

**Christian stewardship for South African
business leaders: A public practical theological
study**

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PREFACE

I am deeply grateful for the grace of God, my Father, for giving me this opportunity, this spiritual journey, to discover His indescribable love for me, my family, for past generations, and for future generations here and into eternity.

A special word of gratitude for my greatest gifts from God, my husband, and my children. Hein, who is part of this journey, his love, his support, and for stewarding me. Wimpie, Karla, and Heindrich for their love and fellowship.

On 25 February 2020, Prof Alfred Brunsdon contacted me, offering to be my study promotor. For the first time in my life, I had the privilege to be mentored. Through his patience, continuous support, guidance, and widening and challenging of my views, opinions, and beliefs, he showed himself to be a true reflection of a selfless leader. “Eish Prof”, thank you!

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ABSTRACT

This study ultimately seeks to contribute to the field of development aimed at Christian stewardship for business leaders involved in sustainable development from a public practical theological perspective. The methodology was guided by Osmer's (2008) model for doing practical theological research, which was considered appropriate for this study as it enabled the researcher to answer the study's research questions. This approach comprises a descriptive empirical task (what is going on?), an interpretive task (why is this going on?), a normative task (what ought to be going on?), and a pragmatic task (how might we respond?)

The investigation is driven by four main questions, namely:

- What are the current problems South Africa and South African business leaders are facing in terms of attaining sustainable development goals?
- Why are South Africa and South African business leaders struggling to meet the sustainable development goals?
- What can a reimagining of Christian stewardship as found in Scripture, church traditions, history, and other disciplines offer South African business leaders to attain the sustainable development goals?
- How will a public practical theological reimagining of Christian stewardship empower South African business leaders to attain the sustainable development goals more effectively?

The study includes an investigation of Scriptural passages that point to the role and responsibility of Christian stewards (Ex 20:1-3; Gen 9:1-3; 1 Cor 4:1-2; 1 Pet 4:8-11), reminding us that we must have no other gods but God, and that our true identity and purpose, as well as our gifts received from God, are to glorify God through Jesus Christ. Furthermore, we must minister these to one another with fervent love.

The study intends to contribute to the field of public practical theology, specifically focusing on sustainable development. This study has recognised the potential of a reimagined Christian stewardship as a new paradigm for business leaders working towards SD from a public practical theological paradigm.

Keywords:

Christian stewardship, business leaders, sustainable development, public practical theology

OPSOMMING

Die navorsing wil uiteindelik 'n bydrae lewer op die gebied van ontwikkeling gerig op Christelike rentmeesterskap vir sakeleiers wat betrokke is by volhoubare ontwikkeling vanuit 'n publieke prakties-teologiese standpunt. Die metodologie is gelei deur Osmer (2008) se model vir die doen van prakties-teologiese navorsing, wat as geskik vir hierdie studie beskou is aangesien dit die navorser in staat gestel het om die studie se navorsingsvrae te beantwoord. Hierdie benadering behels 'n beskrywende empiriese taak (wat is aan die gang?), 'n interpretatiewe taak (waarom is dit aan die gang?), 'n normatiewe taak (wat behoort aan die gang te wees?), en 'n pragmatiese taak (hoe kan ons reageer?).

Die ondersoek word gedryf deur vier hoofvrae, naamlik:

- Wat is die huidige probleme wat Suid-Afrika en Suid-Afrikaanse sakeleiers in die gesig staar ten opsigte van die bereiking van volhoubare ontwikkelingsdoelwitte?
- Waarom sukkel Suid-Afrika en Suid-Afrikaanse sakeleiers om volhoubare ontwikkelingsdoelwitte te bereik?
- Wat kan 'n herverbeelding van Christelike rentmeesterskap soos gevind in die Skrif, kerklike tradisies, geskiedenis en ander dissiplines Suid-Afrikaanse sakeleiers bied om volhoubare ontwikkelingsdoelwitte te bereik?
- Hoe sal 'n openbare praktiese teologiese herverbeelding van Christelike rentmeesterskap Suid-Afrikaanse sakeleiers bemagtig om volhoubare ontwikkelingsdoelwitte meer effektief te bereik?

Die studie sluit 'n ondersoek in van Skrifgedeeltes wat dui op die rol en verantwoordelikheid van Christelike rentmeesters (Ex. 20:1-3; Gen. 9:1-3; 1 Kor. 4:1-2; 1 Pet. 4:8 -11) wat ons daaraan herinner dat ons geen ander gode moet hê as God nie, ons ware identiteit en doel, ons gawes wat van God ontvang is om God deur Jesus Christus te verheerlik en dit met vurige liefde aan mekaar te bedien.

Die studie beoog om by te dra tot die veld van publieke praktiese teologie, spesifiek met die fokus op volhoubare ontwikkeling. Hierdie studie het die potensiaal van 'n herverbeelde Christelike rentmeesterskap erken as 'n nuwe paradigma vir sakeleiers wat vanuit 'n openbare praktiese teologiese paradigma na SD werk.

Sleutelwoorde:

Christelike rentmeesterskap, sakeleiers, volhoubare ontwikkeling, openbare praktiese teologie

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACU	Abilene Christian University
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
ARV	Antiretroviral
ATR	African Traditional Religion
AU	African Union
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BFR-I	Big Fast Results Institute
CBM	The Consultative Business Movement
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
EFSA	Ecumenical Foundation of South Africa
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
G20	Group of Twenty
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IEQ	The Income Evaluation Question
IMF	The International Monetary Fund
MD	Managing Director
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MIQ	Minimum Income Question
NCF	The National Christian Foundation

NDP	National Development Plan
NEET	Not in Employment, Education, and Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NKJV	New King James Version
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NSC 69	National Security Council 1969
NWU	North-West University
PEMANDU	Malaysian Government's Performance and Monitoring Unit
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
QoL	Quality of Life
RCSA	Reformed Churches in South Africa
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACOB	South Africa Chamber of Business
SBI	Small Business Institute
SD	Sustainable Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEC	Social and Ethics Committee
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SoL	Standard of Living
SPWQ	Self-Perceived Wealth Question
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
TERS	South Africa's Temporary Employees Relief Scheme
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UCT	University of Cape Town
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USA	United States of America
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Key Terms and Definitions

Christian stewardship: Christian stewardship acknowledges God's ownership of everything and the One who appointed human beings as stewards. It includes glorying God's image; exercising responsibility over His total creation, along with our physical- and spiritual well-being, the gifts bestowed upon us, our relationships with our neighbours, and our possessions. Moreover, it includes looking after the poor and the widowed for the long term collective good. Christian stewardship asks individuals to dedicate their life and resources to serve both humanity and God (Leavell, 2016; Boloje & Groenewald, 2014).

Business leaders: Business leaders in this study refer to Christian individuals or groups of people (not excluding that non-Christians can benefit from it) involved in all forms of economic activity, from the small business to corporate sector, who are involved as leaders in sustainable development (SD) by providing job opportunities and contributing positively to the economy. According to Abilene Christian University (ACU), Christian values should set the stage for moral performance and service as well as leading, managing, and motivating all people, despite different religious backgrounds, with integrity (ACU, 2019). Gavin (2019) explains that effective leadership (whether a leader of one or many) creates positive, non-incremental change; a vision guiding the change; and a strategy empowering people to achieve the vision despite obstacles.

Sustainable development (SD): SD aims to achieve long-term economic and environmental stability, integrating economic, environmental-, and social concerns, and appreciating the unique contribution of natural resources looking after the needs of the present and future generations (Stoddart, 2011; Dernbach, 1998; Emas, 2015).

Public practical theology: Public theology denotes an interdisciplinary relationship that creates space for the church to theologically reflect, speak to and engage with the public sphere (Brunsdon, 2015:347). Public practical theology is a field of practical theology that addresses a specific "public" by speaking to public issues (Agang, 2020:12-19). As such, it engages in life-giving conversations cultivating oneness, coexistence, trusting each other, peaceful and compassionate existence (Magezi, 2018:6). Public practical theology hence serves society, addresses everyday issues, and facilitates discourse between theology and present-day culture (Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003:218). This study's 'public' is concerned with business leaders aiming for SD in South Africa.

