St Augustine Papers

Can the Dignity of the Human Person be a Serious Criterion in Economic Life?

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TERENCE LAWRENSON

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Introduction

In 1986 the US Catholic Bishops, in their pastoral letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the US Economy, made the statement that the dignity of the human person, realised in community with others, should be the criterion against which all aspects of economic life must be measured (US Bishops 1986, 28). This article asks whether this call is even worth serious consideration or if this type of reasoning is nothing more than wishing for a utopian ideal?

This question implies a debate between the rational and the hopeful. It suggests that our current state of understanding about, not just the economy, but all of our social environment, ourselves and each other is generally robust, and the US Bishops' call for dignity and community is something really quite novel, even quaint and naively religious.

In a November 2010 issue of the *Telegraph*,[1] Ed West wrote a very interesting piece in which he referred to a researched tendency in modern society to form almost religious beliefs about our institutions and leadership (recall the euphoria about Obama and how he was swept in as a modern day saviour for almost all of the world's ills, from the environment to international relations, to wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, to Guantanamo Bay, only to get utterly bogged down in the cynicism of US party-partisan politics). This tendency seems more prevalent in deeply secular societies and seems to manifest as a switch, or replacement, for more traditional religious beliefs. In a bit of a tongue-in-cheek article, West pokes fun at the fact that modern society is just as naïve about our serious, rational, important ideas as what traditional religious beliefs are accused of being.

In this article I am going to try to show that the US Bishops' 1986 call for a relook at the economy is really a call to relook at ourselves and our beliefs, with the hope that this will result in us rethinking our institutions, leadership and ultimately the economy. This is really a debate about humanity's collective hearts and souls, rather than specifically how they manifest in the way in which we have constructed our external reality, including the economy as we know it today.

If it is the case that we need to rethink ourselves and our beliefs in order to rethink the economy, then ideals seem like a very good place to start and quite typical of how all of these theories and systems emerge and develop. The Catholic Bishops' call is as legitimate a starting point as that of Adam Smith, Marx, Keynes or Milton.

Setting the context

The US Bishops' position of using *dignity* and *community* as the central criteria for economic life seems certainly a utopian ideal, but not "merely" a utopian ideal. By this I mean that just because it is an ideal, probably unachievable in absolute terms, it cannot be discarded as unworthy of serious consideration and I will try to demonstrate that it does offer real, practical guidance that can be useful to society. I will even try to argue that it may be anticipating an emerging trend within societies towards a less rational, scientific worldview and belief system. If this is the case, it may be well timed to assist humanity towards reaching a better understanding of our common purpose and common destiny.

Before beginning my argument, it is worth considering that all descriptions of economic systems began as theory/ideology and none have really progressed in the ways in which they were originally described. The US Bishops would not be alone in the apparent disconnect between describing the ideal and seeing something less than ideal develop in the complexity of the real world.

In this section I am going to build towards the argument that the US Bishops are not completely idealistic by:

- Describing the neoclassical economy, looking at those aspects that show how the economy cannot really be easily defined, let alone confined comfortably to any theoretical model (the US Bishops included).
- Considering human nature and dignity, which are even more elusive concepts than trying to describe the economy. Are we ready for the kind of utopia that the Catholic Bishops are urging?
- Finally, asking what the US Bishops' position offer that is practical and likely to be useful to society in real life, that is, more than "merely" utopian.

Why does the economy not behave like it is supposed to?

In his book *The Origin of Wealth,* Eric D. Beinhocker describes the classical economic period as a time when a framework for the workings of the economy was developed around static balance of *demand* versus *production*. In other words, the economy was seen to be static and stable and that shifts were temporary and always served to move the economy back to a healthy, static balance (Beinhocker 2007: 29). Quite clearly the concepts of stable balance developed during the classical period fell short of a full description of the economic reality and society moved on.

The neoclassical period (Beinhocker 2007: 42/43) is described as being a period in which sophisticated scientific and mathematical modelling were incorporated into the ever more complex economy. The economy was then seen as being in dynamic equilibrium and mathematics was borrowed from science and physics to try to explain and predict trends in the economy. In this period there was still a belief that movements within the economy were natural, followed predictable laws and could be described in rational terms. Recent developments in economic reality have again exposed how far from ideal these explanations were, so again society moved on.

The Origin of Wealth (2007) gives a substantial account of the history, origins and probable future of economic thinking. For the purposes of this article I am going to selectively draw from Beinhocker to try to show why a utopian ideal is a perfectly legitimate point of departure in any economic discussion. There are a number of concepts raised in *The Origin of Wealth* that can be used to make this point:

- Right in the beginning, Beinhocker gives an excellent description of the economy as:

  "Humanity's most complex creation, ... , yet no one designed it, no one runs it" (Beinhocker 2007: 5/6)

  Beinhocker compares the trillions of distributed daily decisions and transactions that are made to keep the global economy running with other human creations like the international space station, and concludes that the economy is profoundly more complex than anything else we have ever developed. And yet, nobody project-manages the economy, nobody is in charge, nobody co-ordinates those activities. There is no one person, or group of people, that just need to agree for things to change.

  When considering the economy in this way, as an overwhelmingly complex network of interconnected activities designed by nobody and under nobody's management, two familiar types of reasoning, which appear at times in the media as well as popular and academic writing, seem futile:

  1. A kind of longing for reason to prevail if groups like the economists, philosophers, theologians just rethink their position on ethics. This kind of reasoning implies that somebody must do something! It seems to suggest that some sort of deal could be brokered behind closed doors if only these groups could reach some common agreement around important economic issues.
  2. Moral outrage at those who seem to be to blame, who should know better, as if somehow they are outside of the economy, have a clearer view, should direct activities better.

  If we consider Beinhocker's argument, we find that the economy, and the theories that it spurns, is just not that definite that changes can be made even if groups like economists, politicians and business people could agree.

- Throughout his book, Beinhocker paints a picture of economic thinking which follows trends in society. Adam Smith was a product of his time, as was Marx. The neoclassical period followed an

explosion in scientific and technological progress, a period in which scientific materialism rapidly became the paradigm in which all aspects of human life were reduced to rational concepts. Towards the end of his book, Beinhocker foresees the end of the neoclassical period and predicts a period in which the economy will be viewed as being more like evolutionary science and Complexity-Mathematics. In other words, more thinking from outside of economics as opposed to emerging from within the field. It seems that our conceptualisation of the economy as being a complex, rational and mathematical, system is more likely part of our anthropology rather than reflecting some sort of autonomous, natural phenomenon.

- There has been continual scepticism at the assumptions underlying the development of the rationale and complex mathematics of the neoclassical models. Beinhocker lists many of these dubious assumptions, but most tellingly he writes:

  "For the most part, however, the economists ignored these criticisms, and the program for building the Neoclassical theory continued apace" (Beinhocker 2007: 49).

  From this sort of comment, I deduce that our economic thinking is not only part of our anthropology and dependent on the state of our current knowledge, and the existing tools of our knowledge which emerge mostly from outside of the field, but even resembles a naïve form of belief system, resistant to evidence that it may not fit with the way we organise our reality.

- The final theme worth noting is the continual reference to human nature, particularly in trying to approximate human nature within economic thinking, and of course, the degree to which economic theory falls short in its understanding of human nature. Beinhocker states:

  "At the core of any economic theory, there must be a theory of human behaviour" (Beinhocker 2007: 29).

All commentators seem to agree that human nature is intrinsically embedded in the economy, and that no understanding of the economy can be complete without an understanding of Human Nature.

In respect of Beinhocker, it suffices to say then, that this 500+ page book gives an excellent description of neoclassical economics, but also reveals that the economy remains beyond prediction, beyond control. This doesn't necessarily mean that society is destined to live with the economy as it currently is, and that economy cannot be manipulated, it is more a matter of what needs to be manipulated. Somehow the economy reflects our collective humanity, our collective underlying belief systems. It is more a mirror to our collective self-image than an autonomous, natural, equation-following phenomenon. I will try to show below how the US Bishops' "utopian ideal" about the economy is really focused on our collective self-image and as such does have the ability to impact on the economic real world.

What is our human nature?

The US Bishops' statement about using dignity, personhood and community as central criteria for economic life is deeply embedded with their assumptions about human nature. Implied within the document are hints at what these assumptions are, but an explicit definition can be gained from *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, which within a multi-page definition says:

> *"We become persons in the act of responding to God and to other human beings and to the world, ... The person is called to creative engagement and shared responsibility in the world, with and on behalf of other human beings. The person is called to participate in shaping society in such a way as to promote the well-being of its members, ..."* (Dwyer 1994: 734).

This quotation (and the surrounding text) captures a number of the key elements of what the Catholic Church and the US Bishops mean by our human nature. Some key components are:

- At the core of human dignity is the understanding that we are created by God in His image. Every person shares this intrinsic dignity, none are more worthy, more deserving than others.
- We are in relationship with God and others. We realize our dignity through relationship with God and others. Part of our humanness is these relationships.
- We are part of creation and this invokes notions of stewardship, responsibility, care and concern for the environment. We are also part of society which also involves responsibility, care, concern for society.
- Our dignity is dynamic, it is wrapped up in action, participation, responding, striving, goal directedness. The US Bishops' letter is filled with urges to action, concrete action.

This understanding of our human nature precludes two of the great cop-outs when it comes to the economy: abdication of our responsibility to the "natural laws" that govern economic principles (i.e. "nothing can be done"), and abdication to despondency (i.e. "nothing will change, it's gone too far").

Contrasted with this view of human nature is the modern, liberal view that celebrates individuality and rationality. According to this view we are evolving and improving. Humanity's feats of science and engineering, politics and economics are winning the battle against ignorance and chaos. Even our human nature can be understood, universalised, predicted and harnessed (Martinez 2003: 2). There is a sort of optimistic future perspective that our unlimited potential for improvement will bring solutions tomorrow for problems created today.[2]

It is interesting to consider the (mostly) secular views of Carl Gustav Jung who had one foot firmly in the modern era and the other in the post-modern. His early psychology was very much influenced by the modern concepts of the "scientification" of the human sciences. Later Jung developed a much more complex idea of human nature (Meyer, et al 2003: 96) in which he recognized four components; a physiological dimension, a psychological dimension, a social dimension and a spiritual dimension. So, one of the greatest minds in the study of human nature seems to shift away from a modern, rational view of human nature, to something much more complex, elusive, relational and spiritual. And this at a time when

economics was driving ahead with simplifying, quantifying, "scientificating" humanity, once again trailing trends coming in from other aspects of the human experience.

In order to try to understand how these different views on our nature impacts society, it makes sense to look at post-modernism as it seems to capture a sort of "collective-unconscious". Much has been written about postmodernism and my interest is really only to show that, as Jung perceived, humanity is again in transition, questioning and doubting our beliefs about our knowledge, our institutions and ourselves. In her brief overview of postmodernism, Maria Martinez makes the following comments about modernism and postmodernism (Martinez 2003: 2/3):

- *"Modernity assumed uniformity among all people, ... , constructed a view of universal human nature, ... , and truth, ... organised around universal and timeless concepts, ..."*
- *"Modernism accomplished much, ... , scientific inquiry made huge advances, ..., Western Europe and the United States , ... , rising to economic and political dominance. A strong belief in progress ruled planning and investment, ..."*
- *"Modernism exacted a price that was higher for some than for others, ... , wars, ... , economic depression, a widening gap between rich and poor."*
- *"Today the signs of postmodernism are everywhere, ... , fragmentation, conflicts, contradictions, divisiveness, disorder, ... , multicultural, consumer society in which inequalities and conflicts are growing."*

In the previous two sections I have tried to show that the neoclassical understanding of the economy is not as watertight as it is mostly presented. It appears that rather than following natural internal laws, it seems to have been manipulated around successful laws borrowed from outside of its own realm. Humanity seems to have manipulated economic theory around laws from physics and science because a sort of exuberance around successes we've had in science and technology has led us to collectively believe that we can universalize physics and science into all aspects of our environment, and even ourselves. These beliefs have entrenched themselves into becoming almost religious in nature and have had a profound effect on our impact on the world. The economy then seems,

rather than to reflect mathematical and scientific functions, to reflect the beliefs about ourselves and our beliefs about our environment that have emerged during the modern era. As we pass through the post-modern era these beliefs are in transition, humanity is in disarray and perhaps this is the perfect time for the US Bishops to offer their utopian ideal about how we should be and how we should do.

What can the US Bishops contribute that goes beyond mere "utopian ideal"?

One final way to look at neoclassical capitalism is as a social dilemma. Peter Kollock defines a social dilemma as a situation in which:

> *"...individually reasonable behaviour leads to a situation in which everyone is worse off"*, or
> *"... individual rationality leads to collective irrationality"*
> (Kollock 1998: 183).

Capitalism has created a global situation in which it is not just reasonable, but it is believed to be vital, to grow, accumulate, consume beyond the point of sustainability. The reason why this is a dilemma is that in its logical extreme everyone is worse off, even those most successful at growing, accumulating, consuming. They are worse off because pollution, over-harvesting of natural resources, depleting of non-renewable resources don't know borders, and recently even economic disasters and political/social dissent don't know borders.

Like so many other interesting social concepts, the concept of the social dilemma has also been studied, "scientificated" and quantified. Science has spawned strategies for game theory, business, politics, war, economics and so on. In spite of the scepticism that this needs to arouse, science has also identified a number of qualitative solutions for social dilemmas and it seems that the US Bishops' call either deliberately, or accidentally, contains some of these solutions.

Kollock identifies a number of possible solutions to social dilemmas, broadly considered as motivational, or structural solutions. Motivational solutions rely on participants not being fully egoistic while structural

solutions rely on changing the way the dilemma is structured to enhance collective outcomes (Kollock 1998: 192). Whether coincidental or deliberate, it is in these two categories that the US Bishops seem to be offering real, practical suggestions for a more collectively rational economic system.

