therein. One of the important tasks of missiology is to reflect on creative, contextual expressions of being church in each context.

Niemandt (2015:344) offers a counter-cultural missiology; it counters an idolatrous vision and denounces an economy of greed in a free market economy. Bevans (2014:196) remarks that the "market-ideology" of capitalism is an uncompromising condemnation. Niemandt (2015:98) is of the opinion that the church needs an appropriate missional understanding of leadership in order to organise and transform it into a missional life and to participate in the transformation of communities. This conviction, however, is underscored, as the TTL document provides mission and missiology with a dialogue partner that reminds the church that we together are on a journey towards life (Niemandt 2015:100). This changing landscape reminds us that the church finds itself in the liminal space between an institution and a community of sent disciples participating in God's mission. A new community emerges from life in its fullness – a community where all share in the life and the gifts (Niemandt 2015:100). This community shares and discerns the valuable contributions from those at the margins. The oppressed are to be liberated. Niemandt (2015:347) makes an important statement:

> Mission is not about the expansion of the church but the church bearing witness to God's gift of salvation to the whole world.

Mission, therefore, is not limited to church programmes in its worship and liturgy but offers salvation to a world characterised by sin and suffering. According to Niemandt (2015:347), TTL mentions the kingdom of God in contrast to the economic and ecological injustice of the "global market" (cf. Keum (ed.) 2013:6). The kingdom, according to Niemandt, is a place of freedom celebrated by a restored community. He states that the Spirit of mission restores the community and serves as a present life-giver who sustains life and renews the whole of creation.

Bevans (2015:195) views the TTL as prophetic and ground-breaking; he applauds the contributors who focus on the mission of the Holy Spirit and his operation in the world in ways beyond human imagination. In particular, the focus of the TTL document is on the activity of God in mission since the dawn of creation and on God's presence in all of history, including world religions. Bevans (2014:196) contends that the protection and preservation

of creation is a central part within the mission of the church. He maintains that mission in accordance with the TTL document ought to denounce the economy of greed and participate in an economy of love, sharing, and justice (Bevans 2015:196).

Coorilos (2014:40) asserts that the acts of the Triune God are characterised by an egalitarian, interdependent, communitarian, and inclusive way of operation. He remarks that economic globalisation today "has effectively supplanted the God of life with its own 'ungod' of Mammon – the god of free market capitalism that propagates a 'soteriology' of 'saving' the world through creation of undue wealth and prosperity". The church, especially Pentecostal Charismatic Churches (PPC) with their "prosperity gospel", is complicit to this capitalist market of greed (consumerist greed) (cf. Conradie 2009:73; Meyers 2004:448). Coorilos (2014:40) claims that the TTL document offers a counter-cultural missiology; it counters this idolatrous vision and denounces the economy of greed in a world of free-market economy. Furthermore, TTL (Keum (ed.) 2013:39) summarises the mission affirmation with the following statement on economy: "We affirm that the economy of God is based on the values of love and justice for all and that transformative mission resists idolatry in the free-market economy". Bevans (2014:196) concurs that this is an uncompromising condemnation of the "market ideology" of capitalism; the economy of exchange where reciprocity regulates interactions in a community.

Niemandt (2015:97) opines that the TTL document motivates a need for a new understanding of mission and evangelism because of the manifold changes in our landscape. This also raises the issue of missional leadership succeeding in the formation of a missional congregational culture; the transformation of a traditional congregational culture into a missional congregational culture; this is a complex process, and it involves deep-rooted cultural shifts.

Bevans (2014:196) critiques the understanding of evangelism advanced by the TTL document. He argues that evangelism focuses on "explicit and intentional articulation of the gospel" and that the document speaks of evangelism as an included witness, sensitive to cultures and interfaith dialogue (cf. WCC 2013b §86, §97, §93). According to Bevans (2014:196), evangelism or mission cannot be reduced to verbal proclamation. He opines that the document condemns patriarchy and sexism is excluded. He continues by saying that although recognition has been granted to women and children, the plight of women and their role should receive more emphasis as it will serve as an official statement on mission by the WCC in the future.