1.2 Introduction

1.2.1 Background

The United Nations (UN) was established in 1945 after World War II by 51 countries with the aim of developing sociable relations and sustaining international peace and security amid nations while promoting social progress, better living conditions, and human rights. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) was commissioned in 1983 by the UN General Assembly to create “A global agenda for change” (WCED, 1987). The Brundtland Commission published their unanimous report, the report of the WCED: Our Common Future, in October 1987, with a mission to link challenges concerning economic development and environmental stability. The UN General Assembly followed an urgent call, proposing long-term environmental plans towards SD by 2000. The commission later took on the name World Commission on Environment and Development (United Nations General Assembly, 1987). The report contained the often referred to definition of SD as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987:41). SD denotes continued economic growth, protection of the environment, and the raising of living standards.

Elkington (as cited by Barkemeyer, Holt, Preuss, Tsang, 2014:6) describes a popular explanation of SD as the 'three circles' model consisting of economic, social, and environmental concerns within a corporate agenda, referred to as “triple bottom line” (TBL).

The Brundtland Report set the foundation for the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, representing a significant step towards establishing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the UN. In 2002 the World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in Johannesburg to encourage commitments by government, extending the responsibility of the SDGs into areas of business, local government, and civil society. Strategically, collective commitments to the SDGs are pivotal. According to Nitin Desai, the achievement of the SDGs calls for a collective approach where SD links economics, ecology, and ethics, extending it to connect with various sectoral policies including agriculture, energy, trade, and stakeholders of the private sector (Sustainable Development in Action, 2007).

During 2015, the UN implemented the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, signalling a universal commitment where world leaders agreed and adopted 17 SDGs. Linking to the SDGs set by the UN, the African Union (AU) drafted its Agenda 2063 in May 2013, advocating public policies aimed at addressing some of Africa's biggest challenges in terms of SD; bad governance,

corruption, and socio-economic injustice were among those highlighted, relating to how we conduct business.

Seen in tandem, the UN's SDGs and the AU's Agenda 2063 resonate well with the needs of the African continent. According to Agang (2020:3): "We love Africa, but we are currently living in an Africa we do not want".

In South Africa, SD resides under the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, which predates the UN's 2030 Agenda and the AU's Agenda 2063 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2019). The South African Government implemented the NDP on 19 February 2013, driven by the motto: "*Our future, make it work*". South Africa, like other African countries, faces unique challenges that inhibit SD. The Gini index or Gini co-efficient is the measurement relating to the distribution of income across a population. It is normally used to measure economic inequality where a score of 0 means perfect equality and 1 means perfect inequality. According to the Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (DPME) (Cole, 2017:24), South Africa is, for example, marred by economic inequality. South Africa's Gini index for income inequality during 2015 was 0.65, where over 45% live below the official poverty line, 16% live in extreme poverty on less than \$1,90 per day, rendering the 'triple challenge' of poverty, inequality, and unemployment.

This triple challenge has become historically engrained in the fibre of the country. For example, due to the substantial number of deaths in townships during the '80s, the Kairos Document in South Africa¹ referred to the country's situation as a socio-political 'crisis'. Two decades later, it seems that South Africa is still in a crisis, similar to the time of apartheid, causing unrest by the poor on a national scale, due to grievances against inadequate or absent service delivery by local municipalities (Swart, 2013:1).

Corruption was highlighted as one of the post-1994 causes of poverty and poor service delivery, described as the thief of the poor, where money is used to enrich the elite instead of helping the poor (Kgatle, 2017:4).

To attain SD on a national level, the government and public sector entered into a partnership to reach the 2030 NDP goals, building on the principles of collaboration (a partnership between government, civil society, academia, Chapter 9 Institutions, trade unions, the private sector), unity (the joined nature of development goals), and impact (improve the living standard of the most vulnerable groups and individuals in South Africa) (RSA, 2019).

¹ The Kairos Document (1985) was presented by an ecumenical group of pastors in Soweto (mainly black South African theologians) concerned about South Africa's political disaster and the role of the church.

A good example of an embodiment of such collaboration in South Africa is the government-initiated Operation Phakisa which was aimed at yielding rapid results relating to the implementation of the NDP 2030. Operation Phakisa, adapted from Malaysia's Big Fast Results Method (Zuma, 2014), was to be used as a mechanism to implement the NDP which is a cross-sector programme engaging various stakeholders (public, private, academia, and civil society organisations), to implement initiatives, monitor progress, address delivery restraints, and to govern public accountability and transparency. "Big Fast Results Malaysia" is an eight step method implemented by Dato Sri Idris (Former Senator, former Chief Executive Officer [CEO] and Managing Director [MD] for Malaysia Airlines and Shell, known as the master of turnarounds, and currently CEO of Malaysia's Performance Management and Delivery Unit [PEMANDU] and the Big Fast Results Institute [BFR-I]). The method is focused on leaders becoming involved in problem solving. The ultimate goal was to support the implementation of the NDP, boost economic growth, and create jobs (RSA, 2019:16) – hence, to address the triple challenge of unemployment, poverty, and inequality.

The Economic Times (2023) defines gross domestic product (GDP) as the value of goods and services produced within a specific period – normally a year – within a country, indicating the economic performance of the country.

Operation Phakisa's first project was to increase the ocean's 'blue economy's' GDP. A contribution to South Africa of more than R20-billion rand in 2019 contributes to creating 22,000 new jobs over the same period (RSA, 2015:5). The second project, implemented in October 2015, focused on health to uncover and define the ideal, effective clinic in our health system. Other projects (labs) included education, mining, biodiversity economy, agricultural land reform, and rural development- and chemical and waste economy labs.

According to Masie and Bond (2018:315), the concept of "big fast results" turned out to be small slow failures. For example, Earthlife Africa alerted that the national government wanted to expedite service delivery to lower unemployment and poverty through Operation Phakisa, but that it failed as Operation Phakisa was less concerned about poverty alleviation and more concerned with profits for corporates, and kickbacks to the well-connected tenderpreneurs and their political partners (Masie & Bond, 2018:329).

Unfortunately, Operation Phakisa fell prey to countless challenges that led to opposite outcomes. The project's potential to increase the livelihoods of South Africans was oversold, although based on a GDP-led evaluation of the ocean's potential, the project failed to meet the required short-term economic- and political gains which were mainly taken hold of by oil and shipping multinational corporations, where the political oligarchs and connected tenderpreneurs benefitted

the most. In the background, Phakisa's scar of eco-social destruction, caused by the deeply ingrained crises of capital mass which threatens the sustainability of Phakisa, Phakisa's recklessness about social justice, the environmental commons, and purposeful economic empowerment, cost South Africa dearly. Billions of rands will be lost on a project involving highly unfavourable global macro-economic conditions along with climate change dialogues throwing global trade into question (e.g., future of maritime carbon tax demands), which can lead to economic losses being socialised and gains privatised (Masie & Bond, 2018:314-316).

Operation Phakisa can be regarded as symptomatic of a developing norm regarding state and private sector collaborations that are supposed to promote SDGs, but instead, has fallen victim to corruption driven by economic greed that disregards the common good. Other examples include the Steinhoff Scandal (Rose, 2018), the KPMG and Gupta scandal (Shoaib, 2017). Mr Ace Magashule, the secretary-general of the African National Congress (ANC), faced allegations for running a bona fide shakedown operation in the Free State, ensuring that businesspeople were awarded with municipal and provincial contracts in return for dues paid to him (Myburgh, 2019).

Considering the above, this study is interested in the notion of Christian stewardship, as it presents itself as the antithesis of the driving forces behind the type of governance that defies SD.

According to Smith (2019:52), stewardship is not only about taking care of what has been entrusted to you, but to have the authority to act, to be part of sustaining, delegating, building, creating, growing, and serving responsibly, and ultimately knowing that you will be accountable. Christian stewardship goes further as it includes accountability to God. Hence, it can be described as the total devotion of self and that of leading others, on behalf of and accountable to God. Thus, stewardship denotes accountability to a higher person or institution, whereas Christian stewardship denotes a specific form of stewardship where the human person is ultimately accountable to God and intent on the common good.

The Greek word *oikonomia* refers to 'stewardship, management, or administration'. Irving (2015) writes that "*oikonomia*" refers to the notion of stewardship and the proper management or administration of resources, and the word "economy" which points us to the link between a healthy economy and healthy stewardship of work in relation with others. Peter calls on all Christians to serve for God's glory and to know that "as each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet 4:10-11). According to Boloje and Groenewald (2014:9-10), total devotion,

responsible management, and serving one another with the resources and gifts granted by God, glorifying God's sovereignty and ownership over everything, is faithful Christian stewardship.

