FROM WELFARE TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – THE ROLE OF LOCAL

CONGREGATIONS AS AGENTS OF DEVELOPMENT IN

THE MANGAUNG METROPOLITAN AREA

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A Mini-Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Master's Degree in Development Studies
in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
at the University of the Free State

Bloemfontein
January 2019
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Declaration

This work, unless otherwise indicated in the text, is entirely my own original work and has not been submitted to any other University or Seminary.

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January 2019

Acknowledgements

Abstract:

Local Christian churches have been identified as development partners needed to address the challenges of poverty and inequality in South Africa. Leaders of local congregations influence the manner in which these congregations become involved in their respective communities. This research indicates a need for the churches in Mangaung to foster an understanding of people-centred, participatory development in leaders and members, and address the legacy of apartheid to move away from the charity mind-set that determines its current involvement in surrounding communities.

Keywords: Churches, role, community development, people-centred, participatory, Mangaung.

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1.1   Rationale of the Study

Human poverty and inequality are two of the leading challenges facing the world today. This is also the case in South Africa where 45 out of every 100 households live below the poverty line (RSA, 2015:30). According to Statistics South Africa (2017), more than half of South Africans were poor in 2015 with over 30,4 million South Africans living in poverty. Such challenges cannot be addressed satisfactorily by one sector of society alone. To provide significant, acceptable, participatory, inclusive and real-world solutions to address the needs of communities, partnerships with partners contributing their expertise, skills and resources are needed. Faith-based organisations have been identified globally as potential partners by the World Economic Forum (World Economic Forum, 2013:12), and nationally by the government of South Africa (RSA, 2012:313, 475).

In South Africa a high proportion of people identify themselves as religious, with the Christian religion constituting around 80% of the population (Piper, 2009:65; Schoeman, 2013). *Christianity* is "the religion derived from Jesus Christ based on the Bible as sacred scripture" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2017). The Christian church, with a history of welfare, relief and capacity-building in society, is present on all levels in all geographical locations. It can therefore make a significant contribution to the wellbeing of the population, especially on a local level. If *development* should be "for the people, by the people", local churches possess resources and social capital (Swart, 2006:376) to engage the broader community and to contribute spiritual and physical resources to those in need, the disenfranchised and those living on the periphery of society. Does this happen? Do local congregations make a sustainable contribution to development issues in their communities? How do local congregations understand the need, assess their capabilities and address some of the problems in their communities?

The researcher has been involved in local and regional Christian initiatives for over three decades and has been part of the struggle of local congregations to adapt to social, political and economic changes, trying to be relevant and providing answers to the problems in society. The inability of some groups to see beyond their own interests, the inappropriateness of certain programs and the lack of sustainable results of many actions based on good intentions, has resulted in the quest of this study to find some answers.

1.2   Conceptual Clarification

For the purposes of this study *church* is defined as a local congregation expounding the Christian faith, consisting of a local organised body or grouping of believers (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2017).

Welfare is the statutory procedure or social effort designed to promote the basic physical and material well-being of people in need (Oxford Dictionary, 2018).

Charity defines a system of giving money, food, or help, free to those who are in need because they are ill, poor, or have no home (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018).

Development is defined as *human development* – as defined in the Human Development Report 1990, "The basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives" (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 1990:9). The purpose of development is to offer people more options. One of their options is access to income - not as an end but as a means to acquiring human well-being. But there are other options as well, including long life, knowledge, political freedom, personal security, community participation and guaranteed human rights. People cannot be reduced to a single dimension as economic creature (UNDP, 1990: iii).

Community development can be understood as a method or process, including the employment of change agents to stimulate the participation of the community in

development projects, or the process of the community that takes initiative to formulate objectives involving changes in their living conditions (Theron & Mubangizi, 2014:106).

Agency is defined as **"**the capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2018).

From the above definitions, *development agents* can thus be defined as any person or organisation that engages in activity that addresses the wellbeing of individuals or sectors of the community. This would include any charitable provision and any services rendered that add value to people's lives and empowers them.

Social capital is "the information, trust, and norms of reciprocity inhering in one's social networks" that includes the norms and networks that enable collective action for common benefit (Woolcock, 1998:153,155).

1.3 Problem Statement

Do local Christian churches understand and realise their potential role as development agents?

Almost all local churches are involved in their surrounding communities. Although they are involved in helping the needy, most of the efforts qualify as aid and not as *development* (Kumalo, 2001:10). The potential of greater church involvement in development-orientated activities exists, but this needs to be unlocked (Swart, 2006:365). For the Church to function as a development agent, and not as a welfare organisation (Krige, 2008a:32), it should invest with greater purpose in its traditional core activities. This approach would build social capital, leading to (1) the formation of more extensive relationships based on investing in *people* rather than *projects*, and (2) wider-ranging development actions (Swart, 2006:370). To realise this, a congregation should see itself as a social entrepreneur that *"…can develop capacity through relevant interventions and partnerships and can add value and meet the needs of groups who have been failed by previous government attempts in social redress"* (Urban, 2015:292). The results of such actions of a congregation should be evident in the community.

The legacy of apartheid has caused division within most of civil society. That division is still prevalent in the church today (Mbamalu, 2002:1; Krige, 2008b:156) and visible in the manner churches are involved in civic issues such as addressing poverty, where churches tend to be involved in their 'own' communities (Mbamalu, 2002:116). Although most mainstream churches are multiracial, the majority of local congregations are not. There is a need to research the manner in which churches use their social capital, how they bridge traditional divides and are involved across the historic racial boundaries.

To answer the question of how local congregations understand and realise their potential role as contributing development agents, the city of Bloemfontein and its surrounding municipal area were chosen as a research community. It is a small metropolitan city in South Africa, the capital of the Free State Province and is surrounded by rural and peri-urban activities. It is a unique settlement because of its relative physical isolation from other major cities, but with the combined functions of provincial capital and important educational and health service centre (Visser, 2008:122; Cox, 2017:20-36). The Mangaung metropolitan area incorporates Bloemfontein and the mainly residential and peri-urban areas of Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu, 50 km from the city centre, as part of the legacy of homeland and influx control policies dating from the previous dispensation (IIDE, 2005:5).

1.4   Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to probe the understanding of local churches of their social responsibility and role in terms of the development of the community: the way they interpret the mandate of the congregation towards the community; how they determine the needs in society; assess their capabilities and mobilise their members; and what they do to contribute to sustainable community development. The results of this study may assist leaders of local churches to a better understanding of how their involvement in their communities can contribute to the development of individuals and groups.

1.5   Objectives

The objectives, i.e. measurable outcomes, of the study are:

- to address the question of the existing and expected roles of the church as part of civil society in contributing to development;

- to provide an oversight of the developmental role of churches post-1994 in South Africa;

- to describe actions taken by churches or groupings of churches in the Mangaung metropolitan area in the past two decades;

- to utilise a case study to evaluate the actions, outreaches and developmental programs and influence of nine local Christian congregation in the Mangaung metropolitan area;

- to present the findings of the study; and

- to provide recommendations on how local churches can be assisted to broaden their influence and impact on the community as well as questions raised for possible future research.

1.6   Conceptual Framework

The concept of development has changed since the 1960s, moving from a focus on economic development to human development (Elliot, 2014:68), and from top-down programmes to bottom-up participatory processes (Chambers,1995:174). The change in how development is understood and facilitated has called for civil society, including faith-based organisations, to become involved in providing solutions to the pressing problems of the 21st century (Krige, 2008b:155; World Economic Forum, 2013:12).

Concurrently with the change in development focus areas, the church internationally has identified a responsibility to address more than spiritual needs (Krige, 2008b:158). Various national and regional councils, and denominational organisations are providing frameworks for the church to be involved in their communities, making a sustainable impact on addressing the various needs. Although significant work is being done by faith-based organisations (FBOs), para-church organisations and networks, the local congregation forms a critical part of the resources of the church because of their geographical distribution and sheer number of members (Krige, 2008b:155; Sivov, 2008:218).

While various studies have confirmed the need for local congregations to become involved in development (Bowers & August, 2004:416; Clarke, 2013:348), little change has taken place in the way churches engage with the community (Kumalo, 2001:10; Swart, 2003:406). Local churches understand the realities of their community, have the trust of the community and the people with the necessary skills to facilitate a process of participatory, bottom-up development. Although a wealth of information is available on how local congregations can be involved in development, especially community development, the default action of many congregations is to provide relief (Swart, 2003:406; Krige, 2008:157), in a way that perpetuate a dependency paradigm. The need for non-theological capacities of leadership has been identified (Krige, 2008b:157), such as a need in understanding community empowerment.

To be able to turn congregations into the development agents that they potentially can be, the fundamental understanding of local church leadership of the role of the church in society holds the key to break from a traditional charity mindset, to a developmental mindset. The leaders, as the vision-bearers, are the mobilisers of their congregations to make an impact in the community. Questions that need to be answered, are: how do local church leaders interpret the concept of development? How do they understand the role of church? Do they think churches should address social issues and in what manner? What are their perceptions about how needs should be addressed if the church is involved? What are the activities or programs that the church can contribute in order to address problems? Once these answers are evaluated, plans to bring about the necessary change can be put in place.

1.7   Research Methodology
The rest of this chapter explains the research approach, the choosing of a case study as best-fit approach, sampling methods and how information were collected and analysed.

1.7.1 Research Approach
A *qualitative* research study is characterised by an approach where the quantification of the data is not as important as the words and understanding of reality of the respondent

(Patton & Cochran, 2002:2; Bryman, 2012:35; Nieuwenhuis, 2016:50, 53). The collection of information take place in a natural setting within the process of social life, where humans, their interaction, interpretation and understanding take place (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:50, 53). The flexibility and openness, that is part of the procedure of qualitative research, mean that complex things frequently cannot be explained in an unambiguous way (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:5). Qualitative research is characterised by an important interplay between theory on the abstract level, and the real world where the information for the research is collected (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:5). Such a study places great value on the interpretation of individuals of their social world, and not on quantifiable data that can be scientifically measured.

The perspective of a respondent determines what is true to her or him in a subjective way and their frame of reference and understanding (Baxter & Jack, 2008:546; Nieuwenhuis, 2016:67). The underlying assumption is that the social reality in which an individual function, is constantly shifting and reinterpreted as behaviour is assessed and adapted (Bryman, 20012:6,24,35).

The characteristics of qualitative research matches this study well, as the research question asked can only be answered by understanding the interpretation of individuals of the role of church in society, the way their interpretation influences behaviour based on values and perceptions in the broader context of changing political and economic realities in South Africa. The paradigm of the individual as a leader of his/her congregation, his/her beliefs about reality and worldview; about the role and the function of local congregations; the reasoning behind their activities and the way they are involved in society are the focus points of the study. If qualitative research is about understanding the phenomena, the social meaning that is attributed to experiences, circumstances and situations (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:53), then this research question can only be answered by qualitative research.

Exploratory research is often necessary when the phenomenon being researched does not fit in a fixed framework and key issues and key variables should be identified to lead to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:53). It should be studied in great detail to comprehend the aspects and impact of contributing factors,

making a *case study* an appropriate method (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:53). An exploratory case study is mainly *inductive*, that is, the observations of the study will provide information toward developing theory in coming to grips with the relevant issues (Bryman, 2012:24,26; Nieuwenhuis, 2016:53).

In this study, where the understanding of participants about development influence their involvement in development, the *exploratory* and *inductive* nature of the study will produce the best results. What participants view as knowledge, their understanding of real-life situations that influence their actions, is the insider view that the researcher tries to understand (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:67).

1.7.2 Case Study

Yin (1981:97,98) explains the need for a case study when a contemporary phenomenon is researched in its real-life context in a situation where the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context is not easily separated, especially when the proposed study is of exploratory nature. Therefore, a case study covers both an occurrence and the environment wherein it exists. Because of the number of variables that influence the phenomenon, the information analysed can usually not be described statistically (Yin, 1981:98).

A case study is fitting when a single case is being intensively analysed, such as a single community in a specific location (Bryman, 2012:66-8). One of the most valuable characteristics of the case study is that it allows for the in-depth understanding of the case (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:81). According to Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and McKibbon (2015:1773), the case study is not so much a methodological tradition as a choice that is made because of the research topic. The case being researched is the focus of interest because of its unique features. It allows the researcher the opportunity to obtain information from a variety of sources to explore and understand a specific phenomenon, thus incorporating various perspectives and interpretations from the different participants (Baxter & Jack, 2008:545). The important questions asked in a case study is 'Why?' and 'How?' set within a specific context (Baxter & Jack, 2008:545; Baškarada, 2014:3).

As the purpose of this proposed study is to probe the understanding of church leaders as to their potential role in development, both "how" and "why" are relevant questions, a case study within the geographical context of the Mangaung metropolitan area is a suitable methodology to explore the phenomenon. The case study is best fit to answer the research question, because of the need to understand the phenomenon in depth within a certain context (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:81); the importance of the understanding and interpretation of the participants that determine the actions and plans they undertake; and how they interact with society according to their understanding.

The case study is done within the Christian community residing in the Mangaung metropolitan area, with a sample of local congregations as units of analysis. The geographical area of the MMM was chosen because of its proximity to the researcher, but also because of its unique character. The metropole is physically isolated in the sense that it is the biggest in the province with no other urban area within a 170 km radius. The wider Mangaung metropolitan area incorporates both the 'township' or dormitory neighbourhood of Botshabelo, created in the apartheid era, as well as Thaba Nchu, which was part of the 'homelands' created to provide some sort of self-rule for the black population. Political decisions and physical planning decades ago, created a city with an economic base unable to accommodate the almost 788 000 people living within the metropolitan boundaries (Mangaung Metro Municipality, 2017:11).

1.7.3 Information Collection Strategy

One of the most valuable characteristics of the case study is that it allows for the in-depth understanding of the case (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:81). When an exploratory study is done, no clear, single set of outcomes exists (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:88), calling for a collaborative relationship between researcher and participant, with the interviewee sharing his or her stories. An unstructured interview can produce a wealth of information that can be used to understand perceptions and behaviour in a new way, producing multiple facets of a phenomenon and better understanding. This enable the researcher to keep an open mind and include new concepts that can be extracted from the information gathered (Bryman, 2012:12).

Information was collected by in-depth interviews with the leader or leaders of local congregations. The perspectives of the interviewees are critical in understanding the relevant issues while the format of the unstructured interview is flexible to facilitate discussion into the relevant areas (Maree, 2016:44). A set of prompts was used to direct the discussion in such a way that the researcher understood the perspective of the interviewee (Bryman, 2012:472-3), allowing the answering of questions and discussion of issues in an unconstrained manner.

The questions were open-ended to allow the interviewee to answer, explain and discuss the mindset, experiences and choices made relevant to the research. This enabled the respondent to explain internal and subjective experiences (Maree, 2016:36). Information was collected within the following framework to understand the perspective of the participant: How do the participants see the role of the local congregation in society? Does a congregation have a social responsibility? What are the issues in the country and city? Which issues should a congregation address/help to address? Do you influence your congregation to participate in community life? What are you doing now? What have you done? The list of possible prompting questions for use by the researcher, as the interviewer, is attached as *Addendum A.*

Any direct questions were framed in a way that asked the participant to explain the process of thought that influenced decisions, so as not to appear to criticise and thereby placing the person on defence. During the interview, vague answers were probed and clarified to make sure the researcher understood the information.

All interviews were electronically recorded with the permission of the interviewee, with the understanding that the information would be handled confidentially and in accordance to ethical standards. The interviews were transcribed along with any notes that were manually taken by the researcher. Material provided by a participant was evaluated as to potential contribution to the research. Relevant material on each participating congregation, where available, was also collected electronically from respective websites to support the information from the interviews.

1.7.4 Sample Selection

Sampling can be defined as the *"selection of specific data sources from which data is collected to address the research objectives"* (Gentles *et al.*, 2015:1775). Gentles *et al.* (2015:1176) further continue to explore Yin's understanding that *sampling* may lead to confusion with the choice of doing a case study, as an objective of case studies is not to achieve statistical generalisation, but rather analytical generalisation (Baškarada, 2014:14).

Purposive sampling is frequently used in qualitative studies, when the research question directly leads to the selection of units according to need (Bryman, 2012:416; Nieuwenhuis, 2016:85). The units are selected with the conceptual framework in mind, with the aim of generating rich information on the phenomenon within the boundaries of time, cost and distance (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:85). For this study a stratified purposive sampling method was followed, with the aim to select participants within three different categories: leaders of white congregations, leaders from African or Coloured congregations, and leaders from congregations that purposely chose to be multi-racial. The strata were identified with the history of apartheid in mind, as well as the results of recent studies about reconciliation and unity in the broad church in South Africa.

Within the strata three local congregations represent each grouping, also reflecting the diversity in Christian denominations; size of the congregation; role during the apartheid struggle; and the language in which the main services are conducted. This brings the number of units for analysis to a total of nine, maximising variation in the sample (Patton & Cochran, 2002:9).

Different leaders in each group were identified within the parameters as stated, and those who were available and willing to take part in the study, were included. All participants were interviewed between August and October 2018. The participants were interviewed at various locations.

The concept of *data saturation* is important in determining the size of the sample. Saturation is reached at the point where data and information from new sources add little to the study (Gentles *et al.,* 2015:1781; Nieuwenhuis, 2016:84). In qualitative studies, it has been found that even small samples can generate a reliable sense of

thematic exhaustion, meaning that more interviews do not necessarily generate more answers that fit into new categories (Bryant, 2012:426). This is especially true when the sample is relatively homogenous.

Because of the heterogeneous sample selected for this study in terms of racial profile, size, denomination and historic role, it is very difficult to determine how many units should be included in the sample to attain data saturation. For the purposes of this study the racial composition is accorded the highest priority. Consequently, three congregations will be chosen in each of the subgroups, totalling nine congregations. The wide variation of information sources means that data saturation is unlikely. It is foreseen that this does not jeopardise a study which is exploratory in nature.