In order to facilitate motivational solutions, Kollock identifies enhancing cooperation, communication and group identity. Participants are likely to be less egoistic when a combination of these factors is evident in their interactions. The US Bishops' statement is so rich with these three aspects that it is difficult to deal with each separately:

- We are called to consider ourselves as one human body.
- The US Bishops make a good case for how our group identity needs to shift from the plurality of social order, nationality, gender, race, culture and so on, to one in which we consider ourselves as one human body, one common people, in community.
- We are responsible for each other and thereby responsible for our institutions.
- Our group identity includes aspects of common purpose, of a shared destiny (even if it is a disastrous destiny if we cannot work together).
- The US Bishops' statement carefully and systematically turns to each sector of economic society and patiently outlines its role, problems, commonality within the whole system. They deal with owners, management, workers, unions, women, government, the poor, various economic sectors and so on; always emphasizing our common responsibility, the need for care, concern, justice. Of course, always emphasizing our common humanity and dignity.

So, the US Bishops are deploying a form of a motivational solution for the social dilemma that arises as a result of the neoclassical economy. By calling on society to rethink our individualistic roles as being less egoistic, more collective, more other-centered, more concerned about justice, dignity and the common good, they are invoking a dissonance that is shown to be effective when studying social dilemmas. This also at a time when society seems ready to dispense with the paradigms that came with the modern era, so their timing could be quite good as well.

Structural solutions for Kollock are those solutions that either modify or completely eliminate the social dilemma, redefining the structure to eliminate the selfish or egoistic advantages that give rise to the dilemma (Kollock 1998: 199). These solutions, in theory, assume that participants will not change their behaviours without help from outside of the game. Kollock identifies a number of strategies:

- Iteration and identifiability - rely on driving cooperation through making participants' actions, outcomes and benefits more visible to all (the theory being that participants will act less egoistically when they are identifiable and their actions and outcomes are visible to all).
- Payoff structures - rely on increasing the benefits for cooperation versus egoistic payoffs.
- Efficacy structures - rely on enhancing the individuals' ability to impact on the cooperative good. That is, participants are more likely to cooperate if they are aware of their ability to do so.
- Finally, boundaries and sanctions - rely on powerful external agents to regulate the game, ensuring and enforcing cooperation.

Once again, by luck or by intention, the US Bishops' statement includes calls for and suggestions that are about changing the structure of the economy and facilitating more cooperative outcomes. Some examples:

- "Owners and managers, …., are accountable to, … , workers and communities when making decisions" (US Bishops 1986: 113)
- "The principle of social solidarity suggests that alleviating poverty will require fundamental changes in social and economic structures …."(US Bishops 1986: 187), and later, "through government to establish just and effective public policies" (US Bishops 1986: 189)
- "These and other social welfare programs …", and later, "build and sustain a healthy economy that provides employment opportunities", "remove barriers to full and equal employment" (US Bishops 1986: 192, 196.a., 199.b.).

There are continual references to the government, and other social institutions, intervening to ensure justice, fairness, equity, dignity and ultimately the common good. This is a direct call for greater involvement

from significant "external agents" to mediate the cooperative and egoistic tensions within the economy.

There is a less obvious but more profound "external agent" that the US Bishops involve in the current economic injustices that they highlight. At the heart of the document is a call to Christian values, morality, the reign of God and justice. Ultimately the US Bishops are reminding all people of faith that there is an ever-present "external agent" who does require that we attend to human dignity and the common good. Once again, this reminder comes in this post-modern era when society seems ready and nostalgic for spiritual expression, to dispense with its literal, rational view of life. When people contemplate their spiritual immortality it is very difficult to continue to live as if life is short and miserable and that the best one can do is to make the most of it for oneself.

Conclusion

The US Bishops' 1986 statement on economic justice, and Catholic Social Teaching in general, is a call to values. Values emerge from beliefs and understanding. In this way it is a very profound commentary on the economy. Since the fall of communism, other theories around the economy have really just been tweaks, fixes, patches, enhancements to a deeply entrenched set of paradigms based on values, beliefs and understandings that are a function of our modern society.

The US Bishops are not being prescriptive in economic terms and are quite cleverly sidestepping the complex debate, and the likely paralysis that this kind of position would result in. They clearly state that they are not economists and are reluctant to frame their call in purely economic terms. Rather than represent themselves as economic insiders they write as "heirs of the biblical prophets, …, followers of Jesus…"(US Bishops 1986: 4). The US Bishops reframe the debate around their strengths, around a set of paradigms that are much more difficult to dismiss than their economic credentials.

One of the reasons why the "faith paradigms" that the US Bishops invoke are so difficult to dismiss is that humanity is currently in a profound quandary about what we do believe. The beliefs, and their results, from

the modern era have been deeply troubling on a global level and most of humanity seems to be at odds with the underlying assumptions from the modern era. The post-modern era with its fragmentation, dissent, plurality, nostalgia and so on, is well documented and is really more evidence that humanity is again on the search for meaning. One of the documented trends of postmodernism is the return to spirituality, and it is precisely here that the US Bishops have something to offer. They reframe the economic debate as a debate about our spirituality.

This makes the US Bishops' call for dignity and community to be the central criterion for economic measurement (and their underlying assumptions), relevant, legitimate and well timed. If this was intended, Catholic Social Teaching seems to anticipate the shift away from a rational, scientific, modern reality and holds up answers as humanity asks the questions about itself and its creations, including its most complex creation, the economy.

There is one final negative that could reduce this to being merely a utopian ideal. And that is: how much social impact does Catholic Social Teaching really have, and who really knows what the US Bishops are calling for? For this to really impact on society during this period in which we are collectively agonizing about our self-concepts, beliefs and how these impact on our economic life, Catholic Social Teaching, as brilliant as it is, as deeply founded in rich intellectual thinking, has to penetrate beyond the academic/intellectual institutions. And this is possibly the single, overriding factor that can reduce such teaching to being "merely" utopian.

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Notes

[1] http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/edwest/100062966/when-people-stop-believing-in-god-they-start-believing-in-big-government-and-obamaism/
[2] Karl Popper called this "Promissory science", where we suspend scepticism about what we don't understand because we have full belief that one day we will.

Ethics and Sustainability: taking Corporate Social Responsibility further

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MARILISE SMURTHWAITE

Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has not always received a good press. This is surprising given that one is talking here about terms like social responsibility, principles like charity and stewardship, goals like sustainability, and actions which, to all intents and purposes are aimed at the good of communities and the benefit of people as a kind of business outreach activity. Surely this is desirable: surely this shows business has a conscience and is well-intentioned? Yet there are accusations of CSR being mere "green washing" or "window dressing", serving managers and corporations' self-interest, but not the public good. There have been accusations of capitalist imperialism and exploiting developing economies and evidence that corporates' involvement in political issues has not always contributed to the common good[1]. And then, of course, there is the concept of sustainability: another oft-cited buzzword in the context of CSR, with many variants in its meaning as well as charges that it is merely co-opted by corporates for their own agendas.

So where is the problem? In the actual concepts? In the practice? In the effects? And is the problem a general one making any CSR activities of business suspect or is it that certain types of CSR are perhaps unethical? And what is the relationship of CSR to sustainability and to ethics: can we take CSR further perhaps by looking at this relationship?

It seems to me that the problem has its roots in how we conceive of the good, of the person, and of the basis we have for making a moral judgement (see Gula1989: 9 who uses Gustafson's threefold definition of ethics). Our understanding of CSR, of sustainability and our actions in practice will depend on the types of answers we give to these questions. And this in turn will be based on our value system. "There is no political

community without values, which are the expression of a vision of the good life or an idea of the common good" and all political communities have a 'moral commitment' (Verstraeten 2010: 168). If indeed we want to contribute to the common good of all people, to do justice and to relieve poverty (and many CSR programmes profess to want to do this), then we will have to re-examine our understanding of CSR, our global context in which we practise our CSR and its effects on people and see if we can gain an understanding of our values and vision of the good life by looking at the evidence as it were. We will also have to consider whether references to sustainable and sustainability in the context of CSR are not mere empty rhetoric, oft repeated buzzwords or mere euphemisms for keeping the company going at maximum profit levels. And then we will have to ask if our vision and our practice needs to change. So, what is the vision of the good life and our idea of the common good as evidenced by our CSR practice? Does it incorporate an understanding that

> The common good is the sum total of all those conditions of social living – economic, political, cultural – which make it possible for women and men readily and fully to achieve the perfection of their humanity? Individual rights are always experienced within the context of promotion of the common good (Henriot et al 2002:23; cf. Vallely 1998:5-7).

Or is it closer to a good for some at the expense of many others? Does our version of CSR point to how we envisage the good life for all and how we envisage making a contribution to the common good? To try to answer these questions, I will look at CSR and the global context, at our understanding of CSR and sustainability and try to suggest ways to take CSR forward.

Background: CSR and the global context

As observed in a recent edition of *Business Ethics Quarterly* the globalised environment where many corporations operate is a complex one where traditional values, nation states and political governance systems have been eroded and where there may be few rules or regulations. Political, social and economic roles are no longer clearly demarcated and assumptions of strong nation states which can solve social problems while

business gets on with its economic role are no longer valid. Corporations are involved in the governance of society, not just in making money. Nor is there any form of regulatory global governance system. At the global level, the word "voluntary" characterises all such initiatives. This includes the emergence of international accountability standards like the Global Compact, SA 8000, GRI and ISO 14001, all of which are aimed at setting standards which all would obey. But the problem is these standards cannot be enforced: they are simply voluntary. Santoro (2010) notes that we live in what he calls the post-Westphalian globalised world where there are complex relationships between corporations and power politics. The issues at stake are those of power and legitimacy and corporations now assume some of the functions (e.g. public health, labour rights) of the nation-state, which is in decline. A key issue, then, is to "fill the TNC legitimacy and accountability gap in the modernised globalised political economy" (2010: 287), for which voluntary, non-enforceable regulation as is the current case is unsatisfactory.

While it is clear that corporates have taken on what may once have been considered the responsibilities of government, they also "make the rules of the game" or break them as the case may be. This goes far beyond the original understanding of CSR as responsibility to stakeholders.

It may also be useful to remind ourselves that, in *practice* in our global society, versions of CSR vary regionally. Could some versions be more helpful than others when looking for approaches which take into account the common good? For example, some argue "Business activity requires an environment conducive to sustainability" (Fort and Schipani 2004: 129). Michaelson (2010) argues that CSR in Europe is more oriented to sustainability than that in the US where the emphasis is on compliance. Hiss (2009) contends that in liberal economies like the US, CSR was "explicit" by which she means companies had to show how they would engage beyond the laws. In 'coordinated' economies like Germany's, it was 'implicit', mandatory, regulated and incentivised, a situation which she argues is changing now. Consequently, there are a number of competing versions of CSR emerging in the German context. In respect of underlying values, Fort and Schipani (2004) have a similar argument and have pointed out that the US versions of corporate citizenship are more focused on "legally enforceable duties" (:100) and are less pronounced

than those of Japan or Germany which have a more communitarian orientation and "an expectation that corporations will serve a societal good". However, in their view, the Japanese and German versions represent more of a management "voice" than the US versions.

Coleman's (2010) useful summary of the themes which underlie US culture proves enlightening for an understanding of the differences between Europe and the US in respect of CSR. These themes which he lists as equality, freedom, material abundance, better living through technology and individualism, are "filtered" through "the institutional realities of democracy, technology, the free market 'myth' and partial reality, and a legal system based on adversarial notions in a pattern of common law that privileges individual rights and is relatively blind to anything like collective or cultural rights" (Coleman 2010: 198). The economic system is underpinned by market capitalism and consumerism, while the understanding of the person is firmly individualistic. Notions of solidarity and communitarianism as found in the European understanding are alien to American culture. Coleman argues that the American preference is for the "national interest" rather than notions of the "common good". In addition, America particularly, thinks of itself as an exception to other nations and if Coleman is to be believed, has not quite processed the notion of being part of the globalised world and culture. By contrast, Verstraeten (2010) notes the values underlying the European Union to be peace, freedom, responsibility, diversity, subsidiarity, differentiation, multilateralism, tolerance and solidarity within the Union and with the rest of the world. Thus it is clear that the values underlying particular cultures may well mean that CSR has a more individualistic, legal orientation in some settings and in others may be more communitarian. Such differences could be traced to various roots, but one possible source lies in the differing concepts of what a good society is and what a good and flourishing life for the individual person is. Values lie at the basis of community life. This is why Michaelson (2010: 239) argues that we must be careful not to ask questions about sustainability from a Western position of economic power and capitalist ideology. To do so means we take for granted that Western normative standards should prevail and that those of emerging economies are somehow 'suspect' and that 'the relative prosperity of developed economies' is somehow proof "of a sustainable form of free market capitalism that is supposed to be a universal economic

destination". Such a concern echoes Thompson's comment that sustainable development is "more rhetoric than reality in today's public policy discussions" (Thompson 2003:90).

If this is the context of our global CSR and its practice, then how do we understand CSR and sustainability?

CSR, sometimes re-labelled as "corporate citizenship" by business, has been classified as a 'vacuous' and amorphous concept (Danley 1994); a modern myth where business obeys the law and uses CSR to cover up its real moral responsibilities and amoral business activities (De George 1996); or a term which has so many meanings that it is difficult to know what the expectations for socially responsible behaviour are (Sethi 1996; Whitman 1996 and Zadek 2004). Despite arguments that CSR is based on principles of stewardship and charity (Post, Lawrence and Weber 2002:61-64), and focuses business on taking responsibility for the consequences of its actions (Post, Lawrence and Weber 2002:56), there are other less positive views. These include the argument that CSR tries to be "…a moral alternative to Friedman's classical view" (Green 1996:40-1) without bankrupting the company. This view, a so-called "ethical concept", could, in practice, assist with social problems and be good for the company's profits and image as well (Buchholz and Rosenthal 2002:304). The latter view is typical of what are called "instrumental approaches" to CSR, or, in 'business-speak' the 'win-win' approach to CSR, the so-called 'business case' for CSR. Now what does this mean and what does it say about our values?

