

Community development as an embodiment of pastoral care in Africa: A public practical theology perspective

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Abstract

The pursuit of a fulfilling existence is a common goal among all human beings. As a result, promoting and sustaining quality humanhood or personhood (quality life) is the ultimate goal that international institutions, continental and regional bodies, and nations strive for. From a religious standpoint, theology and Christian religion need to contribute to helping people achieve the quality of life that humanhood aspires to. Consequently, pastoral care as a frontline ministry is positioned to play a leading role in fulfilling this function within church settings. Due to the public nature of this responsibility, the pastoral ministry should acquire a public pastoral care dimension in which community development is enhanced. Therefore, this article argues for public pastoral care as a solution to meeting the challenges faced by communities in Africa.

Keywords

community development; pastoral care; public practical theology; church; holistic mission

Introduction

Reading the scriptures, one finds that God has a concern for humanity. God's concern for humanity is reflected in his yearning for their

advancement or betterment (Gen. 1:28). God's aim for humanity is shalom, or peace. The concepts of God's shalom, human progress, and communal improvement are, arguably, concepts that are connected. Theology and church ministry should use their ministry to advance the community both materially and spiritually, which in our case is in areas of community development. Churches are essential communal structures in African communities that have a tremendous amount of power to encourage and enable community development (Magezi 2017:1; 2022:1). Pastors represent the face of many churches in this process. Pastors cannot, therefore, ignore their obligation to serve the community as public figures. The question, then, is: from the history of pastoral care and its inheritance, what public pastoral care techniques might be deduced to support church-driven community development processes? In order to answer such a question, this article analyses the idea of public pastoral care provided by churches and pastors from the standpoint of community development.

The concept of public pastoral care within community development

To address the issues facing Africa, further interventions are required to support the government's attempts to address societal issues. Magezi (2020:61) emphasizes the necessity of churches getting involved with societal and important public concerns. Because they are called and sent out into the world to be change agents, churches have a public dimension. Through their commitment to the common good, churches make a positive impact on public life. This happens not just via their words and deeds inside the church but also through their participation outside its walls. The demographics of churchgoers vary widely, including their age, gender, education level, socioeconomic class, race, caste, sexual preference, and ethnicity. Even in the face of such extraordinary diversity, churchgoers find a crucial forum to address issues that impact their society as a whole within the church (Lutheran World Federation 2016:16). According to Etzelmuller (2017:107), religious traditions have had a significant developmental impact on the modern world. This has been demonstrated by the historical influences of religious traditions, which remain a determining element both for individuals and civilizations in the future (2017:107). Walker

(2019:37–39) agrees with Etzemuller, asserting that Christianity and theology had a big impact on how the modern democratic state was built. He believes that democracy's foundation and growth have strong Christian foundations. For instance, Christian ideals can be linked to the beliefs that all individuals are made in God's image, that love is the foundation of a covenantal bond between communities, and that the state is the main barrier to sin as it is manifested in crime (2019:37–39).

Importantly, pastoral care is moving away from merely addressing people's personal psychological conditions toward concerns affecting society (McClure 2012:276; Paeth 2008:3; Louw 2014; Anderson 2003:11). It was vehemently emphasized by MacMaster (2011:126) that religion should be regarded holistically in terms of how it applies to people's lives. The realization that the Christian faith must have a public component has led to this transformation (Magezi 2020:62; Kim 2017:40). Theology includes both public issues and attempts to offer remedies, making it more than just a personal matter (Koppel 2015:151; Dreyer & Pieterse 2010:6).

Public pastoral care incorporates numerous theological disciplines such as practical theology, pastoral theology, and hermeneutics to address people's life difficulties (Louw 2014). Understanding public pastoral care requires knowledge of both public theology and practical theology. The connections between pastoral care and public theology are clear. People suffer a lot as a result of their struggles and problems in life (Louw 2014). As a result, pastoral care must intervene. Nonetheless, it is inevitable to explore what churches ought to do when confronted with societal and communal problems such as inequality, poverty, unemployment, gender-based violence, and racism. Why should churches intervene, particularly in terms of pastors? Theology in the public sphere may provide some solutions to these questions. Levesque (2014:38) observed that individuals who advocate for a re-evaluation of how Christians interact with the outside world have engaged in public theology. The purpose of public theology is to reform irrelevant, inaccessible, and aloof theology in light of people's daily lives (Day & Kim 2017:2). In reality, public theology concerns religion's place in contemporary society. Public theology is a theological paradigm that combines many theological traditions and social sciences (Magezi 2020:64). Social sciences, social ethics, foundations theology, and theology of morals are all connected to public theology in this way (Elsdörfer

2019:105; Magezi 2020:64). Brietenberg (2003:66) defines public theology as a public dialogue on public concerns that is theologically informed and aimed at the church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other religious entity as well as the greater public or publics. It is argued in a manner that can be evaluated and judged using publicly accessible justifications and criteria.