1.7.5 Information Analysis

Because of the volume of information generated in a qualitative study, it can be difficult to analyse the information (Bryman, 2012:565). According to Nieuwenhuis (2016:104) structured analysis is instrumental in unravelling the stories into narrative strings that present commonalities in the text, major emerging themes and themes that put information in a timeframe. Inductive information-analyses allows themes to emerge from the data.

Firstly, each unit of analysis and participation is described, providing the context of information. Next all interviews were transcribed with the notes accompanying the interview, such as non-verbal cues (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:105). This information was studied repeatedly and impressions from it were written down. The next step was the codifying of information – dividing it into meaningful units with a designated code. All information was systematically organised into word tables. This enabled the retrieval of all information linked to a specific theme. Because of the exploratory nature of the research, no potential links and patterns were assumed, and no restraints therefore imposed on the emerging patterns (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:109).

After coding were refined, the codes were ordered into a system to make sense of the information, creating categories or themes that describe and explain the phenomena. This approach was used to order and synthesise information to identify some central themes and sub-themes relevant to the research questions. In doing so it was easier to

interpret the information that was collected and also to link the research question with the literature available (Bryman, 2012:13,579; Baškarada, 2014:15).

Following the emergence of themes from the information, results were tested against the findings of previous research. To counter any bias because of personal beliefs, feelings or values of the researcher that might influence objectivity during research (Bryman, 2012:39), as well as the subjective interpretation of participants, two experts were invited to assess the results of the study according to their own experience. One expert is a well-known academic in the field of Theology, while the other is involved in various projects in different communities as part of his mandate in a regional church body.

1.8   Research Ethics

Since the 1960s a debate has been raging about the ethics of research (Bryman, 2012:131). Notorious extreme research projects that made use of deception and disguised observation came under scrutiny, although unethical research can be understated. Bryman (2012: 131) stated that the issue of ethics is crucial in research because of the underlying values that determine the way the research is being done. Discussions about ethical issues in the research of social phenomena have been going on for decades (Bryman, 2012:131). Because of this ongoing debate, the ethical base of research projects is scrutinised by professional - and educational organisations.

One of the main questions in qualitative research is whether the people being researched are treated in an appropriate way? Because of the potential intrusive nature of social research, ethical questions need to be asked, such as: Will the research cause harm to the participants? Did the participants give their consent in taking part in the study? Will their privacy be invaded? Will any kind of deception take place in the execution of the study (Bryman, 2012:135-6)? Resnik (2011:2) argues that, in the interest of research and research institutions, the ethical norms of knowledge and truth should be followed.

With any study that ask for in-depth understanding of issues, it is important to build a relationship with participants that is professional and respectful. Because of the

cooperative nature of research, accountability, trust, fairness and respect should be promoted both to the academic world and the public (Resnik, 2011:2).

This study asked for the participation of some leaders of local congregations in the Mangaung metropolitan area. Mangaung is a medium sized city that is geographically isolated from other cities, raising the possibility of participants being identified. The nature of the questions raised may have some repercussions in our politicised and fragmented society, therefore the participants needed to be assured that the identifiable characteristics of a congregation would be held in confidence, and that their opinions voiced would be presented in such a way that their identities are not revealed.

To allay fears of unethical research procedures, the purpose of the study as well as the research process were transparent to participating leaders to gain their support and to allay any fears that the information will be put to harmful use. Consent forms were used; an example is attached as Addendum B. Participation was voluntary, and interviews could be ended at any time by participants. Sensitive information did not have to be disclosed during interviews.

1.9   Limitations of the Study

The findings of the study are based on information provided by subjective participants, analysed and interpreted by a subjective researcher. Steps were taken to minimise this subjectivity via validation by expert opinions.

The subject of this study is Christian churches within a specific geographical area, which exclude other religions and other locations. For this reason, the findings cannot be generalised.

Only local congregations were included in the sample. This excluded other faith-based organisations, such as FBOs with a religious base or regional organisations that are part of church structures.

Only nine people were interviewed, representing nine congregations. In an attempt to broaden the base of the information, the congregations were chosen from different cultural backgrounds, denominations and localities.

The findings of the study may be difficult to replicate or formulate generalisations. The sample is too limited for drawing conclusions that have wider implications for the church.

The intention of the study is not to interpret, explain, discuss or rectify perceptions that may be discriminatory or racist. The purpose is to understand, as far as possible, the processes congregations have been subjected to that shaped their involvement in their communities.

Chapter 2: Development Actors

2.1 Introduction

If the role of the church in development is studied, it is important to understand what exactly is meant when the term '*development*' is used. Clergy come from different backgrounds, cultures, geographical areas and with various mindsets and personal histories. All these factors influence their perceptions of development and resulting interactions with their own congregation and the surrounding civil society.

This chapter will include a discussion on how the concept of development has changed over the past 60 years. The historic role of the church and expectations towards the church to be more involved in development is considered, with an account of the role social capital plays in development. A look is taken internationally at the contribution of various scholars to evaluate whether the current involvement of the church in society can be classified as development or welfare activities.

2.2 The Changing Concept of Development

2.2.1 Human Development

The concept of *development* has changed drastically over the last decades. Until the 1970s the focus was on economic development, known as the modernisation paradigm, with the underlying presumption that wealth created will trickle down to the poor (Fair, 1982:6-7). After decades of programs and plans that benefitted growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but without addressing the problems of poverty and inequality, the concept of *human development* was eventually adopted. Human development or people-centred development got momentum in 1986 when the United Nations adopted the UN Declaration on the Right to Development (Elliot, 2014:68). From declaring development as a basic human right, different development indices were introduced in an endeavour to measure development, such as decent standard of living, gender empowerment and gender equality, deprivation and other indicators. The Human Development Index (HDI), probably the best-known index, measures health,

education and living standard on a national level by the indicators of life expectancy, mean years of schooling, expected years of schooling and Gross National Income per capita (Potter, 2014:106). Hiagbe (2015:166) noted that the focus in development changed to a people-centred process, from macro to micro, involving local communities and individuals to play an essential role in their own development.

Contributing to the concept of human development on an individual level, the *capability approach*, as pioneered by Sen, brought a whole new perspective on what development can be. *Development as a freedom* is the foundational principle, so that any person experiences the freedom to make the choices that lead to the well-being of that person (Northover, 2014:173). Instead of a list of criteria to be met, the capability approach relates to the subjective quality of the life of a person: physically, socially and mentally as valued by that person; what that person could do and what could be achieved even if it is not actually chosen. By identifying capabilities, the 'unfreedoms' and depravity experienced by an individual can also be identified. Nussbaum (2011:33-35) created a list of ten central capabilities that measure the freedom of individuals and the society, to choose and to act, to live lives full of dignity and respect. These capabilities include concepts such as bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination and thought (which implies adequate education); affiliation; and control over one's environment (Nussbaum, 2011:78-80). When the deprivation of persons in poverty is scrutinised, it can be attested that these freedoms are violated.

The global focus on development is currently on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 goals that "are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity" (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2018). These goals are a mix of economic, social and environmental goals that should be addressed on international, national and local levels by policies, guidelines and partnerships. It includes goals such as no poverty, zero hunger, health and wellbeing, education, and reducing inequalities.

2.2.2 Participatory Development

With the emphasis on people-centred - and sustainable development, a crucial question to ask is how much opportunity for input do those in need have on how development take place at their local level? Chambers (1995:174) propagated a *participatory* process, where development takes place with focus on people rather than programmes, and that they determine the priorities and the pace of development. When development is approached in such a participatory way, the poor becomes more than recipients and should participate in the process (Swart, 2003:422). Kumalo (2001:6) stated that charity does not empower, on the contrary it enslaves the giver, who has to keep on giving and the recipient who has to keep on begging. De Gruchy (2003:28) supported the thinking of Freire and Sen – the freedom of poor people to shape their own development and vision of the future. The likelihood of successful and sustained development interventions increases with community ownership and participation (Clarke, 2013:342).

Development, therefore, is much more than relief packages and handouts for those in need. Human development is participatory development - a process where the needs of people are addressed by developing their capabilities, empowering them to take part in their own development at their own pace. The people in the community are in the best position to identify their own needs, use their own resources and strengths to respond to the needs, and their continued participation and ownership of projects contribute to the success thereof (Clarke 2013:342). This should be the focus of any institution from outside that endeavours to help those in need, that is able to contribute additionally to this process with various resources.

2.3 Who is Responsible for Development?

For the largest part of the twentieth century, the government, with the help of multi-national organisations such as the World Bank, was seen as the driver of development (Davids, 2014a:29-31). This was a legacy from colonialism and the modernisation paradigm, with socio-economic goals determined by politicians and Western elites. Currently, government has the responsibility to formulate social and economic policies

that are implemented by the public sector to achieve development objectives (Davids, 2014b:50).

With the paradigm shift from economic development to human development and the international acceptance of the sustainable development goals, partnerships from international to local levels became vital. The public sector cannot be solely responsible for development. Sustainable development calls for a bottom-up approach with local communities to act in collaborative partnerships to reach the developmental goals (Osborne, Cutter & Ullah, 2015:10-11). This means that although the government has a responsibility to promote development, civil society is a crucial part of the development process. Government has been increasingly required to work in partnership with civil society to reach their developmental goals. Institutions and organisations are asked to take stock to see how they can contribute and be involved in various development strategies on a local level (Osborne *et al.,* 2015:14-15) because of their close ties and involvement with communities. Their experience in service delivery and representing those who are underrepresented in communities are vital (Osborne *et al.*, 2015:16).

As globalisation impacts on world economies and the economies of the welfare states, governments have been under growing pressure to cut welfare spending (Esping-Andersen, 1996:25; Hiilamo, 2012:411), leading to the establishment of *partnerships* with civil organisations. Governments have realised that policy which strengthens local social processes have a positive influence on the success of welfare provision, resulting from the engagement of communities in civic processes (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:896; Piper, 2009:56; Vodo, 2016:1).

Internationally and nationally faith-based organisations have been identified as partners that can contribute to development (RSA, 2012:27; World Economic Forum, 2013:12; Hiagbe, 2015:177-178).

2.4   Historic Involvement of The Church in Society

The role of the Christian church as a major force for change has been well researched (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:207; Sivov, 2008:214). The *Christian church* has a history of being involved in political, economic and social life in various ways over centuries, for

example, fighting for social justice such as the end of slavery and apartheid and for labour legislation (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:895).

Congregations and groups of Christians have taken the responsibility to provide a safety net for the poor and destitute; creating educational opportunities; providing health care; fighting against injustices and even creating economic opportunities and jobs (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:895). Many modern institutions of education, health and social services can be traced back to roots in Christian society before the advancement of the welfare state (Sivov, 2008:214). Local churches have been working towards the eradication of poverty, feeding the hungry, being a voice for those in need of housing and infrastructure, promoting peace and inclusion and holding leaders accountable. In some countries the actions of the church provided the foundation for the welfare state, where government provided some of the necessities to the poorest of the population (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:895; Hiilamo, 2012:402).

In the new millennium, churches have been involved in a spectrum of development programs to combat poverty across the globe (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:895-910; Sivov, 2008:216; Hiilamo, 2012:403; Clarke, 2013:347; Vodo, 2016:2). Internationally, religious institutions have supported the sustainable development goals and established the *International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development* (Öhlman, Frost & Gräb, 2016:1), in recognition of their own role in sustainable development.

The separation between state and church and the rise of the welfare state, resulted in a church that increasingly focused on "spiritual" matters, losing much of its influence in society (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:895; Hiilamo, 2012:402). However, the church is still an important and trusted organisation, contributing in various ways to the needs of society. Research has shown the significant contribution of faith-based organisations (FBOs), and also their important value and contribution as groupings that have the potential to play a significant role in the solution of global issues and influencing other developmental institutions because of their inherent morality and values systems (World Economic Forum, 2013:12). It has been found that FBOs contribute to society because of innate compassion (Be'ery & Bloom, 2015:2,23), despite differences in approaches between religious groups and governments.

2.5 The Church and Social Capital

One of the reasons why the church has been and still is so influential, is because of the formation of *social capital* (Swart, 2006:347; Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:895). Social capital is defined as the trust, norms and networks that enable members of a community to act together to achieve shared objects (Putnam, 1995:664; Woolcox & Narayan, 2000:226). Social trust forms the underlying bond that enables relationships and helps individuals to cooperate and engage in the wider civic society. There is a strong correlation between social trust and civic engagement.

Various forms of social capital exist, depending on its function within the society (Putnam, 1995:665; Bacon, 2002:5; Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:897). *Bonding capital* exist within a group with a common identity such as friends, ethnic-based organisations or a religious group such as a congregation. Within this group social capital provides a sense of belonging and support (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:897), where the social ties in the community can contribute to the alleviation of poverty because it helps in managing risk and vulnerability (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000:231). *Bridging capital* leads groups to cooperation across boundaries with others in jointly striving for broader mutual interests (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000:232). Putnam (1995:667) defines it as the capital *"… that link substantial sectors of the community and span underlying social cleavages — to the extent that the social capital is of a 'bridging' sort"*. Bridging capital allows people and groups of people to develop trust with those outside their usual communities. This allows for diversity and inclusion and straddling differences such as gender, socio-economic barriers and locality (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:897). Social capital can both empower and exclude, strengthen or divide society, depending on the way a group uses its capital. Groups with an inward focus only make the trust available for those inside the group (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:897,902), leading to social inequalities and exclusion, and in some cases even to restrictions on the freedom of those inside the group.

Research has shown that local congregations play a role in enhancing social capital and promoting social cohesion (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:895), reaching out, caring and building networks of cooperation, trust and connectedness on a local level (Swart, 2006:348). Faith groups contribute to government objectives of neighbourhood renewal,

social inclusion and the strengthening of civil society (Bacon, 2002:2; Flint, Atkinson & Kearns, 2002:1) and supporting democracy and development (Piper, 2009:56), making them ideal partners to assist in various state initiatives. According to Hepworth & Stitt (2007:904), FBOs bring a moral component to social capital. Local congregations have strengths to offer to a community because of their resources, links to their localities, and their engagement in different neighbourhoods and with different groupings of people. Churches have the advantage of shared values, beliefs and ethics, putting relationship and people first, and knowledge of neighbourhood communities (Bradley, 2009:107; Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:208; Osborne *et al.*, 2015:14-15). Hepworth & Stitt (2007:904-907) noted that various studies on the use of social capital by churches show consensus in that while churches do sometimes exclude some to pursue their own narrow self-interest, they mostly work towards inclusion and cohesion of the society. Congregations tackle sectarianism, racism and other social tensions and restrictions, striving towards including the most marginalised groups to aid social cohesion, demonstrating the value of both bonding and bridging social capital (Flint *et al.*, 2002:3; Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:905,907). Local faith communities respond to social needs in their immediate locality prevailing across the diverse cultural, political and religious boundaries, empowering social groups and providing dignity and purpose to people (Bacon, 2002:20, 22).

Although social capital can play an important role in the success of community activities by contributing to the wellbeing of individuals in a community, it is not a substitute for a lack of broader economic and material resources (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:897). Networks and social cohesion can alleviate some of the symptoms, but a more equitable distribution of resources is necessary to address poverty, assisting the poor to gain access to formal institutions with the necessary resources to meet their needs (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000:234).

2.6   The Church and Development

With the development of the modern state and especially the welfare state that undertook to provide services historically provided by churches, coupled with the separation of church and state, the church started to focus generally on spiritual matters

(Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:895; Hiilamo, 2012:402). The Geneva Conference in 1966 challenged the church to become more involved in the physical, economic and social needs of a changing world (Krige, 2008b:158). The potential of the church to serve holistically and the obligation to act with social responsibility to the surrounding needs, became increasingly prominent within organised religion.

Clarke (2006:835) argued that the role of religion had been historically ignored in development studies. It became more prominent as engagement between donors and faith-based organisations grew during the new millennium. The continuous involvement of the church in the welfare of communities and the mobilisation of individuals to contribute in various ways, is development (Clarke, 2013:340). Sivov (2008:218) described the church as an organisation which is present in all settlements, with a mandate to serve the community irrespective of social status, age, gender and even belief, making it an ideal partner for development.

According to Piper (2009:55-56), the church contributes to a more engaged and active form of citizenship in local governance and contributes significantly to the realisation of democratic ideals, thereby having a potentially powerful role to play in civil society. Bradley (2009:112) stated that faith is a positive factor that motivates people to contribute to the eradication of inequalities and to give generously. He defined development as a "material and spiritual process of transformation" that is directed at local level, stating that the spiritual and material needs are simultaneously addressed by FBOs (Bradley, 2009:101,112). The argument made by Clarke (2013:348) was that churches have a ministry that includes the whole person – spiritual and physical.

Because of their values and morals, the heart for giving and caring, the potential to be value-added partners to development agencies, the trust generated from society and the inclusive nature of the church, the church should be involved in development. The focus of the church remains irrevocably on people. Spieker (2010:266) states, "*For the Christian understanding of development, no other anthropological premise assumes greater weight than the notion that the human person is squarely the subject of all development.*"

Hiagbe (2015:166) claimed that the church in Sub-Saharan Africa has the same understanding of development as the human development paradigm – ministering to the total man, bringing out the full potential of each individual and the community. Development does not necessarily mean the moving away from traditional values and way of life. He contended that Christianity can play a big role in the economic growth of sub-Saharan Africa based on historic patterns in Europe, if the church embraces a role of involvement in social and political issues based on a biblical mandate of the mission of God (Hiagbe, 2015:170,175). If the church becomes involved in the development agenda, propagating hard work, discipline and economic wisdom instead of embracing dependency on aid, extreme poverty can be reduced immediately (Hiagbe, 1015:177-178).

