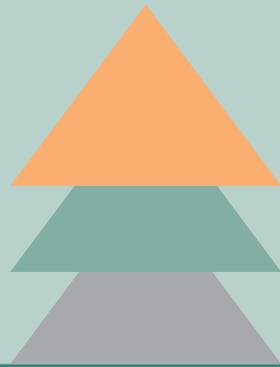


Religions and Development Research Programme

Concepts of Development in the Christian Traditions: A Religions and Development Background Paper

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Working Paper 16 - 2007



Religions and Development

Research Programme

The Religions and Development Research Programme Consortium is an international research partnership that is exploring the relationships between several major world religions, development in low-income countries and poverty reduction. The programme is comprised of a series of comparative research projects that are addressing the following questions:

- How do religious values and beliefs drive the actions and interactions of individuals and faith-based organisations?
- How do religious values and beliefs and religious organisations influence the relationships between states and societies?
- In what ways do faith communities interact with development actors and what are the outcomes with respect to the achievement of development goals?

The research aims to provide knowledge and tools to enable dialogue between development partners and contribute to the achievement of development goals. We believe that our role as researchers is not to make judgements about the truth or desirability of particular values or beliefs, nor is it to urge a greater or lesser role for religion in achieving development objectives. Instead, our aim is to produce systematic and reliable knowledge and better understanding of the social world.

The research focuses on four countries (India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania), enabling the research team to study most of the major world religions: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and African traditional belief systems. The research projects will compare two or more of the focus countries, regions within the countries, different religious traditions and selected development activities and policies.

The consortium consists of six research partner organisations, each of which is working with other researchers in the four focus countries:

- University of Birmingham, UK: International Development Department, Department of Theology and Religion, Centre for West African Studies, Centre for the Study of Global Ethics.
- University of Bath, UK: Centre for Development Studies.
- Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, New Delhi.
- Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, Ibadan.
- University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan.

In addition to the research partners, links have been forged with non-academic and non-government bodies, including Islamic Relief.

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Preface

This is one of a series of six background papers prepared as part of the Religions and Development Research Programme. Each aims to provide an introduction and overview of the teachings of one of the major faith traditions with which the programme is dealing: Christianity, African traditional religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. Their purpose is to summarize recent material produced by the relevant religious organizations and by some of the main academic interpreters to provide background material on the understandings of 'development' that arise out of the core beliefs and values of each faith tradition.

Each review seeks to identify concepts and teachings relevant to human development within the relevant faith tradition, with reference to its teachings/ethics and theology. It also considers the extent to which the understandings have evolved over time; identifies major differences in the understanding of concepts developed by different branches within a faith tradition; and discusses the extent to which views associated with particular religious organisations and their adherents arise from their religious beliefs or are influenced by the social and cultural context in which adherents live.

The writers were asked to concentrate on the key concepts underlying the notion of 'development': development (goals, obstacles and appropriate strategies), poverty (and its causes), wealth, inequality and well-being. They were also asked to consider issues of particular relevance to the various components in this research programme

- a) Credit and debt
- b) Gender roles and equality
- c) Education (the role of education and access to educational opportunities)
- d) Engagement in public life through politics, social movements, advocacy, community organization etc
- e) Corruption/ethical behaviour in public life
- f) Livelihood decisions e.g. building wealth, seeking improved wellbeing, begging.

The contemporary discourse of development post-dates most religious teaching, which is not historically or even today couched in terms of the conventional international development discourse. However, each religious tradition has ideas about 'right social ordering' and provides guidelines to individuals and societies about the values and ethics they should adopt in their pursuit of a life that is not just spiritually rewarding but also morally and socially responsible. Interpreting these teachings in a

relatively short paper in the light of the terminology of development is problematic and the interpretations and views put forward by the authors of these papers are necessarily partial and provisional.

Moreover, all religious traditions have developed schools or denominations that present different interpretations of core teachings and practices. Religious traditions have also developed under the influence of different sorts of inputs: for example, from mystics, theologians, philosophers, ritual specialists or legal experts. While at certain times and in certain places particular interpretations of religious traditions may dominate, it is impossible to talk about a single view of development, for example *a Christian view* or *a Muslim view*, and instead we may find a range of opinions or even competing views. This difficulty is compounded by the fact the interpretation of teachings may vary between the authorities responsible at the highest level and local religious specialists, between the official sources and everyday lived religion, over time, and between places, where it is interpreted through the lens of differing cultural traditions.

Some of this variety is captured in the papers, but certainly not all. The authors themselves come from different backgrounds: not all are scholars from within the religious tradition about which they are writing, and not all are adherents of that tradition. Each has his or her own interests and preoccupations. The accounts are also dependent on the available sources, which do not necessarily deal with all the issues that the authors were asked to consider. Although each of the papers adopts a basically similar approach, their coverage and detailed organisation vary.

These papers were initially prepared for the use of the large international team of researchers engaged in the Religions and Development Research Programme. We hope, however, that they will be a useful resource for all those interested in the topic.

Carole Rakodi
Director, Religions and Development Research Programme.

1 Introduction and historical overview

This paper aims to give an overview of thinking on development and related issues in the major Christian traditions. After this introduction, the material is divided into five sections: Roman Catholic social teaching, liberal Protestantism and social Christianity, the Ecumenical movement and liberation theology, Conservative-Evangelical and Fundamentalist movements, and Pentecostal and independent indigenous churches. The paper concludes by summarising Christian attitudes to the key concepts of the Religions and Development project and Christian approaches to the key issues.

Several preliminary notes need to be made about terminology, processes and sources. Christian beliefs and Christian theology may be articulated by a number of different voices. Much Christian literature is devotional in nature and does not engage with voices outside the Christian tradition or meet other criteria for academic work. At one time Christian theology was “the queen of the sciences” in Europe and its study was the main reason for the establishment of the oldest universities. These days in the West theology is usually combined in university departments with religious studies so that Christianity is studied both in regard to its own self-understanding (theology), and also as a social entity and as a religion. Most academic study of Christianity is by theologians or by sociologists but it is also studied by philosophers and by those of other faiths. The discipline of Christian studies is found in universities in many different parts of the world.

Christian thought is usually the product of reflection by theologians and church leaders (in most cases these are ordained clergy); increasingly lay people (non-clergy) are also included in the reflection process. Different churches or denominations practise different polity, but most designate their leaders (for whom the term “clergy” is acceptable in most cases) by “ordination”, a special act of worship in which their calling and dedication to ministry in the church is recognised. Clergy may be referred to as “priest” (title “Father”), “minister” or “pastor” (title “Reverend”), “elder”, or, if more senior, “bishop”, “archbishop”, “primate”, or “moderator”. In most groups, ordination requires vocational training and education in advance of the majority of those in their congregations, obtained through attendance at a theological (or Bible) college or seminary. Most churches take responsibility for the stipend of ordained clergy, either at the level of the local congregation or centrally through a denominational structure. Some clergy make their living by means other than their Christian vocation, and some leaders may be recognised as such by a church without any special education or process of ordination. The title “missionary” is applied to someone (lay or ordained) commissioned to a particular task – generally overseas or to a different community – of specifically Christian ministry or

more general humanitarian work. Often missionaries are part of a missionary society or religious order, or they may be sent out by a local church or a denominational board of mission. Missionaries may or may not be clergy; they may receive a stipend from their home church or be self-supporting. The term “theologian” may be broadly applied to anyone who does (usually writes) theology (literally “the study of God”). Theologians may be based in the church, or a theological college/seminary, or they may do theology within a secular institution, with or without a faith commitment. In most churches they may be lay or ordained.

1.1 Sources of Christian theology

Since God is believed to have created the whole universe, the subject matter of theology is all encompassing, but the sources for theology always include (though they are not limited to) the Bible. The Bible is common to all Christians, and is referred to in teaching by all the Christian traditions (including increasingly the Roman Catholic Church, which used to prefer to appeal to philosophy). The Bible is not one book but a collection of histories, prophecies, poems, letters and other writings (known collectively as “books”) compiled over more than a thousand-year period, which concern God and his dealings with his people. The Bible includes the Old Testament (the Hebrew Bible, the Jewish scriptures) and the New Testament (material produced by the church mostly in the first century CE), which was gathered together in second century. Some inter-Testamental writings (also known as the Apocrypha) may also be included. It is available in translation, usually from the original Hebrew and Greek, in more than four hundred languages (Bible Society website includes background information; many versions are available online at Biblegateway website). The Bible is referenced by the name of the book, followed by the chapter number, and then verse number. In this paper the format used is “Book chapter:verse”; references are to the New Revised Standard Version (1989), using its abbreviations for the book titles.