To conclude, this section enunciates that the church is sent to call individuals and nations to repentance – their mission is to announce the forgiveness of sin and offer a new beginning in God and with neighbours through Jesus Christ. Humanity is continuously confronted by sin and its life destroying forces. The church, therefore, is required to work with God and His Spirit. It is the duty of the church to protect the entire creation. The West dominated the world for far too long, it unfortunately does not set the agenda for mission anymore – missions from the margins do. The church, however, is an institution and a community of sent disciples.

Humanity is expected to denounce an economy of greed and ought to participate in an economy of love through sharing and justice. *Koinonia* – communion through deeds and actions, therefore, motivates and celebrates diversity. The church is missional through a "transformative spirituality" and encourages a deepened relationship with God, other humans, the earth, its resources, and its ecology. One, therefore, observes that although ecclesiology and ethics for decades displayed tensions on what the church *is* and what the church *does*; the TTL document addresses alternatives and solutions to these ancient issues.

The next section provides a dialogue on ecclesiology and ethics as observed in the TTL document.

6.4 A Reflection on Ecclesiology and Ethics: In Close Dialogue

This section provides a discussion of the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics as reflected in the TTL document.

The Holy Spirit, according to Kim (2016:389-392), plays a valuable role in liberation and empowerment of life affirming forces. Kim argues that unity in mission is the basis for the

visible unity of the church. The Spirit, therefore, empowers the church to be mutual and a common witness (cf. TTL §59, §66). Visible unity is motivated and transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit to mend the tensions that have isolated ecclesiology and ethics for centuries.

Part I of the TTL document recognises that the "Spirit of Mission: Breath of Life" calls the church into being and this same Spirit directs the church to care for the entire created cosmic order. Part II of the document explains that the "Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins" is empowered by God's Spirit. Mission, however, offers life by working for justice and inclusivity, healing and wholeness (WCC 2013b:3). Bosch (1991:376-378) is of the opinion that the church directs people to the kingdom and is not a waiting room for heaven but a community for the world. This, therefore, clarifies what the document argues, that "the church is called out of the world and sent into the world". The TTL document, notes Bosch, argues that the Holy Spirit is the central agent that brings ecclesiology and ethics together through *koinonia* ("moral community"). Ecclesiology and ethics are clearly relational and understood through the power of the Holy Spirit through *koinonia* (missions).

Part III illustrates the "Spirit of Community: Church on the move". Here, the missional church participates in God's mission by calling local and global communities to be missionary, and thereby promoting unity. The church at work is the *koinonia* (this notion appears central in its attempt to bring ecclesiology and ethics together), which, from an ethical point of view, is a "moral community"[70] (cf. Best & Robra (eds.) 1997:9). The church, therefore, not only *has* but *is* a social ethic – a *koinonia* ethic. In this regard, it can be understood that fellowship and shared witness extends beyond the boundaries of the church. The discussion in this section clearly identifies a relationship between ecclesiology and ethics as it is embodied in a community way of life – a social ethic. This social ethic extends beyond the boundaries of the church and is called the *missio Dei*.

The TTL document affirms a restored relationship through mission, as the church belongs to God and mission belongs to God. The church in its witness invites people into union with Jesus Christ, led by the Holy Spirit into the world. This act of the church in the world is through the *missio Dei.* TTL identifies a relationship with creation and life in all its fullness,

[70] "The concept of 'moral community' recovers the fundamental relations between ethics and koinonia, between moral life and community and to seek inspiration on the New Testament witness. The community of disciples rather than the individual Christian is the bearer of the tradition and the form and matrix of the moral life. Christian ethics is the reflection on the life of the community in the context and the perspective on the problem of human life in general" (Best & Robra (ed.) 1997:9).

demonstrated through the church. The document, therefore, establishes a theological bridge between the church (ecclesiology), secular world views, indigenous religions, and wisdom traditions (ethics) (WCC 2013b:17). Coorilos (2014:43) claims that TTL is a creation-centred missiology; this means that *missio Dei* starts with creation. All life given by God has worth, all life matters – even that of the poor, creatures, and the ecology. Ecclesiology and ethics are surely present in the text.