The debate on the role of the church in development takes place mainly on international, national and regional levels without involving local congregations. Emedi (2010:2-3) argued that participation in discussions on church and social concerns indicate that pastors, missionaries and ordinary Christians – those who work with the poor on a daily basis - are left out of the debate. The findings of Flint *et al.* (2003:3) confirmed this, pointing out that linkages between institutions and local churches, and the social capital built in the community, are based on individuals' activities and therefore should be a priority for congregations. It seems as if congregations, as a body, have yet to be mobilised to take part in development actions.

2.7 Community Development or Charity and Welfare?

Development has been defined in Chapter 1 as human development, empowering people to participate in processes and projects that enable themselves and their community. This contrasts with a charity or welfare approach, where people are given necessities to survive or achieve a certain level of consumption. If the activities of local congregations are tested, do local churches mainly focus on charity or do they also contribute to community development? This is a question asked by Swart (2003:406) about the "*ideological, operational and relational framework*" of the church. From both a theological perspective and a secular development perspective, churches are expected

to contribute to development. Can the actions, programs and projects of local churches be classified as development? Do churches use their resources and social capital to engage the broader community and to contribute spiritual and physical resources to those in need, the disenfranchised and those living on the periphery of society? Do local congregations make a sustainable contribution to development issues in communities? How do they identify the need, assess the capabilities and address some of problems in their own or neighbouring communities? Do congregations engage in a process that is empowering and participatory?

In Europe various research projects did find that some church activities and programmes do contribute to development. Hepworth and Stitt (2007:905) found that some congregations were working to tackle sectarianism, racism and other social tensions and impediments, and were striving towards including the most marginalised groups, thereby aiming to aid social cohesion. Some programmes focussed on social justice and the quality of life within local communities (Hepworth and Stitt, 2007:907). A few instances were recorded where a dominant inward focus unfortunately promoted exclusion, with near hostility towards outsiders and an unwillingness to allow them to benefit from social actions (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:906). Bacon (2002:2) described local churches that did initiate actions that surpass the traditional services and programmes, instilling pride, promoting community life, and offering ways of citizen-empowerment, partnering with other organisations to revitalize the surrounding community. Local faith communities responded to social needs prevailing across the diverse cultural, political and religious boundaries.

Research elsewhere in the world showed, for example, that the church assists in combatting poverty (Clarke, 2013:347) and in social development (Ovbiebo, 2013:66). Congregations commit to various HIV/AIDS programmes as volunteers and personnel (Maartens, 2012:52; Hershey, 2016:163); and act as development agents of social justice and addressing inequality (Kamaara, 2000:172). These results show that local churches can act as development agents, but the questions remain if projects such as these are sustainable, empowering and participatory.

De Gruchy (2003:20,22) affirmed that the church is about a "life lived in compassionate service to others, especially the vulnerable," but criticizes approaches taken based on the assumption that people are not able to "do" development themselves. He argued that the actions taken from this mind-set reflect the power inequality that perpetuate poverty, thus does not solve the problem. Swart (2003:406) contributed to the argument by claiming that the church became stuck on focussing on projects, accepting the status quo and socio-economic structures. He claimed that this perspective demands low-income societies to change according to the ideas of rich and developed societies. What is needed, as proposed by Elliot, is a conscientisation process for the rich and poor alike, where the rich develop an awareness of the realities of the poor, brought about by input from the poor themselves, and the poor being empowered and taking charge of their own empowerment (Swart, 2003:415). Swart (2003:409) also discussed the views of Kurien, that the project mindset confine development involvement of churches to a few professionals, while the majority of church members are uninvolved and, in many cases, uneducated about their own potential contributions. This stand in the way of congregations being mobilised, thinking about and addressing needs and problems in their own neighbourhoods.

Both Hepworth & Stitt (2007:897) and Woolcock & Narayan (2000:234) addressed the fact that social capital alone is not enough to alleviate poverty, but that more economic resources should be made available. Existing structures that deter the equitable distribution of resources should be addressed as a main concern, but this falls out of the scope of influence of local churches. What is possible for congregations, is to form partnerships with donor organisations in order to have access to resources that can aid in their development efforts.

Clarke (2006:841,846) discussed the division between the world views of secular donor organisations and the teachings and values of FBOs but argued that such multi-stakeholder partnerships are needed to address global poverty. He also cautions against only building partnerships with main-stream liberal and moderate religious groups, encouraging donors to include other groups to broaden the impact on the poor.

The spiritual and moral values of FBOs, although in contrast with the modern development conventions, add to their contributions and their power to mobilise many people to participate in development actions (Clarke, 2006:845).

2.8 Conclusion

The investigation of the development debate internationally from both outside and inside the church, shows clearly that the church, and specifically local congregations, could and should be involved in community development. However, the way in which engagement takes place, should be investigated to be able to distinguish between development as opposed to welfare and charity actions. This issue will be further discussed in Chapter 3 within the South African context.

Chapter 3: The Involvement of the South African Church in Development

3.1 Introduction

The historic cause of exclusion, inequality and poverty in South Africa was apartheid; therefore, the struggle was to acquire civil and political rights for all (Van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:738). However, obtaining these rights did not result in solving the problems of structural poverty and injustice (Bowers & August, 2004:418; Van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:748). Van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015:732) described a country struggling with issues of poverty, inequality, unemployment and hunger. Approximately 20,2% of the population live below the breadline (Van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:734). Since the start of a democratic South Africa in 1994, the government positioned itself as a development state (Lombard, 2007:295; Swart, 2008:108), with the concepts of development and reconstruction replacing the struggle during apartheid.

This chapter explores the historical and legal framework in South Africa that shaped the development debate and the emergence of a developmental field in the discipline of theology. The potential of congregations to contribute to development is recognised. Research of various South African scholars is used to determine whether the activities of congregations contribute to development. Lastly, the obstacles congregations face in their involvement in development, are explored.

3.2 The Historic and Legal Framework for Welfare and Development

Since early colonisation, missionaries have been involved in supporting the poor and those who have suffered injustices and have also been instrumental in pressuring for laws that provide rights to all people (Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:205-206). The church provided a social net by responding to needs and disasters, establishing schools and institutions to help provide for those in need (Van der Merwe, Swart & Hendriks, 2009:132). Most welfare programmes were run by religious groups and volunteer women's organisations. Frequently that help was only provided within a racial grouping,

such as the Dutch Reformed Church addressing the problem of poor whites from 1886 to well into the 20th century (Van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:732).

Since 1937, with the establishment of the State Department of Social Welfare, most of the state resources were directed towards the white population (Van der Merwe *et al.*, 2009:132). Van der Westhuizen & Swart noted that the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), for instance, aligned with the policies of the National Party (2015:732). Although some churches were intrinsically part of the apartheid regime (Graybill, 1998:110), the church was one of the strongest voices against oppression. Churches and FBOs worked to relief the needs experienced in the black population and contributed to community development (Piper, 2009:58; Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:207).

During 1978 two major policies were made to organise and regulate the social welfare environment – that of the National Welfare Act (Act 100 of 1978) and the Fund-raising Act (Act 107 of 1978), influencing the way churches could raise funds and address the needs around them. Many churches decided to become part of this formalised sector to enable them to receive subsidies for their services. However, many groups with roots in the societies that supported liberation movements and trade unions, did not register and remained working informally (Van der Merwe *et al.*, 2009:132).

With the democratisation of South-Africa, a more inclusive framework of policies for welfare and social development was needed. The state identified an approach of social development rather than social welfare to meet the challenges of poverty (Swart, 2008:129). Regarding welfare policy, post-apartheid South Africa produced the change needed in legislation with the Non-Profit Act (Act 71 of 1997). However, the focus on the legal entity of an organisation in the act brought about difficulties for many FBOs to register because of the informal nature of their organisations and the nature of services rendered (Van der Merwe *et al.*, 2009:133). The White Paper of Social Welfare, 1997, proposed partnerships between the state and civil society as means to address the legacy of poverty and inequality that is the legacy of apartheid. The religious sector is explicitly mentioned as potential partners, especially in the fight against HIV and AIDS (RSA, 1997:8).

Regarding development, the government has recognised that it requires partners to enable the creation of a more self-reliant society that can deliver certain social outcomes (RSA, 2012:27; Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:205; Swart, 2006:347). Kumalo (2009:246-247) mentioned that calls are made to the church to contribute in the development of a participatory democracy, based on the role of the church in the dismantling of apartheid. Churches make good partners in this respect, because most mainstream churches are advocates of human rights, democracy and development. Piper (2009:65-66,72) claimed that churches can keep the government "accountable to principles of good governance and democracy," represent the causes of the people and in this way contribute to a robust democracy. Swart (2005:235; 2006:347) discussed the social trust and potential of churches as agents of social development communities in South Africa, post-1994, based on their wide-spread incidence in society and their capacity to address needs.

The government views poverty alleviation as a critical issue (Van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:734) and has put in place an extensive social wage or grant system to provide relief to many of the most vulnerable people (Lombard, 2007:295; RSA, 2012:353,355). This social security network makes out the lion's share of the social development budget, an unsustainable solution to reaching the social goals of government (Lombard, 2007:295). Van der Westhuizen & Swart (2015:734) are critical of social grants as a solution to reducing poverty, claiming that it can at best be an emergency provision with a possibility of strengthening dependency. Structural poverty should be addressed by confronting inequality and working towards a more equal distribution of resources via social networks and trustful relationships between individuals and communities (Van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:734).

One of the main problems remains the one of social exclusion, which deepened after the fall of apartheid as South Africa became integrated into the global economy (Lombard, 2007:295; Swart, 2008:111). Although the economy grew, it was based on capital intensification, with resultant job losses and growing unemployment. Many people who were disadvantaged by apartheid, are still excluded from the benefits of economic growth and services due to structural poverty (Swart, 2008:116). Vellem

(2013:114-5) argued that the issues of social justice, redistribution and economic sustainability has not been addressed by the macro-economic policies of the new SA. This is confirmed by Swart (2003:406), who stated that the power status quo is not challenged, but that the poor is supported by short- and medium-term projects. He noted that support for radical structural change and the liberation of the poor dwindled in the agenda of the church (Swart, 2003:407).

Within this framework of historic exclusion and inequalities, with a government that has not yet explained the relationship between "welfare" and "development" within its social development agenda (Lombard, 2007:299), the local church must find a place of living out their unique character and vocation in society. De Gruchy (2003:23-25) explained that the gospel calls the church to be involved in social development by translating their faith into works and by restoring the dignity of people, especially those stripped of their worth by apartheid. Bowers Du Toit (2017:1) supported this viewpoint by discussing the emerging focus of the church on the role of local congregations as crucial in being church in the world today. The church still has a mandate as an essential institution to provide solutions and outcomes to civil society (Swart, 2006:354).

Churches play an outstanding role in addressing social needs to such an extent that government has acknowledged their contribution to deliver services and expand inclusion of marginalised groups and individuals (Swart, 2006:347). This is true for national religious bodies, but also for local churches as partners in welfare provision - various studies quoted show that public opinion is that local churches have a positive role to play in communities, because they know what is happening at ground level and understand the needs and challenges of the people (Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:208).

3.3   The Emerging Field of Practical Theology and Development

The church itself has also been discussing its role in society in South Africa. Piper (2009:68) declared that the church today is involved in community because it is God's work and understands problems as social rather than political issues. Though the focus of local churches is on evangelisation - the proclaiming of the gospel of Jesus Christ – activities are coupled with involvement in local and neighbouring communities, the

delivery of services and welfare provision. A growing call is being made to the church from within to be more involved in the social issues of poverty and inequality (De Gruchy, 2003:20; Bowers & August, 2004:417). Christians are called to a life of serving, especially those who are vulnerable. According to Van der Westhuizen & Swart (2015:732-733) the issues of poverty, inequality, unemployment and hunger have an impact on the social services delivered by churches, influencing a need for churches to have a better insight into how their actions on congregational level address the challenges in society. De Gruchy (2003:24) reasoned that a church who understood its vocation, will use the gifts and talents of members to collaborate with God in the world to achieve justice and peace.

Swart (2008:104) mentioned a virtual neglect of the problem of poverty around 2001 in international theological circles in the discipline of practical theology, although there have been numerous calls for the church to become more involved in the issues of poverty and suffering. The realities of South Africa, where the wealthy and upper-middle class elite receive almost 90% of the total income (Swart, 2008:111,117), present a clear picture of structural inequality, poverty and underdevelopment. The various congregations also reflect the exclusion and lack of responsibility towards the vulnerable, raising the question of what an appropriate response would be for role-players. There is an awareness amongst theologians and church leaders that the church needs a contextual approach to engage with the socio-economic sphere; a demand for leadership that is able to deliver solutions to social problems in a secular environment that impacts a large percentage of the population. Swart (2008:109) defined it as a "*theological quest for a far-reaching transformation of the life-situation of the poor members of their society*". De Gruchy (2001:20) motivated the involvement of the church in national reconstruction and social development as "*the Christian faith is not just about intellectual assent, but about a life lived in compassionate service to others, especially the vulnerable*".

From the concern about the church and its engagement in development, there emerged an interdisciplinary collaboration between the fields of theology, development and other sciences (Swart, 2008:118). This led to a focus on people centred development, a

process that involves people and their own efforts to improve their quality of life in a given society or community (De Gruchy, 2003:30; Swart, 2008:119). It incorporates a long-term complex process of involvement instead of a typical one-time event. The principles of participation, empowerment, self-improvement and sustainability become the key to development – for the people by the people, with the role of churches changing from handouts to building the capacities of people to enable them to use their own resources to improve their own livelihoods (De Gruchy, 2003:30; Swart, 2008:120). This poses a challenge to the church politically and strategically, to a culture of inclusion, giving birth to the concept of 'development as transformation' and a way that churches and other FBOs engage effectively and with authenticity, reflecting their identity as faith communities by a holistic approach and according to biblical values (Swart, 2008:121-2).

Bowers Du Toit (2016:3-4) suggested that the theological question of "why" church involvement in development is important, should be answered before "how" it should be done. This indicates a recognition of injustice and power asymmetries embedded in power structures in society, perpetuating poverty. The poor and marginalised should not only be provided with resources and skills but empowered to participate in decision-making in their own development (Bowers Du Toit, 2016:5). This discards charity handouts as means to help people.

3.4 The Developmental Potential of the Local Church

One of the greatest assets of local churches is that they are agents of social capital formation (Swart, 2006:347). In South Africa, there is a recognition that organised religion can play a constructive role in democracy building. Piper (2009:68) explains the bonding and bridging capital of churches that contributes to society to build democracy. The church is one of a few civil organisations with legitimacy to play a constructive role in strengthening the relationship between state and society, supporting the public in their requests and demands to government (Piper, 2009:73,74). Congregations can make a substantial contribution because of the trust the community has in the church (Krige, 2008a:17; Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:209).

On a local level, churches have potentially a strategic role to build social capital and contribute to social development on a community level by addressing moral issues, providing a value system and building cohesion and trust (Swart, 2006:348, Swart & Venter, 2016:452). This is part of the prophetic role of the church (Bowers & August, 2004:417). Local churches can play the role of development agents because of their ties to their communities at a grassroots level (Swart, 2005:325-6) and because of their capacity and experience in providing social service (Swart, 2006:347).

They have the command of considerable resources to contribute to development. They provide a unique function in creating identity and a sense of spiritual wellbeing and self-esteem and for both individuals and communities (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:896). This enables congregations to deliver services and be involved in development on a grassroots level, based on the trust of the community and, at the same time, building more trust based on their actions (Swart, 2006:354).

The church has a history of addressing the physical needs of people. Research has shown that local churches are involved on many levels of society with various projects, for example with the involvement of Pentecostal churches in the Cape Peninsula on HIV/AIDS projects (Burchardt, 2013:628); African Initiated Churches in rural and urban settings throughout South Africa are involved in poverty relief work (Öhlman *et al.*, 2016:5); building networks among local congregations in Tshwane's inner city (Krige, 2008a:23); building capacity and relationship in and from informal townships such as Ivory Park (Kumalo, 2001:16) and Pietermaritzburg (Mbamalu, 2002:61); and various commitments from churches in communities in the Western Cape (Swart, 2005:324). Van der Westhuizen & Swart (2015:473-474) found in their study on the work done by the DRC that congregations provide a variety of services targeting poverty alleviation: from providing food and shelter to distributing clothes, blankets and even providing housing. However, Mangay (2014:5-6) believes that churches overall tend to be self-absorbed in a struggle for survival, and that the inability to understand the injustice of the economy hampers their efforts to impact local problems.

Clearly congregations do address some of the needs surrounding them, but can these activities be defined as development? The challenge of social development is to meet

the criteria of people-centred development when engaging with poverty issues (Swart, 2008:130). Swart and Venter (2016:453) used the classification developed by David Korten of the four generations of intervention by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as a relevant foundation to discuss and evaluate the development actions of the church. Swart (2008:123) explained that this framework can help to challenge the post-apartheid church to move away from traditional charity project-centred approaches to people-centred approaches for development.

The first generation is about humanitarian assistance: directly providing services and resources to meet basic needs with beneficiaries as passive receivers (Bower & August, 2004:419; Swart & Venter, 2016:453). From a human development perspective, these actions do not contribute to development, although it provides some of the means necessary for people to survive circumstances for a set period.

The second generation includes strategies that focus on sustainable development by empowering groups and communities to meet their own needs by developing their capabilities. In this role, NGOs such as congregations, can play a crucial part. Swart (2008:123-125) considered these first two approaches as typical action taken by churches, meeting human needs and building resourcefulness and capacity in the community.