Mannion contends that public theology represents the church in the world (2009:122). It focuses on a person's engagement with social, political, and everyday problems while living out their Christian faith. Mannion (2009:151) accurately asserted that public ecclesiology is the focus of public theology. The relevance of the churches to modern concerns is an ecclesiological topic of interest. Due to the intersection of public ecclesiology, pastoral care, and diakonia, there is no question that the church has a public pastoral function (Magezi 2019:4). There is no unidirectional trend in public theology between theological reflection and social application. Day and Kim (2017:17) contend that the final distinguishing characteristic of public theology is that it is not only proclaimed in publications but also carried out in action. Darragh (2007) suggested that it is preferable to think of practical theology as a way of conducting practical theology, rather than as an abstract concept or a definition. Miller-McLemore (2018:313) proposed that pastoral care should emphasise social principles that are relevant to public concerns. She argued that because religion has social ramifications, pastoral care should socialise believers to certain notions of the church and public concern about social morality. According to the liberation pastoral care paradigm, pastoral care, for instance, is for society itself (Magezi 2019).

But what does it mean to be a public pastor who offers public services? According to Vanhoozer and Strachan (2015:21), the pastor's responsibility is to point people in the right direction and to nurture and empower church members to live out their real identities both inside and outside of the church. A public pastor is a Christ-centred thinker who engages in public and communal issues from a Christian perspective. In this environment, pastoral care broadens its philosophy and practise to analyse and engage with the greater world. Pastoral care is concerned with dealing with living documents (individual persons) within the context of a complex human web. Practical techniques of healing aimed toward the public arena must be developed to transform pastoral care into public pastoral care

(Leslie 2008:21). Pastoral care thus addresses the three publics of society, academics, and the church. Magezi (2019:5) bemoaned the lack of societal impact of pastoral care at the expense of pastoral discourse now taking place in the church and academics.

It is in the context of the society that pastoral care plays a huge role in the development of African communities hence pastoral care becomes public. The definition of public pastoral care given by Magezi (2020) is insightful in positioning the concept of public practical theology and pastoral care in the development of communities. Magezi defines public pastoral care as:

- (1) Caring for people from a Christian spiritual perspective whereby
- (2) the care is provided to people in different public spaces and contexts to address holistic issues affecting people such as spiritual, social, emotional, cultural, economic, political and others (4) to enable them to meaningfully cope with life. (2020:69)

Four observations summarise Magezi's (2020:69) notion of pastoral care. Firstly, the spiritual aspect of pastoral care, which focuses on the care of people's souls. Secondly, the variation in the context and setting of the individuals getting care. It is not simply the church, but people from other backgrounds. Thirdly, the variety of topics that are being addressed. The concerns are not rigid but rather complex. This encompasses spiritual, physical, social, political, economic, and any other challenges impacting society. The care is designed to assist individuals in coping with life. This life management requires transformation. This is where individuals are given the ability to alter their circumstances. The first three objectives are all aimed toward achieving the fourth objective. Consequently, public pastoral care might be interpreted as assisting individuals in transforming their lives.

Chester (2004:63) observed that there is a demand for life reform among the populace. People and community change require fostering the progression and development of individuals and public pastoral care is positioned to help in the process of transformation of communities. Pastoral care and community development both put a strong emphasis on improving people's lives. It is simple to see how pastoral care and public theology are related (Magezi 2019:3). Pastoral care intervention is necessary for the context of various issues, particularly those that African communities are

confronting and which Maathai (2010:9) defines as real and significant (McClure 2012:276; Louw 2014; Paeth 2008:3). Pastoral care is required to step in and intervene when a community faces issues like poverty, underdevelopment, gender-based violence, inequality, and other types of injustices that limit people's ability to enjoy life.