There is wide variation in the way Christians interpret their scriptures and the relative weight they give to different parts of the Bible and to other literature in their teaching. Although the Bible is regarded as authoritative by all Christians, this does not necessarily preclude criticism or recognition that it represents a number of different voices (for example, there are four “gospels” or records of the life of Christ) and later reflection on events. Ultimate authority is vested in Jesus Christ himself. The Bible testifies to Jesus Christ but most Christians believe that there are other ways that Jesus Christ may

be revealed or encountered. The Holy Spirit of God mediates the grace and creative power of God to human beings. The gift of the Spirit is necessary for the proper interpretation of Scripture, and 'in the Spirit', a relationship with, knowledge of, or experience of the risen and ascended Christ is possible. Generally, it is through the church that the Holy Spirit, or the grace of God, is given and received, and it is the Spirit who authenticates the teaching and ministry of the church, but some Christians claim to experience, or identify, the presence or activity of the Spirit beyond the Christian confession in the world at large or in the whole created order. Most Christians profess the ancient Christian creeds formulated by the ancient churches in the first four centuries (see Creeds website). Roughly speaking, the more ancient the church, the greater the body of other religious literature it has developed. Many Christians also believe that God can be known in some general way without specific knowledge of Christian teaching, either by human reason in Protestantism (except the orthodox Reformed tradition), or in the Roman Catholic tradition by 'natural theology' – a system developed in dialogue with Western philosophy.

1.2 Christian foundations for development

Christian perspectives on development begin from the example of Jesus Christ. What can be said about Jesus Christ is both informed and limited by the record of his life and ministry in the Bible, particularly the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). Therefore, although we will identify and explain below different strands of Christian thinking relevant to development concepts and issues, it is worth attempting here an introduction to some relevant biblical material, while recognising that there are other sources for Christian theology, that any summary is incomplete, and that there are also texts in the Bible which may be used against development (e.g. "the poor are always with you" Mt 26:11; Mk 14:7; Jn 12:8; "slaves obey your masters" Col 3:22; Eph 6:5).

According to the New Testament, Jesus Christ renounced the glory of heaven, becoming a human being (incarnation; e.g. Jn 1.1,14; Phil 2:5-8). As written in the Gospels, he declined earthly wealth and status to serve others (e.g. Mark 10:45; Jn 13:1-20), he announced the kingdom of God, the presence of which was demonstrated in his many practical acts on behalf of the poor and oppressed (see Lk 11.20). Jesus taught about the God of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament), who created the world and sustains it, and will also judge human beings according to their behaviour. However, God graciously chooses to involve human beings in his plan to redeem the world from sin and evil.

Drawing from the prophetic tradition of the Hebrew Bible, Jesus challenged those who exploited the poor (e.g. Mt 23:23; Mk 11:15-19). He upheld religious laws that advocated justice for the oppressed, and questioned or reinterpreted others that did not (e.g. Mt 5:21-48). He urged his followers to sell their possessions and give to the poor (e.g. Mt 19:21; Mk 10:21; Lk 18:22), held up as an example those who used their resources to help the needy across religious and social barriers (e.g. the Good Samaritan, Lk 10:25-37) and, in a central act narrated in all four gospels, he shared out food to the crowd (Mt 14:13-21; Mk 6:30-44; Lk 9:12-17; Jn 6:1-14). On the other hand, he is also recorded as praising good stewardship and ingenuity in the use of financial resources (e.g. Mt 25:14-30). Most Christians do not believe Jesus condemned wealth as such (unless Lk 16:13 is interpreted to mean this) but he questioned what constituted true wealth (e.g. Lk 12:13) and to whom it is due (e.g. Mk 12:13-17). He had a reputation for enabling many to find salvation in the sense of healing, release from burdens of sin and evil, and restoration to their family and community (e.g. Lk 7:22; Mk 5:1-20), which continued after his lifetime to be associated with his name.

Jesus and his follows lived by the moral code of the Hebrew Bible, centred on the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17; Deut 5:1-21), which forbid greed (“Do not covet”) and corruption (“Do not steal”, “Do not bear false witness”), and limit the unbridled pursuit of wealth (the injunction to rest on the Sabbath). Jesus summarised these in a double commandment to love God and neighbour (Mt 22:36-40; Mk 12:28-31), who includes the outcast (Lk 10:25-37), and in the “golden rule”, “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Mt 7:12; Lk 6:31). But for his first followers who formed the church after his death, it was not only for his teaching and example that Jesus Christ was worshipped. His crucifixion and resurrection was understood to atone for sin and usher in the kingdom or reign of God on earth, or a new age of the Spirit (e.g. Rom 6:1-14; 8:1-25). The church of the New Testament, regarded itself as a new or renewed people to exemplify and testify to this until the final consummation of history, when Jesus Christ will return, God will judge the world, and the reconciliation of human beings to God, to one another, and to the whole creation, will finally be accomplished (e.g. Col 1:3-23; 1 Pet 1:3-12; Jn 3:16-21). The earliest Christians seem to have pooled their possessions and practised community living locally (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32) and provided for the poor internationally (2Cor 8-9). The book of Acts and the New Testament letters describe new life in the Holy Spirit, in which there is a reconciled diversity of peoples, classes and (to some extent) genders, and mutual encouragement and support; although condemnation of socio-economic inequality and ethnic, racial

and gender discrimination is not voiced unequivocally. The final book of the Bible describes the overthrow of oppressive rule and the vision of the City of God, in which human beings live harmoniously with one another and with the created world (Rev 21). Because the church itself is intended to demonstrate a new society, there is a great deal of truth in the statement that “the church does not have, but is, a social ethic” (S. Hauerwas quoted by Forrester, 2000, 675).

1.3 Christian traditions of social thought

In different times and places the biblical examples and teachings toward the agenda of what is now described as “development” have been interpreted and applied in different ways, and to a greater or lesser extent. The reasons for this variation include the level of faithfulness of the churches to the tradition they have inherited, and the ways in which the church has interacted with local culture. Christians have also differed in their understanding of the relationship of spiritual and material, with some taking an other-worldly approach to faith. The social status and political context of Christians has also been a factor in how they engage socially and politically, and whether they focus on individual and family well-being, or on wider social issues.

In Europe, from the conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine (circa 312 CE), Christianity was the religion of state – an arrangement known as “Christendom”. This was true in both the Byzantine Empire in the East (Orthodox) and the Holy Roman Empire in the West (Catholic), and continued in the West into modern times. In the Holy Roman Empire, the church exacted taxes from citizens: a ‘tithe’, or ten percent, was the norm. Some European churches still levy a tax or receive government support today. In Asia, the Christian communities known as Eastern Orthodox – either Syrian (monophysite) or Persian (Nestorian), which spread into India, Central Asia, and China, were generally in a minority and so their role in society is less well documented (for Orthodox churches and society, see Ware, 1993). The monastic movement, which in the West was separate from the church hierarchy, was a major force in the development of Northern Europe to 1500; monasteries also offered relief to the poor, and introduced new forms of learning, education, health care and agriculture (Bosch, 1991, pp.230-36). Monks and nuns renounce their wealth and espouse poverty as a religious path, living in community or as mendicants (depending on alms for their living); although many of the monastic orders themselves became very wealthy in the Middle Ages.

Over the centuries there were many Christian groups who opposed the established rulers of church and state, because they believed them to be corrupt, and sought the freedom of the Spirit and liberation from autocratic or tyrannical rule. In the sixteenth century Reformation, Protestant rulers broke from the power of the Roman Catholic Church to form national churches of Lutheran, Reformed or Presbyterian, and Anglican tradition, and also various radical networks. The power of the priesthood and the monasteries was curtailed in Northern Europe as the Bible was made available in local languages and lay people claimed access to spiritual resources (Johnston, 1991). In the turmoil of the subsequent period of religious wars in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Christian refugees from Europe sought religious freedom in colonies in other parts of the world. In North America, the development of modern democracy was influenced by the emphasis on personal responsibility of the New England Puritans, and constitutional provision for a plurality of religious expressions within a secular state was encouraged by religious separatists (see, for example, Williams, 1990, pp.95-106; pp.161-65); while “the Protestant work ethic” arguably contributed to the rise of capitalism (Weber, 1958).

In the colonial period, Christian missionaries initiated many aspects of what would now be described under the heading of “development” (and there were similar initiatives at home in Western Europe) (see Bevans & Schroeder, 2004, pp.171-236; Bosch, 1991, pp.262-345). Mission work included mass education, health care, movements to improve the conditions of women, campaigns against caste, slavery and alcohol, initiatives to generate commerce and industry to improve the lives of the poor, care and advocacy for the disenfranchised, prisoners, widows, orphans, and child labourers. Missionaries did not always support the colonial authorities and their religious values sometimes clashed with those of governments; however, in the heyday of the Spanish and Portuguese colonialism, and in the high imperial era, most missionaries were serving the aims of the colonial enterprise, and many failed to distinguish between the Christian gospel and Western civilisation (Bosch, 1991, pp.302-13).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there were a number of international conferences of Protestant missionaries which articulated a global agenda that was social as well as spiritual. The vision of the epoch-making World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 was for “the evangelisation of the world in this generation”, a project that encompassed strategies for conversion of the world to Christianity as well as ambitious programmes for human welfare (Bosch, 1991, pp.334-

39). This confident vision, and the ability to fulfil it, was greatly impaired by two world wars, and in the ensuing break-up of European empires, initiatives set up by missionaries were often integrated into government programmes in the era of “development”. The first leaders of former colonies generally received their education in mission schools, and in some cases, such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, their plans for development could be ascribed in part to these influences (Parratt 1997: 109).