Bevans (2014:195-196) notes that Part IV of the TTL document focuses on evangelism, titled "Spirit of Pentecost: Good News for All". This statement ends with "Concluding Affirmations", restating that "The Triune God invites the whole creation to the 'Feast of Life' through Jesus Christ who offers life in abundance (John 10:10)". The reality is that all do not share in this "Feast of Life" due to the crisis in missions. The *missio Dei* proclaims the good news of God's love for all, incarnated in the witness of a community for the sake of the world. This section maintains that the de-Christianised West no longer dominates the strands of missions; the *missio Dei,* however, is this change agent. TTL mentions that the kingdom of God is a place of freedom celebrated by a restored community. This kingdom of God differs from the economic and ecological injustice of the "global market". The document explains that the Spirit of mission and evangelism are present "life-givers", which transforms the whole of creation and the earth. This section confirms a relationship between ecclesiology and ethics.

In conclusion, the TTL document presents the Holy Spirit as restorative through *koinonia*. It further clarifies that fellowship and shared witness extend beyond the boundaries of the church, proclaiming that "all lives matter!" The *missio Dei* offers a "feast of life" for all to enjoy. These present life-givers are understood as missions and evangelism – together they transform the whole of creation. Some concluding remarks follow next to wrap up the chapter.

6.5 Conclusion

This investigation of the TTL study document offers an historical background that is grounded on the older statement of the EA document, but nevertheless, extends beyond it. A dialogue (does a relationship between ecclesiology and ethics exist in the TTL document and how is it understood?) between ecclesiology and ethics follows with a concluding remark.

Christians for centuries wrestled with the meaning and understanding of the Christian faith and life. It is quite an illusion – the thought of our obedience to a pure gospel within our

church building remains unaffected by cultural, human, and ecological deposits. The reality is that our current world differs from that of past centuries. The church must respond to both faith and polity and the present challenges of life and work within the world today. The entire TTL document, however, is organised around the Spirit's mission, its agent - the *missio Dei*. The chapters offered by the various contributors deal with past, present, and future movements toward a transformative hermeneutic and theology. TTL therefore affirms that *koinonia* is generated and nurtured as churches and Christians reflect together on issues of ethical concern and seek a response to the challenges facing humanity and creation today. This chapter argues that both ecclesiology and ethics have a transformative role to play and call humanity to personal, communal, cultural, and institutional transformation – a transformation that leads to the fullness of life (motivated by the *missio Dei*). I finally conclude that a relationship between ecclesiology and ethics is observed in the witness and service of the church to the world, which is closely connected to its vocation, as is evident in the TTL document.

Chapter 7

The Significance of Discourse on Ecclesiology and Ethics

7.1 Introduction and Summary of Argument

The purpose of this final chapter is to reflect on the findings and outcome of the analysis of the three primary documents analysed in Chapters 4 to 6. Given the nature of these three documents, it would be expected that the tension between ecclesiology and ethics are at least acknowledged therein. In other words, each document would need to attend to contemporary ethical concerns as well as to the nature and mission of the church, to what the church is, and what the church does. The task of the F&O Commission of the WCC is to call the church to "visible unity – one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world advancing towards unity so that the world may believe" (Best and Robra (eds.) 1997:vii-x). Ethics is not separate from the life of the church, but is integrally related to its worship, confession of faith, and its witness and service in the world. Ecclesiological and ethical reflections are, however, separable. A Christian ethic expresses our ecclesiological conviction. Our ecclesiology is informed by our experience of ethical engagement (by living out the gospel in the complex situation of the world) (cf. Best and Robra (eds.) 1997:vii-x).

Following the introduction (7.1), this section offers some concluding comments on ecclesiology and ethics as surveyed in Chapters 4 to 6 (section 7.2). Thereafter, the significance of the study for the following contexts are provided: the wider ecclesiological and ethical discourse (section 7.3); for the South African context (section 7.4); and for my own confessional tradition and congregational context (section 7.5).

7.2 Concluding Remarks on Ecclesiology and Ethics in the Three Documents Surveyed

This section reflects on the insights of Chapters 4 to 6 of this thesis. Included is a discussion of whether "these documents do justice to both ecclesiology and ethics and how this relationship is understood in these documents".