Public pastoral care and healing of the community

Public pastoral care is the embodiment of healing in society (Louw 2017:2). According to McClure (2010:215), the following three firmly held principles are at the centre of pastoral care and counselling. First, a belief in each individual's intrinsic worth. The idea that each person is made in the image of God is the starting point for pastoral care. Because every individual is valuable, they must be treated as such and assisted in realising their worth so that they can prosper in their life (Maqoma 2015:15; Oberdorfer 2010:231; Koopman 2007:177). Sow Chin Wong (2018:152) emphasised that pastoral care is based on the belief that all of creation belongs to God and that God's kingdom is emerging among people; and that the humanity portrayed by Jesus can break through in people's lives and triumph on earth.

Second, a desire to assist in meeting people's needs and relieving their misery. Doehring (2015:xvi) refers to this as compassion. She defines compassion literally as *cum passio*, which means suffering together. Compassion takes emotional intelligence and empathy, as well as the discipline of surrendering to and being moved by the emotional experiences and needs of the other (LaMothe 2012:461). Kießling (2018) defines compassion as follows:

A culture that rests on *empathia* (Greek) and *compassio* (Latin) stands in a long tradition. In *Regula pastoralis*, Gregory the Great explains the meaning of *compassio*, as an attitude that should be exercised per pietas viscera – with a heart full of love. *Compassio* goes to the guts (viscera); at the same time, it goes to the core and becomes solidarity in the flesh. (2018:11)

Every person has worth and deserves compassion even when they are living in a position of destitution. Nobody with any sense will watch as their treasured item is trampled on by others without trying to save it and take care of it. When God sent His Son Jesus to die on their behalf so that

they could be rescued, He demonstrated that humanity is His most valued possession.

Third, a conviction that pastoral care is expressed in providing for others and therefore displaying God's love and grace. To ensure that everyone can participate in what it means to be a part of God's kingdom, all three of these principles place a strong emphasis on the healing of the individual (McClure 2010:215).

In an illuminating comment, McClure (2010:215) says that her theological vision is aimed to see healing (and redemption) as involvement in more fully bringing the Kingdom of God into being. She (McClure) goes on to elaborate that taking part in God's rescuing work in the world alongside one another and God is healing work. The Greek noun *therapeia* and verb *therapeuo* are respectively translated as service, attendance, healing, and curing by Perschbacher (2001:201) and to serve, render service, attendance, healing, and curing. This depiction emphasises that providing one another with healing is a service (Magezi 2006:3).

De Gruchy (1989:39; Clinebell 2011:55) asserts that there is an association between healing and redemption. De Gruchy contended that the idea of healing and redemption are inextricably linked. De Gruchy went on to say that restoration of the social and political order is part of healing, in addition to the physical and psychic realms (Magezi 2006:3). According to this definition of healing in the context of Africa, healing is treating the illnesses that members of the community are dealing with so that they can lead fulfilling lives. This form of flourishing goes beyond the bare minimum of providing for one's basic needs, such as food and shelter. In her book *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet Peril*, McFague (2001:107) makes the case that flourishing involves more than just ecological sustainability and having one's fundamental needs satisfied. It also entails "Democratic and just political/government and arrangements, opportunities for cultural, technological, educational, social, and spiritual development as well as social, emotional, and creative growth both for ourselves and for future generations."

Brand (2002:109), who argued that in the African setting, salvation is conceptualised in comprehensive terms, agreed with the idea of the connection between healing and salvation. According to Brand (2002:103),

the concept of wholeness in Africa denotes that various spheres of life, such as the spiritual and the physical, or the religious and the secular, can never be compartmentalised and comprehended in isolation from one another. This assertion implies that salvation is open to all. It implies a comprehensive understanding of salvation that avoids dividing up the different facets of life into categories like the spiritual and the physical or the sacred and secular.