2 Concepts of development in different traditions

The “historic churches” with international denominational structures based in the West – the Roman Catholic Church and “mainstream” Protestants (Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed/Presbyterian, and Methodist) – have had the closest relations with government in the modern world, and have evolved a substantial literature on social goals and issues of poverty, wealth, inequality, which may be described under “social teaching”, “ethics”, “practical theology”, “political theology”, “public theology”, or “missiology” (the study of/reflection on Christian missions). However, these denominations do not always support government, and each is divided within in their attitudes to development. The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, which has a centralised authority in the Vatican, will be treated first. We will then look at trans-denominational movements: liberal Protestantism and social Christianity, the Ecumenical movement and liberation theology, and Conservative-Evangelical and Fundamentalist movements. Finally, we will note the perspectives of newer, less well established and poorer churches, often described as “Pentecostal” or “Independent”.

Two other worldwide traditions should be mentioned briefly here. First, the Orthodox churches of Eastern Europe, Russia, the Middle East, North Africa and much of Asia. These thrived in the first millennium but struggled simply to maintain their traditions under Muslim and Communist rule. However, they are now found across the world, including India and East Africa. They are undergoing a resurgence in many places and, though they resisted the consequences of the Enlightenment in the form of communism, some are now beginning to engage constructively with modern thought and systems, such as democracy and religious freedom (e.g. Clapsis, 2004). However, in general, the Orthodox churches prefer to focus on celebrating the liturgy (literally “the work of or for the people”), believing that the rituals of the church represent God’s purposes for humankind, and that their performance is effective both in church and society (Bria, 1996; cf. Forrester, 2000, p.675). Second, the “peace churches”; that is, the Church of the Brethren, the Mennonites, the Quakers or Religious Society of Friends, and other descendents of radical Reformation groups which, though relatively small, have been extremely influential in a counter-cultural way. These churches are linked by their belief that Jesus was a pacifist and their consequent resistance to war, the trappings of war and violence in general (Enns, 2004). In the 1990s they came together to form the Christian Peacemaker Teams (website). Most are also radically egalitarian. During the Industrial Revolution, British Quaker families – such as Cadbury, the Rowntree and Fry – gained wealth through the production of chocolate as an alternative drink to alcohol. Based on their emphasis on God’s Spirit at work in individual

conscience, they developed an ethic of honest dealing in business – which meant fixed pricing – and simple living. They reinvested their wealth in model housing and welfare for their workers, programmes of social reform, and other acts of philanthropy (Dale, 1996).

2.1 Roman Catholic social teaching

The social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, which has been developed and systematised by the church hierarchy over two thousand years, is based on the teaching of Christ and the Apostles, and reflects the example of the good deeds of the saints of the Church. Papal documents and other documents back to 1878 may be found on the Vatican website. The church's relations with society have changed enormously since the First Vatican Council of 1869-70 condemned many influences of the modern world – such as rationalism, liberalism and materialism. The struggles of the Church against fascism and communism transformed attitudes, and at the Second Vatican Council of 1962-65, the Church opened itself to the modern world, embraced democracy as the preferred political system, and began to champion human rights (Curran, 2002, pp.152-56, 217-19). Since then, due to the growth of the Church outside the West, Catholic social teaching has also become less Euro-centric and more concerned with global issues.

Recent social teaching, dating from Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum novarum*, "The condition of labour" (1891), is very well discussed and documented (e.g. Curran, 2002; Dorr, 1992; Charles, 1998; Deberri and Hug, 2003). The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) policy and research papers apply Catholic social teaching to specific issues (website). On the basis that there is a "natural law", drawn from both Christian scripture and human reason, Catholic social teaching is not addressed only to Christians but to "all people of good will", and therefore sets forward what the Church believes to be a universal framework for human societal behaviour and relations. It begins from the understanding that all human beings are born with "aptitudes and abilities" and given the duty and the potential to develop themselves to become fully human (Paul VI, 1967, §§15-16; see Curran, 2002, pp.21-51). Human beings have a fundamental and equal dignity because they are made in the image of God. They are social beings, who live in community with others – as children of the same heavenly Father, and in relationship with the whole creation (Curran, 2002, pp.127-36).

Catholic social teaching deals primarily with economics – out of concern for the poor, and secondarily with the political order necessary to bring about a just society (Curran, 2002, p.127). The basis of the economic order is that “the goods of this world”, given by God, “are originally meant for all”. The Church supports the right to private property as “valid and necessary” but only in order to safeguard it for all (John Paul II, 1987, §42). The Church has consistently maintained a middle position between socialism and Marxism, on the one hand, which fail to recognise the sacredness of the human person, and liberalistic capitalism, on the other, which neglects the social aspects of the human person. But it does not set out a new economic system or oppose the present capitalist system as a whole. In steering between economic collectivism and individualism, the Church tends to advocate a basic minimum for everyone coupled with opportunity for individual accumulation of wealth as part of human development (Curran, 2002, p.193). Particularly since John Paul II – who was Archbishop of Krakow, Poland before becoming Pope – the Church has stressed the concept of solidarity, with God, humanity, and the natural world. This represents a move from the sense of dependence on God’s provision, characteristic of agrarian society, to recognition of human responsibility as co-creators with God, brothers and sisters of one another, and custodians of the environment (Curran, 2002, pp.187-88). John Paul II also cautiously expressed a special solidarity with the poor (e.g. 1988, §42). This is derived ultimately from the teaching of Jesus Christ but its importance in contemporary social teaching is largely owing to the influence of liberation theology (see below), which implies resistance to exploitation and the obligation to release the poor from debt (Dorr, 1992, pp.233-51).

Catholic social teaching prescribes a political order in which the state exists to bring about “public well-being and private prosperity” (Leo XIII, 1891, §32). Human society is understood to be made up of a number of levels, rising from the human person, to the family, then to structures such as neighbourhoods, then social, cultural, educational organisations, churches and voluntary associations, and only after these come different levels of government. Pope Pius XI established the principle of “subsidiarity”, which means that matters ought to be handled by the smallest (or the lowest) competent authority (Pius XI, 1931, §80), thus limiting the power of the state to dealing only with matters that exceed the capacity of individuals and intermediate bodies. The state is understood as reflecting the natural order, as necessary for just society, and as a positive force in society, as long as it serves “the common good”, and recognises the primary importance of the human person and family. In this way, the church opposes totalitarianism and emphasises the role of mediating institutions

between government and individual (Curran, 2002, pp.141-45). The Roman Catholic Church supports human rights – economic and social as well as political and civil rights – in so far as they uphold human dignity. Rights are related to duties, and are considered along with other values such as truth, justice and charity (Curran, 2002, pp.215-22).

In 1967, the church embraced the term “development” as “the new name for peace” because it had the potential to overcome economic disparity between nations (Paul VI, 1967, §76). It insisted that development should not be restricted to the economic sphere alone (§14); authentic development is humanity’s “transition from less than human conditions to truly human ones” (§20), in which human welfare is paramount and brotherly love is practised, under “the helping hand of God” (§86). This vision includes discussion of ways to ensure that there is dialogue between nations and those who offer aid to avoid intolerable burdens of debt, and achieve proper accountability without undue interference, so that dignity is maintained (§54). Education, particularly literacy, is regarded as the “first and most basic tool for personal enrichment and social integration; and it is society’s most valuable tool for furthering development and economic progress”. The means of delivery may vary; the important thing is that it “enables man to act for himself” (§35).

A great weakness of Catholic social teaching is in the area of gender roles and gender equality. Papal documents have only started to use inclusive language since the late 1990s. They rarely mention women specifically, and when they do so, it is usually restricted to the context of home and family (Curran, 2002, p.94). Since membership of the hierarchy is restricted to men, it is difficult for the teaching office of the Church (Magisterium) to reflect women’s concerns, though women’s lives may be drastically affected by its pronouncements; for example in 1968, when a papal encyclical (Paul VI, 1968) proscribed artificial methods of birth control. The current Pope is believed to be moving toward a relaxation in the Church’s opposition to the use of condoms in the specific case of married couples where one partner has HIV/AIDS.

The Church supports local initiatives for human well-being, and this means it claims a voice in public policy. However, its teachings are in terms of universal principles which, since they are mediated through all the complexities of human life and experience, may be interpreted in different ways. On the basis of the principle of mediation, the Church tolerates differences in local application of its teaching,

for example U.S. bishops' endorsement of pacifism alongside just war (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1983), and individual Catholics are free to make their own decisions on social and political matters for which there is no authoritative teaching (Paul VI, 1967, §81), for example, which political party to support; but the hierarchy, as guardian of what it believes is the God-ordained natural law, may react strongly when it feels its teachings are being disregarded or undermined (Curran, 2002, pp.108-112). In this truly global organisation, there are many questions connected with the Church's use of authority, which have yet to be addressed, such as the extent to which the Church can be in dialogue with others working for a better human society, whether the Church can admit to error in its past social teaching, and the lack of transparency in the way authoritative documents are composed (Curran, 2002, pp.114-19, 152-56). A further difficulty for Catholic social teaching is that the view that reason and truth are self-evident, and therefore that "all men of goodwill" will agree on the universal principles, is proving difficult to maintain in plural societies.