Stewardship is a choice of service where one's gifts and resources are recognised and used to benefit others, and "tidy up" society. One where we acknowledge that the responsibility to "fix society" cannot be entirely placed on business, government, labour unions, communities, spiritual and religious leaders, social justice promoters, the creative community, women's movement groups, ecologists, or technologists. No one can single-handedly fix the crises that people within societies have created. Stewardship development is where people are drawn more deeply into community life and understand the impact they make on earth (Kevany, 2007:8).

Christian stewardship theories and principles thus demonstrate potential to provide an alternative model for business leadership amidst the current atmosphere of corruption that defies the SDGs. Subsequently, it will be argued that Christian stewardship can be offered as an alternative for business leaders when reimagined from a public practical theological perspective.

1.2.2 State of the current research

Naudé (2020:97) writes that economics is a social science that studies the production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services. National economic systems vary from those that are centrally controlled by the state (socialism); those where all the means of production are owned by the state (communism); and those who rely on the free market steering the economy, where the means of production and capital are in private hands (capitalism). Most African countries have a "mixed" economy leaning towards a central control, meaning that some sectors in the economy (education, electricity generation, water provision) are controlled by the state while others (mining, banking, trading in consumer goods) are open to the free market competition or held jointly by the state (public) and entrepreneurs (private) (e.g. telecommunications, transport).

For theology, matters of public concern certainly include questions about economics issues, for example (un)employment, national debt, wealth creation, technological innovation, poverty and inequality. These matters can be housed under the umbrella of 'the economy' and make the link between public theology and economics a natural and very important one (Naudé, 2020:98).

Köhler (2020:21) in his book, *After Dawn*, writes that South Africa is stuck in identity politics and racial paradigms fuelled by the past, instead of focussing on solving the country's biggest problem to create an inclusive economy providing jobs for millions.

Sekhaulelo (2014:1) states that the focus of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA) slowed down. Historically they focused on giving to the poor, caring for the widows and the dying,

looking after the orphans, and visiting the sick. He claims that although the causes of poverty in South Africa in urban areas can be due to laziness, political policies and economic ills, the main causes of poverty are due to unemployment, globalisation, and economic strategy, enabling an exclusive economy where a few accumulate resources at the expense of the majority. Practically applied, he explains and starts with creation and how humans have to obey God as stewards with dominion over the earth, advancing justice, and improving the life of the neighbourhood. The Lord, through Moses, prevented poverty in the Old Testament era by giving his people economic legislation, safeguarding the poor against interest (Ex 22:25), and not showing partiality during disputes (Ex 23:3). Another regulation was to provide produce and alms to the poor along with the overall uplifting and sustaining of the welfare of the poor, orchestrating an inclusive society (Sekhaulelo, 2014:2, 4).

Kgatle (2017:7-8) notes that inclusivity is when the church preaches and practices that all citizens should and must have the opportunity to enter the economy. It further encompasses moral edification; eradicating corruption to be socially relevant; and assisting members to practice their Christian beliefs and purpose, namely, to care and contribute towards the needy as well as the social well-being of communities until they are able to look after themselves.

Public practical theology aims to understand the status and needs of the public and/or society and actively contribute or attempt to eradicate or find responses to our challenges from a theological framework – becoming an active church. Current development studies reflect the notion that churches should become more active within the society in which they operate, identifying their specific needs and being active participants to improve or sustain welfare through pastoral care. Magezi (2017:132) found that Christians should follow the practical examples provided during Jesus' example of practicing holistic ministry, along with God's compassion for humanity (Lk 15; Mt 9:36; Mk 6:34): "The compassion of God is a model that should compel Christians to participate in holistic mission i.e., word and deed".

Richard Foster (2008:100) writes that our outward lifestyles (the way we live, what we possess, act upon, and make decisions) are affected by our inward realities (to live in unity and for Christ). The danger of deadly legalism stares us in the face when we believe outward lifestyles are not affected by inward realities. Inward realities will be shaped and transformed by our desire to search the kingdom of God first in everything we do (Matt 6:33). Genuinely, firstly searching for the Kingdom of God, will give ecological concerns, the poor, fair distribution of wealth, including many other challenges the attention needed (Foster, 2008:107).

The kingdom of God dawned in the present age with the first coming of Christ, but it will only be fulfilled or completed upon Christ's second coming, the eschatological coming of Christ (the age

to come). The church currently lives between these two ages; the age to come has broken into the present age (the first coming of Christ), and it is only through the eye of faith that one can perceive the presence of the kingdom of God (Longman, 2013:1011).

Christian stewardship is the notion that God expects every person to use everything they possess in ways that honour Him, being stewards for God, managing God's resources in the world. Longman (2013:1578) explains Adam and Eve were first entrusted with the biblical concept of stewardship, the responsibility to care for God's creation, His "property", His creative work (Gen 2:15), "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Ps 24:1). Concerning being the stewards of the mysteries of God, Paul wanted everyone to view him and his fellow ministers as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor 4:1). Van Aarde (2016:287) refers to, "[T]he stewardship² of the grace given to me for you" (Eph 3:2, 9-10) where the church's task of stewarding the gospel included the mystery, the kerygma, apostolic authority, the missionary office as well as the stewardship of the gospel intended for the gentile nations.

This study ultimately wants to contribute to the field of development from a public practical theological stance, investigating Christian stewardship as a theological framework for business leaders involved in SD. Transformational diaconia is desperately needed where the church helps shape business leaders to address and transform cultures, including individuals' characters from the inside out.

Public practical theology should answer to the needs and matters of the public and where groups are given the opportunities and potential to engage mindfully, relating to the issues and concerns within the group.

On the other hand, churches should be concerned with the salvation of sinners and look after the 'sinned against' to sustain justice, take care of the needy, and condemn all kinds of evil (greed and injustice). Acknowledging that the cause of poverty is not only the individual's fault but also due to 'structural sins'. All stakeholders should be involved in initiating change: the government, the church, and the rich (Wilson & Letsosa, 2014:1, 6). Dagmang (2009:87) refers to Piet Schoonenberg's definition of structural sin, as sin which includes the build-up of personal acts of that which is morally wrong, the creation of sin within institutional- and societal structures, cultural patterns, and within a political- and/or economic system(s).

² "Dispensation" instead of stewardship in the Bible (NKJV) with commentary: "Dispensation" means a stewardship, an administration, or management.

Braithwaite and Drahos (as cited by Barkemeyer *et al.*, 2014:6) consider the private sector and its consumption of environmental resources to produce economic capital, stating that it should be involved in socio-economic development influencing the rule-making process of SD.

Despite the progress South Africa made since 1994 (post-apartheid), e.g., increased access to basic public services, decreased poverty and, in some areas, lower inequality, business leaders still struggle to overcome or find solutions to the triple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Solutions seem to be outwardly focussed instead of first searching the kingdom of God for internal change.

Tetty and Nel (2020:8) comment that Jesus transforms and improves people both inside and out. He is not separated from public life and merely concerned with exorcising demons, but teaches responsible living, where our inner state mirrors the state of society.

Pratt, in his presidential address in April 1935, under the theme of 'Ethics and Theology', representing The American Theological Society shared the following view:

Ethics and Theology – forces us to face one of the most difficult problems of religious thought, - the relation between God and morality. One of the simplest and most popular modes of conceiving the relation between God and the laws of morality is to equate righteousness with obedience to the divine will. God is good, we are told, and our goodness is to be defined as conformity to the will of God (Pratt, 1936:1).

Jennings and Velasquez (2015:1) examined how economic prosperity and the ethical wealth (just distribution of goods, better administration, deep-rooted social cooperation, and inculcation of economic duties) of nations are affected by ethical values. The insights of their research reveal the "institutionalised values thesis", which proffers that economic performance is fuelled by ethical values, contributing to the realisation of a healthy society only when these values are intrinsically valued by citizens and embedded and reinforced by the institutional fabric of the society.