Theoretically, CSR can be divided on the basis of its objectives into four basic categories (Garriga and Melé 2008). Instrumental approaches are one of these categories and see CSR "as a means to the end of profits". This could mean a number of things: CSR's focus is on maximizing shareholder value with a focus on short-term profits; *or* it may be on gaining competitive advantage with a focus on longer term profits; *or* CSR could actually be a form of marketing. The latter is the so-called "cause-related marketing" where the activities are 'altruistic' but the aim is actually to market the company. It is seen as a kind of 'win-win' approach or, more bluntly, 'enlightened self-interest' (Garriga and Melé 2008: 78).

Now it appears that since the late 1990s, this instrumental type of CSR has been on the increase, with CSR being a strategy for maximising profit using "marketing tools" to "stimulate stakeholders' behaviours that enhance corporate performance" (Gond, Palazzo and Basu 2009: 57; see also Vogel 2005). This is linked to notions that CSR needs to be justified, and explains why both in academia and in corporate practice there is reference to the "business case" for CSR, where the financial benefits of socially responsible actions are stressed. The theme is "CSR for profit" and the focus is "economic" or "strategic" approaches to CSR rather than "duty-aligned" or "ethical" perspectives. While the latter approaches still exist, the former are becoming dominant as is illustrated by the marketing perspective on CSR. Furthermore the instrumental approach has spawned various "CSR-oriented industries", Corporal Social Investment (CSI, being but one example (Gond *et al* 2009: 68).

What it means is that CSR is less about a corporation's contribution to the common good and the needs of the community and more about self-interest and the costs and benefits (financial and otherwise) of particular projects. This, in turn, means CSR needs to fit the "win-win" paradigm and become a kind of "strategic philanthropy" (Gond, Palazzo and Basu 2009: 67). "In practice this new instrumental CSR is thus portrayed as a panacea to solve negative perceptions regarding corporate malpractice, and therefore as being naturally good" (Gond, Palazzo and Basu 2009: 67). Small wonder then that CSR is sometimes seen merely as a "face" which business puts on to get social acceptance for its activities.

I would argue that if indeed this is a preferred version of CSR our vision of the good is truncated: it is not a notion of the common good in the sense of ensuring those conditions of social life which enable all individuals and groups to "achieve their own fulfilment in a relatively thorough and ready way" (*Gaudium et Spes* 74). It does not envisage contributing to the welfare of the community as a whole and is not an inclusive concept. Rather, we are talking here of an exclusive good, where the interests and benefits of particular groups (and not necessarily the groups who are on the receiving end of the CSR) are prioritised and used as the basis for decision making. Notions of stewardship and charity become really notions of looking after self-interest and contributing where best that self-interest can be profitably fostered. At its worst, people are merely a means

to the end of profit and the good done by the CSR project is really a by-product of the operation of the market. There are indeed ethical questions to be asked in adopting this variant of CSR: not only is profit more important than social responsibility, but also its focus is on "the means of achieving CSR reputation rather than the end of social welfare" (Gond *et al* 2009: 76).

There are also some real dangers in adopting this approach to CSR which we should perhaps take heed of. 'Doing good to do well' may not always be as good as it seems and it may also raise questions about approaches to sustainability. Gond *et al* (2009) argue that corporations that practise this type of CSR have similarities to the Mafia and gain advantages in areas with weak governance, focusing on profit and self-interest and emphasising the "superior culture" of the firm, an emphasis which provides fertile ground for *deviant activities*. Where corporations operate to get what they can while they can and leave when the going is less profitable, communities are damaged. Furthermore, instrumental CSR does not consider normative questions, and so one may ask what happens in situations where a contribution to stakeholders or society will not bring profit? The answer to this is that CSR could either become opportunistic, changing track and commitments depending on the profits to be made, or it could become less about contributions which are truly needed and more about whatever fits the 'business-case', needed or not. Because this version of CSR is "normatively weak", CSR could merely end up serving particular interest groups or even having negative effects on communities, effects which remain hidden under the guise of CSR actions, while actually being dubious business practices (see Gond *et al* 2009).

It seems clear therefore that this type of CSR has grave ethical shortfalls and excludes a meaningful understanding of the common good. In its practice, we could even go as far as to suggest it is unlikely that it will contribute to the common good but may in fact foster unethical practice and may return us to an adapted version of the Friedman dictum that the social responsibility of business is to make a profit for shareholders. And here there is a link with a certain understanding of sustainability, a notion which sees achieving sustainability as rich with possibilities of making profit by developing products and technologies which are environmentally friendly (Hart 2001: 7). Sustainability is thus a business opportunity for

growth, contribution to the society and profit all rolled into one. This ties in with Vogel's observations (2008: 184) that some use the idea of sustainability to make profits over the long-term, adopting the so-called 'business case' for CSR which in practice means 'doing good to do well rather than doing good to do good'. He argues that despite wide CEO support, the jury is still out on whether this so-called business case for CSR *does* deliver long-term profits. For Vogel, despite widespread criticism of Friedman's position that the business of business is only to make a profit for its shareholders, and widespread acknowledgement of CSR as a strategy, in fact "many contemporary advocates of CSR have implicitly accepted Friedman's position that the primary responsibility of companies is to create wealth for their shareholders. But they have added a twist: in order for companies to do so, they must now act virtuously" (Vogel 2008:190). Presumably, then, sustainability, is rather a useful concept: it has an ethical ring to it and suggests one is acting virtuously even if one has merely coopted the *idea* of sustainability and its *use* as a term at strategic intervals in marketing operations and materials.

We need to ask ourselves about the ethics of this. Can we just see sustainability as a business opportunity for profit or, as often seen in business, politics and academia, as a synonym for CSR as a 'business case'? Does this type of understanding point to ethical shortcomings and ethical risk? Perhaps we can consider this by asking what we really mean by sustainability and what we should perhaps mean.

Sustainability is, according to Diesendorf (1999/2000), the goal of the process of sustainable development which was defined in the *Bruntland Report* (WCED, 1987) as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". While this is somewhat vague, it seems understood that sustainable development includes both human economic and social development as well as environmental protection (Diesendorf: 3). This kind of understanding is echoed by those who understand that the term "in a business context aims at mapping out how an organisation can successfully survive without compromising the ecological, social and economic survival of its current and future environment" (Crane et al 2008: 56). This too is a sort of suitably vague catch-all definition, the focus of which is really on the survival of the company without harming its environment,

whatever that might entail. A similar definition, though a little more comprehensive, is provided by Fox et al (2010): "a status that organisations achieve when they function such that the benefits that will be passed on to future generations are not devalued, the burdens are not increased, and the capacity of the individual stakeholders to reach their potential is progressively enhanced" (Fox, Tort and Wade-Benzoni 2010: 173).

But not all accept this notion of three interlocking spheres of sustainable development (the social, economic and environmental). Zadek (2004: 109) argues it is conceptually flawed given that all social phenomena are contained *within* the environment where they have environmental "roots and consequences", while the economic "comprises essentially social processes" (:111). As Thompson (2003: 181) notes: "The principle of sustainable development aims to expand economic opportunities, to achieve a fairer distribution of wealth and power, and to satisfy basic needs without jeopardizing the prospects of future generations". This definition is far more specific and oriented to the common good. In respect of corporations what this means is that we must make sure that so-called development is not exploitation but authentic, does not merely destroy indigenous cultures and that it is not merely a ruse for moving money from South to North. In fact, there are major challenges to sustainability: pollution, depletion and poverty and each of these takes a different form in developed economies, emerging economies and survival economies (Starkey and Welford 2001: 11). Thus the concept of sustainability is a more complex notion incorporating economic, environmental and social *justice* not merely financial and environmental *issues.*

Sustainability, therefore, needs more than new technology and product stewardship. Unless we sustain our environment, we will not manage to sustain the earth. Corporates, along with other social actors, need to take ecological responsibility which may be individual responsibility or it may be collective responsibility undertaken on a collaborative basis with other social actors (see Garriga and Melé 2008). We need to ask what we mean by "social equity, environmental justice and business ethics" (Elkington 2001: 24). As Elkington (2001) notes, business is often more comfortable with challenges on the environmental level rather than with those on the social level. For some, sustainability is merely about "resource efficiency"

(: 31) and has nothing to do with social, ethical, cultural issues. Not so says Elkington: these issues are crucial in "determining the success or failure of the sustainability transition" (: 31). A "would-be" sustainable corporation should think about social capital in terms of trust, ways of working together for common goals, sharing ethics. But, on the other hand, many continue in the old ways and "the side-effects of markets and human greed have the potential to undermine any embryonic trust society may have in business leaders, and, as a result, the capacity of the business world to make the necessary contributions to the sustainability transition" (: 37). Brown (2005) observes that the increasing gap between rich and poor and the increasing ethnic hatred in our world both pose a threat to our moving towards sustainable development. He suggests we go beyond the "business case" for CSR to develop what Zadek calls the "new global governance frameworks". Brown advocates that the model for this change should be a 'civic case' for corporate integrity based on an Aristotelean foundation.

In fact, strategies for a sustainable economy and a sustainable world demand far more than 'going green' and preventing pollution and the question is not just as simple as whether one can make money by going green. Such an orientation once again points to a very narrow understanding of CSR: profit and self-interest. As Michaelson (2010) suggests, for many issues (environmental change, pollution, intellectual property etc), the general solution is the Western approach which is "the instrumentalist-rationalist path of setting a minimum standard" and then trying to "measure and monitor compliance" (: 245). But he argues convincingly that having laws and monitored standards does not mean that there is necessarily a 'moral commitment' to 'enforcing' such standards (: 245). Perhaps we should heed Michaelson's caution that we ask ourselves whether Western "economic and ethical constructs" are indeed the solution to our ethical problems or whether they are simply the consensus of those who are most powerful economically and who have most influence globally (2010: 241). Are we really just taking an instrumentalist approach, putting a number of standards in place and then trying to monitor and measure adherence (Michaelson 2010: 245)? Do we forget or ignore the fact that in certain societies a litigious approach is not culturally acceptable? In addition do we consider that not all societies believe in Western liberal individualism which underlies the notion of human rights:

for some societies the unit for moral analysis is not the individual and his/her rights, but instead the family or the community (Michaelson 2010)?

And, as we have seen above, there are ethical questions about the instrumentalist path which we need to engage with. Is CSR and so-called sustainability of benefit to the wider community, does it contribute to or detract from the common good? Does it reflect a concern with upholding and facilitating the dignity of human beings? Given that not all forms of CSR are the same and not all CSR has beneficial outcomes for communities and persons and the environment, is there a possibility that we can find our way forward by emphasising a different form of CSR? Let us be mindful of Garriga and Melé's argument that, given the number of different approaches to CSR, "Integrating empirical and normative aspects of CSR, or economics and ethics, is a great challenge" (Garriga and Melé in Crane, Matten and Spence 2008: 95) and that the "many competing ethical theories" frequently lead to "…confusion and scepticism' (: 98). Therefore we need to consider whether we have an approach to CSR more suited to achieving justice, sustainability, and consideration of the marginalised than the instrumental one. We need to consider whether we can avoid the dangers of this instrumentalist approach to CSR and sustainability and ensure that our approaches are ethical. Likewise we must consider how to incorporate a vision where we aim to contribute to a wider good than our own monetary and reputational self-interest. In addition, we need to ask ourselves whether we can accept that sustainability needs to be more than a fashionable term frequently used but "more rhetoric than reality" (Thompson 2003:90). And we need to acknowledge that mere instrumental CSR will not serve our purpose well: its focus is too tied to profit and self-interest. This seems possible and there are some useful ideas to be had in this respect. I will deal with three suggestions: those made by Bannerjee (2010), Des Jardines (2011) and Gond et al (2009).

Bannerjee (2010) has some interesting thoughts on this and believes "The 'win-win semantics' of corporate citizenship effectively delegitimises and disempowers large segments of society that are unable to participate in the rule setting game" (Bannerjee 2010: 271). These rules do not necessarily take into account the interests of the marginalised in society. He suggests we ask the wrong questions: we should be less concerned about how

corporations can get *into* civil society and more concerned with how the marginalised and the poor who are not corporate or state or market actors can have their rights protected in a democracy. To this end, in the case of CSR, we should look at the "demand-side" of CSR, and instead of asking how to make a profit out of CSR, we should ask different questions like why there are so many protests against corporations all over the world and why the marginalised are so very poor and dispossessed and what both the state and we, the society, should do about it (Bannerjee 2010: 272). He notes:

> The problem with our theories of corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship and corporate sustainability is that there is too much "corporate" in them … While there is more than forty years of research on what   effects CSR initiatives may or may not have on the corporate bottom line we know very little about the outcome of these initiatives for society. (2010: 266)

This means we focus too much on the "supply-side of CSR" and ask too few questions about the power of corporations and their consequent ability to frame socially responsible behaviour to suit themselves. This was the case where corporations ensured that the "carbon tax debate" ended up allowing them a great deal of leeway in respect of emissions and so business could continue as usual and make large profits (Bannerjee: 2010). Corporations have actually "captured" sustainability, and seem able to retain their social legitimacy and make profits even when they have behaved in ways which are environmentally or socially unethical (Bannerjee 2010: 267). And, in his view, the Global Compact is not a solution. It evidences the desire of business to commit to voluntary initiatives and keep their "entrepreneurial freedom" rather than be legislated (: 267). But there is no proof that the Global Compact results in positive CSR outcomes: it has no monitoring or measuring mechanisms and critics say that some members just join so as to use the UN logo. Others who have joined have been guilty of human rights infringements (: 268 citing Zammit 2003). We need to look at our notions of corporate citizenship and ensure that they are not just about corporate interest at the expense of the welfare of society.

