

**“LIFE BEFORE DEATH - SOCIO-ECONOMIC JUSTICE ISSUES AND  
MISSION  
The Economy, Poverty and the Church”**

Chapter 7 of the book, "Mission in the new SA - No quick fixes"),  
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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT that one of the central issues in the South African household is that of the poverty of so many of its people. It consequently poses to the church one of its most immediate challenges.

It is of basic importance that every Christian should be motivated by the example of the Master who was a friend of the poor. It is also important that Christians realise that, theologically speaking, the poor represent one of the important themes in Scripture. The church's dealing with the poor provides a kind of test of its credibility. It is therefore fine, and necessary, for the church and Christians to reach out to poor people with charity projects. However, this is not enough.

We live in societies – a global society – the shape of which is to a large extent formed by economic realities. Poor people are the victims of policies formulated by the rich and powerful. The church should also address these structural issues. That is what is done in this paper.

THE PURPOSE of this chapter, which focuses primarily on the South African society, is threefold:

- \* to show that certain socio-economic structural issues in society have an above average impact on that society, especially on the poor, causing the poor to stay poor;
- \* to show that globalisation is part and parcel of such structural impact;
- \* and to show some Christian responses with regard to the poor in society, in the face of these societal impacts.

## **2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURES INFLUENCING THE POOR AND THE MARGINALISED IN SOCIETY**

### **Assumptions**

THE AIM of a document like this is to help church leaders to focus on some macro economic issues which impact us all and to look critically at the assumptions we hold

regarding those issues. Often our assumptions act like blinders preventing us from seeing the whole picture. We do not necessarily realise that we hold those assumptions, and to what extent they influence our value judgements. These assumptions are not necessarily mistaken, but we need to make sure that they are still of value to guide us in our thinking.

### **Economic structures**

STRUCTURAL ISSUES impact on society. Some structural issues, however, have a disproportionate negative impact on the poor and the marginalised. Because it is part of the calling of the church to address issues of justice and peace, to care for the weak, the poor and the marginalised in society, and to speak out on their behalf when they cannot achieve that themselves (Prov. 31:7) \*1, the church cannot ignore the structural or systemic issues in society.

### **The Gini Coefficient**

HOW CAN ONE MEASURE in an objective way if there is a societal problem? One such measure indicating major structural problems is the so-called Gini coefficient. Measuring social and economic inequality on a scale of 0 to 1 (zero implying no inequality) South Africa gets the highest score in the world at 0,69 for the year 2000. (Brazil comes in with the second highest inequality rating in the world, namely 0,61.) This indicates that the South African population is the most unequal society in terms of income distribution between rich and poor in the whole world. This spells a problem – a severe economic problem – in South Africa.

### **Other indications of stress**

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT Roosevelt's comment on the plight of his people during the depression years in the nineteen thirties, was: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little".

In South Africa more than 50% of the population have an income of less than US \$1 a day (about R12, depending on the exchange rate). The National Programme of Action of the War On Poverty Forum \*2 of October 1998 stated that "53% of South Africa's population lives below the R301 (\$43 at the time, equal to about \$25 currently) per month breadline; the poorest 40% of households, equivalent to 50% of the population, accounts for only 11% of total income, while the richest 10% of households, equivalent to only 7% of the population, accrue over 40% of the total income".

There is a very high percentage of unemployment in the country (the actual figure is highly disputed by various role-players, varying between 22,5% to a staggering 50% structural unemployment). The situation is aggravated by the fact that there is no safety net available to help stabilise the economic plight of the poorest of the poor. Far from increasing jobs for the half a million final-year school-leavers every year, South Africa has lost nearly one million jobs since 1994. There is a growing disquiet about the fact that many school-leavers will remain unemployed for the rest of their adult life until they reach retirement age, then only hoping to qualify for a government

old-age benefit.

To add to the problems, the ING Barings Bank group warns that the AIDS pandemic could be as high as 26% for the economically active population of South Africa by the year 2006. The figure in 2001 is said to be already around 20%.

### **Life before death?**

IS THERE a crisis? In an address to the Campaign Against Poverty of 1998, Adv. Rams Ramashia referred to “the time bomb on which we all sit”. There is an overwhelming feeling that “South Africa has to move rapidly to eliminate poverty, or our political ‘miracle’ will come under siege, the moral basis of our state will be imperiled and our democracy itself will come under attack, while crime and social degeneration will characterise our future. There seems to be a mood of moral outrage as well as anxiety” \*3.