2.2 Liberal Protestants and social Christianity

Social Christianity emerged within the liberal Protestant tradition – a movement encompassing both progressive and modernist views – in the mid-late nineteenth century under the influence of Hegelian idealism (the progress of the human spirit), Darwinian theories of evolutionary progress, and comparative religion, and in reaction to the rise of individualism in religion and society. Its leadership – including F. D. Maurice (Maurice, 1838), B. F. Westcott (Wescott, 1892) and W. Rauschenbusch (Rauschenbusch, 1917) – focussed on Jesus' ethical teaching to love God and neighbour rather than on doctrine. They took an optimistic view of the human condition, downplaying human sinfulness and doctrines of God's judgment and eternal punishment, and emphasising the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the continuing immanence (presence) of God on earth. They emphasised the unity between sacred and secular, God and humanity, and church and state by their theology of the "fatherhood of God" and the consequent "brotherhood of man". They saw themselves as ushering in – or even building – the Kingdom of God or the New Jerusalem on earth (Phillips, 1996, pp.1-8). This resulted in movements of social compassion, because Jesus Christ came to give life in all its abundance (John 10:10), and movements toward social and church unity, because Christ prayed "that they might be one" (John 17: 21).

Social Christianity arose specifically from realisation of the needs of the urban poor of industrial society. The movement had different strands, such as the “social gospel” (in North America), “Christian socialism” (in Britain), or “religious socialism” (on the Continent). Between 1880 and 1940 it developed from alms-giving and philanthropy toward advocating state intervention. It also led to movements of pacifism and reconciliation in the aftermath of the World Wars. Their altruism and ethos of service led social Christians willingly to transfer their projects to secular authorities and to work with groups which did not share their Christian belief. In this respect they tended to secularise Christianity, but nevertheless this was a religious movement, which understood Christian faith as service in the fulfilment of human aspirations, and fused civilisation with the purposes of God in Christ.

Social Christianity spanned the major denominations but in Britain its strongest representatives were Anglicans. The agenda of social Christianity was implemented – at home and overseas – by church bodies and also by church-related organisations such as the Anglican “high church” mission agency SPG (the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, now USPG). SPG and related agencies were the dominant Anglicans in present-day India but in Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania, CMS (the Church Mission Society) – an Evangelical agency – was the major Anglican missionary presence. The contemporary legacy of the social Christianity may be found in movements for church unity, aspects of liberation theology (see next section), and much Christian-initiated inter-religious dialogue. As a result of the influence of social Christianity, the former colonial mission churches in the Indian sub-continent are the result of unions of denominations – for example, the Church of North India, Church of South India and Church of Pakistan – and have boards of social responsibility, which offer social services and engage with government where possible.

American Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr dominated Christian social thought for the first half of the twentieth century, and was influential in shaping United States’ foreign policy after the Second World War. In the First World War he adopted a pacifist stance and supported socialism but later became highly critical of what he saw as the idealism of social Christianity and the sentimentality of its compassion (though not of its desire to restrain market forces and establish social and political democracy). In the context of the corporate power relations of 1930s Detroit, he found these inadequate to comprehend social evils. In his *The nature and destiny of man* (1941 & 1943), he showed that the Bible and classical Christianity had a realism about humanity as sinful or self-seeking,

although at the same time bearing the image of God in our potential for disinterested love of God and neighbour. He believed human beings should to be loved but not trusted, and that God, though merciful, is also just. He rejected moralism and did not think perfection was possible on earth but, in view of God's forgiveness, he encouraged "proximate justice", involving pragmatic solutions and necessary compromise, for addressing the political issues of the age (Grenz and Olson, 1992, pp.99-112; Werpehowski, 1997, pp.313-15).

Christian feminism, which challenges traditional gender roles and inequality, defies the categories used in this paper, being found in all but the most conservative churches. It will be mentioned at this point because it was established as a branch of theology by liberal Protestant women, mainly in North America from the 1960s (Russell, 1974; Ruether, 1983), who argued that whatever in the tradition did not reflect the full humanity of women should be rejected, and that to change society God needed to be described in feminine as well as (or even instead of) masculine language (Daly, 1973; cf. Johnson, 1992). However, there is a history of women defying traditional norms in the name of Christ, which stretches back through Christian tradition (MacHaffie, 1992) and into the Bible itself (Fiorenza, 1983). In the nineteenth century, women led Christian social reform movements (Byrne, 1995) and were active as overseas missionaries (Beaver, 1980). In these spheres they could exercise leadership denied to them in institutional church structures. Women have challenged their marginalisation in the church in two ways: first by forming their own structures: the Roman Catholic church has women's religious orders (nuns) and Protestant churches have women's groups, such as the Mothers' Union; secondly, by campaigning for ordination. Ordination poses the greatest problem for those churches with a "high" view of the "sacraments", including the Eucharist or Holy Communion. The most ancient churches – Roman Catholic and Orthodox – still exclude women from their hierarchies. Presbyterians and Anglicans have only recently allowed it – and even then not in every part of the world. More radical Reformation churches, which place greater emphasis on the preaching of the Word of God than on celebration of the Eucharist, such as the Congregationalists, and the products of revival movements, which emphasise the unmediated experience of the Spirit, such as Methodists, Salvation Army, and some Pentecostals, have recognised women's ministry from their inception (see Chaves, 1997).

Feminist liberation theology recognises a liberating tradition within the Bible and Christian tradition which, since the gospel of Jesus Christ is regarded as one of liberation, must be preferred over

enslaving traditions. It points, for example to Jesus' conversations with women (e.g. John 4), his inclusion of them in his wider circle (e.g. Luke 10:38-42), and his defence of their causes (e.g. Matt 5:27-32). Some feminist theologians from the Third World have argued that the liberation of women benefits men, the family and the whole of society (Katoppo, 1979, pp.9-24; EATWOT 1986), they have also been leaders in ecofeminist theology (Chung, 1994). Catholic women have reread the traditions about Mary, mother of Jesus (e.g. Luke 1:26-55, 2:1-7), to show her as actively participating in, rather than passively obedient to, God's purposes (e.g. Katoppo, 1979, pp.9-24; contributions in King, 1994, pp.271-82). Within the Evangelical movement, the term "feminist" is usually avoided because of associations with liberalism. They try to show that it is possible to be both feminist and loyal to the biblical text. Some Evangelicals argue that "difficult passages" concerning women in the Bible (e.g. 1Cor 11:2-16; 14:34-35; Eph 5:21-33; 1Tim 2:8-15) are only so because of the ways in which they have been interpreted.

2.3 Ecumenical movement and liberation theology

The Edinburgh 1910 world missionary conference gave birth to the movement for church unity, known as the Ecumenical movement, which resulted in 1948 in the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The Ecumenical movement arose from a desire for churches to bear united witness to the faith, to raise social and international issues in a "league of churches" (analogous to the League of Nations), and to move toward organic unity (see Rouse, 2004). It is centred on, but is not restricted to, the World Council of Churches, founded in 1948 and based in Geneva, which now has nearly 350 churches – mainly national churches – as its membership. Member churches are Protestant, Orthodox, Independent and Pentecostal. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member but several departments of the Roman Curia (the Church's international government) work closely with the Council. The World Council of Churches speaks *to* the churches not *for* them, so its documents are not authoritative in the way that Catholic documents are. They are published by WCC Publications or contained in reports; only recent statements are found on the World Council of Churches website. Ellingsen (1993) has summarised hundreds of World Council of Churches and other ecumenical statements on social issues. The World Council of Churches' two journals the *Ecumenical Review* and the *International Review of Mission* discuss many development-related issues.

From 1910, leaders of the mainline churches began to cooperate in mission and international affairs. The World Council of Churches “in process of formation” played an active role in shaping the Charter of the United Nations, and in persuading public opinion to accept it. The churches stressed the UN should be an instrument of the peoples of the world – not just the powerful nations, helped develop and incorporate the UN charter on human rights, and insisted on provision for UN consultation with NGOs, of which the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs was one of the first (World Council of Churches – International Affairs, 2006). A conference in Oxford in 1937 laid foundations for modern ecumenical social thought. The experience of two world wars had led to the eclipse of liberalism, with its optimistic view of human potential and its sometimes utopian visions of the kingdom of God on earth, by a new movement in theology, most associated with the German Protestant theologian Karl Barth, called “neo-orthodoxy”, which stressed realism about human sinfulness and the otherness of God (as did Reinhold Niebuhr, though Niebuhr retained greater optimism about human potential). Hope for the world was not to be vested in humanity but only in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, which was less about Jesus’ moral example in ministry, and more about his atonement for sin, which was seen as having a central place in God’s overall design for human salvation. At its inaugural assembly in Amsterdam in 1948 the World Council of Churches’ agenda was dominated by the need to rebuild Europe. The assembly called for a “responsible society”, in which freedom was set in the context of God’s justice and order, and “where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it”. The World Council of Churches encouraged member churches to participate in the post-War re-construction, nation-building and development agenda, and cooperate with governmental and non-governmental bodies for these specific purposes (following J. H. Oldham’s “middle axiom” method). Since 1948 many NGOs have emerged, such as Christian Aid (see website), which, on the basis of the ecumenical ethos, have programmes of aid and development. These work with the World Council of Churches and local or regional councils of churches.