The question a business has is whether religion affects labour market performance and whether influential business leaders do influence their employees, suppliers, and customers. One of several studies in this area investigated the effect religion has on economic performance and concluded that in South Africa, unemployment and the improvement of labour market performance are affected by religion (Öhlmann, 2021:29). Öhlmann refers to Barro and McCleary (2003), Chen and Hungerman (2014), and Guiso *et al.* (2003) who conclude that recent economic research recognises religion as a determining factor of economic attitudes and outcomes.

Religion in South African society is highly relevant in private and public life (Öhlmann, 2021:8). According to the Pew Research Centre (2015:242), during 2010 eighty percent of the South

African population were linked to Christian churches, and seventy-four percent viewed religion as essential in their lives. Religious worldviews were found to be common, with elements of African Traditional Religion (ATR) (ancestral belief systems) and Christianity regularly practiced adjacent to each other.

With the majority of South Africans considered religious, the definition and application of Christian stewardship as the total devotion of self and leading others, on behalf of and accountability to God should be evident during our daily lives. This leads to personal development – personhood.

Klaasen (2017:1) explains that the concept of “development” after the 1994 South African context was that the North (developed countries) provides economic and technological support to the South (lower-income countries) to develop, receiving different reactions within theological and secular discourses. Klaasen (2017) refers to Davids *et al.* who mention that the concept of development relates to exclusive economic development, forming the foundation of the modernisation and dependency theories where persons are viewed as commodities controlled by economic, social, and technological principles. Modern economics is perceived as more important than human capital leading to dependency, absence of essential societal structures, lower levels of creativeness and imagination, exhausting of both renewable and non-renewal natural resources, and the mistreating of humans through the false belief that private and public are separate and not connected. These modernisation development theories or charitable based development theories have been implemented by the state, faith-based organisations (FBOs), and non-profit organisations (NPOs). Klaasen argues that the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP), SD and social welfare by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), FBOs, the church, including the dominant development theories and activities, ignored the concept of personal integrity and accountability embedded in personhood. From a Christian anthropological perspective, personhood implies that your identity is connected to your purpose, and it is the individual’s own responsibility to develop personhood (Klaasen, 2017:2). Currently, the acceptable minimum SDGs have been identified by the NDP 2030. Klaasen (2017:5) argues that the NDP does not consider the role of personhood for self-development.

The NDP is the most inclusive effort which the South African government implemented to advance development among the post-apartheid society. However, people as the backbone for the NDP development process are not seen as humans but as commodities, not considering the human’s role of personhood and self-development (Klaasen, 2017:5).

Business leaders (whether a sole proprietor, leader of a small and/or medium organisation, or of a major organisation) influence the lives of their employees and their development of personhood.

All these individuals can work alongside the government to achieve the NDP 2030 goals and the vision: 'Our future, make it work' from a theological perspective.

The World Bank's Country Director for South Africa, Paul Nomba Um, noted that the heart of South Africa's major challenges – poverty, inequality, and unemployment – as identified in the NDP, is the triple challenge to be reduced by 2030. Inequality, which is fuelled by the labour market earnings, contributed to more than 90% of the general Gini coefficient between 2006 and 2016. An assessment study found that access to basic public services positively correlates with income, the lowest earners with the least access to public services, and that relationship between education and the labour market is mainly responsible for overall inequality with employment income contributing almost entirely to income inequality (World Bank, 2018).

With labour market affiliation being one of the primary responsible stakeholders contributing to inequality and income inequality, which is exacerbating South Africa's triple challenge, a review of the morals, labour laws, and models (structural sins or not) currently used by businesses is needed to determine whether sustainable. Do business leaders need a new model focussing on the people, the planet, and profits from a kingdom of God (will of God) perspective?

1.3 Problem Statement

This study aims to address issues concerning whether the term "sustainability" refers only to the triple bottom line relevant to the business sector, or should it encompass a broader perspective including economic-, social- and environmental factors of a country or the area in which they operate? Should the SDGs be the responsibility of various stakeholders within a country, and should the business sector be seen as a stakeholder? Should Christian stewardship by Christian businesspeople or churches push for sustainability as part of their Christian stewardship morality or responsibility?

An overview of academic journals, books, and search facilities provided by the North-West University (NWU), EBSCOHost (international journal articles) and ProQuest (international theses and dissertations), and relevant Internet articles offering responses or solutions to poverty eradication (included but not limited to), are briefly discussed. Scriptural passages pertinent to the study are also investigated. In this regard, four primary focus scriptures (Ex 20:1-3; Gen 9:1-3; 1 Cor 4:1-2; 1 Pet 4:8-11) are used and studied to gain insight into the relationship between Christian stewardship (based on a theological framework) which business leaders involved with SD can apply to contribute towards the overall SDGs and NDP 2030 for South Africa.

1.4 Research Questions

Considering the preceding arguments, the main research question is formulated as follows:

“What theological framework will a public practical theological study yield when Christian stewardship is reimagined for South African business leaders involved with SD in South Africa?”

The sub-research questions are:

- What are the current problems South Africa and South African business leaders are facing in terms of attaining the SDGs?
- Why are South Africa and South African business leaders struggling to meet the SDGs?
- What can a reimagining of Christian stewardship as found in Scripture, church traditions, history, and other disciplines offer South African business leaders to attain the SDGs?
- How will a public practical theological reimagining of Christian stewardship empower South African business leaders to attain the SDGs more effectively?

1.5 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to probe the notion of Christian stewardship from a public practical theological paradigm to provide a framework for business leaders involved with SD in South Africa.

The objectives of this study are to:

- Describe the current challenges and problems South Africa and business leaders are experiencing in terms of achieving the SDGs.
- Identify some of the reasons for the current situation, mindful of the triple challenge of poverty, inequality, and unemployment in South Africa.
- To investigate from a public practical theological stance whether Christian stewardship can provide a theological model for South African business leaders involved with SD.
- To articulate how Christian stewardship can enable South African business leaders to attain and work towards reaching the SDGs more effectively.

1.6 Central Theoretical Argument

The central theoretical argument is that Christian stewardship can serve as a theological framework for business leaders involved with SD in South Africa when viewed from a public practical theological paradigm.

1.7 Methodological Framework

1.7.1 A public practical theological study

This study intends to contribute to the field of public practical theology focusing on the public dimension of SD by suggesting Christian stewardship from a public practical theological paradigm for South African business leaders where a lack of SD is proving to be detrimental to the well-being of ordinary citizens. The need for public practical theological inquiry is accentuated by, for example, Immink and Buinsma (2003:2), who suggest that faith is realised in the concrete acts, convictions, experiences, and expectations of human beings living in the public sphere.

Six months after the tragic events in 2014, referred to as the Ferguson Unrest, which led to the social movement #BlackLivesMatter, faith-based leaders returned to Missouri to hold a public rally of the clergy. One of the members of the public requested to change the chants from “show me what democracy looks like” to “show me what theology looks like”, calling on all the believers to bring the richness of their faith to the public space. The question that arises here is, what does it mean to practice theology in our public spaces? (Kim & Day, 2017:1-2).

According to Chiroma (2020:67), when Christians want to take part in civil society and combat corruption, biblical theology and ethics solely are inadequate. To positively contribute, Christians need to know what civil society is and the meaning of democracy, including the rights and responsibilities as citizens. Public theology helps Christians understand the issues and be informed participants.

Forster (2020:19) remarks that the needed connection between faith and life is evident when seeing the changes in the social, political and religious context, where meaningful exchanges are required between theology and other academic disciplines for critical reflection and acknowledging how history and contextual factors affect(ed) our thoughts.

Hence, theology in general and practical theology in particular need to be contextualised to be able to address burning contextual issues (Swart & de Beer, 2014).

1.8 Method

1.8.1 Research method

This study will be guided by Osmer’s (2008) model for doing practical theological research, which was considered appropriate for this study as it would enable the researcher to answer the study’s research questions. This approach comprises a descriptive empirical task (what is going on?), an interpretive task (why is this going on?), a normative task (what ought to be going on?), and a

pragmatic task (how might we respond?). Aligned with the objectives of the study, these different tasks are anticipated to serve the study in at least the following way:

1.8.1.1 The descriptive-empirical task

Regarding the question “*what is going on?*” in a specific situation (Osmer, 2008:4), the descriptive empirical task addresses the first objective of the study which is to provide a comprehensive description of the current challenges and problems South Africa and business leaders are currently experiencing in terms of achieving the SDGs as presented in literature on the theme. This will be provided in order to highlight some of the deficits in current approaches to SD by South African business leaders. These deficits, which include issues such as mismanagement and corruption, often lead to societal ills such as poverty, inequality, and unemployment.