What does this imply for the future of South Africa and what is the task of the Christian Church in this South African society in the light of this particular challenge? What are some of the causes of the divide between rich and poor in South Africa and what answers have already come to light?

The Christian Church tended to focus on life after death. Rev Willie Cilliers, a pioneer – with the Rev Dale White – in Industrial Mission in the mines and industries of Gauteng, became aware of the other question which people began to ask: is there life *before* the grave?

The Reformation of the sixteenth century focused questions on God, grace and life after death – whether there was a merciful God around. But in the twentieth century – with its world wars and mass genocide – people were starting to ask questions about mercy on earth: is there a merciful, forgiving and caring neighbour around?

For the more than 50% of the population in South Africa who are struggling to survive below the official poverty line, life in South Africa is not easy, to say the least. If they were able to find the time and energy to formulate the question amidst their daily struggle, they would probably say that the question for them is not so much if God really cares, but how they can experience it. Christian Aid in the UK show the way with the slogan ‘We believe in life before death’.

### **3 THE JUBILEE DEBT-RELIEF ISSUE**

A STRUCTURAL ISSUE that has achieved global recognition and is closely associated with globalisation is that of international debt. Most developing countries have had to pay back large amounts of what is commonly called ‘colonial debt’ to developed countries, or to structures of the developed world like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). To what extent such debt is truly ‘colonial debt’, or debt incurred for other reasons, and by corrupt leaders, is a matter for discussion. Nevertheless, the fact is that truly large amounts of money is being paid back by poor countries to rich countries. This debt repayment means that money which would have been available for poverty relief is now not available for that purpose. Instead of money flowing from rich countries to poor countries, just the

reverse is happening.

The extensive nature of the problem led a group of Christians to start a campaign to have this so-called 'one-sided' debt reduced. During the latter part of the nineties they campaigned for a total write-off of the debt. Oxfam and Christian Aid of Britain were prominent in the action, but the overall campaign was known and driven under the umbrella of what is called the 'Jubilee Plus' campaign (previously called Jubilee 2000) \*4 .

The archbishop of the Anglican Church in South Africa, the Right Reverend Ndungane, is the patron of this campaign in South Africa. The campaign in South Africa focuses on the fact that some of the debt which the present government is paying, is debt which had been incurred by the previous government for the purpose of keeping apartheid in place. It remains to be seen what the success of the debt-relief campaign will be in South Africa. In the meantime Christians of all standing are actively taking part in the debt-relief campaign, with the purpose of making more money available for the eradication of poverty in South Africa.

## **4 GLOBALISATION**

### **What does it mean?**

GLOBALISATION MEANS different things to different people. It is a subject of debate, but also a subject of political and economic struggle. Even though it is often spoken of as an all-encompassing term, referring to all forms of global endeavours, the term is most commonly used with reference to economic issues. For practical purposes globalisation refers to the restructuring of the global economy that has taken place since the 1970s. But whatever name it is called by, it is having a serious impact on the global scene and divides society on the basis of where one stands with regard to the poor and the marginalised.

Globalisation is a structural issue, it has a massive and unavoidable impact on everyone and every community. It is therefore not something the Church of Christ can ignore. Already it has become a test of the spiritual depth of the Church and its members. It is understandable that there will be disagreements, but the church should tackle the issue because it is hurting the poor and the marginalised in South Africa.

### **Globalisation – basic ideas**

Globalisation refers to financial and macro economic issues. It is ideologically driven, and is often spoken of as 'competitive globalisation'.

The economic vision underlying globalisation, includes the following basic ideas \*5:

- \* economic growth is the only way to expand the wealth of a country; given time, such new wealth will trickle down to everybody (the so-called 'trickle down' theory);
- \* the free market is the best way to achieve economic development and success;
- \* job-creation happens through economic growth as measured by the gross national product (GDP), ['job-creation through wealth-creation'];

Critical issues relating to globalisation are the following:

- \* environmental ecological threats;
- \* the shocking extent of absolute poverty;
- \* the global debt crisis;
- \* the growth of un- and underemployment;
- \* the failure at the end of the cold war to result in a reduction of militarisation and armed conflict.