For Ecumenical Christians, good deeds are in themselves a communication of the Christian message; therefore, the way in which projects are carried out is regarded as being as important as their success. Western Ecumenical Christians are therefore particularly sensitive to charges of paternalism, charity, or colonialism, and in the post-colonial period – in theory at least – they have emphasised “partnership” between donors and recipients, with equality in decision-making and

exchange of resources where possible (Funkschmidt, 2002). Many Ecumenicals prefer to support local and direct church-to-church projects rather than the more remote programmes of larger bodies, and see this as a way of participating in and building relationships with the “world church”.

From its inception, the ecumenical movement was concerned to help the poor (Taylor, 1995), and at first Ecumenicals accepted the model of transnational economic development by transfer of technology, as the means to achieve this in the “responsible society”. However, in the 1960s and 70s, as a result of secular and Marxist influence, and an increase in the proportion of churches based in the Third World, who tended to be critical of the prevailing model, the theological, economic and political assumptions underlying the concept of the “responsible society” were called into question as too traditional, elitist and Western (Taylor, 1995, pp.47-75). The Geneva conference on church and society in 1966 established a dynamic action-reflection approach to ecumenical social ethics (World Council of Churches, 1967). Radical youth members at Uppsala in 1968, protesting against world poverty, racial discrimination, and the arms race, demanded that the world, not the church, should set the agenda for Christian mission, and that “the human” was the proper criterion for development. After a conference at Bangkok in 1973, the Council adopted a “comprehensive” understanding of salvation (or development) as liberation in four inter-related dimensions: economic justice, human dignity, human solidarity, and “hope in personal life” (World Council of Churches, 1973). The weakness of any explicitly Christian or spiritual dimension to this definition led to a backlash by Evangelical-Fundamentalists against what they saw as a Liberal-Socialist agenda (McGavran, 1972), and this weakened the World Council of Churches in the long run. On the basis of this new framework, the World Council of Churches began lending its support to movements that challenged structures of injustice, such as the ANC in South Africa, and engaging in advocacy and campaigning. Then, in the 1980s, the Council adopted the “option for the poor” of “liberation theology” (Ellingsen, 2003, pp.26-40).

Liberation theology began in Latin America in the 1960s when Roman Catholic priests, using Marxist social analysis and the pedagogical theories of the Brazilian Paulo Freire, encouraged poor lay people to read the Bible together in “base communities” in the light of their social and political condition. This both conscientised the people, and also revealed the extent to which the Bible directly addresses issues of justice and inequality (for background and documentation see Hennelly, 1990). For example, Gutiérrez (1973) showed that the rescue of Israel from oppression in Egypt, often interpreted only as a

metaphor for spiritual liberation, was also a political act. Liberation theologians also noted Jesus' "manifesto" at the synagogue in Nazareth, where he proclaimed that he had come "to bring good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18-20), and the practical outworking of this in his deeds in the gospels. They drew attention to the Old Testament principle of a jubilee every fifty years that meant the land would revert to its original owners and debts would be cancelled (Lev 25), which Jesus appeared to be announcing at Nazareth (Boff, 1978). The Eucharist (sharing of bread and wine as the body and blood of Jesus Christ) was also reinterpreted as a demonstration of the redistribution of material spiritual resources in the God's kingdom (Boff, 1986).

Liberation theology provided a biblical basis for Christian action on behalf of the poor. It also justified theologically the instinctive Christian efforts in Latin America to challenge structural injustices and the ideologies used to support them, and to call for a redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor (Hennelly, 1990, pp.xv-xvi). Its targets included the Roman Catholic hierarchy, who had supported military regimes in Latin America, and the model of development within the global market system, which seemed to be benefiting North rather than South America. Furthermore, liberation theology suggested a new pattern of action combined with theological reflection: identifying with the poor, listening to them, re-reading the Bible in the light of their experience, and joining with people's movements to bring about change from the grassroots. It led to the development of a faith-based method of participation for local development (Segundo, 1976).

The Roman Catholic hierarchy condemned aspects of liberation theology, particularly its use of Marxist socio-economics and socialist solutions (Hennelly, 1990, pp.121-24). Nevertheless, the Church incorporated the "option for the poor" into its social teaching (see above). Because the movement was justified on biblical grounds, it was not specific to Catholic tradition, and so it spread through the Ecumenical movement to Protestants, and influenced Evangelical churches too. It was further developed by Christian theologians in Asia to take into account not only socio-economic categories but also socio-cultural injustice, and re-expressed to appeal to the whole of society, not just the Christian population. In India in particular, liberation theology has strengthened the struggle against caste oppression and for the liberation of Dalits (Stanislaus, L. 1999). The influence of liberation theology across the divides in British churches has been shown by their widespread support of the Jubilee Debt Campaign ([website](#)), which has helped put debt release for the world's poorest nations on the agenda of the G8, and the subsequent Make Poverty History ([website](#)) movement. Liberation

theology has allowed older liberal Protestant agencies such as Christian Aid, which has been the leading player, to gain the support of newer Evangelical bodies such as TEAR Fund, and Roman Catholic organisations such as CAFOD (as well as some other faith groups), to speak to governments with one voice against poverty.

Social thinking in Ecumenical circles has been through two further significant stages since the height of liberation theology in the 1980s. First, in 1983 the World Council of Churches assembly at Vancouver added “the integrity of creation” to the agenda of a ten-year programme on “justice and peace”, in recognition of the inter-relatedness of the forces threatening human survival, and particularly their relation to exploitation of the earth’s resources (Gill, 1983). Lynn White Jr’s controversial thesis (1967) that Judeo-Christian tradition is fundamentally exploitative of creation and responsible for the ‘environmental crisis,’ combined with James Lovelock’s Gaia Hypothesis, suggested that pre-Christian, Eastern or New Age spiritualities were more predisposed to respect the earth. This challenged Christians to rethink the place of the natural world in their theology, by studying the theology of creation, and to rediscover the interest of the biblical writers and the traditions in land, in cosmic forces, and in healing (as, for example, at the World Council of Churches assembly in Canberra in 1991, documented in Kinnamon, 1991). African theologians particularly have stressed the holistic nature of spiritual life, which includes the material, and advocated a ministry of healing that encompasses not only the human community but the whole of creation (e.g. Daneel, 1998). And the theology of the Orthodox churches of the uncreated energies of the Holy Spirit of God, which since the creation (Gen 1.2) are considered to have been continually recreating or renewing the world (e.g. Matsoukas, 1989), has had made a particular contribution to this debate, and to putting care for creation on the mission agenda of most Christian churches and organisations.

Secondly, the success of liberation movements in Latin America, the Philippines, South Africa, Poland, and other parts of the world has led to Christian involvement in the conflict resolution that is necessary after the liberation struggle (Dorr, 2000; Schreiter, 2004). The ecumenical movement, which exists to reconcile churches, does so because it recognises the prior initiative of God’s reconciling the world to himself through the life and death of Jesus Christ and the delegated ministry of reconciliation (e.g. 2 Cor 5:18-20; see Potter, 1991). The examples of Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Anglican) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and Kim Dae-Jung (Roman Catholic) and his

“sunshine policy” toward North Korea, are seen to embody Ecumenical principles. The rise of violent forms of religious expression has also led the Ecumenical movement to restate its opposition to violence through the World Council of Churches’ “Programme to overcome violence”, initiated in 1994 (DOV website), with the support and encouragement of the “peace churches”. The World Council of Churches has an accompaniment programme to support peace in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI website).

The World Council of Churches, the most representative Ecumenical body, celebrated a decade “in solidarity with women” (1988-1998), which highlighted women’s participation in churches, violence against women and economic oppression (World Council of Churches Decade Festival, 1998). However, the Ecumenical movement is deeply divided on the ordination of women to the priesthood or ministry of the sacraments because it includes churches such as the Orthodox churches, which exclude women from these roles. The issue of homosexuality is not yet an issue for the movement as a whole, though it is a critical issue at present for some member churches, such as those in the worldwide Anglican Communion. The World Council of Churches recently initiated the Ecumenical HIV/Aids Initiative in Africa (EHAIA – see website).

2.4 Conservative-Evangelical and Fundamentalist movements

The word “evangelical” is connected with “gospel” or “good news”, and can be used to refer to Protestants in general. However, the Evangelical, or Conservative-Evangelical, movement originated in a succession of Protestant revival movements from 1726 to 1865, which were seen as “awakenings” to a “true religion of the heart”. The resulting movement has a fourfold emphasis: conversionism (the need for individual change of life – being “born again” – because of sin), activism (through evangelistic and missionary efforts), biblicism (attaching a special importance to the Bible as authority for belief and conduct), and crucicentrism (belief in Christ’s death on the cross as of central significance for human salvation) (Bebbington, 1989, pp.2-17). Evangelicals believe in a direct and contractual relationship between the individual and his/her Maker, through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This tends to separate the material and moral/spiritual worlds: the material world, including the market economy, operates according to natural laws put in place by God, whereas the moral or spiritual realm is where God intervenes for the redemption of humankind (Hilton, 1988, pp.8, 16-17). Between 1785 and 1865, mainstream Evangelicalism encouraged free-market individualism

as the sphere to practice individual morality, and at the same time engaged in new religious, social and mission movements, which had a profound moral influence on society. Examples of the latter include movements for the abolition of slavery, electoral and prison reform, mass education, and care of the sick and orphans, on both sides of the Atlantic (Hilton, 1988).