The third generation of development intervention is about changing policies and institutions on different levels, as part of restructuring power relations and inequalities to enable communities at local level to use local resources to finance their own development (Swart & Venter, 2016:454). These actions are outside the scope of local congregations because of a bigger focus on national level (Swart, 2008:126), though the church can be an important partner of government at various levels.

Swart & Venter (2000:454) also discussed a fourth generation of development, which is about mobilising people to people-centred development: sharing a vision, equipping and activating people to become involved and building networks for information to be disseminated. Swart (2008:126) explained that Korten added category four as a strategic step in raising awareness of people-centred development to mobilise volunteers on a national and global scale.

According to Swart (2008:126), the second generation of capacity-building is of critical value because of the contribution to initiatives that are self-reliant, and therefore sustainable in the long term. The third and fourth approaches are complementary to the first two approaches as more efficient strategies for communities reaching the aims of people-centred development. The fourth generation of activities (Swart, 2008:127) is a social movement based on values and ideas, with large-scale transformation of the social environment in mind as various issues overlap and strengthen each other towards people-centred and sustainable development. People themselves are the owners of change during these processes. Swart (2008:127-128) expected churches to be able to make a valuable contribution here because of their potential in using ideas, relationships and values to bring about change in social environments. Churches have the capacity to cross boundaries and cultures, to mobilise volunteers - with the trust of the community - to serve those in need, working in partnership with government or businesses if needed.

When the involvement of the church in the community is evaluated, most of the activities can be categorised as being first generation (Bowers Du Toit, 2016:3). The danger of this approach can be that power remains in the hands of those who have, emphasizing the differences between those who have and those who do not. According to Kumalo (2001:10), most of the efforts of churches to help those in need, do not qualify as development. The findings of Bowers-Du Toit (2012:212,213) affirmed this conclusion, showing that the bulk of most congregations' activities are soup kitchens, distribution of food and clothing, relief work aiming to address the symptoms of poverty and do not qualify as development. These evaluations are backed by Swart and Venter (2016:456), who claimed that civil society organisations, churches included, are still busy with welfare and community-based work, such as feeding schemes, homes for the elderly, care for street children, prostitutes and AIDS victims. Some activities are more sustainable like working with other congregation, building skills, working together to address needs, moving into the second category of building capacity. However, it appears as if involvement is restricted because of an apparently limited capacity and vision for social involvement (Swart & Venter, 2016:457,479).

Many of the actions of the church can be classified as paternalistic behaviour, with people as passive recipients resulting in dependency (Bowers & August, 2004:422). Kumalo (2001:112-113) confirmed this, claiming that handouts cost the dignity of people. Development creates a sense of self-worth and empowerment away from dependency. De Gruchy (2003:22) lamented the mindset of doing for others as if they cannot do anything. The agency of the poor should be acknowledged, as poor people have always been able to plan, adjust and survive.

Swart (2006:32) stated that the potential of greater church involvement in development-orientated activities exists, but this needs to be unlocked. For the church to function as a development agency, and not as a welfare organisation, it should invest with greater purpose in its traditional core activities (Krige, 2008a:32). This approach would build social capital, leading to (1) the formation of more extensive relationships based on investing in people rather than projects, and (2) wider-ranging development actions (Swart, 2006:370). To realise this, a congregation should see itself as a social entrepreneur that *"…can develop capacity through relevant interventions and partnerships and can add value and meet the needs of groups who have been failed by previous government attempts in social redress*" (Urban, 2015:292). In this sense, a church can practise social entrepreneurship by creating social value, taking advantage of opportunities to create that value by innovation as well as being resourceful in with scarce resources to achieve a goal (Peredo & McLean, 2006:64).

In the research of Swart (2006:365) in Paarl and George, findings indicate that many local congregations work in conjunction with other congregation or NGOs to render their services. Many of these services start with initiatives from outside the community, with congregations' involvement restricted to supporting and contributing. Most of these actions can be categorised as immediate relief. Swart concludes that churches in these communities probably do not possess the capacity to address problems by driving development.

Although this study is about the role of local congregations in community development, it should also be mentioned that local congregations have a role to play in fourth

generation development issues, for example addressing corruption. Local congregations have local influence and can hold local people and institutions accountable. Resane (2017:10) believes that churches can be proactive and prophetic by confronting false worldviews and holding on to biblical truths.

3.5 Obstacles to Congregations Being Developmental Agents

From the literature studied, three main obstacles emerged that stand in the way of local congregations to be development agents, namely: a charity mindset in engaging with the poor; the legacy of apartheid and power structures; and lastly, the problems experienced in partnerships. Each of these need to be addressed for local congregations to start realising their roles as development agents.

3.5.1 Facilitating a New Paradigm towards Development

Various researchers identified the need for the church to find a new paradigm of engaging with the problems experienced by society, doing away with a dualistic spiritualisation of the gospel that does not address problems in the physical realm (Bowers & August, 2004:418). Bowers-Du Toit (2012:214) propagated a paradigm shift in theology because the theology of the church and the congregation shapes the way people think and act and addresses the issues of power and powerlessness (Bowers Du Toit, 2016:1). The church needs to be engaged with society in a new way, based on a paradigm of people-centred development, choosing intentionally to move away from conventional welfare practises. Swart (2003:406) asked if the way churches are involved in development reflects the theological debate on development. He indicated a divide between theory and practice – the role of the church in development should be evaluated to bridge progressive thinking and doing at a local level (Swart, 2003:417).

For local congregations to bridge the divide between theory and practice, congregations' approach should change from social welfare to one of community development: to address problems by empowerment, creating capabilities to reach a point of self-reliance and participation, allowing the poor to create a vision for their future and achieve freedom as individuals (De Gruchy, 2003:25-28; Bowers & August, 2004:422; Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:213). To enable the leaders and laity of congregations

to understand and practise this, a possible solution would be for them to go to workshops to understand the biblical base for development so that the focus of preaching and acting can change (Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:214). Activities that address immediate needs are crucial to people, but do not lead to empowerment, participation and freedom and they are not sustainable. Bradley (2009:101) defined "good practice" as development where the needs of the local community, as experienced by them, are addressed and the process is driven based on the relationship between the community and agents. Groups address problems in a self-reliant and concerted effort where the people themselves provide the solutions to social problems in the community.

As a crucial step towards promoting development, South African churches should be critical towards the conventional economic paradigm that created inequalities and poverty and undermined the ideals of people-centred development (Bowers & August, 2004:418; Swart, 2008:134). Vellem (2013:118-119) accused the church of believing too much in the state and not critically analysing the decisions of economists and condoning the shift of the current government from seeking freedom and socialism for the benefit of all, to embracing an excluding capitalistic economic system. At the same time development should not be viewed as a problem experienced by poor people and poor communities, but as a problem experienced by the rich, who want to preserve the current economic system (Swart, 2008:134). Rich churches and persons are custodians of the socio-economic system that hamper the development of poor communities. Swart (2008:134-135) proposed a double movement where the rich and privileged also change, reaching out to the poor to assist them with self-discovery and ultimately reaching their full potential, but simultaneously embracing spiritual, economic and social renewal. If the church does not acknowledge injustice as the root of inequality and poverty, it is difficult to move on to address the situation efficiently (Bowers Du Toit, 2017:2).

It is crucial that the church should once again mobilise members (laity) to be involved in civil life, especially as congregations do have social capital in the form of trust – the trust of its community and networks to help organise society (Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:209). Bowers and August (2004:421) stated that although there are around 33 000 faith

communities, most of the development work is being done by mission agencies or para-church groups. This is affirmed by Swart (2006:354), whose findings suggested that although congregations may inspire voluntary action, most of the outreach come from FBOs and NGOs. Bowers Du Toit (2017:2-4) blamed it on the lack of professionalised capacity in congregations, indicating that members of congregations are not empowered and mobilised to be part of development at a grassroots level, with lay people being overwhelmed by the challenges of poverty and choosing to disengage. Christians should be able to live out their beliefs and calling, contribute to the welfare of the community, seeking justice, and speaking for the marginalised (Van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:470,472). The contributions of congregations are dependent on their capacity, organisational structure and the resources available such as specialist knowledge (Van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:741). Bowers Du Toit (2017:3) considered wealthier congregations as more inclined to offer their members' professional services in asset-based community development. The commitment of congregational members as active participants influences sustainability and determine if strategies can be successful in the long term.

Swart (2003:405,414) stated that national initiatives from religious organisations in areas of development has become exclusively focused on immediate welfare and short- and medium-term projects, and that the church focusses on projects instead of development. He promoted a process of "*conscientisation*", where the members of the church become aware of the "*nature and extent of the major social problems in the communities as well as the most pertinent social needs identified by members of the communities themselves*" (Swart, 2005:333-334). Swart (2006:369) determined that the people who are the most exposed to social problems, generate the most successful action to address those needs. This is the beginning of mobilising and empowering people towards solving problems in a sustainable way, using their own capacities and strengths. Bowers Du Toit (2017:5) discussed congregations that help their laity to discover their biases, preach about issues and organise excursion to expose members to people in need and in the process mobilise members of the congregation for development.

Paternalistic ideas and behaviour should be identified and corrected. Such an approach is biased and brings destruction to traditional communities (Swart, 2003:414). De Gruchy (2003:23,28) stated that an assumption that poor people are not able to help themselves, reflect and reinforce skewed power relations (Bowers & August, 2004:419). Assumptions like this lead to a relationship between poor, needy people with lots of problems, and non-poor providers of services with lots of solutions, thereby stripping dignity and confidence from vulnerable people. This creates a culture of entitlement and dependency, with people unable to contribute to development because of their poverty mindset (Bowers Du Toit, 2017:4). Swart (2003:414) explained how the poor becomes consumers of welfare rather than producers of their own solutions, which creates dependency and a sense of helplessness, instead of when they are empowered to discover their vocation and have the freedom to shape their own development and vision for the future (De Gruchy, 2003:31). Community development that draws from the capabilities, resources and capacity of the people are the policies and activities that are successful (De Gruchy, 2003:31). Van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015:737) proposed that actions should be participatory to include the viewpoints of the poor, instead of "doing development" and creating passive recipients (Bowers & August, 2004:419).

Bowers-Du Toit (2012:209) and Van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015:470) discussed potential roles of the church - moral formation and values, counselling, relief work, bridging social gaps and programmes and strategies to address needs. Swart (2008:133) mentioned empowering strategies and capacity building such as leadership training, literacy and adult education, entrepreneurship and skills development, financial training, employment creation, justice and reconciliation. Local churches are the starting point – instead of reaching out to others, congregations must become centres where others are invited to participate in churches' renewal (Swart, 2003:422). Previously marginalised should be given the opportunity to participate in holistic activities that include economic, social and spiritual renewal. The church is a formidable tool of empowerment (Swart, 2003:415). It can help people understand the reasons behind poverty and ways to adapt their behaviour in order to change their circumstances to address specific problems (Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:213). This may include forming partnerships with other congregations or FBOs, e.g. a partnership

between a wealthy white congregation and poor, previously disadvantaged congregation (Bowers Du Toit, 2017:5).

Bowers & August (2004:417) challenged the church to respond to communities' needs, arguing that the church has still not reached maximum potential in responding to the challenges in society. They affirmed that churches should be prophetic, voicing ethics, morality and social concern, serving holistically, bringing about change and giving hope. Holistic development will break down the division between poor and rich if people become involved rather than giving and receiving handouts (Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:213). De Gruchy (2003:31-33) advised that all development action should be based on the assets in the community, internally focused and built on relationships. He proposed the use of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework to understand poverty and the assets available within the community, such as social capital, natural capital, physical capital and financial capital. The development action decided upon based on this information will "focus on the agency and assets of the poor" (De Gruchy, 2003:33) and will be holistic, empowering and sustainable.

3.5.2 The Legacy of Apartheid and Power Structures

Churches have played a major role in history to shift social norms and being instrumental in the establishment of social policies on a national level. One example of the indispensable role of the church in South Africa was, under the leadership of erstwhile Archbishop Desmond Tutu, with the mobilisation of international pressure on the apartheid regime (World Economic Forum, 2013:23), which led to the dismantling of apartheid and giving rise to a fledgling democratic South Africa.

The legacy of apartheid is the pervading existence of communities that are racially divided (Bowers & August, 2004:420; RSA, 2012:25; Bowers Du Toit, 2016:1). In South Africa many churches were part of the apartheid system (Graybill, 1998:110), while others were instrumental in bringing apartheid to a fall (Shore & Klein, 2006:310, Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:205). This created internal tension in the church (Clark, 2011:349), where the legacy of apartheid is still apparent in the difficulty to realise restoration of dignity, building relationships and restitution across racial lines (Bowers-

Du Toit, 2012:210). The church has a responsibility to address inequality, structural injustices, to share resources and help those oppressed.

Studies have shown that church leaders understand that the church has a crucial role to play, but that some denominations still struggle to erase racial lines (Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:210). Although partnerships exist between churches, this is apparently not taking place on congregational level. This was also discovered by Swart (2006:370), reflecting that when activities and programmes of congregations are critically evaluated, there is no evidence that they contribute to strategic activities that build relationships, linking groups across boundaries. Issues of power and paternalism should also be given attention (Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:211). Bowers & August (2004:419) mention that various studies found that richer congregations prefer to give donations rather than becoming involved, preserving the status quo rather than development and empowerment of the poor. There is a need for the development of theologies compatible with community development.

The frequently paternalistic involvement across racial boundaries might even lead to deeper division (Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:213). Bowers Du Toit (2016:2) conceded that the concept of "neighbour" had not changed much since the fall of apartheid. She reported in her findings that socio-economic prejudices, the superiority complex of some wealthy people and the time constraint of middle- and upper-class people as hindrances to people being involved in development (Bowers Du Toit, 2017:3,4). Bowers and August (2004:419) interpreted the incidence of rich congregations giving money and emergency rations to poor people as a continuation of inequality, with rich people feeding on their power, while the dependency of the poor is strengthened. The concept of empowering people is experienced as a political action because it changes power relations. This perception is reinforced by Vellum (2013:118), arguing that when apartheid fell, so did the involvement of many Christians in addressing social and economic injustices.

Swart (2003:413) also indicates that many of the projects run by churches are based on the modernisation paradigm, an inherent racist approach. The use of this approach by churches is driven by a need to produce results and adopting culture from the secular world that focus on economic growth. He promotes the idea that development should

begin with the conversion of the rich and powerful (Swart, 2003:416), and that development is a problem of both rich and poor, beginning with the need for the rich to change (Swart, 2003:418). The issues of inequality, restitution and justice is still being debated inside and outside the church (Bowers-Du Toit, 2012; Bowers Du Toit & Nkomo, 2014; Swart, Rocher, Green & Erasmus, 2010).

Within the context of bridging the divides erected during apartheid, Bowers and August (2004:423-425) proposed several models of collaboration that will strengthen development efforts. An inter-congregational model can offer a pool of professional expertise and technical service from a local, wealthy congregation to a poor congregation. This will enhance cross pollination of skills and capacity building. A servant-partnership model between a local congregation and para-church organisation promote redistribution of financial, technical and material resources as a foundation for development action. There has been calls for a cross-sectoral type of partnership within cities that partner local congregations of all denominations along with other institutions to address the needs of the community (Bowers & August, 2004:424).

3.5.3 The Challenge of Partnerships

In recognition of the trust of civil society in the church, the church has been identified as a potential partner by governments, international organisations (World Economic Forum, 2013:12) and other organisations and institutions as potential partners in the effort to address poverty, inequality, as distributors of social services and contributors to development. In South Africa the government has recognised that it requires partners to enable the creation of a more self-reliant society that can deliver certain social outcomes (Ministry of Welfare and Population Development, 1997:8; RSA, 2012:27, 313,475).

Swart & Venter (2000:450) mentioned a global development discourse that proposed that NGOs, such as local churches, engage with government and development agencies to influence policies and provide social services. Calls like this do not accommodate the identity, values and ethics of churches (Van der Merwe, Swart & Hendriks, 2009:137). Although the state has earmarked certain outcomes for social development, many local congregations have other priorities. As organisations that are

faith-based, spiritual matters are a priority with an accompanying focus on the spiritual nurturing of people. The scripture- and value-based approach of churches might not fit into the spiritual neutral approach of the state. Churches have their own identity and convictions according to which they become involved in their communities and address needs as they see fit (Van der Merwe *et al.*, 2009:134), often starting with spiritual needs before social and developmental needs.

Regarding partnerships with government, local congregations have expressed their fears of being forced into programmes that goes against their values (Bowers & August, 2004), or keeping their independence and autonomy (Van der Merwe *et al.,* 2009:125; Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:211) and be a prophetic voice when in partnership with others to address issues. Because of the difference in interests between state and church and a lack of capacity to engage, local congregations frequently prefer not to engage with government because of a lack of capacity to negotiate between their interests and the requirements of government (Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:212). Swart (2008:132) contributed to this argument by stating that the church must take a moral stance against the neo-liberal policy of government and its obstruction of the critical church dialogue on faith-based development. At the same time, churches should contribute to the government's social development agenda by using their social capital to address poverty, social exclusion, economic privilege and division in civil society (Swart, 2008:132-133).

While international findings showed that churches frequently find it difficult to work with other churches (Bowers & August, 2004:423), Van der Westhuizen & Swart (2015:474) remarked that successful partnerships were mainly formed between faith-based - and non-governmental organisations. Wealthier congregations frequently partner with NGOs, providing the financial resources while the NGO provide the professional service. Within such a partnership, especially with poor congregations, there is the potential disempowerment of the congregation in terms of the ownership of activities (Bowers Du Toit, 2017:3-4).

The possibility exists that the formation of partnerships and networks could become the focus of activity instead of development (Van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:749). The research of Swart (2006:354) showed that these networks of cooperation and

partnerships find it difficult to engage in more than conventional activities of charity and immediate relief.