Competitive globalisation has adverse consequences. The human consequences are severe for those people and communities which are not 'economically relevant' to those with economic power. They are easily excluded. In the end competitive globalisation is dehumanising. It also impacts negatively on rural poverty, because of the decline of traditional agriculture and the effects of land speculation. Inequality is further increased because of tourism and the globalisation of crime.

Globalisation implies wealth for many, but in practice it concentrates that wealth in the hands of those in power who can make the rules to suit their purposes, and excludes others from the marketplace, from the fruits of development, from the basic conditions of a life of dignity, and in some cases from the very means of survival.

### **Multi-national corporations**

GLOBALISATION IS also about the power of big multi-national corporations. Previously the power of corporations was limited by the laws of the country where they operated. Their money was held locally. Communities had a say when they felt a company crossed a line that was perceived as unacceptable. Managers lived in the communities where the company operated, where they could see the results of their executive decisions. That made them more careful in their decisions. Executive management was subject to sanctions from the community.

Today some multinational corporations have more money power than some governments put together. We are living in a new world in which corporations and some individuals become more important than countries. Multinational corporations have no other imperatives than to make money. A corporation has no conscience; it may be driven by people who do, or it may have a conscience forced on it, but it is not in the inherent nature of a corporation to have morals. They are definitely not limited by the laws of single countries, especially if such are from the third world or classified as developing countries. Multinationals do not understand themselves as having national responsibilities. They just move their money and plants to the union-free, low-wage developing world.

GOVERNMENTS OFTEN have no choice but to try to compromise. But the multinational with the money power still has the ability to invest venture capital where it pleases. Through investment it does create jobs and employment. On the other hand, by not having to comply with national agendas, it has the ability to act in its own interest, which is very often not in the interest of the people of the particular country where it operates. They may even cause disruption on a vast scale within such a country, as long as the interest of the multinational's shareholders is served well. Examples abound.

## **TINA**

The acronym TINA stands for 'There Is No Alternative'. In the globalised world economy, society is being bombarded by the idea that 'money is all that counts'.

Where the TINA attitude reigns there is little sympathy even with the possibility of thinking about alternatives other than in terms of the conventional economic wisdom. Hence there is little understanding of the fact that the economic vision of globalisation underlying the TINA attitude is, to say the least, problematic or even hurting millions of people world-wide. It also leads to even greater income disparities, poverty and unemployment – both in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. A society of unemployed people with nothing to eat, is an unstable society, a society of excluded people. Such a situation does not benefit anyone in the world. It just becomes a social time-bomb.

### **Globalisation and the South African worker**

South Africa is part of the developing world, but its economy has a dualistic character. On the one hand it has a strong modern first-world western style economy. This part of the economy fits well into the current globalised economy, along with the rest of the first world. On the other hand, however, South Africa has a large peripheral informal economy. This informal economy is marginalised and weak, comprised of people who either don't work, or work long hours for little pay as casual labourers, or sell trinkets on the street. An extraordinary number in the rural areas are unemployed – some give a figure as high as 70% unemployment for black women in the rural areas. Unfortunately in South Africa the dividing line between the two economies cuts mainly along the racial divides of white wealth and black poverty. It makes the problem so much more acute.

THE PROBLEM? The problem is that there is tremendous wealth and abject poverty side by side in one country. The obsession with material consumption and the acquisition of economic power, which lies at the heart of competitive globalisation, is present in the economy. It threatens the survival of the poor and the marginalised. It also leads to the degradation of the environment. Competitive globalisation, along with its resultant exclusion, frustration, violence and loss of self esteem, has become a dehumanising economic model and practice. It has no answer for those in society for whom wealth does not 'trickle down' as the theory predicts.

It there a time bomb? Yes, but it is not to be found at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, or in Sandton and Houghton, or among the computer literates surfing the internet – it is in the townships and in the rural areas and to some extent in the decaying inner cities of South Africa. The majority of the poor are economic prisoners in South Africa. They cannot move over into the first-world modern economic sector, however hard they may try.

### **'Limits to Growth' and its follow-up**

IN 1970 THE CLUB OF ROME, an exclusive group of prominent individuals, including world leaders, asked leading researchers to undertake a study regarding the

effects and limits of continued worldwide growth. In the research report, in 1972 published as *The limits to Growth*, it was stated that the problem in our world is not that there is not enough resources available, it lies in the fact that the resources are used according to an economic model which does not make such resources available to those who need it most. The problem is a structural one – certain changes need to be made to the economic model which is currently being used. But as it pointed out, ultimate changes in behaviour can only "be founded on a basic change of values and goals " \*6.