Mbiti (1986:158) rejects the spiritualised idea of being “saved from sin” alone as the exclusive means of redemption. Mbiti (1986) uses the Israelites’ liberation from Egyptian slavery as a metaphor for the all-encompassing idea of salvation. He emphasised that at the beginning of the Exodus drama, the Israelites are not depicted as sinners but rather as ones who have been wronged and who are in peril; as a result, God intervened in powerful deeds to save them (Mbiti 1986:158). This is substantial evidence that redemption is not reserved solely for sinners, but that, as in the case of the Israelites, it may also involve physical salvation and hence deliverance from the suffering they experienced in Egypt. The Exodus narrative also confirms that human beings are both physical and spiritual beings who need salvation (Mbiti 1986:159). Since this leads to a scenario where “one portion of man is practically excluded and starved out,” no side of the same man should be considered as a predecessor at the expense of the other (Mbiti 1986:159). This claim was confirmed by Louw (2017:2) when he discussed how important it is for the pastoral caring tradition to understand the connection between healing and redemption. In reality, the concept of *cura animarum* was used to describe and define the unique field of pastoral care within the framework of Christian, spiritual healing. The Latin phrase *cura animarum* (literally, “Cure or care of human souls”) describes pastoral activity. Human concerns extend beyond just the financial, economic, and physical aspects of life. Since individuals are also spiritual creatures, the remedy they seek must also allow them to effectively address the problems that have an impact on their everyday lives.

Haines (2011) commenting on Psalm 85:7 which says, “Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation” said the following:

I believe that the church in many quarters has come to have a limited view of salvation, in the context of this verse the original

word (salvation) infers help, liberation and welfare. In many ways, we have restricted salvation to the spirit, whereas the concept incorporates the body and the soul and the idea of bringing the individual or even a community into wholeness. Therefore, the Lord our God is concerned for our whole person, which God delivers, helps up and guides towards an ultimate purpose. (2011:4)

The pastoral care system's mandate is that it takes into account "the public, institutional, and political elements of individuals and relationship experiences" (MacMaster 2011:131; Ramsay, 2004:1). The Clinical Pastoral Paradigm, which Louw (1998:27) refers to as having a "client-centred or empirical mode," was dominant for a long time, according to MacMaster (2011:131). However, as noted by Ramsay (2004:1), the Clinical Pastoral Paradigm is being replaced by two new paradigms, the Communal Contextual and the Intercultural Paradigms, which developed around the close of the twentieth century. The Communal Contextual Paradigm focuses on two aspects, according to MacMaster's (2011) explanation. First, concentrates on the context of the church community, where it is nourished and reinforced to provide for the needs of the people. Second, it ensures that care is delivered to members of society whose lives are impacted by social and political circumstances and that its focus has been expanded to include public, structural, and political dimensions. According to Magezi (2016a:140), pastoral care has two distinct aspects in various regions of Africa. The first is a contemplation on pastoral care that primarily draws on literature (publications). The second is the ministry of pastoral care itself. The dimensions of pastoral care stated by Magezi (2016b) and the pastoral care paradigms mentioned by Ramsay (2004) share certain similarities. Similarities between the two can be found in the fact that one is practical and the other is oriented toward equipping. According to Louw (2012), pastoral care is the cure of souls, which comprises the functions of healing, maintaining, directing, reconciling, nurturing, liberating, and empowering. In describing the dimension of pastoral care, Lartey (2003:30, 31) touches on some important subjects which he claims include activities that aim to prevent, relieve, or make it easier for people to deal with anxiety are those that are carried out by those who recognise that there is a transcendent aspect to human life and that this dimension can be expressed through verbal, nonverbal, direct,

indirect, literal, or symbolic modes of communication. Pastoral care aims to promote people's development into complete human beings as well as the creation of ecologically and politically holistic communities where everyone can live decent lives (2003:30, 31).

According to Klaasen (2017:3), pastoral care is meant to encourage transformation as well as to advance human and spiritual health and maturity. Pastoral care is meant to help society heal in this way. According to what was said above, this healing is comprehensive. A comprehensive response to the "suffering" that African communities are experiencing is provided via pastoral care in many forms (Magezi, 2016b:1). Magezi (2019a:5) said that although there is an effective conversation regarding the relationship between the church and academia, nothing is done to apply that knowledge to the healing of societies. According to him (Magezi 2019), if the problems that people are experiencing in real life are not addressed, society will stay the same and oppressive tendencies will continue to exist.