Joseph R. Des Jardines (http://www.stthomas.edu accessed 20 July 2011) therefore suggests that the *purpose* (telos) of business in the 21st century

ought to be sustainability in the sense of "meeting the real needs of presently living human beings without jeopardising the ability of future people to meet their own needs" (:3) for this is in fact the 21st century's "common good", a common good which is "teleological not utilitarian" (: 10). It is less a question of "getting what one wants" and more of getting "what one needs to live a full and meaningful life" (: 10). The economy therefore must serve these human needs not merely focus on growth.

To this end, he argues that business has more than a legal responsibility, and needs more than a concept of negative (read: *passive*) duty to 'fence in' profit[2]. Wettstein (2010) concurs and notes that we cannot assume that we have "well-ordered" political societies within which business operates. In fact, business activities do cause harm to individuals and the corporation has more than a passive duty to "do no harm" and must take their share of collective responsibility for solving global problems. Thus business should actually *do good* even though liberal theories do not require this on the grounds of its encroaching on the freedom of the individual, and even though these same approaches consider that there is no agreed-on definition of the 'common good'.

However, Des Jardines also contends that "Significant harm can be prevented, at present and into the near future, if business institutions would remake themselves on a model of sustainability" and this without much financial problem. He argues that those who hold management positions in business "have an ethical responsibility for taking positive actions to create a more just and environmentally sustainable world" (: 7). There are many who live in poverty and who lack basic necessities. For the common good to be realised, we need to work to ensure the type of "social conditions" where humans can attain fulfilment. Such fulfilment is not provided by the "invisible hand" or endless consumer goods. We need to serve real needs and so "… the world's economy must produce substantial amounts of food, clothing, shelter, health care and jobs, and distribute these goods and services to those in need" (: 7). This has to be done within the constraints of the environment both in terms of its capacity and in terms of its limitations. Is there such a possibility? For Des Jardines, the answer is 'yes'. The model would be focused on *development* rather than *growth* as the economy needs to get "better" not "bigger". "Where economic growth, within a finite biosphere is necessarily limited, economic development

never is" (: 7 citing Herman Daly, *Beyond Growth,* Beacon Press, Boston: 1997).

So is there one preferred way for business to function so as to be sustainable and to contribute to the common good? Des Jardines suggests there are, in fact, several possibilities but all such approaches have certain core characteristics. These are as follows:

- Increased efficiency due to a more environmentally viable form of waste recycling. Everything at each stage of production needs to be recyclable and needs to not destroy the earth when it is recycled into it.
- Production of services becomes the aim of business rather than the production of goods: human beings need many services to live a life of dignity, but not that many goods (so, for example, we need few of the goods available in our consumer markets, but we need services like healthcare, education, transportation etc).
- Entrepreneurial opportunities to create goods which last and are recycleable rather than a multitude of goods fueling the "commodity fetish" of the consumer.
- Rather than seeing the environment as an "unending revenue stream", business should "invest in natural capital" and harness carefully the earth's capacity to produce "life-sustaining necessities" (Des Jardines: 8).

Gond et al (2009) believe that the Mafia metaphor is instructive and we can learn three things from the close parallels between instrumental CSR and Mafia activities. We can learn that:

1. We should be wary of imagining that instrumental CSR, "best-practice" CSR, ethical codes and the numbers of measuring instruments appearing to track CSR, mean that we have socially responsible business behaviour. Mere instrumental CSR can mean "ethical myopia among managers" (: 74), codes can be used to prevent ethical scrutiny and measures can actually mean less rather than more "corporate social performance" (: 74) or can prop up a façade of CSR.

2. CSR should be embedded both normatively and socially for two reasons. Firstly, this is important so that CSR is not only motivated by self-interest and profit. Secondly, we need to consider "win-win" CSR normatively and understand whether business is merely using its power to make its CSR ventures *appear* good for society or whether, when evaluated, such ventures have little benefit for society and various stakeholders.

3. The global context where corporations operate in a "legal and moral vacuum" (: 75) is such that they themselves decide on the limitations or otherwise of their actions which are not monitored/sanctioned, and that this could mean possible corporate opportunism and mafia-like behaviour.

Conclusion

Perhaps we should begin our conclusion with reference to the papal encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* and remind ourselves that:

> *The economy needs ethics in order to function correctly* — not any ethics whatsoever, but an ethics which is people-centred. …It would be advisable, however, to develop a sound criterion of discernment, since the adjective "ethical" can be abused. When the word is used generically, it can lend itself to any number of interpretations, even to the point where it includes decisions and choices contrary to justice and authentic human welfare (*CV*: 45).

We need such discernment in assessing our approach to CSR. In our globalised world, for reasons both political and economic, corporations are powerful actors, who make the rules of the game, play in the game and also break the rules of the game. We need business to contribute, along with other players, to the common good and to ensuring that our environment (and that means every part of that environment) is one where humans can live with dignity and where sustainable development for all persons is fostered. CSR is the ideal means to make such a contribution. And many corporates do exactly that. But CSR becomes less than ideal if it means, as some have pointed out, that we have either a resurgence of the "robber baron" approach to business facilitated by weak governance. This means that one makes a profit however one wishes and then puts some of

this profit into CSR projects (Crane et al 2008). CSR is also less than ideal if we co-opt CSR in order to make further profits for the company irrespective of the real needs of communities and heedless of the effects of our decisions and actions on those same communities. Our justification for judging a project worthwhile becomes profit and self-interest of the company alone, while we could instead view "profit as a means for achieving the goal of a more humane market and society" (*CV*: 47). Our economic decisions have moral consequences (*CV*: 37) and so

> Profit is useful if it serves as a means towards an end that provides a sense both of how to produce it and how to make good use of it. Once profit becomes the exclusive goal, if it is produced by improper means and without the common good as its ultimate end, it risks destroying wealth and creating poverty. The economic development that Paul VI hoped to see was meant to produce real growth, of benefit to everyone and genuinely sustainable. It is true that growth has taken place, and it continues to be a positive factor that has lifted billions of people out of misery - recently it has given many countries the possibility of becoming effective players in international politics. Yet it must be acknowledged that this same economic growth has been and continues to be weighed down by *malfunctions and dramatic problems*, highlighted even further by the current crisis. (*CV*: 21)

We need the vision to see that our present trajectory is unsustainable: imagine the emerging economies using resources and generating waste at the same level as the first world. This is not viable. If we are to take CSR further, we need to do a number of things in my view:

1. We need to acknowledge the shifts in understanding and practice in CSR in our contemporary world. And we need to acknowledge some of the critique of contemporary Western approaches to CSR. Without this we cannot necessarily take CSR further in an ethical and sustainable manner.
2. We need to understand 'sustainability' in a holistic way so that it can be linked first and foremost to an understanding of the human person and to a concept of the common good. "In *development programmes*, the principle of the *centrality of the human person*, as the subject primarily responsible for development, must be preserved" (*CV*:47).

3. Then we need to ask ourselves about our values and our motivation in deciding on CSR projects and take CSR further by facing the ethical issues and challenges of the "win-win" business case approach to CSR. Our vision needs to be person-centred and not profit-centred. We need to consider CSR in the context of person-centred development and the use of profits to create a more humane society. In this way, our CSR could truly make a contribution to the common good and to sustainability not only of the company itself but also to that of communities and the environment. Such an approach would match the type of CSR classified by Garriga and Melé as ethical theories, so-called because this group of approaches focuses on "the right thing to achieve a good society" (Garriga and Melé 2008: 97). Included in this group of theories are normative stakeholder theories, universal rights approaches, sustainable development approaches (largely at the macro-economic level) and the common good approaches. It seems to me that merely focusing on long-term profits (instrumental) or on responsible exercise of corporate power (political) are limited and very 'corporation-oriented'. Approaches "integrating social demands" (integrative) seem more ethical but could be trumped by those approaches which focus on "contributing to a good society by doing what is ethically correct" (Garriga and Melé 2008: 98). Such approaches would marry an intentional contribution to the common good with an under-standing of doing what is ethically correct and not merely profitably correct.

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Dimensions and Drivers
of Business Giving in South Africa

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JUDITH HUDSON

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Why do businesses operating in South Africa invest in social needs? Why do they select and prioritise some needs over others? Is business giving in South Africa an attempt to stabilise the business environment or is it intended to curry favour with governing politicians? Is it a marketing exercise or a considered attempt to tackle social needs? How significant is giving by small and medium enterprises (SMEs)? Is there a causal relationship between particular types of South African identities and histories on the one hand, and social giving on the other? How best can business giving - a crucial source of human and physical resources - be used to tackle society's development needs?[1] How should we assess business giving?

It is generally accepted in business – although some major companies do not devote funds to social investment – that it is perilous to assume that the welfare of a poor majority can be overlooked in a society in which the yawning gap between rich and poor can be seen as a product of racial privilege. This takes on a sharp significance in a context where, while poverty has reportedly declined since 2001, inequality did not drop between 1994 and 2008, and may in fact have increased. South Africa has the highest income inequality, perhaps in the world. Professor Servaas van der Bergh has estimated South Africa's Gini coefficient 0.67 in 1994, rising to 0.69 in 2001 and then back to 0.67 in 2008 (in Simkins 2011). Leibbrandt et al (2010) calculate Gini coefficients using per capita income to show that South Africa's income inequality increased from 0.66 in 1993 to 0.70 in 2008.[2] Using expenditure rather than income measures, Bhorat and van der Westhuizen (2011) find a similar increase in inequality from 0.64 in 1995 to 0.69 in 2005. Notwithstanding the differences in the calculations and measures, the results suggest that democratic South Africa remains a highly unequal society.

This paper attempts to address these issues. The overall purpose is to understand the decision-making processes, assumptions and values which shape business giving - by both big and small businesses - in South Africa. The following approach is taken: key terms are clarified at the outset followed by an overview of available quantitative and qualitative studies on the extent of business's contribution. Drawing on qualitative interviews with key informants, the paper proposes ways in which business as a social actor can foster forms of giving that can boost development. It is argued that the more business giving innovates, produces new ideas and novel projects where government will not go, the more it will serve society. While the temptation to reign in business giving behind government development goals must be great, it is counterproductive both for society and for government. The analysis illustrates the importance of diversity in approaches rather than an attempt to shoehorn business giving into a single, 'professional' paradigm.

Clarification of terms

The term philanthropy has the connotation of extra resources being devoted on a voluntary basis by financially well-endowed individuals to strangers in need (Habib et al 2008:21). Brown et al (2000) associate philanthropy with the benevolence and paternalism of the wealthy elite, donations from wealthy patrons like the Rockefellers, Bill and Melinda Gates or our own Oppenheimers and Ruperts. Recently, Standard Bank's chief executive, Jacko Maree, publicised his philanthropic contributions partly in response to the debate about disparities between executive pay and general salary levels. First National Bank chief executive officer, Sizwe Nxasana, apparently also makes personal contributions to community development initiatives in Ixopo, KwaZulu-Natal. The BoE Private Clients survey of 2010 *The Giving Report 2010* for example, shows that 93,5% of High Net Worth Individuals have given in one form or another.

This focus obscures the fact that small, regular donations from ordinary people have for years sustained a number of non-profit organisations and charities such as the SOS Children's Villages and the SPCA (Quoted in

'Philanthropy – Why South Africans give?' in *Business Day* 23 December 2010).

Survey evidence undercuts the assumption that giving is the preserve only of the richer more resourced sections of society flowing in a unilinear direction to poor communities. It demonstrates instead that giving is part of everyday life for all South Africans, rich and poor (Everatt and Solanki 2005). According to the 2003 survey, ordinary South Africans were giving collectively about R930 million towards poverty alleviation and development. Poor households (many of which often have some form of small enterprise activity happening within them) generally give less money, often proportionately more, more often, and give greater time to the needy.

More conceptually, it has been argued that philanthropic giving does not challenge the status quo. Instead, the philanthropic sector has been accused of colluding with the forces of inequality that ultimately reinforce a fundamentally unjust system (Habib et al 2008:36). Martin Luther King said, 'Philanthropy may be commendable but it must not overlook the circumstances of economic injustice that make philanthropy necessary' (quoted in Habib et al 2008:36). But in the words of Middleton and O'Keefe, 'to palliate is not always and everywhere a bad thing, but it should not be confused with enabling a larger justice to prevail' (2001:14).

That the term philanthropy is avoided in this paper is not to argue that this type of giving is wrong or that giving to the poor is acceptable only if it helps to eradicate poverty. As Seleoane aptly captures, 'if my very survival depended on handouts, I would not be overly interested in critiquing the long-term effects of the handouts that might put bread on my table' (Seleoane 2008:138). The term 'business giving' is used since philanthropy is not an adequate or accurate description of the flow of resources towards poverty alleviation and development; similarly, the term Corporate Social Investment (hereafter CSI) does not capture the contribution of small businesses which, as this paper will demonstrate, is not insignificant.

The limits of numbers

There have been numerous estimates quantifying business's contribution to South Africa as a mark of its significance and gravity. In the late 1990s, the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) conducted two surveys: one among 75 of the largest corporations, the second among a random sample of 545 businesses of all sizes. The study concluded that business probably spent R4bn-R5bn on CSI, including sport (CDE 1998).

On average, large corporations were spending 1,3% of after-tax profits on CSI, higher than in the US (0,9% in 1996) and Canada (0,8% in 1994) which is significant, the companies maintain, since the culture of structured giving around tax concessions found in some countries - which have concessions for donations - is not yet entrenched in South Africa.

In 2004, the then South Africa Foundation repeated the exercise drawing on a sample of 25 companies. CSI amounted to 0,13% of gross income and just under 0,87% of net profit according to the study. Other calculations put CSI at about R4bn, including non-cash contributions; Trialogue estimated the total CSI for 2004 at R2,4bn, a nominal 2% increase over the previous year and more recently CSI for 2009/2010 reportedly totaled about R5,4billion (Quoted in Heywood, M 'On my mind – Invest in Justice' in *Business Day* 27 October 2011).