IN A FOLLOW-UP REPORT 20 years later, the original drafters of the report from MIT looked at how the picture has changed in 20 years. In *Beyond the Limits: Confronting Global Collapse, Envisioning a Sustainable Future* (1992) they strengthen their original conclusions with these words:

“Now we would write them this way:

1. Human use of many essential resources and generation of many kinds of pollutants have already surpassed rates that are physically sustainable. Without significant reductions in material and energy flows, there will be in the coming decades an uncontrolled decline in per capita food output, energy use, and industrial production.
2. This decline is not inevitable. To avoid it two changes are necessary. The first is a comprehensive revision of policies and practices that perpetuate growth in material consumption and in population. The second is a rapid, drastic increase in the efficiency with which materials and energy are used.
- 3 A sustainable society is still technically and economically possible. It could be much more desirable than a society that tries to solve its problems by constant expansion. The transition to a sustainable society requires a careful balance between long-term and short-term goals and an emphasis on sufficiency, equity, and quality of life rather than on quantity of output. It requires more than productivity and more than technology; it also requires maturity, compassion, and wisdom.”

THESE CONCLUSIONS constitute a conditional warning, not a dire prediction. They offer a living choice, not a death sentence. The choice isn't necessarily a gloomy one. It does not mean that the poor must be frozen in their poverty or that the rich must become poor. It could actually mean achieving at last the goals that humanity has been pursuing in continuous attempts to maintain physical growth. “We think the human race is up to the challenge. We think that a better world is possible”, the authors of *Beyond the limits* conclude.

The reason for including the lengthy quote here is to challenge the Church to hear the agenda which the world is currently grappling with. Is it not true that sometimes God writes his agenda for his children in the agenda which the world is struggling with? As canon (later bishop) Phibbs wrote in his book *God on Monday* (Doubleday, 1965):

‘It is difficult to speak of or to practice love, friendship, generosity, understanding, or solidarity within a system whose rules, goals, and information streams are geared for lesser human qualities. But we try, and we urge you to try. Be patient with yourself and others as you and they confront the difficulty of a changing world. Understand and empathize with inevitable resistance; there is some resistance, some clinging to the ways of

unsustainability, within each of us. Include everyone in the new world. Everyone will be needed’.

## **5 DEALING WITH ECONOMIC JUSTICE ISSUES IN SOCIETY**

CHRISTIANS REALISE that the Church of Jesus Christ needs to respond to issues which impact society. This will include structural economic and justice issues such as globalisation. The response will reflect the particular theology and spirituality of the Church involved.

If the *Limits to Growth* and its follow-on is the way secular people in a scientific context could speak about the future, how much more should the Church listen and speak from a perspective of God’s grace and righteousness. The problem is that Christians in South Africa are currently still deeply divided. Some regard the reigning economic paradigm with holy respect, and others with holy wrath. In the process some churches are silent about the issues relating to economic justice.

### **Do Christian believe in life before death?**

SOME GROUPS FOCUS on the need for government to take more responsibility for what is by right the task of the government \*7. In essence it is a call on government to act responsibly. Some faith based groups are at present lobbying and calling on government(s) to put more controls in place against the free-wheeling of the trans-national corporations. These do not necessarily coincide with what is best for all the citizens of the country. A good primer in this regard from an international perspective is the document called *Jihad versus McWorld* (Barber 1995).

Note should also be taken of reports and articles such as that of Patricia Pitchon on “Globalization or Localization”, and the UN Human Development Report of 1999, “A Human face for globalization”. It asks for better control of the market economy (governing the market economy, rather than controlling it in an ad hoc manner). A number of South African Christian documents and pamphlets take up the challenge resulting from globalisation today, and especially issues relating to poverty and unemployment. Both ICIM and Esset (South African faith based NGO’s focusing on economic justice) will be able to provide information on the subject.

ONE EXAMPLE of Christians working together on economic issues is called ‘the economic literacy campaign’. It focuses on so-called People's Budget Workshops, highlighting the need for a higher percentage national government monetary allocation to social welfare and education. The Industrial Mission Network, along with the Worker Sunday project of 2001 and 2002, campaigned for the government to decide on a Basic Income Grant (the BIG issue).