1.8.1.2 The interpretive task

The interpretative task addresses the second objective of the study which is to identify some of the reasons for the current situation, mainly focussing on why SD is not achieved. In essence, this task concerns the question: “Why is this going on?” (Osmer, 2008:4). Finding reasons for the current state of affairs is pivotal in the search for feasible theological alternatives in the area of SD. Inherent to this task is uncovering some of the theories that will shed light on the lack of SD in the South African context as Osmer (2008:80) contends that theories assist humans to appreciate and describe features of history, the episode, a situation, or context. This section seeks to establish why the business sector (business leaders) is seemingly failing to support SD ideals.

1.8.1.3 The normative task

The normative task of practical theological research, according to Osmer (2008:8), concerns theological reflection on the issue under investigation. The question at stake is what the ideal for a specific situation will be from a Christian perspective. In the case of this study, this question aligns to the third objective of the study, which asks what should be going on in terms of the involvement of South African business leaders with SD. As an overview of literature has shown that the theological concept of Christian stewardship contains much potential as a paradigm for business leadership, this concept will be further explored from a public practical theological stance. A Christian perspective will first and foremost be interested in what perspectives the Bible provide on Christian stewardship. In light of this, the study will engage several passages from Scripture (see the section on data collection in the following paragraphs). Theological reflection is, however, not limited to Scriptures, but the Christian tradition can also be consulted as it can “provide normative guidance in shaping the patterns of the Christian life” (Osmer, 2008:8).

1.8.1.4 The pragmatic task

The fourth movement of practical theological research concerns the question: “How might we respond?” (Osmer, 2008:4). This question stands in service of the fourth objective of this study which is to articulate how Christian stewardship can enable South African business leaders to achieve SD more effectively.

The pragmatic task thus serves as a convergence point for the preceding tasks as it offers a public practical theological alternative for the current state of affairs. Christian stewardship will thus be reimagined within the framework of the role of South African business leaders in SD after a theoretical interpretation of the current scenario regarding national SD, and theologically pondering the potential of Christian stewardship as a means to enable South African business leaders involved with SD.

1.8.2 Data collection

1.8.2.1 Literature study

A literature study was conducted through a search of relevant books, academic journals, dissertations, and other media resources as required, to find new and old ideas relevant to a Christian stewardship model. The researcher made use of the databases made available by the NWU, namely EBSCOHost (international journal articles) and ProQuest (international theses and dissertations), to collect relevant data sources (e.g., books and articles). Scriptural passages relevant to the study were also reviewed.

Additionally, the researcher consulted various commentaries to understand selected scriptures to gain insight into Christian stewardship and the practical applications and guidelines business leaders can use in order to positively contribute towards SD. Texts investigated in this study included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Exodus 20:1-3: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me”.

Ostring (2016:244-246) explains that Genesis theology shows that God's people's work should be a blessing to others while realising the reciprocal nature of work. Independent human effort is seriously insufficient and seen as going hand in hand with curses. It is only good when God blesses human effort or work. She concludes that the study found that the ancient narrative of work portrays work as humanity's great sin, where humans' self-worship in their capabilities, and pride leads to idolatry as well as the first sin in the Ten Commandments.

Paeth (2004:253) comments that public theology as an agent in the dialogues within a liberal democratic society contributes a sense of good to the discursive process, which is the core of the church's identity as the anticipatory community, engaging in hermeneutical assessment of the social situation and becoming an "interpretive community". He refers to an "exodus community", and the responsibility to influence and observe norms of the kingdom, backing those norms against the "realism" of an unsaved social system (Egypt and slavery). He further notes that should Christian ethics be social ethics, it is important to create open public spaces where social analyses can occur, and where public theology and Christian social ethics can interact and engage with living religious traditions and various stakeholders, namely the public-, the economic-political-, and cultural spheres of our common life.

- Genesis 9:1-3: "So God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every living thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs'".

Lizorkin-Eyzenberg (2019:35) notes that the covenant God made with Noah included his children and all animal life on Earth. Noah and his company are given the same commands as those once given to Adam (Gen 1:28). Conradie (2011:81) refers to Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful and multiply...subdue the earth and rule over it...", and notes that the command in Gen 1:28 to "have dominion" over the earth plays a vital role in a Christian understanding of the relationship between humanity and nature. It is argued that Genesis 1:27-28 should be read with Genesis 2:15 where humanity ('*adam*') is called to "till" ('*abad*') and to "keep" (*samar*) the soil ('*adamah*'). The role of human beings on earth is basically to serve ('*abad*') and preserve (*samar*).

- 1 Corinthians 4:1-2: "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful".

Considering Sibilio's (2006:263) examination of Paul's address, highlighting that as God's servant, he is only accountable to God and holds moral authority over the Corinthians before God; distinguishing the gospel of Christ from cults and morals cannot simply be learned but must also be lived. Paul invites the community to see them as serving the same God. This study argues that business leaders serving the same God, should steward God's mysteries, live it, not just learn it, and be faithful. Hall, as mentioned by Conradie (2011:82), developed dimensions of the symbol of stewardship and refers to the eschatological dimension conscious of the coming end. Stewards must be watchful (Lk 12), trustworthy (1 Cor 4:2), and blameworthy (Ti 1:7).

- 1 Peter 4:8-11: “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins. Therefore, be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak of the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen”.

Ostring (2016:250) calls for a reassessment in educational approaches and our current practices. Doing so will create the space where students can discover their own abilities and, in turn, contribute to the welfare of society and bless others instead of seeking self-achievement and the attainment of financially beneficial employment. With Christian attitudes, where we see everyone in society as a blessing towards others (despite age and financial stability), our opinion and feelings toward retirement and unemployment will change. This will give rise to a society actively involved in understanding the blessings of people towards one another.

The above-mentioned passages were selected based on three questions: (1) Why do we do it?; How should we do it?; and (3) What do we need to do as stewards? To unpack this further: *Why?* Exodus 20:1-3, as our First Commandment and to glorify God. *How?* Genesis 9:1-3, we have dominion, and we must be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor 4). *What do we need to do?* 1 Peter 4:8-11, love one another, be stewards of God and minister with one’s gifts received.

1.9 Ethical Considerations and Estimated Risk Level of the Study

The research will be literature-based, and no human participants will be involved in the study. Consequently, the risk level is anticipated to be ‘no’ risk.

1.10 Value of the Study

A survey conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in 2019 found that 30% of South African companies are aware of and include SDGs as part of their strategies and business processes (PwC, 2019). Although the private sector’s contribution has added to the progress, it is evident that greater awareness across all government and society sectors is needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda, with the private sector playing a critical role in collaborating with other sectors and stakeholders.

The current study therefore endeavoured to contribute to a greater awareness of the SDGs and offer public practical theological perspectives on reimagined Christian stewardship that can guide stakeholders to respond and aim for reasonable SD progress.

1.11 Chapter Outline

The study consisted of the following six chapters:

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the study.

Chapter 2 explores SD from the current perspective in South Africa.

Chapter 3 investigates the causes of South Africa's triple challenges impacting on SD.

Chapter 4 reimagines Christian stewardship and the relations between Christian stewardship, work and society.

Chapter 5 probes the possible contribution Christian stewardship practices have for South Africa business leaders.

Chapter 6, the final chapter, summarises the study's findings, and provides a conclusion and recommendations based on the insights obtained from the research. It also acknowledges the limitations of the study and makes suggestions for further research.

1.12 Summary

The main purpose of this chapter was to introduce the topic under investigation and provide a background to the study, especially its aim, objectives, and approach. The research questions were also presented, along with the methodology employed to conduct the research. To sum up, this study is interested in the notion of Christian stewardship as a new paradigm for business leaders involved in SD and potential ways to contribute towards addressing the triple challenges South Africa is currently facing – namely, inequality, unemployment, and poverty – from a public practical theological stance. By means of a literature review, the following chapter surveys current perspectives of SD in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2 – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CURRENT PERSPECTIVE

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the topic of the study and the main elements of the research process. Chapter 2 discusses the current state and challenges South Africa is facing in terms of achieving or working towards the SDGs and the impact the SDGs have for business leaders. The discussion focusses on the past and current economic conditions, integrating both socio- and environmental conditions and the challenges faced as a nation; and contextualising and conceptualising SD in terms of economic, socio, and environmental challenges in line with the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. The focus of this chapter is based on the first objective of the study, which is to describe the challenges South Africa and business leaders are currently experiencing in terms of achieving the SDGs.