It is beyond doubt that the above studies devoted significant effort to generate accurate accounts of spending by the companies sampled. However, there is no way of knowing whether the data generated from a sample of companies can be reliably said to provide information for all. Thus, calculations throughout the economy, however well-intended, can only be estimates. Companies which devolve giving to regional branches/offices have a difficult time adding up total spent. Anglogold Ashanti convened a social summit in 2003, one purpose of which was to try to gain a sense of the total amount the company spends in society. It seems unlikely that definitive estimates on spending in an entire economy are possible if social investments within companies are so diverse that a single corporation, admittedly a large one, has to adopt the summit approach to determine the quantity and scope of its own CSI. In addition, many discussions on CSI tend to assume that the dedicated giving fund -

which many corporates have - is the sole source of funding. In reality, it accounts for only part of giving.

In Trialogue's methodology, for example, the corporates decide what is CSI guaranteeing that no consistent criteria are used. Corporate giving does not always mean the same thing to all companies. Some still include sponsorship of the local golf day.

Another grey area is non-monetary giving. Business-giving practitioners are adamant that businesses contribute more than funding to meeting social needs: time and effort, expertise, knowledge, relationships, the ability to innovate or 'get things done'. Measuring this application of private sector principles and approaches to developmental problems is fraught with difficulty. And, though it may be logical to expect exaggeration of company spend, understating can be as much of a distortion (Interview Markus Reichardt 1 April 2004 in Friedman et al 2008a).

The above business giving estimates are also biased towards listed companies since little hard information is available on giving by SMEs. More broadly, it is often assumed that small businesses are so absorbed in survival that they have neither the resources nor the inclination to give. Illustratively, FinScope small business South Africa 2010 found that more than 70% of small business owners work 7 days a week, with the average day at least 10 hours long. In addition, the majority of SMEs in South Africa finance their capital requirements through private savings from individuals as well as retained earnings (World Bank survey in van Biljon et al 2002:12) which may also blunt the urge to give. But one interviewee, the late Professor Lawrence Schlemmer, suggested that

> *'what SMEs give is not peanuts… Small business giving is often directed at the very micro level – money for book prizes, trophies at schools, soup kitchens, Aids orphanages. There is involvement in the goodwill of the local community'* (Interview Schlemmer).

In this way, the localised character of small business giving builds the fabric of society. An interviewee suggested that large companies are better able to 'gear up and do novel things at a bigger scale. SMEs tend to get involved with the local hospice, for example - important but different' (Interview Gavin Keeton). Measuring small business giving in a

persuasive and more rigorous sense is likely to be vexing. The FinScope small business South Africa 2010 survey found, for example, that only 45% of small businesses keep any form of records (ranging from slips in a shoe box to more formal accounting procedures and mechanisms). Around 42% do not use formal or informal financial products for business purposes, they rely on family and friends for borrowing and saving money at home. Small businesses are light on leaving a paper trail in many instances and to add complexity, small business giving is often in-kind, for example, food stores may give away food, stores may donate goods (Interview Steven Friedman, 13 September 2011).

When it comes to SMEs, there is often a very thin line between individual and business giving. This is perhaps unsurprising given that according to the FinScope small business 2010 survey two thirds of small businesses are owner-operated with no employees. In addition, there are striking and important differences in the small and medium categories of business which are useful to bear in mind. The latter may be in a better position to give on a more sustainable basis and on a bigger scale.

Simply put, the judgement of one interviewee that 'quants are not doable' in a reliable sense when it comes to business giving (Interview Lawrence Schlemmer, 27 January 2004) is hard to fault. What is clearer is that however significant giving by businesses in South Africa - large, medium and small -the scale and ambit of resources deployed by the state are of a much greater magnitude and therefore impact. Illustratively, in the first decade of democracy expenditure by the state on social services increased in real terms by 57,5%, from R70, 2 billion in 1995/96 to R196,6 billion in 2004/05. Expenditure on economic services increased in real terms by 71,5%, from R16,2 billion in 1995/96 to R49,4 billion in 2004/05 (Swilling et al 2008:281). The sheer scale of resources deployed by the state, relative to other stakeholders, in relation to poverty alleviation and development provides the context in which to view business' contribution.

Drivers of business giving

What motivates businesses to give? Interviewees pointed to the role of champions within companies, the threat of penalties, anticipated

legislation, local context and reputational jockeying, as well as greater exposure to international pressures. Indeed, the drivers of business giving have emerged out of an interplay of both external pressures and internal influences. Business giving as a response to apartheid is over 30 years old: corporate pioneers Anton Rupert of the Rembrandt Group and Harry Oppenheimer of the Anglo American Corporation established the Urban Foundation as a private sector initiative to address urban development issues in townships in response to the Soweto uprisings of 1976. One interviewee said the following: 'In apartheid days, corporates [gave] because of guilt, enlightened self-interest, and to show liberal opposition to apartheid. Now it is much more about the business imperative. We're more exposed to global pressure groups' (Interview Gavin Keeton, 4 December 2003). South African companies which moved their primary listings abroad are said to have more focus on 'soft' issues. Foreign corporates who are forced to live up to global reporting standards and are exposed to global pressure groups are said to have prompted larger local firms to adapt. The localised nature of the majority of South Africa's small businesses means that they are less immune to these global pressures as drivers for giving.

Perhaps the most commonly mentioned motive is the notion that while business was not responsible for creating apartheid, self-interest dictated that it takes social responsibility seriously. The emphasis on education and skills development is a product of enlightened self-interest. In the post-apartheid era, business has shifted from a concern to be seen to be pursuing change and showing opposition to apartheid to a desire to show that it is fitting in with the new political reality. This has its downside as Mamphele Ramphele complained in the *CSI Handbook*: 'CSI is driven by a compliance culture, not by a vision of sustainable investment in the country we all passionately want to live in' (quoted in 'On my mind - Invest in Justice' in *Business Day* 27 October 2011).

Many corporates use giving as a mechanism to help preserve influence in a democratic South Africa with different stakeholders and relations between stakeholders. Government has very different people in it. The desire to work with government is often strong among white executives eager to form relationships with a new political elite which they may not understand. The then South Africa Foundation study found that spending

to facilitate black economic empowerment 'now absorbs around ten times what corporations spend on CSI' (2004:8). It concluded that corporates 'would do well to reflect on the possibility that they might be drawn into a broader process that offers more benefits to the emerging middle class and elites than the poor.' AngloGold's decision to fund political parties - using a formula in which opposition parties got more than the ruling African National Congress - in South Africa's 2004 elections, indicated a revived interest in the political environment but, while it received much publicity, only a few corporates followed suit. SAB Miller used a similar formula in their funding of political parties in South Africa's 2009 elections.

As Godsell et al observed: 'In most of the ethnically divided societies of the world, corporations and retail businesses are owned and managed by individuals belonging to an ethnic minority' (in Bernstein et al 1998:3). South Africa is no exception. Most companies' relationship with society and its governing elite renders them vulnerable to special pleading or a personalised appeal. Most are white-owned businesses considered by many to have benefited from apartheid and are therefore under some pressure to show that they are committed to a democratic South Africa. This raises the stakes of saying 'no' to politicians and activists. Some of this type of giving is typified by the 'Mandela school' of the 1990s - schools built at the request of former president Nelson Mandela. Very few respondents consulted as part of a Centre for Civil Society study saw these schools as developmental, but most saw them as to be expected since some political figures could not be ignored perhaps for fear of appearing to disrespect national icons. It seems that even the most sophisticated giving policy finds it hard to withstand an appeal from an icon such as Mandela.

Important gains of business giving are extending brand recognition and reputation enhancement. Giving can be seen as a way of 'building a good brand', and has been ingrained in the culture of some companies, instilled by leading figures in the company over a long period. Small enterprises are much more vulnerable. They have more limited administrative resources and uncertain cash flows are thus unlikely to be vigorous in marketing their more localised spend. Professor Schlemmer put it this way:

> *'Soup kitchens, orphanages, church schools get lots from SMEs. But the targets are not sexy. There is no heroism here. By contrast, many big*

corporates see CSI as an opportunity to get a spanking new annual report, a photo opportunity' (Interview Lawrence Schlemmer).

For some critics giving can draw attention away from companies' wider social responsibility, it can hide a range of socially irresponsible sins, paying others to repair the damage they created (Hamann and Bezuidenhout 2003). In the words of Fig, 'some corporations may be using the procrustean formulae of corporate social and environmental responsibility to deflect attention from the fundamentals' (Fig 2003:4). By contrast, Godsell et al maintain that 'by dint of its existence outside state-created organisation [business] can contribute to greater pluralism and diversity in a society, thereby strengthening the pressures for democratisation' (in Bernstein et al 1998:3). In this view, giving is not a fig leaf to hide exploitation but an additional dimension to an already socially useful role. Middleton and O'Keefe underline the importance of not being naïve, 'The greatest economic myth of all is that the market has as its principal purpose the service of human needs rather than the aggrandisement of capitalists and their corporations' (2001:15).

Of course, black businesses, particularly small black businesses, have less reason to demonstrate their credibility than white, since they cannot be accused of benefiting from apartheid.[3] Indeed, apartheid legislation lumbered black entrepreneurs with dozens of handicaps designed to nip success in the bud. According to one interviewee, 'more generally, relations between black business and government are likely to be better than those between government and white business, not only because of a shared identity but also, in many cases, as a result of a common political history and loyalty' (Interview Jabulani Sikhakhane, 22 September 2004). It is important to note, however, that relations between larger black business and government are not always friendly.

Former President Thabo Mbeki (while deputy president) criticised the 'greed' of the new black economic elite (Mbeki 1998). He repeated this while president on the eve of his ousting at the African National Congress conference in Polokwane and in the inaugural Nelson Mandela Memorial Lecture in 2006 titled, *The pursuit of wealth*. He said,

Thus, every day, and during every hour of our time beyond sleep, the demons embedded in our society, that stalk us at every minute, seem

always to beckon each one of us towards a realisable dream and nightmare. With every passing second, they advise, with rhythmic and hypnotic regularity – get rich! Get rich! Get rich! And thus has it come about that many of us accept that our common natural instinct to escape from poverty is but the other side of the same coin on whose reverse side is written the words – at all costs, get rich!

In these circumstances, personal wealth, and the public communication of the message that we are people of wealth, becomes, at the same time, the means by which we communicate the message that we are worthy citizens of our community, the very exemplars of what defines the product of a liberated South Africa.

In these circumstances, the meaning of freedom has come to be defined not by the seemingly ethereal and therefore intangible gift of liberty, but by the designer labels on the clothes we wear, the cars we drive, the spaciousness of our houses and our yards, their geographic location, the company we keep and what we do as part of that company.

It is perfectly obvious that many in our society, having absorbed the value system of the capitalist market, have come to the conclusion that, for them, personal success and fulfilment means personal enrichment at all costs, and the most theatrical and striking public display of that wealth (Mbeki 2006).

The bonds between the two groups - black business and government - may surpass their differences but this does not wipe away these differences. Black business people are not immune to pressure, their lack of complicity in apartheid does not absolve them from obligation. One interviewee observed the possibility that social inequality could come back to haunt black business people: 'The black elite run the risk of being targeted ten years down the line by those who have not been as fortunate. Therefore, there is a measure of self-interest for them to give' (Interview Sikhakhane). Indeed, just short of ten years later, Radebe (2011) argued: 'Many of the activists, who earned the enviable title of "comrades in business", are being accused of perpetuating apartheid-era inequalities, rather than helping to uplift poor black masses…. It has been 18 years since South Africa started producing what could have been a special class of capitalists, people who would infuse a socially friendly face into the way business was traditionally done. Instead, many of these individuals hitched a ride on a rich business bandwagon with the broad based black economic empowerment (BBBEEE) ticket, which has made them

fabulously rich. Many have made obscene sums of money that far outstrip the benefits derived from the BBBEEE agenda they claim to represent.'

Focusing on the upper end of income scale, Macgregor's *Who owns whom* directory for 1996 showed no black people on the list of the 50 richest people in South Africa; nine years later there were 5. In 2011 there are 16 whose combined wealth is estimated at nearly $6 billion (MacGregor's *Who owns whom* in Simkins 2011). Rising and open criticism of the current brand of black economic empowerment, on the grounds that it enriches only a few, seems to be creating a climate in which black-owned businesses are unlikely to feel exempt from social responsibility by being owned by the previously disadvantaged. Recently, black empowerment companies have increased their involvement in giving. The Ploughback Trust, for example, harnesses the collective resources of successful black entrepreneurs and professionals. In addition, wealthy black businessmen have started corporate foundations through which they channel considerable resources to worthy causes, for example Cyril Ramaphosa's Shanduka Foundation, Tokyo Sexwale's Mvela Trust, Patrice Motsepe's family foundation and Saki Macozoma's Safika Holdings. ('Philanthropy – why South Africans give' in *Business Day* 23 December 2010 and 'Comrades cash in', in *The New Age* 26 September 2011).

But if giving is meant to enhance business' reputation for philanthropy, it seems not to have succeeded. A Centre for Civil Society commissioned survey conducted in 2004 asked respondents to comment on the statement: 'Big companies give only as a way of advertising themselves': two-thirds agreed or strongly agreed, with just 16% rejecting it and the rest choosing a neutral option. The same survey suggested that reliance on local small businesses for social investment is relatively low in South Africa - particularly among black South Africans. This could mean that the role of SMEs is less important than some interviewees presented.

'Like chalk, like cheese'[4]

Business giving was once the product of whim: the company chair or chief executive, moved by personal preferences would set the giving agenda. For many analysts and practitioners, the common understanding of

business giving trends can be summed up as 'beyond the chairman's whim'. Now we are told that 'professionalisation' - ensuring that decisions are based on serious consideration of development impact, company strategy and listening to beneficiaries, monitoring and evaluation - is increasingly influential, with the scope for whim being progressively reduced (Interview Merle Favis, 5 October 2003 in Friedman et al 2008a).