Outside donors call for the separation of spiritual and development action, a distinction that the church does not make. Even the physical separation of development space cannot be achieved because many congregations only have one structure available (Clarke, 2013:343; Őhlmann *et al.*, 2016:6). Churches adopt a holistic approach – meeting spiritual, economic and social needs at the same time (Clarke, 2013:348; Őhlmann *et al.*, 2016:5). This is not always acceptable to partners.

The issues of donorship, power and paternalism should also be addressed. Although faith shape the identity and method of driving development, donors place restrictions that must be adhered to by recipients (Bradley, 2009:102). Donors do not always understand that in indigenous, structurally informal churches, spiritual - and developmental activities cannot be separated, restricting these groups' access to funding (Őhlmann *et al.,* 2016:10). There is a perception that organisations with a Kingdom agenda (evangelistic focus) might marginalise and exclude some people even more (Bradley, 2009:104), something that every congregation must address. Another concern is that outside interference from donors, applying pressure for the scaling up of activities or to change the way things are done, is because of a lack of understanding the local context of values and capacity of the organisation (Bradley, 2009:107; Őhlmann *et al.*, 2016:10; Swart & Venter, 2016:451). Churches are under pressure to drive projects instead of holistic development. The proposal is made by Őhlmann *et al.* (2016:10-11) that churches should co-finance all development to strengthen their agency and ownership.

Because of the informal nature of many of the services provided by local congregations without formal structures and programmes (Van der Merwe *et al.,* 2009:134; Őhlmann *et al.,* 2016:6), coupled with the fact that much of the work is done by volunteers, many local congregations provide much needed services without support or financial assistance from outside. This is especially true for African Initiated Churches (AIC). Many of these churches keep on listening to the voice of the vulnerable, rally their

assets and agency to combat poverty and underdevelopment, while being true to their prophetic vocation and value system (Őhlmann *et al.,* 2016:1).

3.6   Conclusion

From the research done in South Africa, it can be verified that the church on a local level needs to create an understanding of development and their own possible contribution, after acknowledging the injustices of the past. Coming to terms and accessing the influence of the former way of community involvement, will shape future activities to be just, participatory and human-centred.

Moving from a national to a local level, the next chapter will explore the findings of some research done within the Mangaung metropolitan area, in an effort to understand how the local churches view their role in society and how they engage with the issues of development.

Chapter 4: The Involvement of Mangaung Churches in Development

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter attention is moved from national to the local level of Mangaung. It includes a short explanation of the establishment of the towns of Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu. The results of research done locally are discussed, with attention to the challenges that local churches experience in their involvement in development. Lastly, some recommendations are made to transform congregations into community development agents.

The Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality consists of an area of 9 886km² that include Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu, as well as the small towns of Dewetsdorp, Soutpan, Van Stadensrus and Wepener (Municipalities of South Africa, 2018). The population is around 788 000 people (Statistics South Africa, 2018:10), with an unemployment rate of 27,7% and a youth unemployment rate of 37,2% (Statistics SA, 2019). The number of people living in poverty in the metropolitan area has grown substantially since the mid-1990's (Marais, Ntema, Sigenu, Lenka, & Cloete, 2015:10).

As everywhere else in South Africa, the policies of the Apartheid regime influenced the physical environment of the metropole with a developed business district in Bloemfontein surrounded by affluent neighbourhoods. The policies of influx control and self-determination resulted in a large black settlement or 'location' just east of the city, peri-urban Thaba Nchu as part of the 'homeland' system and Botshabelo as a catchment area for 'unwanted' people moving to urban areas (Smith and Booysen, 1982:21-24; Verster, 1996:410; Marais *et al.*, 2015:2) (See Figure 1). These areas were characterised physically by poor infrastructure and services, with little economic development and employment opportunities. Although much has been done by government to provide infrastructure over the past two decades, there is little new economic development and job creation in Thaba Nchu and especially Botshabelo (Marais *et al.*, 2015:18).

With 89,3% of the population in the Free State province identifying themselves as Christian (Statistics South Africa, 2018:22), and with a large number of diverse of

churches in Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu, the church is in the position to make an impact on society in every area.

4.2 Expectations Toward the Church

The church has been part of civil life since the British established the town of Bloemfontein in 1846. By 1850 there were active congregations of the Dutch Reformed, Anglican, Roman Catholic and Wesleyan churches. One of the lasting legacies of their initiative and civil involvement was the establishment of the early schools in the city, namely St. Andrews, St. Michaels, Grey College, Eunice and the Wesleyan school (South African History Online [SAHO], 2018). The Wesleyan Church, with its accompanying school, is also known as the birthplace of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912, an example of how the physical infrastructure of the church can provide space for civil activities (Haasbroek, 2002:149; Clarke, 2013:342).

Verster has done extensive research from a missiological perspective within the poor informal settlements on the eastern side of Bloemfontein. The findings of his research highlighted a high expectation toward church for projects that bring relief to the people both inside and outside the church (Verster, 2011:5-7). These expectations varied from spiritual guidance and support to social issues such as family matters, poverty, unemployment, alcoholism and teen pregnancies, but also to be a bringer of hope, faith and justice. This affirms the holistic approach of the church in development (Verster, 1996:418,420; Verster, 2011:6).

There is an expectation from local government towards churches to contribute to the wellbeing of the larger society. This was expressed by a former mayor, who had convened Christian leadership and asked the local church to reclaim their places in society (Mangaung Metro Municipality, 2013:1). The expectation towards the church was to bridge the divide between local government and communities due to their local knowledge of social situations. The church should also assist in the transformation of society and restoring moral fibre, the lack of aforementioned leading to rising crime levels and violence. This expectation of the church to serve as a bridge between

government and community is affirmed by Tshobeka and Masson (2017:20195), who accentuated the overlapping goals of government and the church in alleviating poverty.

Figure 1: A Map of Mangaung Metropolitan Area (Municipalities of South Africa, 2018)

4.3 The Role of Local Churches in Development in Mangaung

Research in the squatter camps and other poverty-stricken areas in the eastern parts of Mangaung, indicated a belief that the church should lead people to Christ and be a haven for the poor (Verster, 1996:416). It should be involved in the provision of physical needs, with anticipation of more projects launched to provide food, jobs and money (Verster, 2012:5-7). Although many of the projects currently in place address basic

needs, some activities are focussed on empowering people (Verster, 2012:38). The living conditions and extreme challenges experienced by people living in poverty require one to ask the question: can the poor be empowered to have a new vision and be involved in their own circumstances to bring about change and a better life (Verster, 2002:262)? Can people be helped towards self-reliance and livelihood strategies (Verster, 2011:7-8)? These questions relating to people-centred development and participation, lie at the heart of community development.

As part of the vision of churches to act as transformation agents and contribute to community transformation in Mangaung, a study was commissioned by the International Institute for Development and Ethics (IIDE) in 2005. The concept "transformation" was used instead of development, defined by an "*emphasis on human beings and their ability to transform the political, social, economic and political spheres, both on a personal and societal level*" (IIDE, 2005:163). This is a holistic approach that includes the spiritual dimension instead of only social, economic and political ways of impacting society (IIDE, 2005:164).

Several leaders of FBOs took part in the study, which included local congregations and various Christian initiatives (IIDE, 2005: xvi). The aim of the study was to identify and analyse good practises that will enable the transformation of institutions itself and their communities (IIDE, 2005:4). Various definitions of the concept of transformation were used, including one of Denison that stated *"… (transformation) is an ongoing process of mobilising the whole church in a given geographical area to strategically focus its resources on reaching the whole city with the whole gospel, resulting in the transformation of the city and all its societies*" (IIDE, 2005:12). These references to 'whole church' and 'geographical area' as well as the mentioning of church-based community development as one of the focus areas of the study (IIDE, 2005:12,16), is relevant to this research where the understanding of local churches' role as potential development agents and the realising of it, is probed.

Although the scope of the IIDE research was much wider, there are intersecting criteria that is relevant to this study, such as a focus on community and its needs; the building

of bridges and crossing of divides; a change of mindsets; no dual lifestyles; a quest for justice; being a prophetic voice; social action; empowerment and mentorship; inclusivity; a holistic approach; human resource development; training, equipping and skills development; gifts, calling and passion; grass-roots ownership; participation; moving away from dependency to self-reliance; sustainability; the carriers of vision; relationship and doing things together; and creating opportunities for the disadvantaged (IIDE, 2005:14,15).

The study revealed that of the 34 cases that were researched, only nine were involved in development and community empowerment, with the rest doing 'mercy' or charity work (IIDE, 2005:47). This approach contributes to a culture of dependency, lacking in addressing spiritual, physical and social needs characteristic of a holistic approach (IIDE, 2005:47). In contrast to this tactic the spiritual approach was also used, a belief that socio-economic problems will disappear once spiritual breakthrough take place (IIDE, 2005:48). A critique against the way many initiatives were driven by FBOs in Mangaung, was that it tended to be top down and did not allow participation and ownership, with emerging issues relating to sustainability and empowerment (IIDE, 2005:41). This was found to be especially true where white people were involved in community-based projects – although they were involved because of their passion, their need for speedy results did not allow for the more time-consuming process of participation by and ownership of the local community, continuing the dependency paradigm (IIDE:2005:51).

Other aspects that were identified relating to transformational agents were passion and vision; mentorship; and the need for leadership that "*can keep track of rapidly changing political, economic and social context, infused by global processes*" (IIDE, 2005:42-43). Leaders should be able to influence their members to move from being consumers to producers, break dependency mindsets and be able to serve and mentor leaders in the governing and business spheres. The issue of respect towards all groups in our diverse nation was also mentioned (IIDE, 2005:43). Attention was also given to inclusivity – to include women and youth in decision-making processes, and the deployment of retired

professional laity as volunteers with the expertise to assist and train others (IIDE, 2005:44).

4.4 Challenges of Local Churches as Agents of Community Development

From the findings of studies completed in Mangaung, the challenges congregations face can be grouped into three main categories. The first challenge the church has to overcome in order to play a role in community development is that of the church, and leaders in the church, to understand that they can and should play a role in community development (See Chapter 3). Krige (2008b:172) found that the majority of churches do not know what church-based community development is and that leaders are not equipped with a vision to implement development. He explained that most churches have a dualistic mindset, focusing on spiritual things whilst waiting for development to be done to them (2008b:157,172). The belief exists that the church only has to pray for change without doing anything themselves to bring about change (IIDE, 2005:48). A conclusion of the IIDE study was that there is a lack of transformational agents available in Mangaung (IIDE, 2005:1,67).

Linked to the understanding of their potential role as development agents, is for local congregations to use the physical structures of the church as a community centre (Flint *et al.*, 2002:3; Clarke, 2013:342.). Clarke stated that churches' premises are vital sites for civic engagement in local communities, based on his research in the developing world (2013:342). He explained that although church leaders do not have to facilitate all the community development initiatives, the place and identity of the church in the community contributes to development activities (Clarke, 2013:344). This concept presents two different problems: most churches' infrastructure is under-utilised during the week (Krige, 2008b:173) and that most of the independent and initiated churches in the townships have partial structures or no structures at all (Verster, 2011:5,7; 2012:28). Without a physical presence in the community, it is challenging for a congregation to provide social services.

A second concern centres around the capability and capacity of congregations, coupled with a spirit of dependency. Various national studies found that a lack of capacity in congregations, restricts the developmental role congregations can play in communities (See Chapter 3). This is affirmed by Krige (2008b:172) and the research done by the IIDE, summed up as a lack of institutional and human capacity (2005:45). The colonial and apartheid history of South Africa played a major role in creating a legacy of white imperialism, keeping power and leadership in white hands, thereby producing a lack of self-belief, self-esteem and confidence, resulting in a dependency syndrome (Manyake-Boshielo, 2017:4; Pali, 2017:3). Pali documented behaviour of mission churches seeking financial and ministerial assistance, as encouraged by regional councils, instead of acting in independence (2017:3). Manyake-Boshielo corroborated this dependency, quoting an African saying, "*sehlare sa Mosotho ke lekgowa*" - the answer for a black person is a white person (2017:4). Krige argued that one of the greatest crimes of apartheid was the creation of a spirit of dependency, never promoting self-reliance (2008b:157). This dependency influences many leaders and members of congregations which, combined with little capability and capacity, creates a church without hope to tackle the enormous challenges surrounding them.

Thirdly, financial constraints play a detrimental role. The racial policies of the past created inequalities between rich and poor congregations (Krige, 2008b:174). Within the townships, congregations and their members are in a daily struggle for survival, with little financial resources available to use for development purposes. The competition for resources from government or other donors is great for those churches that have programs that meet the requirements (Krige, 2008b:157).

## 4.5 Recommendations from Previous Research Towards Transforming Congregations into Community Development Agents

To address se problem of local congregations understanding their potential role as development agents, Krige stated that congregations need to change from an inward to an outward focus to increase impact and need to have a holistic approach to be transformed into community-based resource centres (2008b:166,171). Pali affirmed this,

proposing a holistic approach with transformational leadership to be the catalysts that transforms understanding and actions of the church to impact the community spiritually and socially (2017:11). A holistic approach combines spiritual and socio-economic approaches, in an effort to change and impact the environment (Krige, 2008b:164).

Krige suggested that congregations need a revelation of God's heart for people, changing their own hearts and lifestyles to one of compassion and sacrifice for others (2008b:174). An understanding of development theory and application should be built, with the members of congregations available and willing to become involved in development activities. He maintained that the church needs to see the importance of working for the transformation of the community into a community in line with God's purpose, suggesting a *"live among them, learn from them, love them, start with what they know, and build on what they have"* approach (Krige, 2008b:174). To reach this place of influence and effective impact, there are no quick fixes. What is needed, is time and hard work; leadership; good governance; the capacity to do the work needed to be done; networking; partnerships with institutions outside the congregation; vision; and spiritual guidance from the Holy Spirit (Krige, 2008b:175). Each congregation will have a unique approach according to their vision, gifting, capacity and capabilities, building an appropriate network to reach their goals and influencing the community increasingly (See Fig. 2).

Once a congregation understands the role they can play, they should make use of their physical infrastructure as a community centre, open seven days a week, with members involved in serving all in need, using their skills, time and finances to provide physical assistance, giving hope and restoring dignity (Krige, 2008b:167). The church mobilises its members by training and mentoring, empowering them to act, a bottom-up approach of development that can be interpreted as second-generation development activities (Krige, 2008b:161,177). Actions like this will restore the credibility of the church. Krige affirmed the need of the church to transform the community from consumers into producers, breaking the culture of dependence (2008b:157). The key to sustainable community-based development is mentorship and relationship (Krige, 2008b:157). This can be translated as the Christian concepts of discipleship and being the body of Christ.
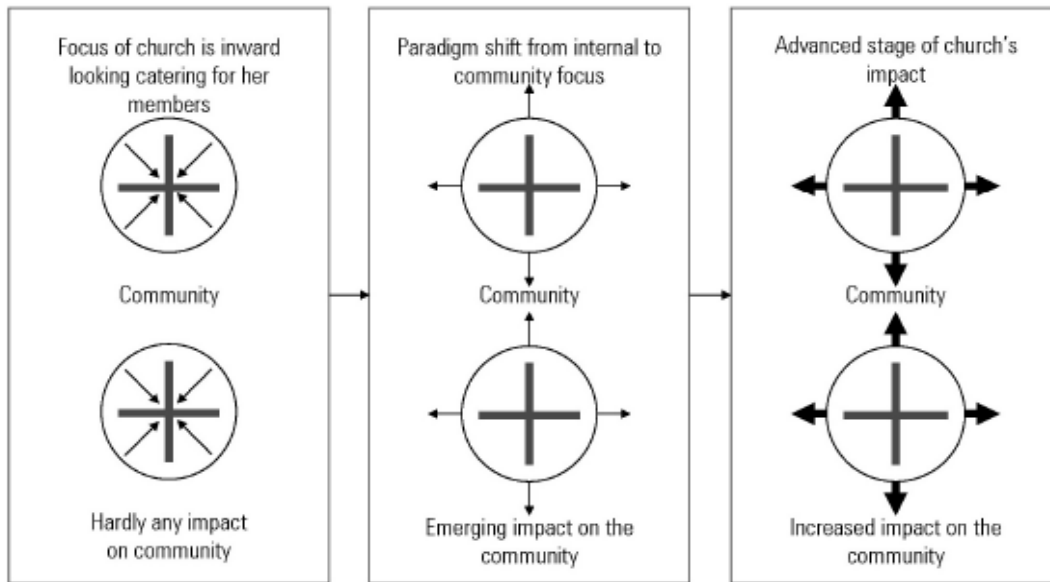
Figure 2: Phases of local congregations influencing the community (Source: Krige, 2008b:172)

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For congregations to be able to move beyond charity, they should make a distinction between the basic needs of a family such as food and shelter, and those of the community such as injustice, inequality and moral decay (Krige, 2008b:168). To address the community issues, churches need to work in partnership with other congregations and institutions to pool resources and knowledge in order to address issues in a bottom-up, people-first approach. This can be beneficial for many congregations in the townships, where many leaders are self-appointed with little leadership training (Krige, 2008b:157).

Research has shown that poor congregations are more willing to become involved in community development and poverty alleviation that rich congregations (Krige, 2008b:174). The racial legacy resulted in inequalities and physical distance, which make it easier for congregations not to become involved. Krige propose a "twinning" or partnering of congregations, building a bridge between two congregations, where the

richer and institutionally advanced church contributes resources to a poor church (Krige, 2008b:174). It is critical that all activity should be building on what the poor church has available, empowering them to determine the agenda, using their skills, including youth and women, who are good assets in community transformation and governance (Krige, 2008b:158,176). The rich church must develop a sensitive approach, building quality relationships, allowing a high level of local ownership (Krige 2008b:169,176). The IIDE found that white people, although they had good intentions, frequently sabotaged the community development processes of empowerment and ownership by taking initiative and focus on fast results and outcomes, without allowing the community to spend enough time and build the necessary capacity and relationships (IIDE, 2005:53). These actions perpetuate the status quo of dependency. Krige proposed an approach of first looking and listening before acting (2008b:176).