What is the contribution of pastoral care to public pastoral care and practical theology? When pastoral care is offered from a Christian spiritual standpoint, it has a particular aim and motivation (Magezi 2020:69). Pastoral care provided from a Christian perspective aids individuals in meeting life's obstacles in a way that fosters spiritual growth and gives meaning to their lives. It comes from people whose motivation is based on Christian beliefs. The completion of all of God's promises and the transformation of the entire work of Christ's atonement serves as the cornerstone of Christian spirituality. The ultimate goal is a developed faith that prevails over the limitations of the finite world. This conviction causes Christians to struggle in spreading God's kingdom throughout the world (Magezi 2006:4; 2020:69). Publicly available pastoral care means reaching out to those who identify as "non-church" and addressing numerous concerns that have an impact on their lives. The issues could relate to people's spirituality, society, health, politics, or anything else (Magezi 2020:70). This is what it means to provide society with public healing. When pastoral care is provided in various public settings where the target audience is the unchurched rather than the church. While the definition of practical theology is complex, public pastoral care contributes to practical theology in the context of providing a method and perspective within which the need for social

change can be highlighted and initiated (Magezi & Nanthambwe 2022a:8; Willows & Swinton 2001:11).

Relevant and effective public pastoral care approaches to address community challenges

Magezi (2020; 2022) has written profoundly and extensively on how public pastoral care can be practised by pastors and churches to ensure that people's challenges are effectively addressed in the communities. He (Magezi) has been an instrument in advocating for public practical theology in Africa. The approaches that this article suggests are adopted from Magezi's article (2020) entitled "From the heart to the public? Public pastoral care to foster community healing, peace, and transformation". In this article, Magezi translates very well how public practical theology which involves public pastoral care can be employed by pastors to enhance community transformation. The article also shows what direction pastoral care is taking to involve public issues (McClure 2012; Paeth 2008; Louw 2014; Anderson 2003). These approaches include public healing, giving people a voice, church-led social mobilisation and leadership and transformation.

Public pastoral care of fostering healing

The challenges that African communities are facing need public healing. Community healing plays a crucial role in the development of African communities. Understanding how the involvement of pastors and congregations may help communities heal is crucial (Magezi 2020:71; Hiagbe 2015:165; Myers 2017:175). Four regions are highlighted by Magezi (2020) as potential sites for public healing: the restoration of the community and the recovery of community stability, peace, and prosperity are the main goals of community healing. What can churches do to offer pastoral care in African communities so that community stability, restoration, peace, and flourishing can start to be felt by people? Pastors and church congregations can take on public pastoral care mediating and nurturing communal peace in times of conflict, especially in the African context where there are concerns with tribalism. One of the strategies the church can use to provide public pastoral care to African communities is church intervention in public healing. Public healing is essential for the realisation

of community development in African communities. Second, mental and spiritual well-being; Magezi (2020:71) asserts that because spiritual leaders can be consulted by the community on a variety of issues, such as officiating at public functions, spiritual care can take on a public dimension. As part of their hospital ministry, pastors might pray for both members of the local church and non-members. Lastly, blessed localities: Magezi (2020) noted that during national occasion displays, blessing communities can be presented. For instance, a political party might have asked a pastor to bless and pray for the attendees at a rally before a presidential election, as well as public ceremonies like state funerals (for instance, the late former President Nelson Mandela's funeral in South Africa). Finally, national health and healing. As part of the nation's care and healing, pastors can actively participate in some national counselling and healing initiatives. For instance, pastoral work in South Africa and Rwanda can start and support the healing of memories for those who were touched by apartheid and the genocide, respectively. The example of Tutu's leadership in the attempts at reconciliation in South Africa is a significant illustration of how churches can take on public pastoral care with the goal of national care and healing.

What does public pastoral care involve in this public healing? Becoming agents of the gospel would include how this salvation would be communicated to people in our communities since, as was previously discussed, salvation in God is all-encompassing and encompasses both the material and spiritual realities. This indicates that the church's involvement in delivering spiritual healing to individuals who have been hurt will ultimately transform our "dying" communities. Magezi & Magezi (2016b) describes healing as follows:

... It is maintained that theologically, healing refers to the event of being transformed from a condition of death into a condition of life (*soteriology*). This new condition is an indication of a new state of being (*pneumatological being*): being accepted unconditionally by grace and being restored into a new relationship with God (*soteriology*), a relationship of peace, reconciliation, and forgiveness (*shalom* and healing). (2016b:12).