Together with this, there seems to be a convergence on 'fashionable' topics: education has tended to take the biggest slice, and not only because of tax concessions. Spending on HIV/Aids grew in the late 1990s early 2000s, partly as a result of the perceived inadequacy of government intervention in this area and its impact on the productivity of company operations. Small business promotion is also supported, seen as a way to mop up unemployment and drive economic growth. Thus, small businesses are themselves disbursers and recipients of business giving. More recently, environmental issues are moving up the agenda.

Certain commentators have expressed doubts about the impact of this spend. Says Bernstein, 'businesses spend something like R1,3bn on educational projects, but I have to ask what impact this has had on the schooling system in South Africa? Very little' (quoted in Chance, K 'Why businesses do good just by doing what they do best' in *Business Day* 19 May 2010). According to Heywood,

> *Much CSI ends up being wasted... Computers lie idle, books are stolen. Little pools of opportunity are created, but the system remains broken. .....None [of the spend in education and health] goes to organisations that make advocacy and education about these rights their core business.....It is time ethical corporations changed their thinking about who, how and what they fund.... [W]ithout money, major social justice organisations are in danger of becoming extinct* (Heywood, M 'On my mind - Invest in Justice' in *Business Day* 27 October 2011).

Of the reported R5,4bn of reported CSI spend, 37% of this goes to non-governmental organisations. The Treatment Action Campaign – self-proclaimed 'thorn in government's side' (ibid) - has reportedly been entirely dependent on foreign funding.

If professionalisation is understood as working to make business giving more well-thought-out and accountable, it has indeed brought advances.

However, the notion of professionalisation is fuzzy and can with little difficulty be understood as the assertion that there is a superior technique available and that all can concur on what that is. How do firms determine whether those communities with which they engage do in reality speak for the beneficiaries? This is challenging for development professionals, let alone giving officials some of whom may be inexperienced in social dynamics. The usefulness of the advance needs to be balanced against the potential drawback of 'squeezing' business giving into a particular mould. Professionalism can encourage the adoption of a uniform set of approaches on the grounds that they are professional. This can be less helpful than hoped.

The previously quoted Centre for Civil Society study compared case studies in this regard. The first was Anglogold Ashanti, widely assumed to be strategic and professional, entrusting giving to company officials with strong social science backgrounds. In an annual survey of CSI reputations among corporates and non-profit organisations by Trialogue, Anglo American topped all four categories among non-profits, three of four among corporates. It has been voted top more often than any other company since the survey began. Conversely, Pick n Pay has not received a single mention in Trialogue's account and is criticized as publicity seeking. Pick n Pay's social investment has been widely regarded as the product of decisions by its founder, Raymond Ackerman, who has no background in social analysis and whose strong personality and preference for hands-on decision making make him the classic whimsical chairman, driven by an indistinct notion of what will attract publicity. Pick n Pay tirelessly attempts to appeal to the 'average shopper' rather than the development professional.

The two examples seem bespoke to examine the contrast between expertise and impulse. The studies showed that there are indeed significant differences in the two companies' giving philosophy and processes of decision-making, but they showed, too, that the divide between chairman's whim and professional giving may be less clear cut than current business giving thinking tends to assume - and further that professional giving may be less helpful to society than its advocates imagine.

Most important was that the companies innovated, providing funds for projects which would otherwise not be supported. Anglogold's HIV/Aids programmes for employees and funding political parties as a contribution to strengthening democracy confirmed the corporation's reputation as a pioneer. In Pick n Pay's whimsical funding of small projects - helping township youngsters to make jewellery, learn African dance, sponsoring a College of Magic which helps youth to become magicians – somewhat unusual interventions but the beneficiaries of which now provide for their families with their newly found abilities and skills. While social scientists and development professionals might be more at ease with the decision to fund political parties there is no objective criteria that can demonstrate the superiority of one over the other.

In reality, innovation and breaking new ground - as opposed to professionalisation - is the most desirable end for a business giving programme. Greater development success is more likely to surface through trial and error - by attempting new approaches and learning from the attempts - than by the implementation of development fashion. Because professionalisation is embedded and entrenched in some companies, this can tilt giving away from 'social consciousness' and towards bureaucratic stodginess: initiatives are funded simply because the company has been doing so for years. While this ingrained practice has the upside of worthwhile projects continuing to be funded, this should not happen at the expense of innovation. Small business is thankfully resistant to this stodginess and thus offers a promising site for inventive and flexible giving.

Secondly, private companies can afford to experiment in a way that public institutions cannot. Government has to 'be accountable for ensuring delivery to all citizens, for monitoring the quality of service provision and for the proper accounting of public resources' (Bernstein et al, 1998:25). Government spending should seek to be consistent with goals endorsed by political majorities; business giving should be governed by principles such as innovation, inventiveness and diversity, focusing on projects where government cannot and will not go. The state is the primary actor in poverty alleviation and development. Material development is best undertaken by governments which are meant to command the capacities to deliver on a far greater scale than anyone funded by business giving.

Private companies are thus ideally placed to try new approaches which may enrich development practices.

Concluding remarks

In a high socially stratified society like South Africa, the role of business giving is significant. The more business giving innovates, produces new ideas and novel projects, the more it will serve both society and government. This is not to say that unrestrained whim should determine giving priorities, nor does it discount the valuable contribution which capable giving professionals can make to development. The intention is considerably more modest and suggests that we should assess business giving - by big, medium and small companies - by whether it brings something fresh to society's development efforts, not by its ability to fit into a mould - however sophisticated and elaborate the latter may be. Companies which do the unusual, the inventive and perhaps even the unpopular, but are frank and open about what and why they are doing this, are the source of accountable and developmentally constructive business giving.

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Notes

[1] This chapter is based inter alia on three papers written jointly with Professor Steven Friedman for a study into corporate giving in South Africa co-ordinated by the Centre for Civil Society at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. This research was published by the HSRC in a book titled *Giving and Solidarity: Resource flows for poverty alleviation and development in South Africa.* All research papers produced as part of this study are available at www.ccs.ukzn.ac.za.

[2] Household per capital income provides a more accurate idea of individual welfare within the household, compared to an overall measurement of aggregated household income.

[3] For a fuller discussion see Friedman, S., Hudson, J. and Mackay, S. 2008. 'The colour of giving: Racial identity and corporate giving' in Habib, A. and Maharaj, B. (eds) *Giving and Solidarity: Resource flows for poverty alleviation and development in South Africa* Pretoria: HSRC Press.

[4] For a fuller version of this discussion see Friedman, S.; Hudson, J. and Mackay, S. 2008. 'Like chalk, like cheese: Professionalism and whim in corporate giving at Anglogold Ashanti and Pick n Pay' in Habib, A. and Maharaj, B. (eds) *Giving and Solidarity: Resource flows for poverty alleviation and development in South Africa* Pretoria:HSRC Press.

Meaning of Mission

MARGARET McGOVERN
MICHAEL VAN HEERDEN

Introduction[1]

Mission, with its practical expression, often referred to as missionary activity, evangelising, or apostolic sending, has its roots reaching far beyond the foundations of organized religion, national boundaries or any individual calling. The meaning of mission weaves its way back to the empty void into which God's plan broke. This creative plan shattered the futility of nothingness, injecting it with created syntheses and life-giving possibilities. Above the chaos, in which time was born, the charismatic Spirit (Gen 1: 2) hovered: symbolising God's plan and bringing into being the well organised event of the cosmos. This mysterious, miraculous happening launched an on-going relationship, a covenant of connected sharing and continuous movement.[2] An all-embracing occurrence encompassing the collective pilgrimage of a world in which individuals would continually become part of the intended kingdom. This sacred interaction issued the on-going invitation to bring about, for all time, the same kingdom that existed at the beginning of the world (Rom 1: 19-20).

The fact that all levels of creation culminate in the creation of Adam and Eve (Gen 1: 27), empowers humankind forever with a co-responsibility of stewardship: to transform, to enrich and to bring about appropriate change. It is within this context that the human person is seen as an extension of the on-going, life-giving God, whose own transformation of the chaos of infinite possibility into meaningful existence constitutes the call in each person's life to live out a missionary activity. This is a concept clearly referred to in the Lord's prayer: "Your kingdom come" (Mt 6: 10), echoing a longing for a return to the original state of God's freely-given life in all its goodness.

Stewardship and Mission

This call to be co-creative with God, is not only an individual call. As it was originally addressed to both parents of the human family, there is the need for a co-operative merging of the missionary awareness in the human species. The sacred, well-organised event of the creation of the human person as social was geared to the eventual formation of a people, the Israelites and, later, the Church of Christ. As God created them male and female, in God's image, there is a strong indication of God's intention for the dignity of equality and uniqueness of the human person. This dignity would serve as the human vehicle for God's on-going influence within the world. Moreover, human stewardship would advocate and promote improvement so as to bring to fulfilment creation as presented in Genesis: achieving what creation is intended to become. In order to fulfil this mandate, consistent relationship with the One who mandates, who 'sends', needs to be maintained, developed and consolidated.

Reality, though, shows clearly that alienation often results. Thus in the Yahwistic account of the Fall in Genesis, alienation leaves the channels of relationship unclear, shaky and faltering (Gen 3-5): "The man and his wife hid themselves from God" (Gen 3:8). Rebuilding, re-bonding and reuniting become the particular way to realise the mission of bringing darkness to light. But, what is the prevailing darkness? The initial alienation is symbolised in the account of Adam and Eve's disobedience (Gen 3) and traditionally was called original sin. There have been many recent interpretations of original sin. Broadly, however, there are four general interpretations. Firstly, as in the theology of biblical fundamentalists, original sin is seen as a guilty condition inherited from a single person, Adam, the first human being. This guilt is passed into each successive generation through either biological procreation or through a juridical sense of the inherited sentence of damnation on all the children of Adam by God (Rom 5: 12-21). Secondly, there are theologians (like Piet Schoonenberg) who equate the distinctiveness of original sin with the accumulated sin in the history of human beings (which is institutionalised in social realities) which, in turn, constitutes the concrete situation into which everyone is born. A third perspective gives more credence to the evolutionary perspective and emphasises that paradise is not a state at the beginning of our existence as humans, but a utopic symbol of the goal of

that existence. Juan Luis Segundo (1986:56), for example, sees a deep tensive structure in human existence that leads to sin and is reflected in all reality; a tension between entropy and negentropy. In the exercise of human freedom, these are respectively reflected by the pull of routine, mechanistic and un-free behaviour on the one hand over the liberating, creative energy of grace which empowers harmonizing and loving acts of true freedom on the other hand. Fourthly, there are those who deny that original sin is distinct from personal sin; the only utility of the idea of original sin is that as sinners we depend absolutely on the grace of God for the salvific exercise of freedom.

It would seem that a more precise position on the darkness inherited from the beginning would take all these positions into account. Given the insights of evolution that have become ever more prevalent, we could say that God's creative power is seen in the structural and behavioural potentials that emerge at each level of creation to ensure a certain level of synthesis. The higher the level of each new synthesis, the greater its 'rationality' or ability to direct its own behaviour. In humans this scope, provided for by the previous syntheses of instinctual levels, opens up to a freedom that can freely **determine** its own synthesis. This transcendental potential was presented to human beings at the outset of their emergence. Alienation from this missionary call to freely determine themselves through responsible stewardship came as a result of the choice made by each new generation to perpetuate instinctive syntheses from the past, instead of allowing these to be abrogated into the new freedom or transcendence they had from the Divine. The effects of this choice are twofold: firstly, this choice takes on social forms of behaviour, which survive the individual and are institutionalized in cultural forms, which further obscure this potential and provide added resistance to its emergence; secondly, because humans follow this choice that is contrary to their new nature, their relationship to the natural becomes disturbed.

The creative movement as reflected in the account of Genesis brings into being, out of the limitations of the chaos of infinite possibility, a kingdom of harmony: "God saw all that he had made and indeed it was very good" (Gen 1: 31). Because the relationship to the natural is disturbed by the refusal of humankind, an indelible line is marked between them and the Creator. While the accounts in Genesis were written much later than the

actual emergence of human life as we know it, evidence from a variety of scientific fields has already proven that the salvific role of God was called upon to envelop the 'wanderer' from the start. Without this salvific role the outer and inner alienation of our human ancestors would have choked their advance and completely stifled their possibilities.

Mission as Recreation and Restoration

The Patriarchs: Noah and Abraham

In the Noah event: Genesis 6-9, we find a nation of people, removed from God and wandering aimlessly. Because of the severed relationship with the Life-Giver, their free will is damaged, even to the point of self-destruction. Noah symbolises the just, loyal one who retains the covenantal relationship.[3] He receives the signs and promises of a continuing human race with the knowledge that not all will be lost and that freedom of choice is still possible. Through a seeming singling-out, or setting apart, God formed a leadership within creation to become a gentle, shepherding presence.

It was with this presence that the dedicated leadership of Abraham co-operated, realising a commitment to the formation of God's people.[4] God's invitation to Abraham was one to uproot and leave what was familiar and secure: "Leave your country, your family and your father's house for the land which I will show you" (Gen 12: 1). To let go of the local, in order to become emerged in the global (Gen 17: 4-8). This was an unknown entity and demanded not only a sound and meaningful faith; but, also a realisation of the need to create an environment where a sense of belonging and inter-relatedness becomes a norm (Gen 18). Within the obscure view of his mission (Heb 11: 8-19), Abraham discerned his call to be one of recognizing and working to restore the dignity of those within his orbit. Within a very complex and absorbing society, the novice missionary was forced to acquire his unique style and meaningful language: something he did by creating sacred spaces, as he sought to challenge, purify, transform and change a self-centred, non-focused people (Gen 21: 27-34).[5] In doing this he uncovered a system of moral values as

guidelines by which to live in order to reinstate the original image and likeness of the Creator.