For churches to be involved in third generation development, holding the municipality accountable for service delivery and practices of good governance, a representative forum should be established to be the platform for the prophetic voice of the church (IIDE 2005:65; Krige, 2008b:177). The focus of the church must be on social justice, peace and reconciliation.

In all these recommendations, leadership is crucial. Krige maintains that charismatic leadership is needed to mobilise the church, a new breed of leadership that can cope with the changing civil society; have the capabilities of management and entrepreneurial skill to lead a congregation in addressing needs in a sustainable, participatory way; empowering, equipping and mobilising members of the congregation to live out the vision of a church that exists to serve the community (Krige, 2008b:157,176).

4.6   Conclusion

The literature study completed on the role of churches in Mangaung show communities in dire need, with a church that has begun to understand their potential to contribute in development, but not necessarily living out that potential. The next chapter will discuss the information gleaned from the interviews with various congregational leaders to determine whether local churches have been able to overcome challenges and be transformed into community development agents.

Chapter 5: Findings, Analysis and Interpretation:

5.1 Introduction

Information was gathered through in-depth interviews with nine leaders of local congregations situated in the Mangaung Metropolitan area, in order to answer the research question of how local churches understand their social responsibility and role in development in the community. The interviews were open, not just restricted to a set of questions, with a list of potential pointers to make sure that all the relevant topics were covered during discussions (Attached as Addendum C: Potential pointers for the unstructured interviews). The information was analysed according to the conceptual framework of the study and themes from the literature study.

This chapter includes a brief description of each congregation and their involvement in the community. The information gathered from the interviews are presented, thereafter also analysed and interpreted.

5.2 A Brief Description of the Participating Congregations

The congregations included in this study are situated in various locations across the metropolitan area, from affluent neighbourhoods, inner city areas, township developments and peri-urban areas. The inclusion of the latter was purposefully done because the development in these areas suffered the most from apartheid policies. Theologically, the churches ranged from Orthodox (historical), Evangelical, Pentecostal to Charismatic churches, with most associated with national and international denominations. The size of the congregations also varied in terms of the number of members, as did the structure of the leadership, with some churches headed by a single person while others were managed by a team of leaders. The interviewees in such cases were mostly a senior leader of the congregation or the person in charge of interactions between the congregation and the community.

The ages of the participants varied, as did the length of time they had been involved in their congregations. Only one woman was interviewed as a pastor of a congregation, while the wife of another leader also contributed during the interview with her husband. Yet another pastor took the trouble to arrange for the presence of a female volunteer

who provided a wealth of information on the involvement of their congregation in the community.

The inclusion of congregations was determined by the framework as determined in Chapter 1 of three local churches from each of the following groups: congregations that only had white members (Congregations A1, A2 and A3); those that chose intentionally to be multicultural (Congregations B1, B2 and B3); and congregations that consisted of one or more ethnic groups that did not include white members (Congregations C1, C2 and C3). The inclusion of specific congregations was determined by referrals from Christian leaders, contacts made through spiritual networks, personal knowledge of the community, and by the willingness and availability of a leader to be interviewed.

The description provided of each church and their activities is not extensive and do not include a complete list of all their projects and involvements. The information used was a result of the interviews. Some biographical information is withheld for ethical purposes to protect the identity of the participants. As the purpose of the study is to determine how churches understand development and how they are involved in the community, the information provided during the interviews reflect the mindset and understanding of development more than a comprehensive compilation of current activities would.

5.2.1 Group A: White Churches

5.2.1.1 Profile of Congregation A1

The congregation is a large community with members coming from various neighbourhoods. The leadership consists of a team of professional people who are full-time and part-time employed to serve and head activities and ministries. During the interview, it became clear that the leaders of the congregation are intentionally mobilising their congregation to adapt to a changing society, to build long-term relationships inside and outside the congregation and to meet needs as and where they encounter it.

Much of the relief and development work is being done by cell groups which are small groups of members that attend home-based meetings for Bible-study, fellowship and spiritual growth. These groups are mobilised by the leadership with the challenge of

"*you are the body of Christ*" (Congregation A1, 2018). Members are dared to "*go and see*" where interaction takes place with the broader community, not to "*hit and run*" by dumping resources at a location in the hope that it will address needs (Congregation A1, 2018). In this way partnerships are built as the congregation reaches out to others, building the skills of those in need. While training others, the members also learn from those they teach.

A high priority is given to change the perspectives of members to be at ease with people they had little contact with in the past. Multi-racial services are held on a regular basis to build relationships and adapt to a changing demography in the neighbourhood. The leadership are also building relationships with other congregations within the same denomination, especially those that were previously disadvantaged. This includes joint church services, eating together and supporting the leadership in various ways.

5.2.1.2 Profile of Congregation A2

The congregation is led by two full-time pastors. The outreach work to the community is being done by trained volunteers, who are equipped to address needs in areas they are passionate about. Much of this work involve serving at surrounding institutions. The congregation had been involved in outreaches at different locations over the past couple of decades, including various soup kitchens and feeding schemes. Many of these projects were taken over by NGOs over time, while others were discontinued because of an unsafe environment for female volunteers or a lack of skills to manage the culture of recipients such as street people.

Currently the church is running an orphanage at own cost, without any financial subsidies from outside. People from outside the church are involved in various capacities in this project, from professional persons to volunteers. The church facilities are used to run a child-care facility, both as a small business venture to fund the orphanage, but also as a service to the surrounding community.

5.2.1.3 Profile of Congregation A3

The church is a large congregation with a leadership consisting of a team of full-time people employed in various capacities. The church has a heart for helping people in financial need and helps by contributing financially on a monthly basis to people like

pensioners and single parents to meet their obligations. It also provides professional counselling for free and sometimes pays for medical consultation of people in need.

Current involvement in the larger community is mainly by monthly donations to legitimate, professional organisations who have the knowledge and access to people in need. This financial support enables these organisations with the sustainable, long-term financial backing to do the work. Members of the congregation freely provide financial resources to projects when called to do so. Individual members have at times initiated projects they were passionate about, with the church becoming subsequently involved by providing expert professional knowledge and financial backing.

5.2.2 Group B: Multicultural Churches

5.2.2.1 Profile of Congregation B1

The church is a small congregation situated in a neighbourhood near the city centre. It has a very specific focus in ministry which is done by voluntary full-time teams, locally and nationally. The teams are equipped and mobilised to train and support people in schools and churches across the country, invited frequently because of their long-term relationships with the institutions.

The training provided includes a variety of skills that may be used by trainees to earn an income. The process includes finding strategic people in poor communities, sponsoring their development and equipping them so that they can return to their home communities and minister there. Together with various training events open to the public, the church runs a Christian school on its premises. The congregation also occasionally organises events that involve hundreds of young people from outside the church, to showcase forgiveness and redemption to the community.

5.2.2.2 Profile of Congregation B2

This congregation is large and situated in the inner city, with a leadership that consist of various people with local and/or regional responsibilities. The denomination it belongs to has historically been multicultural, even during the apartheid era. It has a long tradition of involvement in providing health care, schools, day-care centres and the like as part of

their mission. These activities provide opportunities for hundreds of people to access services that they cannot afford elsewhere.

Much of the community work is done by volunteers organised in groups with international links to the church. The pastor explained their involvement as *"inherited traditions in welfare and charity"* (Congregation B2, 2018). The work of the volunteer groups differs as to focus and modus operandi, providing a host of services and programs to the community. One of the volunteer organisations work by visiting the people in need and building medium term relationships, discovering first-hand what the problems are. Through this the church also offers help with problems where people do not have birth certificates, helping children to get into schools, accessing grants – actions that will help people on their feet. Their experience is that many of these people can, after a short while, stand on their own feet without outside assistance. The volunteers are using their experience and skills in charity work to train new volunteers in congregations in poor communities elsewhere in the province.

5.2.2.3 Profile of Congregation B3

The congregation is located in a neighbourhood impacted by a shift in demography over the past decades and dwindling membership. The pastor of this church, the only full-time leader, has responded by challenging the church with a statement – *"ons moet uitloop of doodloop"* (Congregation B3, 2018), meaning they had to change in order to thrive, or die. The congregation accepted the challenge to change and has transformed over time into a multi-cultural church. Although services are held in Afrikaans, the congregation consists of people from various cultural backgrounds. There is a strong culture of empowerment and working together to achieve common goals, with many of these activities taking place on the premises of the church. The church has cultivated long-term partnerships with richer congregations that help them in providing in the basic needs of the members, but also providing skills training.

The congregation is able to pay the salary of a full-time pastor because of a subsidy by a regional body of the church. When this pastor retires, the subsidy will fall away. To help mitigate the change, the current pastor is pro-actively teaching and empowering members to take responsibility of various tasks and positions, so that the work of the

church will continue without a full-time leader. As part of this empowerment and to make ends meet financially, they run a food stall on Saturdays at a busy complex in the city, using the opportunity to build the skills of members and helping them to take ownership of the project. The leader explained that *"the congregation witness the results of working together and achieving success, of being part of a team that produce results: I can, I know how"* (Congregation B3, 2018).

5.2.3 Group C: Churches with Black or Coloured Members

5.2.3.1 Profile of Congregation C1

The congregation is situated in a poor neighbourhood on the outskirts of Bloemfontein. There is only one pastor in the congregation. The work of the church has been challenging in the face of a history of alcoholism, drug abuse and gangs. The pastor is working closely with a professional NGO which provides an array of professional statutory social services. Much of the work done by the church can be classified as spiritual work and pastoral care, although the local leaders and youth are empowered by their relationship with the pastor. This empowerment includes people being equipped and given the opportunity to do spiritual work in affiliated congregations in surrounding towns and elsewhere, but also being given the skills and worth to make better choices in their personal lives.

One of the future problems the church is facing, is that the financial subsidy that enables them to have a full-time pastor will fall away when the current pastor retires. As part of the pastor's plan to empower members of the church *"to help them think differently, learn and grow"* (Congregation C1, 2018), a yearly outreach outside the borders of South Africa has been organised. Church members are taken along to see the need in other places in the hope that it will trigger initiatives to help their own community.

5.2.3.2 Profile of Congregation C2

The church is led by a visionary leader heading a team of full-time workers. The main campus of the church is situated in the township east of Bloemfontein's industrial development, with smaller satellite campuses scattered throughout the municipal area.

Personal mentoring relationships are the foundation of the church, from spiritual relations to educational support.

The pastor described the role of the church regarding the legacy of apartheid as "*the church train people, without the bitterness, anger and resentfulness, to do without the negative feelings*" (Congregation C2, 2018). Many of the volunteers in the church provide their professional services for free to members of the community who are unable to pay for it, partnering with other organisations to help those in need.

The congregation has a very strong focus on the spiritual and economic empowerment of members, based on the understanding that education will make the difference to people previously disadvantaged and dispossessed. Empowerment through education is done by a knowledge sharing "*let's do it yourself*" project, where third- and fourth-year university students tutor students still in school (Congregation C2, 2018). Those with honours- and master's degrees, tutor the undergraduates. The church leadership also train the students to have an entrepreneurial mindset, because of the inability of the formal job market to absorb new graduates.

5.2.3.3 Profile of Congregation C3

The congregation is situated in the peri-urban area of Botshabelo on the eastern side of Mangaung, in a community plagued with poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment. The single pastor lives and works in Bloemfontein and visit his congregation whenever possible, because the congregation cannot afford full-time leadership. The little time available with his congregation is very challenging where he has to address the socio-economic needs of his members and implement plans for empowerment.

The pastor places fostering a relationship with the local ward councillors in his area as a priority, because they have the responsibility to help with the development of the community. This relationship allows the church to hold the councillors accountable, while supporting them, praying for them and encouraging them to do the right thing. The relationship also helps the councillor to engage with the local voters. This was the only example found in the study of the church being involved in the building of the democracy and engaging in the political arena.

The lack of valuing an education as a means of getting out of extreme poverty, motivated the pastor to build a culture that honours educational achievement. He holds a yearly celebration within his church to the passing matriculants, propagating education as long-term solution to poverty to motivate others to keep going to school. He also buys and distributes books to the children in his congregation, expecting a written report after they have finished reading it, thereby actively promoting reading and writing skills as part of the educational culture.

5.3   Findings

The information gathered from the interviews are presented around the following matters: the social responsibility of the church towards society; the benefits of the church as a role player in community development; the problems experienced inside the church and by the community; determining the needs of the community; current contributions of the church to the community; partnerships with other institutions; and obstacles that restrict plans.

5.3.1   The Social Responsibility of the Church Towards Society

All the participants were clear on the issue of the church having a social responsibility towards society. The church also has a strong mandate to be socially involved, to look after "*the widow and the orphan*", to take the responsibility to provide a social net to those in need where the state is unable to provide (Congregation A2, 2018. A participant likened his congregation to "*one of the fishes in a large aquarium that is critical to keep the system going*", attesting that the actions of their church are crucial in the survival of many in the community (Congregation B3, 2018). The churches situated in the poorest neighbourhoods especially were living out their social responsibility with many people looking to the church for hope and help (Congregation B3, 2018; Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018).

5.3.2   The Benefits of the Church as a Role Player in Community Development

Many of the responses of participants demonstrated the holistic and spiritual approach of the church. These answers include: the church provide identity and worth; a sense of

belonging; unconditional love; a hiding place for broken people; hope and meaning to existence. The church can teach members to believe in themselves because God restores; we have access to God's power to transform people's lives; the church understand that real poverty is spiritual poverty; the church not only provides physical help but how to know God and know Jesus. One participant clarified the potential of the church as a presence in every town, with infrastructure and people able to make a difference (Congregation A1, 2018). Another referred to it as a trusted institution and "*people will open their doors for the church as representatives of God*" (Congregation C3, 2018). As one participant stated, "*When the local church works well, it is the hope of the world, the hope of this community*" (Congregation C2, 2018).

5.3.3 The Problems Experienced Inside the Church and by the Community

During the interviews, most of the participants mentioned the same problems as causes for concern for their churches and individual members. These problems are discussed in the following section in order of prominence.

5.3.3.1 Poverty

The first question asked during all the interviews was what the biggest challenges were that congregations faced. All the leaders mentioned poverty as a major concern, while some added the problems of low self-esteem, a lack of dignity and dependency. Though some congregations experience extreme poverty firsthand, even more affluent congregations have members that were becoming progressively poorer because of the economic climate in South Africa.

In those congregations that are situated in very poor neighbourhoods, the leaders found that they must keep on empowering and uplifting the members in their churches (Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018). They constantly needed to help their members understand their worth in Christ. The reason provided for a lack of self-worth in poor people is that it is a part of the evil cycle of poverty. Parents are too busy trying to survive, and therefore the children growing up in extreme poverty are frequently neglected. They interpret the neglect and lack of care as them having no worth. These

churches had to launch programs to help members survive financially and equip people with skills to be able to find jobs (Congregation C2, 2018).

Almost all the participants viewed poverty as a challenge on a national and local level, while many specified unemployment as a main contributor. Two of the pastors from Group C also discussed the perceived link between poverty and ill-health experienced by members of the congregation, in that poverty causes and perpetuates sickness, including HIV/Aids (Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018).

5.3.3.2 The Legacy of Apartheid

The legacy of apartheid was reported as a challenge in different ways. The pastor of a church argued that the church is still "*a bastion of whiteness*" although the leaders understand the need for the church to change (Congregation B3, 2018). In some white congregations, people are resisting what they deem as political preaching and a push for transformation (Congregation A, 2018; Congregation B3, 2018). As one participant suggested, "*the 'ooms' (the older, white male members on the church board) do not allow their leaders to transform and to aid in transformation*" (Congregation A1, 2018). Some leaders experienced that the current political climate of land issues and poor governance causes emotional responses and negativity that influence thinking, which in turn influence their financial contributions to worthy causes (Congregation A1, 2018). It is difficult for many people to cross racial boundaries in church membership because people tend to flock to their "*own people*" when going to church, while "*congregations with young people are able to cope better without the baggage of the past*" (Congregation A1, 2018). A couple of participants said that addressing racism was important so that the legacy of the past can be eradicated (Congregation A1, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018).

A change in the mindset of church leaders "*to think further than their salary and pension*" and to understand the potential to influence change in the community is needed (Congregation A1, 2018; Congregation B3, 2018). One leader lamented the lack of vision from older pastors when a church has not changed with demographic shifts, resulting in a shrinking church with a few older white people in a mixed

neighbourhood, "*We need to serve the community and change with the community*" (Congregation B3, 2018). A part of the problem is that pastors were not trained for multicultural ministry (Congregation A1, 2018). One participant explained that people are trying to keep their community together - "*we are turning inward, that is our biggest crisis*" (Congregation A1, 2018).

Pastors from previously disadvantaged communities experienced the legacy of apartheid, one stating it as *"a lack of hope and self-worth of the members of the congregation*" (Congregation C2, 2018). Because of the injustices of apartheid, people were not able to amass property and goods. Their families have been dispossessed and they have a lack of dignity. The pastor explained it as "*they do not believe something is possible, they have not seen something significant in their own lives"* (Congregation C2, 2018). The churches in the poor neighbourhoods found that people needed to be empowered before they could contribute anything to their congregations (Congregation B3, 2018; Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018).