However, in the late nineteenth and for much of the twentieth century, the movement underwent a “great reversal”, and gradually withdrew from social and political involvement (Marsden, 1980). The reasons for this have most to do with social as well as religious developments in the USA, which became the stronghold of the movement. Following another series of revivals in the 1860s, the destruction of the Civil War, and in reaction to the post-millennial social gospel movement, many Evangelicals took an increasingly pessimistic view of human nature and a “pre-millennialist” view of the end of the world. That is, they believed the world was destined for destruction, and so there was little point in improving it; only individual souls could be plucked from burning to join the future kingdom, which Jesus Christ was about to establish in heaven, rather than on earth. The central reliance of Evangelicals on the Bible as “the Word of God” was threatened by biblical criticism, scientific scepticism of miracles, and Darwinian theory. As centres of power became increasingly secular and liberal, the Evangelical community became alienated from them, and adopted a defensive and separatist posture. They regarded contemporary society as having strayed from its original godly foundation and sought to bring religion back to centre stage by converting individuals and praying for national revival (cf. Coleman, 1993). The name “fundamentalist” was coined in 1920 to describe this kind of Evangelicalism (Marsden, 1980, pp.118-23). By definition, Fundamentalists are resistant to development or any form of social change that does not appear to advance the cause of their religion.

In the Cold War, Evangelicals were vehemently anti-Communist, particularly because Communism was atheistic and stood against the religious freedom they were trying to protect. This made them suspicious of sociology and movements for social change, which they saw as politically leftwing. By the 1960s, most Evangelical groups had left the Ecumenical movement because they saw Ecumenical leaders as preoccupied with “social action”, while neglecting “evangelism” in the sense of verbal proclamation of the Christian message (Yates, 1994, pp.193-223). In the Evangelical mission theology of the time, “social action” became a secondary activity for situations where the “evangelism” was not possible, or to create opportunity for it. The thinking was that right action stemmed from a

right heart, and therefore evangelism should be the precursor to socially responsible action, and the conversion of the population to Christianity would result in the long run in the improvement of society. Furthermore, evangelism concerned a person's eternal destiny, whereas social action would help only temporarily. Moreover, though any human being could engage in social action, evangelism was a uniquely Christian activity, and therefore should have priority (Lausanne Committee, 1982, pp.24-25).

However, since the mid-1960s, Evangelicalism has been gaining ground over liberalism and engaging again in the public sphere. The American evangelist Billy Graham particularly (Noll, 2001, pp.44-55), and also Evangelical leaders from the Third World, helped Evangelicalism recover a social conscience through the Lausanne Movement. In 1974, a wide group of more than 2000 Evangelical leaders from 150 countries signed the "Lausanne Covenant" (Lausanne website), which expressed regret for the separation of evangelism from social concern, arguing that "socio-political involvement" is part of the Christian duty to love one's neighbour as well as God, that "faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:17), and that God's kingdom begins in this world (Lausanne Covenant, 1974, §5; Stott, 1975). The British-based agency Tearfund (website) is one of the main bodies to emerge from the Lausanne Movement. The history of Tearfund, which was originally The Evangelical Alliance Relief (TEAR) Fund (in Britain), shows how socially concerned Evangelicals have moved from a theology of relief to promoting development through partnerships with local churches (see Hughes, 1998). Tearfund is the lead agency in the global Micah Network (based on Micah 6:8; see Micah Network website) of evangelical churches and agencies (many from the global South) committed to "integral mission" or "holistic transformation", in which evangelistic proclamation is seen to have social consequences. The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (website) has led in developing a theology of "transformation" – social, economic and spiritual – for Evangelical social concern through their journal *Transformation* and other publications (Samuel & Sugden, 1999), and has initiated discussions between African Churches and the World Bank (Belshaw et al, 2001).

Today Evangelicalism can be understood as a broad coalition of diverse Protestant subgroups with a broadly similar "statement of faith" or doctrinal statement (Noll, 2001, pp.56-66). The North America-based World Evangelical Alliance (formerly Fellowship) (website), probably represents most Evangelicals, but there are more extreme and separatist groupings. The Evangelical movement continues to work toward world evangelization, particularly through the Joshua Project (website),

which identifies “unreached” or “least reached people groups”, most of whom are poor and live in North Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Increasingly, because of the difficulty of access, missionaries are Asians and enter as professionals (“tent-making”). A characteristically Evangelical view of the world is found in *Operation World* (Johnstone, 2001), a handbook containing summary information about every country from the point of view of Christian evangelism, but which includes social, economic, and political data in its suggestions for prayer.

In contrast to social Christians, Evangelicals are comfortable with a capitalist, market economy (indeed they helped to create it), and with the material trappings of modernity. They generally regard wealth as a blessing from God, and some openly preach a “prosperity gospel”; that is, a message that prosperity or success is evidence of God’s favour. At the same time, they encourage a separatist Christian culture as far as personal and family life is concerned. While Evangelicals are expected to use the gifts given to them for the glory of God and for helping their neighbour, they may be hindered from engaging political issues because of schisms over doctrine, their emphasis on individual rather than corporate responsibility, commitment to the primacy of the local church, the relative weakness of denominational structures, and a belief in the separation of church and state.

Evangelicals rely on the Bible for guidance on matters of “faith and conduct” and tend to give all parts of it equal weight. As a result, traditional mores may be reinforced, rather than challenged by the Christian gospel, if there are biblical examples that accord with local customs. Since the Bible is the product of several different cultural settings over hundreds of years, it is possible to find justification, in terms of biblical texts, for many different practices – such as polygamy, apartheid, begging, and military conquest. Gender-related customs – such as impurity during menstruation or women covering their heads – that were practised in the communities that form the background to the biblical writings may be supported in societies where these are part of the wider tradition, even though these practices may be regarded by others as no longer obligatory because of New Testament teaching that the Christian community is egalitarian. As a result, Evangelicals take a range of positions on women’s status and roles, about which it is impossible to generalise (cf. Noll, 2001, pp.80-107).

The 12-16 million strong Southern Baptist Convention (an umbrella organisation of local churches) is the largest single denomination within North American Evangelicalism. Its statement of beliefs (see

SBC website) is illustrative of Evangelical approaches to gender, society, material possessions, and education. Mainstream Evangelicalism promotes family life and therefore, although women are stated to be of equal worth before God, husband and wife are expected to fulfil traditional roles in the family. There is also a “pro-life” agenda that is anti-abortion. Christians are enjoined to “oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography”. They are to provide for the poor, and to encourage “righteousness, truth, and brotherly love” in society. Social involvement is by individuals as citizens, not churches themselves. Christians are expected to steward time, talents and material possessions as gifts of God. Education is encouraged as long as it is “limited by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures”; this means in practice that creationism or intelligent design is taught in preference to Darwinian theory in Christian schools. As is well known, such is the influence of conservative Evangelicalism and conservative Roman Catholicism that neo-conservative American politicians have appealed to these constituencies for votes in recent US elections.

Evangelicals in the Third World now far outnumber those in the West – and are found in Africa, parts of Asia, and even the traditionally Catholic Latin America (Freston, 2001, p.3). While developments in North America remain significant because of media influence and economic strings, it is no longer true that they determine Evangelicalism globally (Freston, 2001, pp.4, 283-84). The political involvement of Evangelicals depends on their organisation, religious and socio-political location as much as their theology. The decentralised nature of Evangelicalism means that it may get caught up in ethnic, national or local questions of church politics (Freston, 2001, pp.282, 286). Whereas Christian Fundamentalism reacts against contemporary forms of globalisation, Evangelicalism predates them and has possibly contributed to them; most Evangelicalism in the Third World is allied to forces of modernity (Freston, 2001, pp.315, 288). Evangelicalism in the Third World is a very diverse movement, but nevertheless Freston (2001) has made some general observations: Evangelicals have not hesitated to get involved in politics; for example, in Nigeria, President Obasanjo is a born-again Christian (pp. 230-31). Unlike Liberal Christians, Evangelicals rarely discuss economic issues, but when they do they tend to promote neo-liberal policies (pp. 293-94). Their concern with avoiding sin in personal life leads to an emphasis on personal morality that praises self-restraint and honesty, so that in public pronouncements they are anti-corruption, but this has often not been the case in practice. Evangelical presidents Kim Young-Sam (South Korea), Jorge Serrano (Guatemala) and Frederick

Chiluba (Zambia) have all been implicated in scandals, due perhaps to the assimilation of political culture (Freston, 2001, pp.294-95). Evangelical leaders may see themselves as establishing a new Christendom and so may not be tolerant to other religions (Freston, 2001, pp.295-97) or necessarily friendly to democracy (Freston, 2001, p.309).