2.2 Sustainable Development

“By 2030, we seek to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. We seek a country wherein all citizens have the capabilities to grasp the ever-broadening opportunities available. Our plan is to change the life chances of millions of our people, especially the youth; life chances that remain stunted by our apartheid history” (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2012:5).

Circular Ecology (n.d.) differentiates between SD and sustainability, and defines SD as:

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland Commission, 1987).

“Sustainability”, on the other hand, is described as a balance between economic, environmental, and social factors in equal harmony.

- *Environmental sustainability* – living within the limits of our natural resources.
- *Economic sustainability* – where a business or country uses resources responsibly, in a well-structured manner, producing consistent operational profits in a sustainable manner.
- *Social sustainability* – is reflected in societies' ability to constantly achieve a good social well-being.

Circular Ecology (n.d.) identifies three pillars of sustainability. True sustainability is when there is a balance between all three pillars – economic, social, and environmental sustainability factors –

in equal harmony. If two out of the three pillars are achieved, we end up with one element being neglected and we find:

- Social + Economic Sustainability = Equitable
- Social + Environmental Sustainability = Bearable
- Economic + Environmental Sustainability = Viable

Our environmental-, economic-, and social sustainability is directly related to the way we develop as individuals, businesses, communities, and the country. It is critical to adhere to the principles of SD or else it will lead to challenges.

South Africa's major challenges are described by Paul Noumba Um as the *triple challenge* to be overcome by 2030, namely, that of poverty, inequality, and unemployment (quoted in World Bank, 2018). Elkington *et al.* (in Barkemeyer *et al.* 2014) use the '*three circles*' model to illustrate SD. This model consists of economic, social, and environmental concerns, and within a corporate agenda, it is referred to as the '*triple bottom line*' (TBL). This chapter researches the country's triple challenges, and how the corporate agenda's TBL – the economic, socio-, and environmental concerns – affect poverty, inequality, and unemployment, if at all.

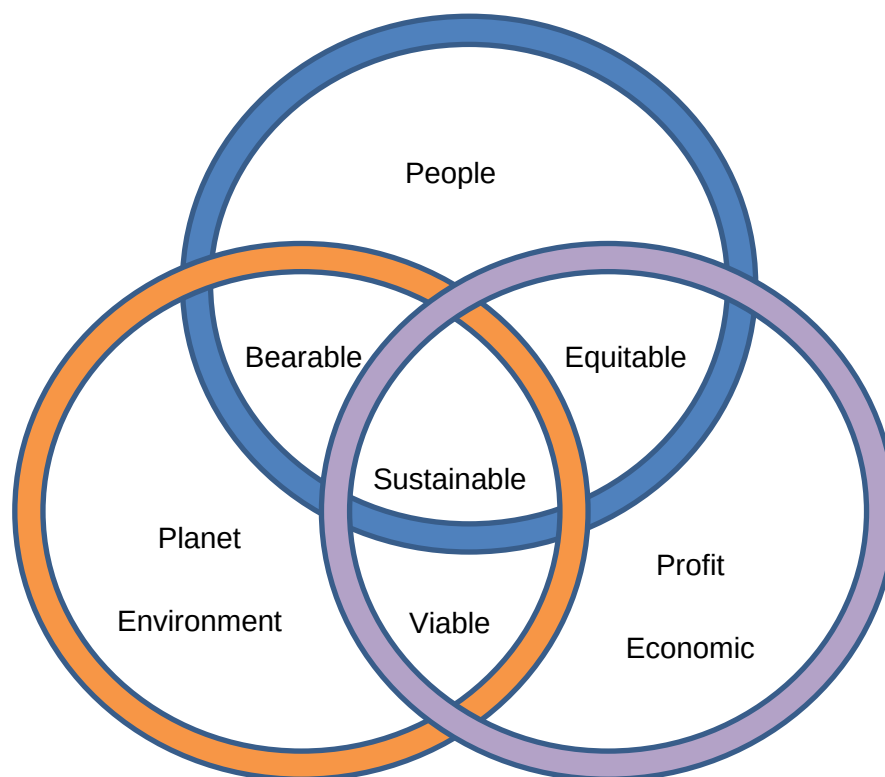


Figure 2-1: Triple Bottom Line and sustainability. Source: Elkington, 1997

This chapter focuses on understanding the context, background, and challenges South Africa faces in terms of SD from a corporate and social *perspective* in terms of the *TBL*, *the three circles* and, the *triple challenges*.

2.2.1 Economic, background, context, and challenges

Increasing dialogues are held by the private sector focusing on SD, the needs of the current and future generations (especially amongst the world's poor), and the idea of limitation forced by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to accommodate the needs of the present and future. Unsustainable detail of development is linked to the economic, social, and environmental challenges, and can be improved and addressed by the private sector with other societal actors (Barkemeyer *et al.*, 2014:2). CEOs, political leaders, and public administrators present their politics, projects, and initiatives based on their contribution toward SD (Ukwandu, 2015:166). According to Circular Ecology (n.d.), economic sustainability is where a business or country uses resources responsibly, in a well-structured manner, producing consistent operational profits in a sustainable manner.

GDP, one of the main indicators of a country's economic performance, is the total value of all goods and services produced in the country within a specific period, e.g., a year. Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) (2022) reported that the South African economy, the real GDP, recorded a positive fourth quarter (October – December 2021), increasing the annual growth rate for 2021 to 4.9% from 3.7%. The main drivers of economic growth were personal services, trade, manufacturing, and agriculture. The biggest contributors to growth were exports and household expenditure. Although positive figures, the real GDP is not what was during the second quarter of 2021, before the civil unrest and stricter lockdown restrictions agitated the economy in the third quarter. During 2021, the GDP was worth 419.02 billion United States (US) dollars and represented 0.19% of the world economy compared to 0.27% during 2020 (Trading Economics, 2021). GDP impacts everyone in the economy. When GDP growth is strong, there is more employment; higher salaries; more spending by consumers; and more confidence to invest in the country, laying the basis for economic growth. When the GDP growth is low, it might lead to a recession, fostering unemployment, lower wages, and less investment into the country.

According to the Small Business Institute (SBI) chairman Bernard Swanepoel, 95% of all businesses in South Africa are small businesses and contribute at least 40% to the country's GDP (Parsons & Parry, 2018:93).

The GDP per capita is a financial metric breaking down a country's economic output per person, calculated by dividing the GDP of a nation by its population. During 2020 South Africa's GDP per

capita was at 5121.04 US dollars and was equivalent to 41% of the world's average (Trading Economics, 2021). Compared with other countries, we see the GDP per capita recorded during December 2020 being at 85 682 USD in Switzerland; 58 510 USD in the US; 58 020 USD in Australia; 41 259 USD in Germany; 29 287 USD in Italy; 24 935 USD in Spain; and 8 229 USD in Brazil.

GDP is an important indicator of a country's "health and wealth", affecting all of its citizens. GDP can be linked with the NDP's 2030 vision to "seek a country wherein all citizens have the capabilities to grasp the ever-broadening opportunities available".

Fourie (2021:46) explains that throughout human history societies have had to solve three economic problems: Firstly, producing enough goods; secondly, producing enough of the right goods; and thirdly, fairly distributing the goods to everyone.

2.2.1.1 A macroeconomic perspective

Macroeconomics is a holistic study on how the overall economy, structures, performance, decision-making processes, markets, consumers, and the government behave, whereas *microeconomics* is the study of decision-making and behaviour of individuals, companies, and households (Investopedia, 2022).

Naudé (2020:97) writes that economics is a social science studying the production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services. National economic systems vary from those that are centrally controlled by the state (socialism), those where all the means of production are owned by the state (communism), and those who rely on the free market steering the economy, where the means of production and capital are in private hands (capitalism). Most African countries have a "mixed" economy leaning towards a central control, meaning that some sectors in the economy (education, electricity generation, water provision) are controlled by the state while others (mining, banking, trading in consumer goods) are open to the free market competition or held jointly by the state (public) and entrepreneurs (private) (e.g., telecommunications, transport).