On the other hand the Christian Churches in South Africa was challenged in 2000 by the Industrial Mission Network to give support to the unemployed and the working poor by declaring a commitment to such people. The challenge comes in a document called “Solidarity with the Unemployed – unemployment and the family”. It is being distributed as part of the Worker Sunday campaign.



THE BOTTOM LINE is the choice of the Church in South Africa between TINA ('there is no alternative') on the one hand and THEMBA on the other hand. THEMBA is an acronym standing for the words: "There Must Be an Alternative". It reflects the fact that there must be alternatives to a globalising economic structure which marginalises and dehumanises people. The word *themba* is also a South African word for 'hope'. The challenge for the Church and its mission is to stand in solidarity with the unemployed and the working poor in South Africa. They should be willing to be counted when it comes to THEMBA.

Churches in South Africa may provide a valuable contribution by setting up research committees to focus on the issues mentioned here, along the lines of the work of the British and Irish Council of Churches with their report on *Unemployment and the future of work* of 1997. Major alternatives – like a citizen's income, SLEDs (Self-reliant Local Economic Development), social entrepreneurship, alternative tax systems, alternative monetary systems, etc – will have to be further researched.

### **A Catholic perspective from 1999**

A TRULY momentous document emanated from the Catholic Church, in particular from the South African Bishops Conference (SACBC), called *Economic Justice in South Africa* (A Pastoral Statement by the SACBC, May 1999). It reflects on the problems of economic justice, and serious attention should be given to the theological and practical issues raised therein regarding the impact of globalisation. It is perhaps the most authoritative theological work on the subject coming from South Africa over the last three years.

### **The Processus Confessionis – a reformed perspective, 1997**

IN 1997, at a small city in Hungary called Debrecen, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) committed itself to what is called "a Continuing Process of Witness on Economic Justice", *A Processus Confessionis*. It is an important document, with South Africans involved in the drafting thereof.

In the document it is accepted that some difference of opinion may exist within the Christian Church on issues of economic justice, but that the matter at hand is of such importance that the Church needs to seriously discuss the matter. In the South African context this is driven by the South African Alliance of Reformed Churches (SARC).

The Processus Confessionis states that the severe and progressive exclusion of the poor from the global economy, as well as the growing acceptance in the South of a common faith in the humanising work of Jesus Christ, lead to a historical moment (a Kairos). It therefor declares under point 2 a processus confessionis (a continuing witness) on economic injustice. It asks for a programme of progressive analysis, recognition and confession regarding economic injustice, an advocacy process to address the issue of the debilitating foreign debt, as well as a solidarity action with women and children who form the first line of victims. It also insists that the Church should speak out at the exclusion in the globalised economy.

### **The Confession of Belhar**

THE CONFESSION OF BELHAR was adopted in 1986 (by the then Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa), as one of the confessions of the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa. The Belhar Confession of 1986, maybe the youngest of the theological confessions of faith in the world, refers to some specific structural problems of our own time. Article 4 says of God that He is a just God. He cares for people, and in a special way He is the God of the suffering – the God of the poor and the oppressed. Belhar focuses on the fact that He not only cares for the poor, but that He is their God, their champion as it were. Belhar then goes further to state that this God calls on his church and people to follow him also in this, to become the champion of people in need, the oppressed and those who suffer injustice. Thus the church has the calling to promote justice, also economic justice, following in the footsteps of the Lord.

### **The World Council of Churches Consultation at Malaga, Spain, 1998**

AT THE MALAGA consultation (of the WCC) the issue was: what should be the Church's response to globalisation? The following response was put forward as challenge to the Church:

- \* resistance and the exploring of creative new alternatives;
- \* strengthening the role of social movements, civil society and network building;
- \* exchanging experience on concrete issues like labour, agriculture, industry, migration, and tourism;
- \* theological reflection on the issue of globalisation; and
- \* focus on a process of exchange, research, learning and action.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

THE CHALLENGES to and problems of humankind have become global. They should also be tackled in a global, inclusive way. Many options are already being hinted at by workshops and conferences on globalisation, the globalisation of poverty, and by the many local churches beginning to talk about the consequences of unemployment. It is being driven by Christians, by civil society, also by economists working from a new people-oriented economic paradigm, as well as by activists and a wide variety of people who have not given up hope on humanity. These are all people who have made a conscious decision not to let the poor and the marginalised be further excluded in society or to leave them marginalised. It all starts with the attitude one uses as the entry-point in this approach.