One participant, who spent decades working in the community where his church is, said that the apartheid policies caused a brain drain of the top potential leaders, who had to leave the Free State to gain tertiary education and to acquire decent work because of work restrictions (Congregation C1, 2018). The impact on his local congregation is still felt today.

The physical layout of the Mangaung metropolitan area, as a legacy of the past, is also an obstacle. As one pastor commented, "*our locality is not enabling non-white people to come to us*", a fact that is especially true in exclusive, high income neighbourhoods (Congregation A3, 2018; Congregation B3, 2018). It perpetuates the action of churches only serving their "own" people, not living out their social responsibility to the bigger community and that "*the church does not exist for itself, it should choose to be relevant*" (Congregation B3, 2018). However, the problem of not wanting to contribute to the welfare of others also exists in poor communities, when people do not want to understand why they needed to help some of the poorer members "*because they get a grant*" (Congregation C3, 2018).

5.3.3.3 Staying Relevant

A few of the leaders talked about the challenge for the church to stay relevant in a changing community - the issues people are facing should be addressed by the church (Congregation A1, 2018; Congregation A2, 2018; Congregation B1, 2018). Members have increasingly busy programs and face growing pressures at work, with less time for outside activities (Congregation A2, 2018; Congregation A3, 2018). There are less of a commitment from members to attend church services, a fact that is exacerbated by the pervasiveness of Christian programs on the media (Congregation A2, 2018). One leader explained that *"the church's role is to give people an identity in Christ, a foundation of Christ, so that they could dream without the restrictions of circumstances"* (Congregation B1, 2018). Another spoke about how the congregation expect the church to help parents to build strong families so that the children can make good choices (Congregation C3, 2018). The positive side of having a community changing around the church was identified by a pastor who stated, *"our members have to cope with the changing demography of the neighbourhood, but it provides a good challenge to us to do new things"* (Congregation A1, 2018)*.*

5.3.3.4 Service Provision

The inability of local authorities to provide basic services and occasional service shutdowns were declared by almost all leaders as impacting all people in the metropolis. The pastor from one of the most underdeveloped areas included in the study, added that the local government does not improve services because of corruption (Congregation C3, 2018). The local government was branded as being incompetent by a participant (Congregation B2, 2918). A pastor from said that initiatives to hold the local council responsible by a corporate church, have not yet succeeded (Congregation A1, 2018).

Most of the participants identified poor service provision as a problem for the functioning of local congregations, with the challenges of water and electricity provision specifically mentioned (Congregation A1, 2018; Congregation B1, 2018; Congregation B2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018). In communities where people must walk to church facilities, the lack of good roads during bad weather and safety issues at night, impacted greatly

on church activities (Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation C3; 2018). One participant lamented the fact that people were educated to wash their hands for health reasons but cannot benefit from this knowledge due to a lack of running water at or near their houses (Congregation C3, 2018).

5.3.3.5 Crime

High crime levels were stated as a major problem. In affluent communities, people are walling themselves in to be safe and therefore contributing to their isolation (Congregation A2, 2018). One pastor had to close all evening services because the members of the church, who walk to church, are not safe after dark (Congregation C1, 2018). The rise in alcoholism and drug abuse caused concern, especially where even primary school children are getting involved (Congregation C1, 2018). Gangsterism was also mentioned as a plague in some neighbourhoods, resulting in the escalation of violence (Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018). A participant linked young people becoming involved in gangs in order to feed their siblings as there are no parents (Congregation C3, 2018).

5.3.3.6 Other Challenges

One pastor bemoaned the mentality of poor people, that the government is the solution to their economic woes – "*the government is the solution to provide jobs. They do not think they can do something. Their power is in voting. They get disappointed every time*" (Congregation C2, 2018). This lack of hope and lack of leadership is felt in communities which are already influenced by fatherlessness and broken families (Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018).

A pastor mentioned the irresponsibility of some political leaders who instigate lawlessness (Congregation C3, 2018). He used the encouragement from a politician for people to illegally settle on a farm as an example, an incidence that breaks down relationships between the community and police when illegal squatters are subsequently removed by force.

Significant concepts that were only mentioned by one participant, were the issues of injustice, dispossession and the lack of opportunities that many people endured during apartheid (Congregation C2, 2018).

5.3.4 Determining the Needs of the Community

During interviews, participants were prompted to gain an understanding in how churches determine the needs in their communities and how they went about to address those needs. Their responses were used to determine how they assessed their own capabilities, how they involved people to have input in their own development process or strengthen dependency and ignoring their agency.

One participant explained that church involvement is automatic, because poverty comes to you (Congregation B2, 2018). Organisations contact a church for help, or people come to a church for help (Congregation A3, 2018; Congregation B2, 2018; Congregation B3, 2018; Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018). Some churches are addressing long-term needs in the community (Congregation C1, 2018), while others are building on activities that have been going on over time (Congregation C2, 2018). One pastor identified spiritual discernment as a necessity when determining where to be involved (Congregation B1, 2018).

Many churches motivate their members to go and see where help is needed – "*to go and see to understand the dimensions of poverty*" (Congregation A1, 2018). In this way people become committed in areas they are interested in (Congregation A2, 2018).

5.3.5 How Churches Mobilise Their Members to Become Involved in Development

This concern establishes whether the church is effective in empowering and mobilising lay people to become involved in community development. This implicates creating some form of awareness in people of needs in the community and possible training or equipping them to become involved. One participant stated that "*leaders have to equip the members of the church in the places where they live and work, to minister there to the needs of the people around them*" (Congregation B1, 2018). One pastor suggested that people want to make a difference, and when they are not involved, it showed a "*problem with the leadership and governing board of the church*" (Congregation A3; 2018).

Some participants confirmed that social issues should be central in preaching, so that members can be motivated "*to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the marketplace*"

(Congregation A2, 2018). One pastor offered a solution of preaching to make theology practical, "*My work is to ask them what Jesus sees, why we are here, if we are not supposed to help others? We need to hear Jesus's heart, we need to preach Jesus's heart*" (Congregation B3, 2018).

A crucial aspect that was mentioned is the equipping of members of the congregation to become involved on various levels (Congregation A2, 2018; Congregation B1, 2018; Congregation B3, 2018; Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018). People who are empowered with skills and training, understanding their vocation as Christians in the community, will become involved in societal needs (Congregation A2, 2018; Congregation B1, 2018). People who are not empowered, feel inadequate to become involved (Congregation A2, 2018). In many congregations with poor people, people must first be uplifted and empowered before they can understand that they can contribute to the welfare of others (Congregation B3, 2018; Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018). Working together to achieve goals, add a sense of achievement that help to change a dependency mindset (Congregation B3, 2018).

In many instances small groups and interest groups are mobilised to identify and address needs with support from the church (Congregation A1, 2018; Congregation A2, 2018; Congregation A3, 2018; Congregation B2; 2018; Congregation B3; Congregation C2, 2018). Some of the churches have introduced plans and made substantial progress to address the issue of mobilising their members. One of the congregations has launched a two-year plan of challenging and equipping the congregation to reach out (Congregation A1, 2018). Others have already mobilised and equipped more volunteers or have the vision to do so, "*create situations that people can become involved in*" by finding the issues people are passionate about (Congregation A2, 2018; Congregation A3, 2018; Congregation B1, 2018).

One congregation have most of its members contribute financially, but not directly involved in activities themselves. The pastor declared, "*your people need to hear your heart for poor people and trust you to give you the money*" (Congregation A3, 2018).

5.3.6 Current Contributions of the Church to the Community

A few of the leaders affirmed that the most important role and contribution of the church is spiritually (Congregation A3, 2018; Congregation B1, 2018; Congregation B2, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018). Various leaders added that the church should focus on evangelism, must meet a person's needs, and provide prayer and encouragement (Congregation A2, 2018; Congregation A3, 2018; Congregation B1, 2018; Congregation B2, 2018; Congregation B3, 2018). When prompted to describe the role of their congregation in community development, all the participants were able to list numerous activities and programs that they are involved in to help those in need, whether spiritual, social, emotional or physical.

Most of the churches were involved in providing in the basic needs of members and other people by running soup kitchens, handing out food parcels and other feeding schemes at schools, hospitals and clinics. Some of the churches contributed largely to needs of members and others by subsidising housing, school fees and medical costs. A few congregations provide medical help, eye care and counselling, cost-free. In some cases, volunteers provide services at clinics, hospitals and old age homes (Congregation A2, 2018; Congregation A3, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018).

Various churches are involved in providing education opportunities, from day-care centres to Christian schools and aftercare facilities (Congregation A2, 2018; Congregation B1, 2018; Congregation B2, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018). These are provided as a service to the community. Some poor churches are working to show the value of education as a means to get out of poverty (Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018). This is done by mentorship programs to school children, both inside and outside the church (Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018). Some of the congregations provide bursaries for young people to study further (Congregation A3, 2018; Congregation B2, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018).

Some churches are involved in skills-training and helping members of the church and community to gain qualifications, such as computer literacy, bookkeeping, vegetable gardening, car maintenance and other skills that will enable them to earn an income (Congregation B1, 2018; Congregation B3, 2018; Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation

C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018). Many of the participants see skills-training as part of ministering to people holistically, affirming their identity in Christ and building their self-esteem. Once people understand their identity and worth, they have the courage to go out and look for work or become involved in projects where they can start to earn money (Congregation B3, 2018).

Other activities and programs that were mentioned during interviews were: working with vulnerable children; preventative programs for drug addiction; programs for ex-drug addicts; alcoholism and drug support groups; programs for young people who had run-ins with the law; empowering young people and children to make better decisions; counselling and support groups for children and parents; programs to foster entrepreneurship; and empowering people to turn away from crime (Congregation A2, 2018; Congregation B2, 2018; Congregation B3, 2018; Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018). Two of the churches that provide meals or vegetables, enhance this charity activity with teaching people about balanced meals and diets, empowering the members to make better choices about food (Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3; 2018).

5.3.7 Partnerships with Other Institutions

This matter was raised to ascertain if the participating churches used their social capital to build bridges and make use of networks and linkages to organisations. Most of the congregations did not work in isolation. They worked together with other churches of the same denomination or others (Congregation A1, 2018), with professional NGOs and FBOs (Congregation A3, 2018; Congregation B2, 2018; Congregation C1, 2018), institutions such as schools, community organisations and tertiary educational institutions. In some cases, the churches were supported by their professional partners, but the roles were also reversed in cases where the partners received support from the churches. This support could include financial resources, manpower in the form of volunteers, knowledge and professional services. Some participants were also involved in "fraternities", networks of church leaders that support and learn from each other. Churches also made use of the expert ministries that other congregations provided, for example programs empowering ex-drug addicts (Congregation B3, 2018).

The aspect of sustainable relationships was raised by various leaders, of working together so that both the "givers" and "receivers" build long-term relationships and learn from each other (Congregation A1, 2018; Congregation A3, 2018; Congregation B2, 2018; Congregation B3, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018). Long-term relationships were seen as important in order to foster the trust that is needed in development action.

One facet that was raised by some leaders of white and multi-cultural churches, was the problems experienced when trying to build relationships with some black churches. One participant voiced the problem as "*black congregations want money, not partnerships. They do not want to talk about community*" (Congregation A1, 2018). He explained the situation of poor black churches that were battling to pay salaries and the upkeep of their infrastructure. Another leader affirmed this experience, noting that some congregations "*do not think they have something to contribute*" to partnerships (Congregation B3, 2018). The attitude of "*we can't help, we need help*" demonstrates a dependency on others that do not lead to the building of healthy partnerships (Congregation B3, 2018).

5.3.8 Obstacles that Restrict the Implementation of Plans

Most of the participants named a lack of finances as a big obstacle. This means that many plans could not be implemented, but also that some partnerships could not be formed, as partners usually expect the congregation to raise 50% of the needed funds (Congregation C2, 2018). Furthermore, poverty entails amongst others the following: people lacking adequate clothing to do work especially during cold or rainy seasons; the unavailability of transport to reach people in need; restrictions to work during daytime asnight-time activities posed a security risk (Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018).

Various participants had discussed the incidence of members not being involved in projects because of their lack of vision and feelings of inadequacy (Congregation A2, 2018; Congregation B2, 2018; Congregation B3, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018). As a volunteer worker stated, "*poor people find it difficult to mobilise themselves to help others, they think and feel that they need help. People join our services as volunteers because they think it is about their own needs. They need a*

new mindset, they have to give to be able to receive" (Congregation B2, 2018). A pastor clarified this by explaining it as a culture where, "*You need to take responsibility for yourself. I take what I can now. The mentality is that I look after myself, not others, I do not have to give*" (Congregation C3, 2018). Another participant confirmed this by adding that local leaders in churches associated with his congregation, find it difficult to make decisions to do the work, even when the benefits of action to the community is clear (Congregation C1, 2018).

The problem of not having enough manpower was also raised. Even when people were equipped to contribute, the demands on their time made commitment difficult (Congregation A2, 2018; Congregation B1, 2018; Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018). The effective equipment of many church members (lay people) can help to relieve this obstacle, an action the leaders of many of the poor churches identified as a critical aspect of any development activity (Congregation C1, 2018; Congregation C2, 2018; Congregation C3, 2018). Coupled with the issue of empowerment, is the aspect of finding the right people to invest in, "*people with potential to go back and influence, people from poor and hurting communities*" (Congregation B1, 2018).

The aspect of governance in the church was also raised, with a pastor maintaining that some of the poor churches were weak on keeping records and were not held accountable by the church members. The use of scarce resources would be more effective if better managed (Congregation C3, 2018). Other obstacles that were mentioned included the challenge of many poor churches having a leader who also has a full-time job as well as his leadership position (Congregation C3, 2018); and lacking in a united front of churches to hold the municipality accountable (Congregation A1, 2018; Congregation B2, 2018).

5.4 Analysis and Interpretation

5.4.1 Moving from Charity to People-centred, Participatory Development

When analysing the findings from the information gathered, there was little evidence that churches took time to do research on the needs of the surrounding community and that they formally assessed their own potential to address needs.

It appears as if the default method of the church in the community is to start rallying volunteers and resources to become involved in the distribution of food, clothes and blankets. This finding is supported by the research of Bowers-Du Toit (2012:212,213), Swart (2003:406) and Krige (2008:157), showing that the bulk of most congregations' activities are soup kitchens, distribution of food and clothing, *relief work* that aim to address the symptoms of poverty and do not qualify as development.

When asked about their involvement in community development, all the leaders were able to respond with a list of activities. However, most of these activities are driven by a *charity mindset*, with programs and activities focused on meeting the needs of people. There is little expectation towards recipients to be involved in their own development, an indication of a paternalistic mindset that does not recognise the agency of the poor. Bowers and August (2004:422) identified such actions as classic paternalistic behaviour that result in passive dependency. The research of Kumalo (2001:10) and Swart (2003:406) reinforced this finding, showing that the way churches engage with the community perpetuates dependency.

Most congregations were involved in *development* activities by the holistic services they provide to members, by addressing spiritual, emotional and social needs that provide hope, empower individuals, helping them to take control of their own lives. However, in most cases these services were only available to members of the church because of a lack of vision and capacity to engage with the socio-economic issues outside the church. This finding is substantiated by research that identified the need for the church to find a new paradigm of engaging with the problems experienced by society, doing away with a dualistic spiritualisation of the gospel that does not address problems in the physical realm (Bowers & August, 2004:418). The mindset was described by Swart, stating the need for a contextual approach from the church to engage with the socio-

economic sphere and deliver solutions to social problems in a secular environment that impact a large percentage of the population (Swart 2008:109).

In the incidences where churches contributed to the development of the community, the leadership of congregations made a conscious choice to change the way they interact with those in need. These churches mobilised their members, used their knowledge and networks to plan and tackle problems in the church and the surrounding communities. The activities included the changing of mindsets and equipping members to take ownership and empowering them and others as needed, frequently starting with the need of individuals to find identity and self-worth. This usually implied long-term relationships, allowing input from those that receive skills and resources, and everyone involved, recipients and givers, to learn from each other.

In a racially divided South Africa, development by churches imply a conscious choice to address racism and build relationships across boundaries. If these choices are not made intentionally, the white and richer churches mainly engage with their surrounding communities and do not become involved in the poor communities, a finding supported by Krige (2008b:174). Bowers Du Toit (2017:5) acknowledged this occurrence and proposed that congregations help the laity to discover their biases, to preach about issues and help to expose members to people in need so that they can be mobilised for development. She (2017:2) confirmed that the injustices of apartheid must be acknowledged as the root of inequality and poverty, so that churches can become efficiently involved in providing solutions.

The churches that chose to build cross-cultural relationships are investing in long-term relationships that empower people and allow them to play a significant role in their development. Although some of the activities were to address needs directly, other activities were aimed at the people themselves, to build their capacity and transfer skills. De Gruchy (2003:30) and Swart (2008:119) called such approaches *people centred development*, where the process involves people and their own efforts to improve their quality of life.

During the analysis of the interviews, it became apparent that the passion and capabilities of each leader determined the main focus of a congregation's involvement

in the community. This finding demonstrates the importance of the perceptions and understanding of leaders regarding the role of the church in community development.

5.4.2 Mobilisation of Members

Although leaders understand the necessity of mobilising the members of their congregations, only some congregations have been successful in mobilising large numbers of people. Those that have been successful, started with empowering the people, equipping them as needed and helping them to become involved in places they were passionate about. Evidence suggest that the churches that were able to mobilise members to become involved in the community, are those that started by developing the capabilities and skills of their own members first.

The pastors of very poor congregants started with building their own members and providing identity, helping them understand that they can contribute to address the needs of the surrounding community. These actions are the foundation of people-centred development – investing in the capabilities of people, not a focus on programs. Empowered 'poor' people became the backbone of some activities that in turn reached out to others. In this way the capacity of the churches grew.