Therefore, for community development in Africa to become a reality it is necessary to accept this core idea of healing and make sure that whatever

it may require for public healing is prioritised in the church's efforts to address societal problems. African communities will undergo a transition that will see relationships repaired, peace experienced, and people's lives flourishing when public healing is emphasised and it is a given.

Public pastoral care of giving people a voice

Challenges of poor governance, gender-based violence (GBV), crimes, corruption, rape, tribalism, poverty and inequality, and unemployment, just to mention a few in Africa, demand that pastors and congregations intervene and play a critical role as a voice of conscience and advocating for good (Magezi 2020:72). How can churches practice pastoral care that addresses these issues? One way churches can address these issues is by being a prophetic voice (Nanthambwe 2020; Pereira 2010). Pereira (2010:iv) strongly contends for the church to be a prophetic voice where the issues of social justice, social responsibilities, and social reconstruction must be voiced out. There is a great need in Africa to speak against all aspects of oppression, exploitation, and other injustices if the communities are to be developed. Churches and pastors must uphold democratic principles and serve as the voice for honesty and accountability if Africa is to experience community development. Look at how pervasive corruption is and the harm it has done, particularly to the lives of the underprivileged in Africa. It is the same as denying the reality of what the Gospel of Jesus has accomplished for individuals to remain mute on these matters. The gospel's message is one of liberation from all forms of human slavery. This comprises the freedoms of the mind, body, and soul. Such freedoms may be supported by the church and clergy. Writing in the context of the church in Zimbabwe and GBV, Magezi and Manzanga (2020:7) argue that churches must practice public pastoral care that will speak against the mistreatment of women by advocating that men and women are created equal in the image of God. Magezi and Nanthambwe (2022b:7) pointed out that effective public pastoral care practised by churches must ensure that all injustices that perpetuate human suffering, especially in the context of poverty must be voiced against by churches.

Public pastoral care of leading a church-led social mobilisation

Public pastoral care must take on the duty of organising neighbourhoods for social benefit, particularly in the context of African communities (Magezi 2020:72). This kind of approach is different from the one where the focus is emphasised solely on personal internal challenges and for churchgoers. A pastoral care strategy is required to address the issues that African communities are facing for example issues of gender-based violence (GBV), poverty, political instability, people affected by HIV and AIDS and COVID-19, unemployment, and many other things. Churches may do this by fostering vital community relationships that can bring people together and be used for the benefit of all (Magezi 2020:72). Churches must take the lead in development projects that enable communities to take care of their own needs using their resources (Scott et al. 2014:2). This strategy makes sure that pastors and churches are contributing to the change of individuals and their communities in a way that affects their entire person rather than simply their spiritual side (Magezi & Mutowa 2018:124). Church-led social mobilisation is a manifestation of an “integral mission” in which the church takes part in fostering the good development of communities on all levels – spiritual, physical, economic, psychological, and social.

Public pastoral care focusing on leadership and transformation

The lack of effective political leadership in Africa necessitates a public pastoral care strategy where the problem of ineffective leadership will be addressed. How does the church accomplish that? Religious leaders are seen as significant members of society in Africa and other religiously significant regions of the world (Magezi 2020:72). According to Magezi (2020:72), religious authorities have an important role in leading change and transformation through their followers. As a result, many African political figures seek the support of their churches and church leaders during elections. Church leaders have occasionally transitioned into politics and taken charge of entire nations – for instance, Lazarus Chakwera, the current president of Malawi, and Fredrick Chiluba, the president of Zambia from 1990 to 2000. Church leaders can take advantage of the fact that they are well-respected in many communities to work with public officials to improve leadership in the local, district, and national government, seek to influence change when community leaders fail, and exert community

pressure by organising protests and mobilising citizens to oppose unethical and bad political leadership (Magezi 2020).