SOME TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS regarding the way forward are coming from these quarters.

- \* On the economic front listen to work by SANE in South Africa, the New Economics Foundations in Britain and others \*8;
- \* Attention should be given to concepts like democratising economic globalisation and forging a strong civil society \*9, a strong NGO sector and a strong Non-Profit sector (NPO sector) \*10;
- \* In the Christian community different papers are helpful. Examples: the Papal theme 'the Globalization of Solidarity'; 'Jubilee 2000 – Economic Justice for Churches in Eastern and Southern Africa', 1999, Harare; the latest report of the Anglican Bishops of Southern Africa on Economic Justice (March 2001); and

the WCC report of T Addy on globalisation and ways to counter the problems associated with it.

\* The very high unemployment situation in the rural areas and in the townships needs to be urgently addressed. Marginalised areas and peoples need to get attention in their own right.

\* The fact that there is not a social security safety net needs to be urgently addressed. The current call for a government driven 'basic income grant' needs to be vigorously discussed by the church as one way of at least making sure that the very poorest of the poor do not starve in the midst of a society where there is abundance.

\* Becoming involved in local regenerative development by creating working local economies, and by working towards achieving local community self governance (especially on the political front), as well as guarding against anything which threatens such.

\* Making use of the manifold studies available on the subject.

IN THE END it is the search for THEMBA (hope), as well as the search for an alternative to what the poor and the excluded are experiencing, which brings the Biblical concepts of justice and liberation within the reach of the unemployed and the working poor in South Africa, in Africa and in the rest of the world.

The question is: IN THE NAME OF GOD, ARE WE READY? Is the Church in South Africa ready for the task? Is there a willingness for the Christian witness in the world of today? Will the Christian Church take up the call? Will it at least start talking about these issues, or will it remain silent? Life before death starts by taking up the challenge.

## **7 FOOTNOTES AND ITEMS FOR FURTHER READING**

### **7.1 FOOTNOTES**

\*1 Literature on this issue abounds and need not be reiterated here. However some new commentaries on the New Testament have appeared during the last five years which are not widely known and which augment the large volume of Old Testament and other literature on the prophetic calling of the Church. Refer for example to the Commentary on Mark "Binding the Strong Man' (Myers C, 1997); on Matthews "Matthews and the Marginalised" (Carter W, 2000); on Revelations "Unveiling Empire" (Howard-Brook W and Gwyther A 2000).

\*2 National Programme of Action of October 1998, of the 'War On Poverty Forum' of SANGOCO (the South African NGO Coalition).

\*3 The reference is to a speaker at the National Poverty Summit, convened in June 1998 by South African Anglican Archbishop Ndungane. The summit focused on various plans to reduce economic dependency. Various other summits, focused on issues of poverty and unemployment, took place in 1998 in South Africa. The South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO) raised to a national awareness the plight of the poor in the Speak out on Poverty hearings. It showed the lack of access to resources as one of the main problems of the poor. The government's Poverty and Inequality Report (PIR) documents not only the problems but also the government's response as

a policy framework. It includes market reforms as an important pillar in its strategy against poverty. A joint workshop took place between ESSET and the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in August 1998, with as topic Economic Strategies for Poverty Eradication. Some of the problems of the unemployed and the working poor was highlighted in the Presidential Job-Summit which was also convened in October 1998.

\*4 “Let liberty ring” was a quote of Dr Martin Luther King, spoken with reference to the Liberty Bell, housed in Philadelphia, USA. This bell proclaimed the liberty of the American people from the British empire in 1776; on the bell the words of the Jubilee text from Lev. 25 are inscribed. King’s words refers to the fact that true democracy means that all people should experience liberation, not only some. The Jubilee text in the OT, which is also used in reference to the debt-relief campaign, has become a Christian clarion call on economic restructuring as part of the campaign on liberation, calling for new thinking on behalf of the poor, also in the South African context.

\*5 For the purpose of this report use is made of the work of J van Zyl, a ‘new economics’ South African professor in economy (UP & Vista), as well as a booklet on Globalisation from the World Council of Churches, written by Tony Addy. Needless to say, much have been written on the current economic vision. On the ‘sustainable people-centred development vision’ refer to the paper presented by Van Zyl to the Africa Institute on 30 May 2001 in Pretoria under the title: ‘Is there really a more hopeful economic future for South Africa?’