2.5 Pentecostal and independent indigenous churches

The twentieth century saw the emergence of diverse new expressions of Christianity. Many of these are loosely grouped together under the heading “Pentecostal” and/or “Independent”. The designation “Pentecostal” refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (God’s Spirit and the Spirit of Jesus Christ) on the earliest believers, giving them courage to preach the message of salvation in Jesus Christ, power to do signs and wonders as Jesus himself had done, and marking the beginning of the church as a table fellowship of believers, who pooled their resources and helped the poor (Acts 2). The Pentecostal movement originated in revivals in the early twentieth century; the most famous took place at Azusa Street, Los Angeles in 1906 and others in Wales (1904), India (1905), Korea (1907), Chile (1909), Brazil (1911), Ghana (1914), and other places. These revivals, and the similar “charismatic revival” in the 1970s, sometimes benefited existing denominations (Protestant and Catholic) but also led to the founding of new churches, often among poor people (see Anderson, 2004).

In colonial settings, particularly in Africa, but also in Latin America and Asia, revival movements led by local leaders became expressions of independence from colonial masters (such as the Kimbanguist movement in West Africa). Hence the new churches are described as “African independent (indigenous or initiated) churches” (AICs), also known as “prophet-healing”, “Spirit” or “spiritual” churches. Nowadays in Africa there are also Western Pentecostal denominations and local charismatic movements, which have originated since the 1970s (Anderson, 2004, pp.103-122). A similar picture is found in India, although the former mission churches are relatively stronger there (Anderson, 2004, pp.124-28; Hedlund, 2000). Pentecostalism seems to be responsible for much of the remarkable growth of indigenous churches in China since missionaries were expelled by the Communists in 1950 (Tang, 2005)

Though many Pentecostal churches formally adopt an Evangelical theology, and are similarly conversionist, activist, biblicist, and often crucicentrist, their identity does not lie in adherence to a set of beliefs but in a particular style of worship. This involves awareness of the immediate presence of God by the Holy Spirit, expectation of some sign of miraculous/powerful intervention, and spontaneous congregational participation (Anderson, 2004, pp.1-15). The congregation receive the “gifts of the Spirit” (1Cor 12:4-11; Rom 12.3-8) to enable them to participate in worship and building up the local body of believers. These gifts include prophecy, teaching, miracle-working, and healing. The gift of “speaking in tongues”, understood as a form of ecstatic utterance intelligible only if someone receives another “gift of interpretation’ to explain it, is especially emphasised in many churches as a sign of spiritual empowerment. Many Pentecostal and Independent churches interact with popular beliefs in cosmic or supernatural forces, applying biblical stories of Jesus’ acts of healing and exorcism of evil spirits. In doing so, they take on characteristics of local popular religiosity in their worship and practice; such as the Aladura churches in Nigeria, who use cursing as they do battle with evil forces (for details of movements see Hollenweger, 1972; 1997; Anderson, 2004; Martin, 1990; 2002.) These popular movements have often been dismissed by the European churches as “heretical” but, as a global phenomenon and the fastest growing form of Christianity today, they are difficult to ignore, and it is even argued that they represent a resurgence of primal human religious impulses, which represents the shape of religion in the new century (Cox, 1996).

As churches of the poor, most Pentecostal churches deal with social problems at personal and family level; indeed their healing-centred theology is directed toward solving problems by the power of the Holy Spirit. Sociologists such as Martin (2002) have observed that Pentecostal churches in Latin America, and elsewhere in the global East and South, like their Methodist counterparts before them, tend to be upwardly mobile because of the opportunities they provide for self-improvement – such as a drug and alcohol-free environment, high standards of personal morality that aid stable family life, opportunities and encouragement in education and leadership, and a network of support (Martin, 2002, pp.14-16; cf. Hollenweger 1972, pp.11-17). Furthermore Pentecostal spirituality seems to engender attitudes consonant with success in the capitalist context of late or post modernity (Martin, 2002, pp.14-16; Cox, 1996, pp.213-41). These churches usually begin as communities of poor people; as such they are not equipped to deal with wider social and political questions, or to develop agendas for social ethics. Because they are religious movements, they may not articulate their vision for human

welfare in social or political terms, or use the term “development”, but use religious imagery and passages from the Bible. They often have a “prosperity theology”; this encourages wealth creation by individuals and families. However, they are equally likely to have a doctrine of “tithing” so that ten percent of this income is given to the church – and may therefore be benefiting the Christian community, and even the wider community through mission initiatives. The largest churches (such as Yoido Full Gospel Church, South Korea – see website) are now in a position to found educational establishments and produce development programmes of their own. While their opponents charge them with promising unrealisable benefits either on earth or in the next life, emerging theologians of the movement argue that Pentecostalism has been at least as successful as liberation theology in improving the lot of the poor, and that their theology is also holistic in taking historical realities seriously and meeting bodily needs (Sepúlveda, 1993, pp.51-64; Daneel, 1993, pp.96-126; Land, 1993; Petersen, 1996; Wenk, 2000).

3 Summary of Christian attitudes to key concepts

Theologians increasingly recognise the contextually conditioned nature of all Christian traditions, even the most ancient, and of the biblical text. Christian churches in different parts of the world diverge in their theology and social practice not only according to their denomination, but also due to later trans-denominational movements, and because of the role of local culture in shaping outlook and interpretation. A good example of this is the current division in the worldwide Anglican Communion over the ordination of an openly homosexual man to bishop in the United States, which has been condemned most strongly by the Anglican primate of Nigeria. Not only does this represent a difference between Liberal and Evangelical movements within one denomination, it is also due to the divergence of the prevailing cultural norms in the two countries.

Despite the variety of Christian profession today, it is possible to make a few general observations about Christian attitudes to the key concepts of development, poverty and wealth. All Christian traditions inherit from the Bible a sense that God is involved in this world and desires relations of peace and justice. Most are therefore committed to improving the human condition, though not all are committed to contemporary international models of development. There are a number of reasons for this. Churches differ in whether they have a relatively private or public understanding of their faith, and whether they have a this-worldly or other worldly orientation. They also differ in their relations to government. Christians may resist development initiatives for political, as well as religious, reasons; for example, fear of communist influence, or resistance to foreign interference. Religious reasons may include a pessimistic view of human nature due to sin, pre-millennialism (see above), and fatalism about God's will (e.g. belief in predestination). There may also be vested interests at work and structural obstacles to change due to allegiance to the tradition, as well as problems of the social and ethnic situation or composition of the particular Christian community.

Those Christians who engage constructively with the term "development" insist that true development, like salvation, is a holistic matter. Some see this as possible within one of the current development models; others challenge this. In the post-War order, many overseas Christian mission agencies and churches have joined with the development aims of governmental and non-governmental organisations for a variety of reasons. These include a response to need out of sympathy, compassion, and other altruistic motives, or for pragmatic social and political reasons. Some groups are characterised by a conviction that God has chosen them because of their superior development (in some respect) to be his standard-bearers to the whole world, similar to the sense of "manifest

destiny” which marked the nineteenth century missionary movement (see Bosch, 1991, pp.298-302). Others wish to express and experience the global nature of Christian faith, and believe they have spiritual lessons to learn as well as practical help to give. There may be links to national sensitivities: some Western agencies are trying to redress the injustices of colonialism, whereas some groups from South Korea, for example, or the Russian Orthodox Church, are keen to further their cultural influence as well as Christianity. Many Evangelical churches are pursuing a narrower agenda of conversion and church-planting, and find that involvement in humanitarian work is a means to this end. Liberation theology challenged capitalist models of development, and led rather than followed trends toward emphasis on poverty reduction and participation in development. As shown above, development strategies used by Christians include: aid and alms-giving; service delivery, such as provision of health care and education; promoting economic growth and alternatives to slavery and undesirable or exploitative practices; campaigning for human rights and against injustice; advocacy on behalf of the poor; and critique of power.

Poverty that is voluntary is regarded by Christians of many persuasions as a virtue, because renunciation is a recurring theme in the teaching of Jesus Christ. However, such teaching can hardly be followed by those who are already poor – as many Christians are; prosperity teachers advocate the opposite; and others may simply regard selling their possessions as socially and morally irresponsible. With few exceptions, rich Christians justify not taking the call to renunciation literally – despite Jesus’ comparison of a rich man entering the kingdom of God to a camel trying to pass through the eye of a needle (Mark 10.25 and parallels). Involuntary poverty may be seen as God’s will for discipline, punishment or testing (Job 1). It may be regarded as characteristic of a necessarily unequal world – “the poor are always with us” (Mark 14.7 and parallels). On the other hand it may be seen as an evil to be eradicated, the result of the corruption of human beings or society by sin, or the outcome of political and economic injustice and oppression (cf. John 9:1-3). Taylor (2003) documents examples of how churches in poorer parts of the world respond to poverty and wealth.