The mobilisation of members, especially in small groups and interest groups, generated a wider involvement in the community and a more sustainable approach as the number of people involved as well as their capacity, capabilities and resources increased. The relationships built between church and community members, empowered the members of poor communities to be more involved in activities and have a voice in how needs are addressed.

Bowers-Du Toit (2012:209) and Bowers and August (2004:421) propagated the mobilisation of members based on the social capital of the church and trust relationships. If people are empowered, mobilised and their capacity developed, they have the ability to take part in grassroots development without being overcome by the challenges of poverty (2017:2-4). Swart (2006:369) mentioned the need for people to be exposed to social problems, so that they can generate actions to address needs – an approach that is affirmed by the findings of this study.

5.4.3 Social Capital, Long-term Relationships and Partnerships

All the churches that took part in the study made use of their social capital to build trust and relationships with people and other institutions. Most churches used their spiritual ministry to reach out to people, strengthening those relationships over time by adding skills-building and other empowering actions. However, not all congregations used their social capital to bridge social and cultural boundaries.

In one case within the study, the long-term relationships between two churches provided the resources and knowledge to address needs in a poor area. The church with more resources worked together with a poorer church in a partnership, with the poor church determining the developmental agenda and taking ownership of the process. Such a relationship is called "twinning" by Krige (2008b:157), who encouraged such relationships, especially where the self-appointed leaders of small, poor congregations have little training to solve the socio-economic problems.

The churches who nurtured long-term relationships with the poor, were the congregations that were the most involved in empowerment, skills development and participatory processes. Krige (2008b:157) reinforced this finding by claiming that the key to sustainable community-based development lies in mentorship and relationships.

5.5 Summary

All the churches included in this study were involved in the community. However, many of the activities were centred on directly fulfilling the needs of people by providing resources. These activities are first generation development actions, and do not contribute to community development. In many cases it can be linked to paternalistic attitudes that cause dependency and erodes the dignity of the recipients.

Some congregations were moving away from the charity mindset, by firstly equipping their own members for service, providing skills and resources for their own development. These members were able to go out into the community, identify needs and build relationships with people to empower them to help themselves.

Many of the activities of churches can be adapted to move away from charity to development by changing the focus of the activity from the program to people. However,

this implicates the building of relationships with recipients and allowing them to have a say in what they need, how they need it and determining the timeframe. To achieve the shift in focus, a church has to make a conscious choice to change the way it has been doing things, take inventory of their own capabilities, capacities and other resources, and then study the problems in the community to assess the best way to become involved. When the members of the congregation are empowered and equipped to participate, the potential of the church to have an impact on the socio-economic problems is strengthened.

Further conclusions, recommendations and possible areas for further research are discussed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to probe the understanding of local churches of their social responsibility and role in terms of the development of the community: the way they interpret the mandate of the congregation towards the community; how they determine the needs in society; assess their capabilities and mobilise their members; and what they do to contribute to sustainable community development.

The first objection of the study was to explore the existing and expected roles of the church internationally in contributing to development. During the study of relevant literature, it became clear that civil society across the globe and the church itself expect the church to play a role in development, based on the historic role of the church and the social capital the church possess (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:895; World Economic Forum, 2013:12) .

Secondly, the developmental role and expectations of the church post-1994 in South Africa was investigated. The expectation in South Africa from government, civil society, and from the church itself, was that the church can and should be involved in development (De Gruchy, 2003:20; Bowers & August, 2004:417; Swart, 2006:347; RSA, 2012:313, 475). Congregations are involved in addressing some of the needs of people in the communities around them. However, most of these activities do not empower people or build capacity in the community (Bowers Du Toit, 2016:3; Swart and Venter, 2016:456,457,479). The issues that contributed to the lack of community building by the church, was found to be: a charity mindset in engaging with the poor; the legacy of apartheid and power structures; and the problems experienced in partnerships (Swart, 2003:405,414; Swart, 2006:370; Van der Merwe *et al.*, 2009:125, 137; Őhlmann *et al.,* 2016:10; Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:210, 211; Bowers Du Toit, 2017:2-4).

The third objective of the study was to describe actions taken by churches or groupings of churches in the Mangaung metropolitan area over the past two decades. Research completed in Mangaung in the past showed that churches have been addressing many

needs in poor communities, but most of these could be classified as first-generation activities, and do not contribute to community development (IIDE, 2005:47; Krige, 2008b:172). This finding shows that the churches in Mangaung experience the same problems found elsewhere in South Africa (Swart, 2003:405,414; Swart, 2006:370; Van der Merwe *et al.*, 2009:125, 137; Őhlmann *et al.,* 2016:10; Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:210, 211; Bowers Du Toit, 2017:2-4).

6.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions were made after the collection and analysis of information retrieved during the utilisation of the case study. This achieves the objectives of the study of using a case study to evaluate the actions, outreaches and developmental programs and influence of nine local congregation in the Mangaung metropolitan area; and presenting the findings of the study.

6.2.1 A Holistic Approach to the Needs of the Community

The ways in which churches play a role in the community reveal their focus on holistic ministry – that spiritual, physical, social and emotional issues are all important, and frequently difficult to separate, a finding supported by Clarke (2013:348), Hiagbe (2015:166) and Bowers & August (2004:418). Leaders experienced that empowering members inside the congregations is a way of building local ownership of projects and plans. Many of the participants emphasised that the church is not an organisation that exists for itself, but for the society around them. The activities of their churches describe actions that build social capital and networks, that empower and equip people, that help people cope with problems and acquire the skills to function better. Actions like these by local churches create benefits to their communities universally (Swart, 2006:347,348; Hepworth & Stitt, 2007:895; Clarke, 2013:340). The church has the benefit of giving hope, affirm the worth of individuals and give a sense of belonging.

Each congregation that took part in the study had a unique approach to the needs of society according to their vision, capacity and capabilities, building an appropriate network to reach their goals and influencing the community. The churches in very poor areas spent time to affirm and equip their members to help themselves and those

around them. Other churches developed programs to train and equip their members to become involved in their communities. Some of the churches built on the strengths and expertise of their leader to create a unique ministry to impact those inside and outside the church. The churches with a heritage of community work focused on building these traditions, while another church donate large amounts in supporting organisations with professional knowledge to reach those in need.

6.2.2 A Charity Mindset

The results of this research affirmed that many churches do not understand community development and their potential to play a role in the development of their communities (Swart, 2003:406,417; Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:214; Bowers Du Toit, 2016:1). A charity mindset was found behind much of the work done by churches, keeping them focused on short-term relief work of handing out resources. The people who are receiving resources are not empowered or take part in decision-making, turning them into passive recipients, an outcome observed by the research of Kumalo (2001:6), Swart (2003:414,422) and Bowers Du Toit (2016:5).

Many of the churches are involved in the community by providing holistic services to address spiritual, physical, social and emotional needs. The needs that are addressed are visible and critical in many cases. However, there seems to be a lack of a formal process of determining needs, prioritising them, assessing possible solutions and mobilising the resources and volunteers to become involved. Frequently the consequence of impulsive actions is an unsustainable, top-down model that does not empower people. On the contrary it deepens dependency of the recipients, while draining the resources of donors and volunteers alike, a result supported by Kumalo (2001:6), De Gruchy (2003:31) and (Bowers & August, 2004:419). The agency of recipients is not recognised, and they are rarely involved in any decision-making processes, also commented upon by by De Gruchy (2003:28,31) and Van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015:737).

6.2.3 People-centred Participatory Development

Of the congregations interviewed, a few had been going to great lengths to change the way things were done in the past, assessing the challenges of a changing world, planning and implementing actions that empowered and mobilised their congregations to be part of the development of the community, as propagated by Swart (2003:415,422), Bowers-Du Toit (2012:213) and Clarke (2013:342). These actions were not a once-off activity, but a paradigm shift of long-term, sustainable relationships that impacted the lives of all involved, including people outside the congregation, to benefit from the work of the church. These congregations came from the various strata defined in the study, irrespective of the racial profile of the church.

6.2.4 The Legacy of Apartheid

The legacies of apartheid and power structures were also evident in the way some churches were still struggling to come to terms with and adapt to a changing society. Paternalistic attitudes, exclusion, and dependency attitudes are still visible and contribute to a difficulty in building sustainable relationships that can drive development, hindrances affirmed by the research of Swart (2008:116) and Vellem (2013:114-5) and Bowers-Du Toit (2012:210,213). These problems need to be addressed specifically, because deeply entrenched attitudes and perceptions do not change easily.

Although various leaders talked about the impact of apartheid on society, only one leader mentioned the issues of injustice, dispossession and a lack of opportunities that still affect the well-being of a large percentage of the population. These topics, together with restorative justice, are discussed by the church and politicians on national level (Swart, 2003:406; Bowers & August, 2004:418; Swart, 2008:134). It is not clear why these "political" topics were mentioned on local church level as problems but omitted by most participants within the context of the broader society. The omission might indicate that local churches do address political topics inside the church, but do not have the platform, influence or will to engage in these issues within the community.

6.2.5 Leading a Church to Become More Involved in Community Development

There was a marked difference in the way churches in more affluent and poor neighbourhoods approached this subject. Churches in affluent neighbourhoods had the opportunity of choosing their focus of involvement, with only some members needing assistance. From there on they could decide where and how they wanted to contribute further. Churches in poor neighbourhoods were surrounded by pressing needs, unable to distance themselves from the crushing realities of poverty, thus forced to try to alleviate some of the problems experienced by the community. Although both groups of churches responded by providing immediate relief, churches in poor communities frequently responded also more readily with sustainable development options of empowerment.

The paradigm in these churches is about addressing pressing needs, but also capacity-building and empowering people so that they will ultimately be able to help themselves. People are lifted up spiritually and their identity in Christ affirmed, while they are supported, mentored and provided with skills. Many of the churches in poor communities have limited capacity and will benefit from partnerships with other churches or organisations to help them with skills and capacity building programs, a response presented by Bowers Du Toit (2017:3).

Although churches have mobilised and equipped some members to be involved in development activities, the majority of members are passive. The mobilisation and empowerment of members will lead to more sustainable long-term activities (Flint *et.al*. 2003:3; Swart, 2003:409; Emedi, 2010:2-3; Bowers-Du Toit, 2012:209, Bowers Du Toit, 2017:2-4).

6.3 Recommendations

A final objective of the study as to provide recommendations on how local churches can be assisted to broaden their influence and impact on the community as well as questions raised for possible future research. This will be discussed in the final section.

6.3.1 Training and Equipping of Leadership

The results of the study in Mangaung suggest that, although some congregations do not understand their potential role as development agents, some churches do: they were confronted with the need of people, created a plan for long-term involvement and implemented it. These churches had leaders who acted pro-actively, sharing their vision with their local leadership, equipped members with the skills and knowledge to take ownership and become involved in long-term relationships as individuals or groups, within or outside the church. Members were challenged to "go and see" to experience the need of people.

Pro-active, informed actions by church leaders seem to be a critical aspect for churches to be involved in development. The training and equipping of leadership for this role should therefore be a high priority. Leaders of churches should understand their biblical mandate and be assisted to move away from the charity mindset and understand how their churches can become more involved in community development. This should include an understanding of the potential contribution of churches to development. An understanding should also be developed in churches that development should focus on people, not projects, and that the church, by its nature, should build relationships. Leaders should be exposed to churches that are involved in development, learn how change was managed and become part of a network that help and support each other with practical knowledge.

6.3.2 Training and Equipping of Lay Members

As leaders need to understand the concept of community development, so should lay people also be exposed to the biblical basis for development. This should be done by preaching and by workshops presented in the church and the community.

The mobilisation of the members of churches to become involved in community development releases knowledge, skills and other resources. However, if the members are not trained, they may become discouraged in the face of so much poverty. On the other side, many members feel inadequate to become involved, thinking they have nothing to contribute. Both these obstacles that were mentioned by participants in the study, can be overcome by training and equipping members so that they have the knowledge and skills to participate in and contribute to community development. As part of their equipment, people should be helped to be involved in areas they are passionate about. Linked to their deployment, every member should be part of a structure that can provide resources, knowledge and support as needed, so that development will be sustained.

6.3.3 Dealing with Racism, Privilege, Inequality and Injustice

The legacy of apartheid should be faced and dealt with. The consequences of the policies are still felt by a large part of the population. Issues of racism, privilege, injustice and inequality cannot be ignored by local churches, as it has an impact on relationships and the way in which people live out their social responsibility. Therefore, leadership has a responsibility to address these issues biblically, helping the church to move beyond the stereotyping of people and racial boundaries. This may also help churches to move away from paternalistic relationships with poor churches and to build partnerships on the foundation of mutual respect. Although these are often sensitive and emotional issues, churches will have to be courageous in confronting these social ills prophetically. If not, no real healing and biblical social transformation will occur.

6.3.4 Partnerships and Twinning Relationships

The possibility of twinning should be investigated by affluent congregations. It will help richer congregants through the process of conscientisation – becoming aware of the major social problems and social needs in the communities as identified by members of

the communities themselves. Such relationships can be beneficial to all involved, spiritually, socially and financially. However, this should only be one of the options for a church to be involved in development.

6.4 Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations are made on possible future research projects to assist local churches to broaden their influence and impact on the community:

- The process of managing a paradigm change in a church from charity towards people-centred community development.
- Training and equipping programs for leaders to enable them to facilitate capacity-building and empowerment in their churches to address the socio-economic challenges of their communities.
- Training and equipping programs for lay members of a congregation to be mobilised in community development activities.
- A model for the successful twinning of congregations that lead to sustainable development.
- A study on the perspectives of the members of congregations on the approach of local churches to development in their communities.

6.5 Final Comment

This study was undertaken to probe the understanding of local churches on their social responsibility and how they were involved in community development. Although many of the activities could not be classified as development because of its top-down, non-participatory nature, these activities do address critical needs on the short term. If churches gain a better understanding of the nature of poverty, development and empowerment, the resultant training, activities and relationships can be a major influence for social change in a community.

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Congregation B1. Interview with pastor, Mangaung: 10 August 2018.

Congregation B2. Interview with pastor, Mangaung: 25 September 2018.

Congregation B3. Interview with pastor, Mangaung: 19 September 2018.

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Appendix A: Letter of Information for Participants

Researcher: Lynette Bezuidenhout
University of the Free State
Telephone: 0847020310
Email: lynettebez@lantic.net
19 July 2018

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT: Local congregations and community development

I am a Masters student at the Centre for Development Studies at the University of the Free State. I would like to invite you to take part in my research project entitled: *The role of local congregations in Mangaung in community development*. Participation will be in the form of a personal interview at a suitable time. The study is aimed at determining how local congregations understand and live out their potential role as development agents in Mangaung.

The study involves conducting in-depth interviews with the leadership of various local congregations to understand their views on their role as congregation in the community and any activities, plans and programmes they launch re development. An interview will take about one hour to complete.

There are no direct benefits for participating in this study, however, the information that you provide might contribute towards an understanding of what local Christian congregations consider as their role in civil society and in what ways they address the issues. This might add to the knowledge of the interaction between church and community, to the benefit of both.

The information that I will obtain from you will be stored safely, although it will be shared with my supervisor who are involved in this study. Excerpts from the interview may be included in the final dissertation and may also be published in journals. The interview will be conducted in a private place and your name or your organisation's name will not be written down or recorded anywhere. Furthermore, the study does not require you to disclose or name any specific individuals and you do not have to discuss any personal information that you do not feel comfortable talking about.

There is no major anticipated risk that will be encountered by your participating in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to conduct the interview. If you have any concerns with the way the research is being conducted, please feel free to contact and discuss it with my supervisor, whose contact details are given below.

Please feel free to ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you.

Yours sincerely,
Lynette Bezuidenhout
Email: lynettebez@lantic.net

Supervisor: Mr. Willem Ellis
Email: EllisWF@ufs.ac.za

Appendix B: Consent Form

Please fill in and return this page. Keep the letter above for future reference
_____

Study: The role of local congregations in Mangaung in community development
Researcher: Lynette Bezuidenhout
Criteria Type: Interviews with local church leaders
_____

By signing below, I agree to the following statements:
1) I have read and understood the attached information sheet giving details of the project.
2) I have had the opportunity to ask the researcher any questions that I had about the project and my involvement in it, and I understand my role in the project.
3) My decision to consent is entirely voluntary, and I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
4) I understand that data gathered in this project may form the basis of a report or other form of publication or presentation.
5) I have given the researcher permission to audio record the interview.
6) I understand that my name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation and that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality.

Participant's Signature*: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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*Please do not write your name to maintain anonymity

Addendum C: Potential pointers for the unstructured interviews:

What do you see as the biggest challenges for your congregation currently?

What do you understand as the biggest problems in your neighbourhood/ city/ country?

> Do you think that a local congregation has a social responsibility to address some of these issues?

> Should a congregation be involved in community development?

> How do you see the role of the local congregation in the community regarding development/community development? In Mangaung / your surrounding neighbourhood?

>> How do you determine what is needed?

>> How do you proceed from a need to action/ a program/ a partnership?

> Can / should the church be involved at all, or should issues be addressed by other agencies? By whom?

> Can you as church contribute to someone else's plans, projects and programs?

>> Are your congregation mobilised to take part?

>> Who is the people expected to take part in these actions?

How do you think you should lead your congregation to become more involved in community development?

> Do you sometimes preach about the role the church and/or members can and should play in community?

> What are you currently doing to contribute to community development?

> What have you tried? Why did it work/not work?

> Have you done any projects with partners such as government or an NGO?

>> Has the partnership been successful?

>> What were the benefits of partnerships?

What were the drawbacks?

How do you think you should lead your congregation to become more involved in the community?

What are, to your mind, the biggest obstacles that restrict your involvement / plans?

What are the benefits/resources that the church has that other organisations/institutions do not have?