Principles for church-driven community development

The Oxford Dictionary defines principle as “a moral rule or a strong belief that influence your actions.” Community development principles are frameworks and standards churches use to unify their efforts. It is crucial to note that religious and non-religious organisations use distinct methods for community development. The World Bank, UN, and Christian denominations have community development ideals. Church-driven community development has unique motivations, aims, and processes (Yoms & Bowers-Du Toit 2017:46-50). Magezi (2019:3; 2017a) advised that churches should not be seen as “instruments” and “vehicles” or “channels” for development because of their closeness to the community but rather “as possessing a unique differentiating Christian transformation framework than other development organisations.” The need to focus development on the grassroots level has been emphasised by Magezi (2017b), Kotze and Kotze (2008), Coetzee (2001), Yoms and Bowers-Du Toit (2017) and many other scholars. Development should be people-orientated (UN 2015), and guidelines for meaningful community involvement must consider this. For community development to be enhanced in societies, it is essential to apply various principles for it to be holistic. Therefore, the principles for public pastoral care that enhances community development that this article proposes are drawn from achieving the goal of a holistic development approach. It is through churches practicing the public pastoral care that community development is enhanced. Public pastoral care is done by people of faith (Christians).

Human orientated

Public pastoral care led by churches must always prioritise people (Yoms 2015:52). Public pastoral care that enhances community development should prioritise individuals for these reasons. First, understanding human dignity and value (Voorhies 2009:605). Every person should be treated as God made them, according to the Bible. This means that society’s level of living should show that people are well-treated and respected like God

does (Oberdorfer 2010:231; Koopman 2007:177). Yoms and Bowers-Du Toit (2017:52) noted that church-driven community development affirms people's dignity and self-worth to help them feel completely human. Second, realising that progress that ignores individuals doesn't alleviate society's problems. The Third World development programmes that promote economic growth to alleviate poverty imply that economic expansion benefits everyone, including the poor (Coetzee 2001:122). This was wrong (Schutte 2016:3). Church-driven community development should prioritise human needs and development benefits rather than other things. A more people-oriented development empowers individuals to govern their social, political, economic, and ecological life (Schutte, 2016:3).

Bester and Cronje (2014:208) suggested that development should prioritise human well-being and help individuals become more human. Nayyar and Chang (2005:1) firmly think that progress should enhance living conditions. Coetzee (2001:219) states that basic requirements including shelter, food, healthcare, and the right to a meaningful existence must be met. For development to be people-focused, social justice, broad consultation and cooperative decision making, reducing suffering by meeting basic requirements, respect for local natural resources, social and cultural patterns, and freedom of expression and impression are needed (Bester & Cronje 2014:208). This does not guarantee material well-being. Church-driven community development may improve material well-being, but its fundamental goal is to improve human well-being. Myers (2011:179) stated that the social, political, and economic change of the impoverished is crucial for human well-being. Church-driven community development assures individuals they are made in God's image with potential and ability and can alter their surroundings and fulfil God's purpose.

Church programmes must be people-centred. This idea is threatened when churches use their programmes to attract individuals to attend their congregations. When this happens, it shows that the church prioritises programmes over people. It also misunderstands the church's position in society. A comprehensive development approach can help churches make their projects people centred. Therefore, churches must ensure that issues affecting people in the public are being addressed in their efforts to reach out to the communities. These issues include but are not limited to political, economic and social. All the people affected, including non-churchgoers

should be involved when churches employ their pastoral ministries to communities. Churches must also realise that issues touch the complete person-spirit, soul, and mind, hence, holistic church-driven community development must address the complete problem and individual (Voorhies 2009:605). Churches must include the gospel in their holistic approach because God uses it to change individuals from the inside out.

Community ownership – participation

August (2010:9) described community development participation as “a process in which an individual or a community can initiate and take an action that is stimulated by their thinking.” Participation allows people to lead community development programmes rather than just be included in them (Fields 2014:1). Community ownership encourages churches to empower community members to dream and act. This principle requires churches to invest in communities long-term and relationally, resourcing, encouraging, and partnering (Fields 2014:1).

Participation ensures church and community members are involved in programme conception, planning, and implementation (Voorhies 2009:605). Church and community participation empowers people of all social classes to contribute and shape their futures. Participation helps people realise they are valuable and can contribute regardless of their social level. Participation empowers communities to solve problems. Unfortunately, most churches design their programmes and activities internally and “spin their wheels” trying to recruit outsiders. Because they ignore people’s demands and problems, such programmes seem uninspiring. Not allowing people to change their communities is dismissing their conditions and devaluing them (Yoms 2015:52).