It was within the local culture that the wandering alien aimed at rooting his own experience of a living, relational God (Gen 14: 17-24). This experience was intended to form a community from which would flow a challenging message: beckoning other nations to a unity of harmony and peace reflecting that of the kingdom of God. Abraham had the capacity to influence and accept the culture that he found himself in and, yet, also to search for the Other within its heart: "I am a stranger and a settler among you, let me have a burial plot among you." (Gen 23: 4). Sensitivity emanates within this relationship where there is both inculturation and assimilation. Interaction within the space of another or others, as Donald Senior states (1983: 39), meant that Abraham was a '*ger*' or 'resident alien'. Nevertheless, he worshipped at Canaanite shrines (Gen 12: 6-8), which indicates the contradiction often prevalent in missionary exchange: a perceived threat can result particularly on the part of the host nation as the newness of the situation begins to emerge. This perception can, in turn, evoke reactive and defensive tendencies which are deeply embedded in the human state: an aggressive defending of territory, a misinterpretation of motives and a prevalent suspicion. These often have to emerge before an element of acceptance begins to sprout.[6]

It was within this enriching forward movement of adaptation and familiarity that Abraham, despite many personal and communal disturbances, successfully laid the foundations for an Israel which would endure violence and conflict, an Israel that would pave the way for the messianic realisation: "I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains on the seashore . . . All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendents as a reward for your obedience" (Gen 22: 17-18). His intercession with Yahweh around the issue of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18: 22-32), his pleading before Yahweh for the just, is evidence of both his committed life-style and his liminality[7] of standing between God and people.

Moses and the Exodus

A small, but firm and lasting root, had been permanently established in the mission of Abraham which, in turn, wove its way into the Mosaic tradition. The community in slavery in Egypt was a wavering and unsure one, whose near blindness to the graciousness of Yahweh left them a fearful and vulnerable group. This painful Egyptian situation, into which Moses was called, could have ended in their annihilation as a people, had not Shiphrah and Puah and the other midwives kept the ideal of the new community of God alive (Ex 1: 15-17). In this example of courage and fidelity to God's plan, Moses – the one who was drawn "out of the water" (Ex 2: 10), was able to discover a sense of personal mission (Ex 2: 13) in the continuity of hope coming from Abraham (Ex 3: 6). Some authors, such as Rowley, acclaim him as "the first missionary of the Bible" (1968: 57). This could be due to the fact that Moses was "not only a guide enabling his compatriots to escape from Egypt, but also a chief who united them into a single people, author of their faith, legislator and religious initiator" (Senior, 1983: 18). But, on the other hand, this would only have been possible because of the achievements in the mission of Abraham.

The turbulence of the slavery under Pharaoh indicated the need for a radical liberation from the physical and psychological violence to a sense of well-being which reconnects the whole human being with the God of hope. God's missionary initiative, as portrayed in the rather reticent and hesitant character of Moses: "Who am I to go to Pharaoh" (Ex 3: 11); unravels a personal uncertainty and human questioning posed as a state of unworthiness. A wrestling with God: "What am I to tell them?" (Ex 3: 13); creates the space within which a process of discernment and reflection gives way to surrender. As Buono (2002: 83) points out: being tasked with a fearsome and daunting mission, drew out of Moses a faith-filled response which stretched him far beyond his own knowledge of himself and his abilities. Moses, by becoming an agent of God's continuing, redemptive, missionary action, resumes within the Israelite community the thrust of Abraham to secure a sense of belonging. The Israelite community, which, though made up of many diverse groups, was called afresh into a moulding in the true human community as envisaged in the creation epic.

Such secular oppression, as was advocated and practised in a power-ridden Egypt, presents the opportunity for a true entry into the history of human events. God does not act alone, but within an elaborate network of politics, economics and social customs (Senior, 1983: 37). By challenging this network directly, those who were oppressed were enabled to move on to a more hopeful existence. This demanded a courageous confrontation with the tyranny in dominance of a people. This tyranny diminished not only their dignity; but, also their sense of being created in the image of God. Moses had grown up with the comforts of palace life whilst his people suffered the wrath of the very leaders who provided Moses with his life-style. Moses had to deal with this dichotomy and within this dilemma make a choice. He made a radical choice, one to move to the edge and take a stand - the call of a true missionary. Coupled with his struggle to deal with the contradictions of his own identity and his loyalty to his own roots, Moses embarked on a deep and sincere quest for a way forward. The radical call from God drew Moses into the depth and intensity of his particular commission, one that could not be avoided. God spoke what had already echoed in the heart of Moses: "I have seen the miserable state of my people in Egypt" (Ex 3: 7) and Moses, hearing the commission: "I send you" (Ex 3: 10), surrendered to the greater, directive Being.

A three-dimensional effect resulted from this scenario: the instrument of mission (Moses) was challenged, action was taken and change came about in him; the victims to whom the missionary response was directed also experienced a movement of liberation; and, lastly, the perpetrator of the evil was challenged. Within the God-Moses exchange a new dimension of the spirituality of mission is realised: while Moses picked up the thread of the covenant system of Noah and Abraham, he enriched this permanent link with God through a greater reliance on God, particularly as it arose from the misery ingrained in the unacceptable, human situation. Human inadequacies, when faced realistically (as is evident in all the leaders), reveal a need for an exposure of self in order to go beyond the boundaries of the present, a personal stretching towards the 'beyond'. Such a movement on the part of the leader, as in the case of Moses, begins a process of purification, of transformation through the grace of an intervening God. Stirring inside Moses was a discomfort that demanded conversion and change, calling for the surrender of comfort, to an involvement with a common humanity - wherein one finds one's own

rootedness. This common humanity and its plight were to become a binding force in mission at all levels, as with Moses. This idea of mission was to reinforce the understanding of God's unique relationship with each person and the specific plan of God for the individual mission of each within God's greater plan.

Unfortunately, the accumulation of the baggage of sinful choices increases with the advancement of time:[8] "Your people, who you brought out of Egypt have apostatised" (Ex 32: 7). This spiritual realisation became an even deeper revelation for the Exodus people under the direction of Moses. Moses' shepherding unravelled the need for a more structured credal framework within which this new movement could find expression.[9] The Mosaic culture, in its visible and invisible appearance, operated through loyalty to his forerunners and to his own particular circumstance. This culture adapted to the life-style of the 'desert experience' in enduring what it entailed. This adaptation was inspired by the attempt to understand the 'now' in the light of the future - the direction set by the God who called. An evaluation of the mission of Moses indicates a prominence greater than either of his predecessors or any of his successors to the time of Jesus. The legacy of Moses retains a perpetual validity so that even New Testament missionary activity, including that of Jesus (referred to as the 'New Moses' - Heb 3: 1-6), is seen in the light of the Mosaic mission. This legacy forms the foundation both of the commissioning of Jesus (Lk 2: 22; 24; 27; Jn 1: 17; 6: 32; 8: 58) and his commissioning of the Church.

Joshua and the Conquest of the Land

Missionary involvement and awareness is never a *fait accompli*. Its continuation is dependent, not only on the consistency of the missionary plan as inspired by God; but, equally on the readiness of the human listening and cooperative contribution. The handing on process (in an attitude of sharing, mentoring, empowering), which bonded Moses and Joshua, became the solid grounding on which the promised-land settlement could be realised. This settlement was meant to establish a community of people who would, in the future, act as a leaven out of which the missionary work of God could become an emerging hope for all time and all people. It was into this process that Joshua's journey began. "This very

day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that I am with you, as I was with Moses" (Jos 3: 7). In honouring the legacy of Moses, this newly mentored missionary relived the previously challenging events of crossing a boundary from one reality into the territory of another. The threat of violence presented the outward reality of the psychological invasion into the space of the 'other'.

For the Israelites their grounded faith in the moveable tent and worship and their attachment to focused leadership, provided them with the courage to stand with Joshua in the 'invasion' into the territory of Canaan. One can easily admire good leadership. Yet it is imperative for those who follow to identify closely with the God-driven fulfilment of a missionary endeavour. Without protection, guidance and sustenance for the followers (visible in the continual presence of regular, prayerful worship and remembrance) endeavours for transformation would prove to be futile. "Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because tomorrow Yahweh will work wonders among you" (Jos 3: 5). This accompaniment empowered the people of God to face the violent confrontation with the dissident tribes of their new-found land. Once the fears these evoked were allayed, the indigenisation process could begin. An openness to indigenisation was more than mere survival and dependency, but rather seeking and finding God in the context of the new surroundings, circumstances and experiences.

However, in the new context there were those who veered away from the all-powerful concept of the singular Kingship of God. Their request for a secular king proved to be a cross road (1 Sam 8: 4-6). Nevertheless, the idea of a servant king (1 Sam 12: 13-15) was a link retained with the past that allowed for new possibilities for the future. The good they encountered in the new situation and cultures had to be reinforced to contain the diverse elements that can draw people away from the true goal of life. One of the most deleterious elements in all cultures is a misguided thirst for dominance which obscures the ongoing enrichment of the human condition by the Creator. In the lives of the descendants of the 'Exodus-Sinai' group, it was power dominance that led them to a demand for a broader form of political life. Flowing out of this secular, power-driven mentality, there is a move from the sacred towards individualism and self-satisfaction. An expectation of reward now begins to dominate and

marginalise the poor – the very people called to be present by their 'election' as God's people. Maintaining stability, unity and groundedness within the vision (by guarding against the onslaught of secularisation), the leaders had to challenge what they saw to be 'a stiff-necked people' (Dt 9: 6; 2 Chr 30: 8). The Book of Judges draws the attention of the people to the reality of individualistic tendencies and choices: "everyone did what was right in their own eyes" (Jgs 21: 25).

Mission, then, though a response flowing from the individual by its very nature, encourages a sense of belonging to a designated public group. In other words mission draws each separate strand into existence and imbues each with its essence until each is merged into a communal movement. For this reason the Judges express concern around the fragmentation of the oneness intended by God. As political oppression established itself firmly within the ambit of Israeli society, the prophets volubly voiced their opposition. Their visible and deeply-rooted divine inspiration, began to stir new action from within. Senior (1983: 58) encapsulates this reaction when he states that the prophets sought "to reform Israel's religious and civil institutions by reverting to the free, uncomplicated, and heroic times of Moses and Joshua".

Prophecy and Mission

Challengers of the Status Quo

As is clearly evident in the unfolding of revelation, God continually calls human beings to participate fully in the realisation of God's plan of salvation. The prophets began the task of constantly challenging the waywardness of a struggling humanity. Hence, characteristic of such a prophet is a person attuned to the plan of God mediated both within the living tradition of scripture and within the deepest aspirations of the human person.[10] As well as being vigilant to the damaging influences of a secular and largely selfish world (Hos 4: 9; Jer 6: 28; Is 9: 16), which stifle this transcendence these leaders even though they had no official status (they were not institutionally ordained as was customary in the societies of the time - Dt 17: 14f), dealt with contemporary controversies. They courageously challenged the secular and sovereign leaders of the time

calling them to accountability and, as such, they were often known to be anti-establishment (Ez 34: 18; Jer 6: 6; Is 3: 12-15; Am 2: 7). It was part of their vocation and commitment to hear the cries of the poor in order to realise and value God's compassion for the marginalised and neglected. In these efforts the prophets called for a re-creation, a reuniting with the original covenant of creation as was envisaged by the Creator, so as to eliminate division, injustice and separation (Jer 31: 32; Ez 36: 16-38; Is 54: 1-10).

The responsibility, of course, was on the prophet to model the challenge. His/her public profile confronted those in authority and attempted to confront them with their own evils, before turning to a process of reconciliation. This challenge was necessary before the surrender could be made to a more faith-based life, a life which left behind power mongering. As we have noted, despite the fact that these prophets had no official status, they courageously left a legacy of promoting the missionary line begun by the Patriarchs and continued in the life of the Judges. As Larkin (1998: 19) states: "through the prophet, the Lord promises those held captive that he will send a saviour and champion to save them (Is 19: 20), a renewal possibility bringing about a different kind of redemption action".

Heralds of a New Future

Such was the case for the missionary role of the prophets. In the diaspora realities, God inspired the prophets to deal with complicated real life situations, cultures, values, prejudices, fragilities and human neglect. All leaders are called to change faltering life-styles, to purify and re-direct, in order to enable the community to fashion a pattern of worship and morality with the underlying message of loyal hope (Dan 3: 26-45; 5: 25-30). This is a realisation of the God-eruption: a prophetic breaking through into the misery of a broken humanity. This thinking resonated with the common folk who recognised the heritage of truth and the need to be prepared to risk in sharing it (1 Mc 4: 46; 9: 27; 14: 41). Thus, to be in touch with the traditions means to have an accurate perspective of where the origins lie and where the goal leads (Is 8: 16; Jer 36: 4). The focus, the centre of gravity, is the Creator who alone can inspire this internal change and move toward unity. In forming this sound base from which to operate, the

leaders are in a position to face the conscience of the community so as to inspire hope, direction and new ideas (Is 3: 2; Jer 5: 4f; Hos 5: 1; Is 10: 1). In this task the reality of a leader's task is to face and suffer the consequences. This strong line of commitment brings about Hosea's contribution to the prophetic ministry: he indicated that it was imperative to feel the full impact of the past (Hos 5-6); but, in that acknowledgment, also to come to a new set of circumstances: a renewal of God's love in a betrothal of restored dialogue (Hos 2; 11; 14). The three successors of Hosea, brought together under the one title of Isaiah, were filled with insight into the will of God in the pre-exilic (Is 1-39), exilic (Is 40-55) and post-exilic (Is 56-66) periods. Isaiah himself spoke in the pre-exilic period with that clarity of vision. His deep conviction that all things were under the wise and powerful control of God led him to be non-negotiable in matters of faith. He engaged the elements of social injustice of his time (Is 3; 10); but, always against the backdrop of the hope that the Messiah would come and rule over the remnant of the people (Is 2: 1-5; 9: 1-6; 10: 20-22; 11-12; 25: 6-12; 29: 17-24).