Christians see God as a loving parent-figure (usually Father), who created the world and intends the well-being of human beings and (usually) creation (e.g. The Lord’s Prayer, Mt 6: 9-13). They may see personal wealth as a sign of God’s blessing, or even as the reward of faith. Equally, they may regard wealth with suspicion as a sign of ill-gotten gains, self-interest to the exclusion of concern for others, or social advantage. Christians are warned against “mammon” or “money” as something which easily

comes between them and God: “the root of all evil”, a source of temptation (1Tim 6:10; cf. Acts 5:1-11). On the whole, however, Christians with wealth or relative wealth seem to find their state compatible with their Christianity, and most do not question the capitalist system. The danger is perceived as “the love of money” (cf. Luke 16:13), rather than money itself, and it is the gap between rich and poor, that has been the particular focus of those who are socially concerned. There is strong emphasis in the Bible (for references, see section 1.1) and in all church traditions on sharing wealth, or giving to God or the community, or at least investing it for profit, and against hoarding it. So, wealth is affirmed if shared, if obtained by honest means, if it does not usurp the place of God, and if it is used to good ends (Taylor, 2006). However, a recent report calls for the churches to give more attention to wealth as an issue, in view of the biblical teaching against greed (Taylor, 2003, xi).

4 General observations on Christian approaches to research issues

4.1 Livelihood decisions

Although there are the laws of jubilee (see above) and other references to different economic patterns in the Bible, most Christians do not see the Bible and their tradition as prescribing a particular economic system different from prevailing capitalist one. Christians have exhibited divergent economic practices, which often have more to do with local cultural norms. The majority of Christians therefore build wealth as they are able, and this is affirmed particularly by Catholic and Evangelical teaching, while also feeling some obligation to redistribute at least some of it in the interests of the faith and general human well-being. Whereas the Medieval friars lived by receiving alms, and some Evangelical church workers live “by faith” (that is on unsolicited voluntary donations), there are no significant Christian groups today that practise begging (unless charity collections on behalf of others are included); the prevailing view is that human beings have a responsibility to work for a living.

4.2 Credit and debt

Lending money is recognised practice in the Christian tradition, although the Old Testament forbids charging of interest (usury; e.g. Ex 22:25) – at least by Jews of fellow Jews, and Jesus condemned exploitation of the poor by money-lenders (Mark 11:15 and parallels). In the Middle Ages in Europe, the fact that most money-lenders were Jews fuelled Christian anti-Semitism, but after this period lending at interest became uncritically accepted practice as capitalism grew (although the Puritans resisted it – Williams, 1990, p.102). Though Christian traditions have not been the main inspiration behind cooperatives and credit banks, some Christian agencies (e.g. Christian Aid) welcome and use microcredit as a strategy for development (Blundell, 1998). The recent Jubilee Debt Campaign (website), which received such widespread support, emerged from the reflection on biblical teachings in the liberation theology movement and is directed at cancelling the international debt of the poorest nations. It has not been widely translated into criticism of the indebtedness that is built into global capitalism, although some people have been making the point that cancelling the debts of the poorest countries leaves deeper problems unsolved (Taylor 2006).

4.3 Engagement in public life

We have seen a variety of Christian attitudes to public life from Fundamentalist withdrawal on the one hand to a preoccupation with politics and social questions by some Liberal Protestants. The historic or “mainstream” denominations (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed/

Presbyterian, Methodist) are most likely to engage politically (sometimes critically) in their European and North American homelands, where they have (or have had) an established national role; but in another part of the world, they may be a persecuted minority (e.g. Anglicans in Iran). At any rate, they are the churches with the most developed theologies of engagement. However, we have seen that Evangelicals are increasingly active in public life, and in some countries (e.g. Brazil, South Korea), newer Pentecostal churches may also be politically involved. Christian churches in formation, or in revival or renewal, may constitute social movements in themselves. Broad coalitions like liberation theology, Evangelicalism, and the charismatic movement also span churches denominationally and internationally, and have the capacity to mobilise large numbers. Some movements, like liberation theology, advocate social change; others, like Pentecostalism, tend to be more accepting of the status quo (whether capitalist or communist). We have seen that Christian churches and agencies are involved in campaigning and advocacy; these include Conservative-Evangelicals.

4.4 Education

The churches have offered education since the monasteries were established, and that tradition was continued in overseas missionary work. Protestants particularly, with their Reformation emphasis on “the Word alone”, have encouraged Bible-reading, and therefore literacy, and the biblicism of the Evangelical revivals gave incentive for mass education movements. Christians were motivated to set up schools to enable people to read the Bible, to train church workers, as a way of helping the poor better themselves, or as a means to influence leaders of society (see Ingleby, 2000). For the latter reason, some missionary schools are elitist rather than of benefit to the poor, but in some countries (e.g. Korea) missionaries are credited with initiating mass education, as Christians did in the West with the Sunday School movements. Particularly in North America, some Evangelicals, and other Christians who wish to separate themselves from mainstream society, which they believe is evil, may home-school their children or create narrowly Christian schools to protect them from the mainstream.

4.5 Ethical behaviour in public life

The Hebrew Bible establishes that rulers are subject to God’s moral law as much as the people are (e.g. 2Sam 12:1-14); Jesus Christ taught that whoever wants to be great should become a servant (Mark 10:43; Matt 20:26). Therefore Christian leaders are enjoined to ethical behaviour as all Christians are – and more so because they will be judged more harshly (e.g. Mark 9:42). Though

many leaders and ordinary Christians have found ways around these responsibilities, we should note that the term “Christian” itself can carry connotations of upright behaviour in public life. There is little theological debate about the principle of this; the issues lie in the application. Questions of corruption, bribery, loyalty to family versus state, and suchlike are dealt with at a local level, as the subject of sermons (e.g. Gitari, 1996, p.57) and contextual theological discussion (e.g. Mugambi and Nasimiyu-Wasike, 2003). Christians in different countries have campaigned for democracy and other aspects of good governance – De Gruchy (1995, pp.129-224) gives examples – and the contribution Christianity can make to this is the subject of discussion particularly in African Christian theology (e.g. Magesa and Nthamburi, 1999; Bediako, 2000, pp.97-107). Mission and development agencies face questions of accountability, though literature on this is sparse – Bonk (1991) is a rare example.

4.6 Gender roles and equality

Most Christian traditions have been conservative with regard to gender roles and equality, but as we noted (above) there is a wide spectrum of views on women’s status and roles, even within Conservative-Evangelicalism, and there are active Christian feminist movements. Catholics, Orthodox and Evangelicals generally reject homosexual practice (though not necessarily homosexuals – Grenz, 1998) as incompatible with Christian faith, and many will not even discuss it, but Liberal Protestants are more likely to be accepting of it as a lifestyle option, even of church leaders, if it is not promiscuous (Doe, 2001). The Roman Catholic Church is out of step with most other churches in its attitude to birth control but opposition to “abortion on demand” is widespread among Christians. Cultural and other factors play an important role in forming attitudes.

5 Concluding reflections

Some Christian traditions have consciously interacted with government and other agencies to form Christian concepts of development; this paper has attempted to survey the documentation of the results of this. In most cases, however, it might be better to say that, although some see little hope for this world, most Christian traditions suggest visions of human well-being, welfare and happiness which inspire action to bring about a better society. These visions may motivate Christians to cooperate with nations, governments, NGOs and others in initiatives that fall under the heading of “international development”, or they may lead Christians to resist development or espouse alternative models to improve their situation.

Christian responses to development are extremely varied. In the post-war era, the leadership of the historic Protestant churches generally supported international development; the Roman Catholic Church appraised development somewhat later and has taken a more critical approach. Many churches are involved in development at a local level, and not all have the interest or resources to look at the wider issues. As Jenkins (2002) has pointed out, the numerically powerful, and increasingly independent, churches of the global South (or East) are generally (although not invariably) traditional in faith and morality, and they may strongly resist what they see as liberalising influences from the North (or West). This does not necessarily mean they are against the benefits of development, only that their vision for humanity has different priorities.

Predicting the attitudes of Christians in any particular nation to development concepts and issues is very difficult because the behaviour of Christians may be shaped to a large extent by local factors in culture, society and politics, as well as by different forms of Christian confession (see, for example, Parratt 2004). The denominational and theological systems and concepts we have examined mostly have a Western bias and are not always followed or appreciated at a grassroots level, particularly in other continents. Furthermore, there are many examples of local independent churches and movements. Increasingly Christian beliefs and practices must be examined locally. It is sometimes possible to identify commonalities of Christians at a regional or national level because of shared cultural and historical factors in their reception of the Christian faith, but often the self-understanding of churches and movements must be studied in their particularity to appreciate their social vision and the motivations for improving their corporate situation.

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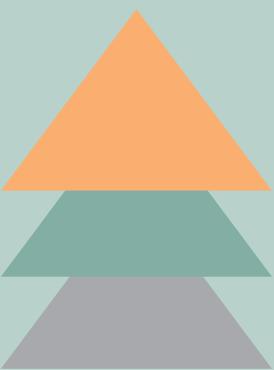
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Micah Network, www.micahnetwork.org
Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, www.ocms.ac.uk
Southern Baptist Convention, www.sbc.net
Tearfund, www.tearfund.org
Vatican, www.vatican.va
World Council of Churches,
World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence, overcomingviolence.org
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