South Africa was and still is deeply integrated into an international political economy that was and is mainly capitalist (Johnson, 2015:2). After the great change in 1990 –1994,³ there was a general loss of interest in South Africa globally as it was assumed that 'the problem has been solved, they've democratised, end of the story'. Sanctions were raised, obstacles to investment disappeared, and the tariff regime was liberalised. People from all over the globe entered the

³ Referring to the new ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC).

trade, to invest or simply explore the country as tourists. The result was that South Africa today is more vulnerable and sensitive to international factors than ever before (Johnson, 2015:222).

Today, South Africa remains a conflicted country with opposing ideologies over what economic system and governance standards should prevail. What contribution should private businesses and state-owned enterprises make to grow the South African economy and redress the injustices of the past? The ruling party, the ANC, has become increasingly divided in recent years. The flame of discontent grows the revelations of corruption – at the highest levels – with state-owned enterprises and attempts by a political elite to enrich themselves at the cost of the citizens and the country's economic future. Corruption is often referred to as cancer; with the phenomenon of state capture emerging, like an ugly growth, it is one of its nastiest and most destructive manifestations yet. State capture, unfortunately, does not paint the full picture. Many businesses and individuals have been captured in a complex web of dubious or illegal transactions involving powerful people in government and the private sector abusing their power. Losing the focus to build the nation, resulting in rising unemployment and deepening poverty, inequality takes South Africa backward. With South Africa's gift of hindsight, the country should set an example to other countries trying to move out of a torrid political past. Organised business could and should be one of the leaders in this process, helping to dissolve not aggravate the tensions in the country (Parsons & Parry, 2018:87-88).

Mbeki and Mbeki (2016:2) explain that the old South Africa lives on despite Nelson Mandela leaving the world imagining a South Africa at peace with itself, ready for changes to create a modern country in Africa. But despite all that has taken place in the last two decades, the country appears to be drifting further and further away from its vision. And now the situation has reached boiling point; almost all the hallmarks that were associated with the old, repressive, white minority regime seem to remain in place. Examples of the present challenges include brutal police behaviour where people are begging for a better life; arrogant mining companies exploiting South Africa's natural resources; widespread infectious diseases among hundreds of thousands of black people; young people disadvantaged due to a failing education system, growing inequality especially among black folk, and extensive corruption placing South Africa 73 out of 180 countries in the 2018 Corruption Perception Index 2018: Global Scores (Transparency International, 2018).

Simpson (2021:450) explains that the greatest challenge for President Ramaphosa in 2018 was to sustain the condition of the economy. He further comments:

- Between 2012 – 2017 South Africa had an average growth of 1.6% per annum.
- Poverty increased alarmingly.

- StatsSA reckoned that there was a 15% decrease in the median income between 2011 – 2015.
- World Bank figures showed the USD 1.90-a-day poverty rate increased from 16.8% to 18.9% between 2010 – 2015.
- The construction of the Medupi and Kusile started during 2007-8, and were forecast to be in operation during 2011 at a cost of R69.1 billion and R80.6 billion, respectively. The dates were revised to 2017, 2018, and again in 2015 to 2020 and 2021. Eskom became liable for capital and interest costs while not being able to earn the estimated R30 billion per annum if the two stations were operational. 'State capture' aggravated matters, R1.5 billion was paid to McKinsey and Trillian for 'turnaround' guidance. Tegeta received a R586-million coal pre-payment. The cost was transferred to customers.
- Angelo Agrizzi, the chief operating officer of Bosasa, claimed that R4-6million in monthly bribes were paid by Bosasa in return for state tenders.
- The wounds and scars of the country can be attributed to being self-inflicted (Simpson, 2021:450).

The cost of State Capture was around R1.5-trillion during the second term of the President Jacob Zuma's administration, which amounts to a third of South Africa's R4.9-trillion GDP. 'Costs' such as "finder fees", "consultancies", "commissions, but effectively kickbacks" (Merten, 2019).

The former premier Ace Magashule allegedly ran a bona fide shakedown operation with the Free State's R255-million asbestos audit project, ensuring that businesspeople who got awarded contracts from provincial departments and municipalities paid their dues to him when they got paid from the public purse (Myburgh, 2019:251).

More recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses and individuals have been exposed, by submitting fraudulent claims to South Africa's Temporary Employees Relief Scheme (TERS), which was implemented to alleviate the impact of COVID-19. Bernstein and Botes (2020) reported that there were 75 fraudulent cases, with 5 arrested for UIF (Unemployment Insurance Fund) Fraud worth R5.7 million.

Two-thirds of the COVID-19 relief fund was mismanaged and from April to August 2020, R15,6 billion was allocated by government as a relief to the pandemic, but it was found that 67%, R10,5 billion was mismanaged and/or part of corruption. The Gauteng Health Department is also being investigated for claims associated with corruption for the value of R200 million (Janse van Rensburg, 2020).

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) calls the coronavirus-induced economic crisis “the Great Lockdown”, mimicking the Great Depression of the 1920s; the Great Recession was followed by the Global Financial Crisis in 2007/08. Our current economic depression is not solely due to the negative impact of the pandemic, and it is our responsibility to search for the root cause. Pre-COVID-19 unemployment rates and declines in economic growth are both a direct outcome of policy choices promoted by the dominant economic players,

[O]ne that says free markets are the best way to organise our economic lives. It promotes the interest of the financial sector, discouraging investments, and weakened the public sector's capacity to deal with the pandemic (Szymborska, 2020).

The majority believe that the pandemic was caused by an "external shock", with no relation to the structure and functioning of the economy. The underlying causes that make the crisis severe like inequality and unemployment, are direct outcomes of the mainstream economic policy that was there before the pandemic. It is time to rethink our economics and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic which showed that governments are able to invest in healthcare, education, and research while supporting workers and small businesses (Szymborska, 2020).

During December 2020, the NPC released recommendations for course correction in terms of economic progress towards the NDP 2030 which highlighted (NPC, 2020:1) that since the apartheid era much has changed for the better. Public sector infrastructure spending increased. Employment creation doubled between 2001 to 2017 compared to 1960 – 1993. Housing for black Africans improved significantly with access to municipal services, e.g., access to electricity and sanitation. School attendance rose; however, learners who did not pay their school fees increased from 0.3% in 2002 to 64.8% in 2017. Access to education lays the foundation for intergenerational class mobility. Poverty rates decreased from 51% in 2006 to 40% in 2015. Despite the many areas of improvement, progress has stalled. The social and economic indicators revealed that since 2008 South Africa made no progress, where the progress towards poverty eradication was partly reversed.

The constant struggle to find employment causes pain and frustration. Although this is not felt by all nationally, the racial and age dimensions show that the unemployment rate gives rise to the experience of poverty and inequality (NPC, 2020:16).

Trading Economics (2021a) reported that South Africa's unemployment rate rose to 34.9% during the third quarter of 2021 compared to 34.4% in the previous period. This is the highest

unemployment rate since 2008. With 7.6 million unemployed persons, employment fell by 660 000 to 14.2 million, and the labour force dropped by 842 000 to 21.9 million.

When comparing unemployment rates with the Group of Twenty (G20) countries, we find that:

Table 2-1: Unemployment rates within G20 countries

Country	Unemployment Rate	Date reported
Singapore	2.4%	December 2021
Netherlands	3.6%	January 2022
United States	3.8%	February 2022
United Kingdom	4.1%	December 2021
Australia	4.2%	January 2022
Germany	5%	February 2022
France	7.4%	December 2021
India	8%	December 2021
Brazil	11.1%	December 2021
Spain	13.3%	December 2021
South Africa	34.9%	September 2021

From the above it is evident that South Africa has the highest unemployment rate. With 34.9% (46.6% including discouraged work seekers) of citizens being unemployed, it puts a massive strain on the government's social responsibility, civil society, and poverty.