- **Chapter 4: Poverty, Wealth and Ecology (PWE)**

These booklets recommend methods for church communities, governments, economists and societal groups to deal with the scourges of injustice. The PWE document relates to L&W –

in other words, what the church does. It also covers the social responsibility of the church that relates to economic justice and environmental sustainability. A connectedness is observed as the document builds on concerns over poverty, inequality, and economic injustices, on the one hand, and concerns over environmental degradation on the other. A tendency to emphasise the one over the other (i.e., a concern over population versus a concern over consumption; feeding people versus saving nature; the green agenda "the environment" versus the brown agenda "poverty") is also observed in these booklets.

The document surveyed in this chapter postulates that ethics can easily exist without ecclesiology, but that the converse is not true. This notion is explicit within these booklets and the volume by Peralta and Mshana. The Christian ethical expression is a manifestation of our ecclesiological conviction. Our ecclesiology, however, must be informed by our experience of ethical engagement. The notions of the church as "moral community" and "moral formation" do not only reflect the church's teaching, but the whole life of the church. Each hearing and the investigation on the greed line discussed in Chapter 4 emphasises our social responsibility with a minimal focus on our Christian identity. This is clearly observed in the theme of the study – "poverty, wealth and ecology".

- **Chapter 5: *The Church Towards a Common Vision* (TCTCV)**

The document that formed the focus of Chapter 5 – the TCTCV – insightfully focuses on "Faith and Order" – what the church is. TCTCV discusses the church as servants of God proclaiming the Good News to people and the world. This document addresses issues faced by the church and how to overcome these obstacles by living out the Lord's gift of communion. The attempt in the document is to serve the calling of the church to "visible unity" – One Faith and One Eucharistic fellowship. Eucharistic fellowship is expressed in the church's worship and common life in Christ. This is accomplished through the church's witness and service to the world, and thereby advancing towards unity, so that the world may believe. The brokenness and divisions within the church are observed within the history of the church as well as within the document. This, however, contradicts Christ's will for unity amongst the disciples. Disunity and brokenness unfortunately hinder the mission of the church. Christ's love and the sharing of his mission to the church are observed in this document. His mission assigned to the church offers light and healing to humanity and the ecology. This further illustrates that the church's mandate is to teach and act. The TCTCV study document focusses mainly on ecclesiology, with minimal reflections on ethics. It therefore differs from the PWE study which primarily focuses on ethics. What is needed is a

balance between ecclesiology and ethics. To underplay the significance may undermine the specific contributions that churches could make in addressing the poverty and ecology nexus. These are contributions that no other institution can render except the church. Caution and reflection are, however, required, as there may be a tendency to repeat what is said in a secular context.

- **Chapter 6: Together Towards Life (TTL)**

Does the missiological text of TTL – the document that formed the primary focus of Chapter 6 – maintain a better balance in this regard? Evidently, TTL offers renewed vision, appropriate concepts, and a sense of direction to understand and practice mission in changing landscapes. TTL is an important hermeneutical key in the church's prophetic witness toward society and its participation in good governance in its action in and for the world. The Holy Spirit is central and integral to restore humanity and the earth through *koinonia.* Furthermore, the document articulates that fellowship and shared witness extend beyond the boundaries of the church as "all lives matter". The *missio Dei* is identified as a restorative agent of missions and offers a "feast of life" for all to enjoy.

The present life-givers are missions and evangelism – as the whole of creation is transformed. Both ethical reflections together with action by the Spirit and the church are observed in the document – it is intrinsic in the nature and life of the church. TTL identifies that ecclesiology and ethics must stay in dialogue by honouring and learning from the distinctive language and thought forms of each other. The document also observes that ecclesiology and ethics together have a transformative role to play. The transformative role is to call humanity to personal, communal, cultural, and institutional transformation. This transformation leads to fullness of life and is motivated by the *missio Dei.* The document is understood in a context of the Spirit operating through mission and evangelism.