Builders of Community

Economic and political development posed a threat to traditional values. A key factor of the liminality of the prophetic mission is the readiness to take a marginalised stance. Alienation (in its positive form of being set apart) puts the prophets aside for an objective surveying of reality. This alienation freed them to exist on a level that forged the God-human relationship. They were part of society, but removed from it. This dichotomy brought with it the added responsibility of relating to the whole: 'all nations', which re-echoed the original mandate of Creation and the call of Abraham. The special status of the prophets carried with it not privilege but, rather a concentrated people-oriented, community task. Loyalty to the initial relationship of God to Israel ensured the survival of the 'remnant' - so that the continuity of the presence of God could release new possibilities. In order to enhance the spirituality of the sojourners on their way and to enable them to express their inner struggles, the prayer formulas: the Psalms, took on a missionary flavour.[11] Deeply embedded within this prayerful community, life-giving prayers maintained a sense of tradition and a rooted orientation. The Psalmist created an added

awareness of the purification process needed and provided a consistent and constant reminder to remain true to the 'founding event' (in this case Creation and the Exodus). This task reached its fullest dimension in the proclamation of 'liberty to captives' (Is 61: 1). Within their human limitations then all the prophets echoed the same possibilities.

The Incarnation: Recreation by Prophecy in Mission

Jesus, the New Adam

Jesus, the new Adam, brought about a re-creation, building on the remnant of the past (Rom 5: 12-21; 1 Cor 15: 22, 45; 1 Tim 2: 13-14). As an integral part of his mission, Christ the prophet-teacher, saw the need for the re-interpretation of the salvific events of the Old Testament. He expounded on the scriptures using strong and explicit prophetic utterances which contained the eternal, life-giving place of the kingdom envisaged in Genesis. So, with the incarnation, the historical Jesus led with a difference in a new era of mission. His message carried a broader perspective than the concept of 'Israel and all the nations'. Jesus summed up in his person the expression of God's interventions in the work of mission throughout the Old Testament. While mirroring the power of God, who, in the events of the Old Testament remained in the eyes of some Israelites a seemingly distant figure, Jesus showed concretely that the journey with God's creative intent could be reached within the limited awareness of the human being (Mt 6: 28; Lk 12:27). The 'sending' of God's Son as a perfect model of authentic witness and missionary intervention, paved the way towards a more specific and detailed form of missionary expansion in a world beyond the boundaries of Israel and its neighbours.

Jesus as Prophecy in Mission

The continuity with the community worship and rituals of Israel, shaped out of the Old Testament missionary need, provided the link for the human formation of the messianic, missionary Jesus (Mt 23: 1-3; Mk 11: 15-17; Lk 2: 22-52). Recognising, as he did, the valuable and untouchable elements of the historical, faith development of the people (Mt 5: 17-18;

22: 36; Lk 16: 16-17; Jn 7: 23), his purpose became to eliminate what mitigated against the intent of His Father. Unnecessary and conflicting perceptions were disregarded, while retaining with gratitude an indelible historic consciousness and reliance, for what had transpired over the centuries. Mirroring his Old Testament predecessors, his mission reinforced the challenge: to carry the legitimate authority of entering into the messiness of human life unencumbered by fear and rejection. For Jesus, the reinstating of the 'kingdom of God' as the ultimate priority was necessary in order to demonstrate the kingdom as the destiny of all creation.

> . . . Jesus of Nazareth had experience and then made the heart of mission a renewed appreciation of the free and gracious nature of the God of Israel, this God who could not be controlled or limited by Israel's own carefully constructed boundaries. (Senior, 1983: 147)

One senses a freedom, a liberating explosion, an opening up to the exposure of the kingdom here and hereafter. Within the mission of the New Testament and for all time hereafter, this kingdom was personified in the mission of Jesus. Mission had truly taken on a human form. The previous thinking in the Old Testament on mission had emphasised message and ritual, to which was now added the need for an adequate and immediate response on the part of the individual. While these former aspects remained as core, added to them was a new quality: the depth and the influence of the Person whose example of missionary action reached far beyond the teaching of the Old Testament missionaries. This example was rooted in Jesus' hope for the future. So the conviction of a future existence in the very life of God added a spiritual reality which became central to the New Testament missionary expansion. The ability to enter into the real, to challenge with authority the emerging reality, to have the capacity to evoke a transformation was summed up in the parables. The parables were the group and personal challenges at the heart of the teachings of Jesus. To be able to move on - having instilled thinking and instituted a process of change even in the face of violence - characterised the missionary thrust of Jesus. This Jesus did within the context of his Galilean ministry; but, particularly in his Jerusalem confrontation with authorities, there arose the epitome of the Father's redemptive mission:

that of crucifixion, resurrection and the restoration of relationship with the presence of the Spirit.

Conclusion

The restoration of all things in Christ enables one to understand the depth of centuries of missionary endeavour on the part of God for humanity and creation. It was an ingrained part of this famous Prophet that he believed in God's continuing presence in an often unsavoury world. The true prophets experienced a direct call from God, whose motive for their choice was that they be, on the one hand, part of the fabric of society, while on the other hand have an acute awareness of the visible and invisible evils and injustices which prevail. They reformed what existed, whilst struggling with a distinctive evolving culture, difficult ethnic boundaries, language problems, superstition and risk coupled with many loses. This missionary intervention first developed into the concrete reality of the Greco-Roman political and social world with its fragmentation, discrimination and power-driven mixture of Canaanite, Greek and Roman culture. This intervention presented a more complicated scenario than ever before. But, one which only deepened the anticipation of the fullness of human life where universal salvation became the priority. Throughout the history of salvation, from the creative eruption onwards, there is a move towards the new Exodus to God's presence (Is 40). The re-birth that was achieved in Christ, indicated the reality of God's living presence - calling God's people back to their real soul.

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Notes

[1] Sr Margaret McGovern HC wrote this article with the view to it being part of the first chapter of her doctoral thesis. The thesis was to explore the history of the mission of the Holy Cross Sisters in

South Africa. Unfortunately she died suddenly during her studies and the following article was edited for publication in this journal by Dr Michael van Heerden, her supervisor.

[2] With the institution of most of the covenants in the Old Testament, there is usually the mention of some sign, ritual or even natural phenomenon that fixes the oath in the memory of the contracting parties. This is especially characteristic of the priestly tradition which explains the Sabbath (Ex 31:16) and the rainbow (Gn 9:17) in these terms. The Sabbath, the rainbow and circumcision are, in fact, the three great pre-Exilic covenants established by God at the three critical stages of the early history of mankind - the creation (Gn:1; 2:3 ; Ex 31:16), the re-establishment of mankind after the flood (Gn 9:17), and the birth of the Hebrew nation (Gn 17:1ff). Given the similarities between Gn 9:1-2 and Gn 1:28, we can infer that there is an intended correspondence between Noah and Adam. As Dumbrell (1984:26) notes: "The very act of creation involved God's entering into relationship with the world, and it is therefore insufficient to side with Karl Barth and others who would regard creation as merely the ground of covenant; the basis upon which a covenant with man can proceed".

[3] Noah, in his world with its tendencies to move away from God, proved to remain in touch in a positive way with God and cooperated in the renewal of the brokenness. Noah's faith-filled response along with his assurance of having received God's favour was rewarded by the promise never to inflict such a punishment on creation again (Gen 8: 21). The divine stamp on the Noah response is seen in the renewal of the covenant of and missionary mandate of creation (Gen 9: 7).

[4] Following the call of Abraham there came about the perception of an 'election' which, in its positive intent, indicated a special favour formation and protection for the followers of Abraham (Gen 17: 1-22). But, in its negative connotation, tended to negate the importance of all nations being worthy of God's redemption. A thinking which was challenged by New Testament missionary activity in particular (Acts 15:22-29).

[5] Throughout his journeys Abraham encountered many practices and peoples with whom he had to exist and lead his own people. Abraham, in his efforts to rebuild kingdom relationships and under God's direction to form a worshipping community, was forced, due to the lack of permanency of a sacred place, to use Canaanite facilities in order to fulfill this essence of his mission. In Gen 21: 33 Abraham evokes God under the name of God, the Eternal. This is likely the name of the deity of the pre-Israelite sanctuary of Beer-Sheba.

[6] As Donald Senior notes (1983: 38) the process for missionary interaction involves first the struggle, the slow movement for a process of indigenization, before a challenge is posed. For example, Abraham while coping first with the challenges of the journey eventually verbalised areas of non- acceptance and challenge.

[7] A position into which a prophet is called in order to be able to challenge the people to whom he or she is sent. But, this position can only be assumed if there is an intimate and ever strengthening relationship with God. This ensures the continuation of the unfolding mission as a response to God's call and expectations, as well as ensuring that the missionary remains true to himself/herself and loyal to their community.

[8] As the Israelites moved forward the exposure to a world beyond their own drew them into even more sinful situations where the temptations became more real. This gradually removed them further from the God who saves. This was further complicated by the fact that those to whom the missionary response is directed are not always in tune with the movement. The Israelites complained to Moses and expressed their dissatisfaction: "Why did we not die at Yahweh's hand in the land of Egypt" (Ex 16:3).

[9] In brief, this framework was provided by the Decalogue (Ex 20: 1-17), the Tabernacle, the tent and the altar (Ex 25-27), and the holocausts (Ex 24).

[10] This listening is a hallmark of the prophetic vocation, as Paul Beauchamp remarks (Léon-Dufour, 1969: 414-416): "The prophets from the beginning are all animated by the same Spirit of God . . . Whatever may be their mutual dependence, it is from God that they have the Word. The prophetic charism is a charism of revelation (Am 3:7; Jer 23:18; 2 Kgs 6:12), which makes known to men what he could not discover by his own efforts. Its object is at the same time multiple and unique: it

is the plan of salvation which will be concentrated and fulfilled in Jesus Christ . . .From what God reveals to him at the present time, he relates the Law to the existential situation".

[11] The psalms reflect the concrete circumstances of the people: both in reinforcing the presence of God with them (Ps 105: 26-27) and in expressing their inner feelings (Ps 130; or Ps 50; where they reassess their own faithfulness and plead for forgiveness for transgressions).

List of Contributors

TERENCE LAWRENSON has a BSc degree in Electrical Engineering (UND) and an Honours degree in Psychology (UNISA). He is currently the CEO of Reid and Mitchell (a division of Actom PTY Ltd). He is also currently registered at St Augustine College for an MPhil in Applied Ethics.

MARILISE SMURTHWAITE has the degrees BA(Hons)(Wits), BA(Hons), HDE(UNISA), MPhil, DPhil (St Augustine ZA). She is the holder of the Bishop Fürst Chair of Applied Ethics in Catholic Social Teaching, and is Head of the Department of Applied Ethics at St Augustine College of South Africa, where she lectures in Business Ethics at both undergraduate and postgraduate (Masters) levels. She supervises Masters level research papers and has also taught on the Political Leaderhip Certificate programme. Her areas of research include the corporation and economic justice in South Africa, Catholic Social Thought, especially as an ethical framework for examining the economy and related issues, ethical business leadership, work, ethics, economy and sustainability and ethics in banking. She has published widely in these areas.

JUDITH HUDSON is currently completing her doctoral studies. She lectures in Political Science at St Augustine College. She holds a Masters degree in Political Science from the University of Natal, where she also lectured in that subject. Previously she was senior research fellow at Kings' College, London University and also worked in various policy think tanks including the Centre for Policy Studies, the Small Business Project, Centre for Development and Enterprise, Community Agency for Social Enquiry and the South African Institute of Race Relations. Ms Hudson has provided consulting services to the FinMark Trust on broadening access to financial services and in this capacity is managing projects in Tanzania, Botswana, Ghana and South Africa – as well as Shisaka Development Management Services, the Independent Development Trust, Business Trust, the Nelson Mandela Foundation, Standard Bank and the South African Revenue Services. She was appointed to the SARS National Task Team focusing on how to ease the tax compliance burden for South Africa's small enterprises.

MARGARET McGOVERN, a member of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, originally came from Belfast, Ireland. It was at St Mary's College of Education in Belfast that she obtained a Teacher's Certificate in Religious Education and then a Bachelor of Education from Queen's University in Belfast. She also obtained a Bachelor of Theology from UNISA and a Master of Leadership Degree from the Australian Catholic University. At the time of her death in 2009, she was working on a doctorate at St Augustine College of South Africa, the title of her thesis was: "Holy Cross Mission in South Africa".

MICHAEL J VAN HEERDEN is the President of *St Augustine College of South Africa.* He has a BA in Social Sciences (Unisa), a BTheol (Urbaniana), a Masters in Theology (UNISA) and a Masters and Doctorate in Philosophy from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. He has been Vice-Rector of St Peter's Seminary in Pretoria as well as Rector of the Cape Town Diocesan Seminary. Dr van Heerden has published two books: *Leuven Philosophy Series, C.S. Peirce Categories to Constantinople* (1998) and Larry Rametti, *Creation, Recreation, Consummation* (2001). He also published a number of articles in scholarly journals and contributed several articles to the *Christelike Ensiklopedie* (2009).

St Augustine Papers Editorial Committee

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The idea of founding a Catholic university in South Africa was first mooted in 1993 by a group of academics, clergy and business people. It culminated in the establishment of St Augustine College of South Africa in July 1999, when it was registered by the Minister of Education as a private higher education institution and started teaching students registered for the degree of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy.

It is situated in Victory Park, Johannesburg and operates as a university offering values-based education to students of any faith or denomination, to develop leaders in Africa for Africa.

The name 'St Augustine' was chosen in order to indicate the African identity of the College since St Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.) was one of the first great Christian scholars of Africa.

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Bean, P. and Melville, J. 1989. *Lost Children of the Empire.* London: Unwin Hyman.
Black, M. 1979. *More About Metaphor*. In Ortony, A. (ed.) 1979: 19-43
Hrushovski, B. 1984. Poetic metaphor and Frames of Reference. *Poetics Today* 5 (1):5-43
Ortony, A. (ed.). 1979. *Metaphor and Thought.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

NOTES

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