\*6 Meadows et al, *The Limits to Growth* (A Report for the Club of Rome). London: Pan, 1972, p 195.

\*7 "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men (*my italics*). Taken from the USA Declaration of Independence, 1776, inscribed on the inner walls of the Jefferson Memorial, Washington mall.

\*8 The South African New Economics Foundation (SANE) is a local NGO focused on applying sound economic principles in South Africa. Prof. J van Zyl from Pretoria is a board member of the SANE Foundation. His paper read at the Africa Institute (30 May 2001) in Pretoria under the title: ‘Is there really a more hopeful economic future for South Africa?’ provides 10 practical economic policy proposals to fit the South African situation aimed at growing jobs and combating poverty. SANE links internationally with NEF, the New Economics Foundation, whose headquarters is in Britain.

\*9 See Barber, B. 1995. *Jihad versus McWorld*. Time Books. The reference here is to an article by Barber with a similar title as the book, as part of a chapter with the heading "Understanding Civil Society" (27-30), included in S Myers (ed.). 1997. *Democracy is a Discussion. Civic Engagement in Old and New Democracies*. The Handbook. Connecticut: College.

\*10 Take note of a 3rd economic sector – the ‘non-profit world’. An interesting

development in recent times is the growth of Non-Profit Organisations (or NPO's). It has the capacity to create employment for many people who would be otherwise unemployed. It is called by various names, such as 'the third sector', the 'third force', the 'non-profit society' etc. It is widely covered in the work of J Rifkind. 1995. *The End of Work. The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era.* (New York: Putnam).

The focus within non-profit kind of organisations is on the establishment of a culture within society where neither greed nor profit is the motives for people to share services, goods or talents, but the ideal that all may survive and grow. Such 'community focused' organisations has caught on worldwide in secular society. The Church can do much to assist in the creation of such organisations. Assistance in the creation of a third-sector job-placement agency is already a place to start.

Research indicates that the NPO sector represented about 4,7% of the GNP, which in Rand terms means R10 billion per annum. It was estimated that over 1,2 million South Africans are employed by non-profit organisations, and that a further 1,2 million are working as volunteers. New research from John Hopkins University revealed that non-profit organisations around the world now spend more than US\$1 trillion annually, and employ at least 19 million people world-wide. It was interesting to note that South Africa's contribution as an emerging economy was quite startling. [The quoted information on NPO's were found at e-Prodder Mail, 99-02-08, no 101, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), edited and compiled by David Barnard and Yzette Terreblanche. More information can be found by contacting the National Co-ordinator, SA Institute for Fundraisers, in the Western Cape.]

## 7.2 ITEMS FOR FURTHER READING

Addy T. 1998. *THE GLOBALISING ECONOMY, New Risks – New Challenges – New Alliances*, compiled by Tony Addy, undated but late 1998, published by Unit III (Justice, Peace and Creation) of the World Council of Churches; a report of a consultation, discussions and summaries of workgroups at the Malaga consultation on globalisation.

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World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) 1997: Report: 'A Continuing Process of Witness on Economic Justice' / 'A Processus Confessionis'.

Further papers by rev. Piet Beukes

- 1 'UNEMPLOYMENT': - GRAVE ECONOMIC INJUSTICE OF OUR TIME  
- COMPASSION IS NOT ENOUGH  
\* Paper read at the South African Missiology Society (SAMS) conference of Jan 1999.
- 2 AN INDUSTRIAL MISSION REFLECTION ON EMPLOYMENT ETHICS  
\* Paper read at the Theological Society of South Africa (TSSA) conference of Aug 1999.
- 3 GLOBALISATION AND HUMAN DIGNITY:  
ENGAGEMENT WITH BABYLON: A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE FROM SOUTH AFRICA ON UNEMPLOYMENT, POVERTY AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE  
\* Paper presented at the sociological ACTS/CSS2000 conference, Lee Univ., Tennessee, June 2000. A similar paper was read as guest lecturer at the Dept of Church History, Univ. of Pretoria.
- 4 GOD IN AFRICA AMIDST POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT?:  
A SOUTH AFRICAN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE  
\* Paper presented at the IACAC 2000 Conference of the International Association of Civil Airport Chaplains, Omaramba/Rustenburg, RSA, September 2000.

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