TTL presents a balance between ecclesiology and ethics. It is, however, important to note that wherever balance is distorted, as proven in PWE and TCTCV, there is significance for theological reflection on ecclesiology and ethics. This study document does accommodate similarities and a relationship between PWE and TTL, as it presents a balance between ecclesiology and ethics. A further noteworthy point is that the unity of the church cannot be separated from the church's witness and service as these are connected to its vocation.

- **In summary**

Reflecting on the previous chapters, the analysis and critical engagement primarily started

with Chapter 4 which presented a detailed critical analysis of the ways in which the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics is understood. This analysis included an investigation of five booklets on PWE (2009-2012) and an edited volume on the *Greed Line: Tool for a Just Economy* (Peralta & Mshana (ed.) 2016). Ethics is primarily observed in this document and a relationship between PWE and TTL is evident on the grounds of ethics.

Chapter 5 analysed TCTCV (WCC 2013a). The results prove that ecclesiology is primarily clearly visible in this document and a relationship is identified between this document and TTL on the grounds of ecclesiology.

Chapter 6 investigated the document TTL (WCC 2013a). The findings demonstrated a clear balance between ecclesiology and ethics as well as a relationship between this document and PWE on the grounds of ethics.

Chapter 7, the current chapter, indicates the implications and significance of this research within the wider ecumenical discourse on ecclesiology and ethics. It also supports the significance of this study for a South African context. In addition, it details the implications of this for my own confessional tradition and congregational context.

In terms of the research question relating to chapters 4 to 6, the following noteworthy points are indicated below:

In Chapter 4, the study document strongly supports ethics, with no relationship between ecclesiology and ethics manifesting in this document. In response to Chapter 5, the TCTCV study document strongly emphasised ecclesiology, but in addition, no relationship could be observed in this document as it presents a strong emphasis on ecclesiology. However, the document analysed in Chapter 6 confirmed a relationship between ecclesiology and ethics, and demonstrated a balance between both ecclesiology and ethics.

To underplay the significance of ecclesiology may undermine the specific contributions that churches could make in addressing the poverty and ecology nexus. These are contributions that only the church can offer. The comparison of these study documents clarifies that the church has a responsibility in both worship and action in and for the world. In light of the investigation of the three documents (chapters 4-6), it can be deduced that further work is needed to unify the church and motivate a balance between F&O and L&W. The research results, however, prove that ecclesiology without ethics is ineffective, and the other way around, attention to the one without the other is observed. The unity of the church therefore cannot be separated from its witness and service to the world as the church's calling is closely related to its vocation. The TTL document substantiates that this ideal is reachable

through the Spirit, mission, and evangelism in changing landscapes.

7.3 The Significance of This Study for the Wider Ecumenical Discourse on Ecclesiology and Ethics

The WCC commissioned a joint study project on ecclesiology and ethics; this was conducted as a joint study project on ecclesiology and ethics by both the F&O Movement (Unit I) and the JPCIC Movement (Unit III). The premise of the study was to heal age old tensions between Faith and Order and Life and Work. The joint venture explored the link between what the church is and what the church does. The findings of this study document illustrate that the unity of the church cannot be separated from the church's witness and service. In other words, its calling is tightly connected to its vocation. Furthermore, it clarifies that the unity of the church has an important role to play in society. If the church is unified on fundamental issues it will play a positive role within society. Based on Best and Robra's (eds.) (1997) study on ecclesiology, with specific focus on the "costlies" (*costly unity, costly commitment,* and *costly obedience*), it remains inconclusive whether the attempt to integrate ecclesiological and ethical concerns has been successful.

The Porto Alegre Assembly in 2006 proposed a study project on the intrinsic links between poverty, wealth, and ecology. Two main views emerged on the dominant market-driven and money-centric development paradigm. Firstly, they emphasised practical reforms within the paradigm, and secondly, they regarded the development paradigm as the main cause of poverty and extreme wealth for a few. They demanded a radical change of the paradigm in order to achieve poverty eradication, equitable resource sharing, and ecological sustainability. Since then, issues around trade, finance, and the role of investments have been addressed in numerous ecumenical statements as these creative tensions are not new. Subsequently, a study process on PWE was commissioned, and the results of this work were presented at the Busan Assembly in 2013.