Churches must execute development projects that teach individuals to manage their lives and address their problems. Swanepoel and De Beer (2011:50) recommended local participation in development projects because of this. Locals know more about their political, social, economic, cultural, and ecological surroundings than outsiders. Ignoring such people stymies community progress. Participation boosts self-esteem, initiative, creativity, responsibility, and teamwork, according to Yoms (2015:53). Participation is necessary for individual or communal development to improve people’s lives.

Cross-sector partnership

Eric Swanson and Rick Rusaw (2020), in their book, *The externally focused quest: becoming the best church for the community*, say that churches must become less self-focused and more community-focused to be effective. They suggest churches partner with non-church organisations in their communities. When churches confine themselves to their resources, they may realise they don't have enough to solve the difficulties, leading to desperation. Churches benefit from working with non-religious organisations on shared issues. God used people, armies, prostitutes, and borrowed donkeys to accomplish His goals in the Bible, much like the church does (Fields, 2014:2). Magezi (2017a:11) suggested that churches should find more ways to use network resources to support community projects. Churches must work with government and non-religious development organisations to solve community challenges (Nanthambwe 2020:11). Churches must integrate their approach to community issues because people experience different concerns. Churches cannot grow communities monotonously. They collaborate with religious and non-religious groups for developing society.

Sustainability

Churches must acknowledge that they are the foundation for enduring and abundant transformation (Voorhies 2009:606). This is because God has promised that the Kingdom of God will influence the entire globe through the power of the Gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 13:32; Luke 13:19). Yoms (2015:54) eloquently stated that the principles of sustainability in community development are the essence of empowering a community to ensure that they are completely and actively engaging in the process of their development, which should result in the sustainability of the community. The fundamental concept of community development is that benefits must flow continually. In other words, unsustainable development is not development. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2001) explains what sustainable development that captures its necessity in development endeavours in this way:

... development path along which the maximisation of human wellbeing for today's generations does not lead to declines in future wellbeing. Attaining this path requires eliminating those negative

externalities that are responsible for natural resource depletion and environmental degradation. It also requires securing those public goods that are essential for economic development to last, such as those provided by well-functioning ecosystems, a healthy environment, and a cohesive society. Sustainable development also stresses the importance of retaining the flexibility to respond to future shocks even when their probability and the size and location of their effects cannot be assessed with certainty.

The above definition of sustainable development (SD) emphasises human welfare. The definition shows how development can improve human welfare without depleting natural resources or polluting the environment. Churches must ask who will solve community issues and how to achieve sustainable development. Community members should demonstrate their willingness and abilities to protect what's beneficial for them and the community in their replies (Yoms 2015:55; Swanepoel & De Beer 2011:54). Thus, churches must encourage people to alter their conditions sustainably and holistically using their God-given resources (Tearfund 2017:3; Magezi 2019:6). Churches must use community assets to reach people (Mutemwa et al, 2018:8). Communities can use their strengths, resources, and potential to change and develop.

Empowerment

Church-led community development denotes the involvement of churches in allowing locals to decide their transformational path (Mutemwa et al. 2018:4). August (2010:11) discusses the components of empowerment, stating that first, empowerment is the development of skills and talents that enable people to negotiate and/or control the development delivery system more effectively. Second, empowerment entails granting communities the ability to employ the resources within their reach to fulfil their development objectives.

The empowerment principle is present in both the Old and New Testaments, where God is shown as empowering people through a variety of techniques so that they can face their obstacles (Deyoung & Gilbert 2011:151; Lev. 25). Churches must empower individuals so that they can own the process of their change and not be wholly dependent on external inputs.

Conclusion

This article has presented a picture of the church within the practical ministry, advocating for operative ecclesiology through utilising church-provided public pastoral care to enhance community development. As churches are a subsystem of society throughout the world, they play a crucial role in giving solutions to the problems that people confront in their communities. The difficulties that have afflicted the African continent, including inequality, poverty, unemployment, conflicts, gender-based violence, tribalism, and the effects of HIV/AIDS, and COVID-19, require the participation of civil society, of which the church is a part. Nonetheless, churches have been focused on providing spiritual care at the expense of meeting people's material necessities. It became obvious that church fellowship must provide an environment in which pastoral ministry contacts with the bodily and spiritual needs of people are satisfied. The attitude of churches to ministry must be incarnational, and being incarnational entails being present, public, prophetic, and engaged in society's public issues. Effective public pastoral care can be a mechanism for transforming African communities in this way.

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