The results of the investigation on the three documents reveal that the differences on ecclesiology and ethics still remain a bone of contention, as was observed in the study documents PWE, TCTCV and TTL as well as the South African discussion on the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics. The discussion on identity and responsibility seems limited within all study documents and should seriously be addressed. This limitation on the identity and responsibility of the church related to the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics requires further discourse and action.

7.4 The Significance of This Study for the South African Context

Discourse on ecclesiology and ethics is replete in South African literature as the tension between ecclesiology and ethics was at the heart of this project. The idea was to stimulate reflection and provide ecumenical leadership through carefully planned publications to take the debate between ecclesiology and ethics forward. This culminated in an international conference on ecclesiology and ethics, "The state of ecumenical theology in Africa", hosted by UWC from 2-5 June 2015. One of the workshops on "Notions and forms of ecumenicity" primarily focussed on the tension between ecclesiology and ethics. This, in turn, resulted in the publication of *South African Perspectives and Forms of Ecumenicity* edited by Professor Ernst Conradie. Importantly, divisive issues in society are also divisive issues in the church. This project on ecclesiology and ethics was stirred by the South African churches' struggle against apartheid. The church's role was observed as both central and essential to society. The Belhar Confession is a prime example of an ecclesial focus with clear ethical implications (cf. Conradie 2013:78). John De Gruchy (1995:14; cf. Conradie (ed.) 2013:45) provides remarkable clarity when he states that "the separation of ecclesiological issues and ethical concerns is one of the reasons why, with the end of the church's struggle against apartheid, a decline in ecumenical commitment was observed. Our unity was based on common social praxis" (cf. De Gruchy 1995:14). This meant that all attention was placed on the issues of concern, while theological reflection and education that needed to be foundational for the church in a new historic context was lacking. This left South African churches voiceless amidst the plethora of injustices in this new democracy.

Papers that were presented at the conference on the state of ecumenical theology in the African context were published in an edition of *The Ecumenical Review* (edited by Conradie, Engdahl & Phiri 2015). Included was an article by Conradie (2015), entitled 'The University of the Western Cape Project on Ecclesiology and Ethics'. This article provides an overview of the UWC project on Ecumenical Studies and Social Ethics, as well as outlines completed projects that contributed to a long trajectory in an attempt to bring ecclesiology and ethics together (cf. Conradie 2015:530).

7.5 The Significance of This Study for My Own Confessional Tradition and Congregational Context

I am an ordained pastor in the Baptist Church, a member church of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA). Professor Godfrey Harold (2014:166-147), in an article entitled 'Engaging God's mission through justice and compassion: An Evangelical Discourse', argues that the evangelical church observes the social gospel as a "Trojan Horse" of liberation; it is believed that a social ethic turns away from the biblical form of mission.

Evangelical theology holds that the primary action of mission is to concentrate on salvation and church planting only.

The absence of a social ethic in evangelicalism portrays a church that is voiceless on issues of injustices, socio-economic challenges, racism, poverty, and ecological degradation locally, nationally, and globally. Based on this premise, Harold (2014:172) contends that the church's voice can only be regained through proper understanding of compassion grounded in its ethic. He further maintains that within the mission of God, God calls us to address the socio-economic and socio-political structures and systems that cause injustice and pain in society. A sharing gospel is needed as it calls the church to social responsibility (being missional). Harold (2014:72), in closing this argument, is of the opinion that if we as the church are missional – the Word of God must be shared in word and in deed (James 2:17).

This attitude modelled by my church affiliation proves that if ecclesiology receives more attention, our Christian ethic suffers, and if ethics receives more attention, ecclesiology suffers.

In summary, this section clarifies that the church in general struggles to strike a balance. These injustices and disparities continue in the name of development and the church remains voiceless whilst humanity and the earth are exploited and suffer the consequences of domination, greed, injustice, poverty, and ecological degradation. Further dialogue on ecclesiology and ethics are needed by ecclesial bodies, theologians, and educators, to name a few. It is hoped this research will generate new interest which will in turn lead to further research on the topic. There is a serious need for unity, witness, and service – our calling remains tightly connected to our vocation!

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