The NPC further reported that deindustrialisation has accelerated. Although employment grew in the manufacturing sector, the amount of people working in this sector decreased, which is an ordinary challenge in middle- and upper-income economies globally. Employment in manufacturing decreased to 9% in 2019 from 14% in 2008. The financial services and community, social, and personal services industries were the main sources of employment growth. During 2008 – 2015, small businesses' total account for employment decreased from 64% to 55%, youth

employment stalled, people aged between 15 to 34 were the only ones experiencing a reduction in total employment with a combined decrease of 355 000, and the working age population within these two age groups grew by 600 000. All net job creation went to people over 35 years old. By 2019, 89% of all the unemployed people were black Africans, higher than their percentage of the labour force at 79%. The official unemployment rates across different races recorded at 7% for Whites, 12% for Indians, 23% for Coloureds, and 40% for black Africans.

In terms of measuring welfare, the employment ratio measures the share of employed people in the working age population. The NDP target was meant to increase from 41.9% in 2010 to 43.8% by 2015 and 46.9% by 2020. It rose to 43.7% in 2015, but unfortunately it fell to 42.5% in 2019. Moreover, the unemployment rate can be a misleading statistic as it is a function of the number of unemployed and the number of people participating in the labour market. The increase in the unemployment rate during 2017 was partially due to the increase in labour force participation. Measuring the number of the working-age population, who are employed, is a more sound indicator of welfare. The NDP suggests that the employment ratio increases from 41.3% in 2010 to 61% by 2030. The 2030 target is adjusted to 52.4% as the working age population is increasing faster than expected. Appropriate interim targets for 2020 and 2025 are about 47.3% and 49.8%, respectively (NPC, 2020).

In line with the NDP 2030 vision to create employment for all, one can ask if this is a reasonable vision. The NDP's job creation target for 2010 to 2015 was almost achieved, however considerable ground has been lost since then. A sustainable, employment-generating growth path is required to solve this challenge (NPC, 2020:19).

Corbridge and Goulet (cited by Matshazi, 2017:44) contend that policymakers, researchers, and governments, especially in developing countries, should assess whether the current economic growth model is sustainable to overcome the countries' current challenges along with a joint effort to alleviate human poverty and unemployment.

2.2.2 Social concerns, background, context, and challenges

Social sustainability is reflected in societies' ability to constantly achieve good social well-being (Circular Ecology, n.d.). South Africa's slowing economy, high youth unemployment rates, inadequate housing, and high crime rates are some of the socio-economic development challenges the country faces. The business community has been affected during the countries' process of transition to provide an equal, equitable, and just society for its previously disadvantaged people. The current socio-economic situation indicates an unsustainable business environment. For SD, social justice and socio-economic development are central where all

stakeholders take part, particularly the business community, in building a just, healthy, and robust environment (Anwana, 2020:1).

Swart (2013:1) recognises that service delivery represents a new focus area for practical theological scholarship in South Africa and is particularly interested in the field of Christian diaconia. He draws attention to the country's desperately poor black communities' anger currently (similar to the apartheid period), protesting more violently and fierce against their living conditions due to insufficient or complete lack of service delivery from their local municipalities. Peter Alexander's (as cited by Swart, 2013:4) view of South Africa's social unrest due to poor service delivery anticipates that it will be difficult for the ANC government to rectify it and deliver the needed aids, service, and capacity to manage inequality and have a favourable social shift, concluding that "the waves of protest reflect disappointment with the fruits of democracy" which could lead "into the development of a revolutionary movement". Smith (2005:93) refers to the following statement once made by Martin Luther King: "[W]hen people are voiceless, they will have temper tantrums like a little child who has not been paid attention to. And riots are massive temper tantrums from a neglected and voiceless people".

Jared Sacks (cited by Swart, 2013:4), a social justice activist, noted that residents of the informal settlement in Cape Town, Sweet Home in Philippi, protested due to what Sacks described as their 'relative deprivation'. Their living areas were dirty, unattractive, and unhygienic due to no garbage removals, broken and unsanitary toilets, limited electricity supply, open-air sewage canals leading to unsafe areas for children including affecting the health of residents, and the ward councillor not being available to meet with residents to discuss these matters.

It is perceived by local communities that the actions of the elite, the representative bodies, and the leaders (corporate and government) view the responsibility to deliver these services to the needy 'as a burden'. These corporate and state elite attacks on the poor incite the anger of the people, due to the elite driving the people deeper and deeper into poverty, and then blaming the poor for their poverty (Hattingh, 2009; cf. Von Holdt 2011:20-22).

July 2021 saw stores and vehicles being looted and parts of KwaZulu-Natal and Johannesburg set ablaze. On 11 July 2021, in his address to the nation, President Cyril Ramaphosa extended the COVID-19 Level 4 lockdown regulations and allocated a section of his speech to criticising the 'increasingly violent protest...based on ethnic mobilisation'; however, offering no plan, he left it to 'God...to bless South Africa and protect her people' (Simpson, 2021:490).

Simpson (2021:493-494) explains that the protests' effects on the economy and socially during July 2021 was calculated by the South African Property Owners Association and found that 161

malls, 11 warehouses, and 8 factories were extensively damaged, while 3 000 stores had been looted, at a cost to GDP of at least R50 billion. On the 23 July 2021 the government estimated that these disturbances killed at least 330 people – 79 in Gauteng and 251 in KwaZulu-Natal. Ordinary citizens initiated and worked together, from operating tills and fuel pumps to bartering and sharing commodities, and online groups organised volunteers who cleaned up the shopping malls and rebuilt what was damaged.

Social unrest in South Africa is becoming more frequent. What is going on? What is the cause(s) of these unrests? The question posed during this study is whether the triple challenges (unemployment, inequality, and poverty) are caused or results from the current SD framework from a corporate agenda point of view (TBL), affecting our overall economics, societies, and environment.

According to the Sustainable Development Report 2019 (StatsSA, 2019:51, 95), although the increase of social grants relieved poverty, access to basic services in South Africa are at a decline. Progress was made in terms of the SDG combatting Zero Hunger (SDG 2); however, it was reported that the number of South Africans who experience food insecurity remain high. In terms of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being, it was reported that there is a decline in HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) and tuberculosis cases but an increase in the harmful use of alcohol. Access to schooling increased, although the level and quality of learning remains a challenge in much of South Africa's school system.

Due to the immense challenges and complexity of achieving SD outcomes, the contemporary social development paradigm in South Africa shifted in favour of a more pluralistic approach entailing the pooling together of the resources of the state, market, and civil society in addressing the country's development realities. Businesses are seen as social partners and social change agents in promoting integrated social and economic development and environmental sustainability. The concept and practice of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has the potential to contribute significantly to SD in South Africa (Mushonga 2012:1).

In his dissertation, Mushonga (2012:5) highlights that post-apartheid South Africa is hindered by increased levels of poverty and inequality, which is further aggravated by the prevalence of HIV and AIDS. Mushonga (2012) refers to an article where Selwyn Jehoma, the Deputy Director-General of Social Development estimated in 2010 that 50% of the population (approximately 24 million people) could be considered poor and living in abject poverty (Ross, 2010). The gap between the rich and the poor is seen as the largest in the world, confirming our inequality by the Gini co-efficient in South Africa rising from 0.57 in 2000 to 0.67 in 2010 (World Bank, 2010). Increasingly, the government is constrained in meeting its socio-economic development goals

and obligations due to the government's bureaucratic processes as well as issues relating to governance and accountability, more specifically the lack of management capacity by bureaucrats and generally their corrupt tendencies leading to the widespread sporadic service delivery protests across different communities in South Africa, which has become a common feature in print and media and is mainly targeted at local government level. These protests have been fuelled by the demand for basic services ranging from sanitation, to bulk infrastructure provision such as water, electricity, roads, and housing and socio-economic deprivation.

2.2.3 Environmental concerns, background, context, and challenges

Environmental sustainability refers to living within the limits of our natural resources (Circular Ecology, n.d.). Ngobese and Cock (cited by Mushonga, 2012:8) state that industrialisation and land use pre-1994 South Africa had serious implications for the environment, affecting mostly and felt more by the poor. Controversial and irresponsible corporate behaviour caused massive amounts of solid waste with little responsibility to workers and their immediate communities, especially in the mining sector.

Challenges relating to poverty and underdevelopment in both developed and the developing world are known by politicians, academics, and aid agencies; however, they are conscious of the fact and believe that these challenges might be caused by the people living in these conditions. Matshazi (quoting Timberlake, 1985:224), explains:

Environmental bankruptcy has not been caused by the stupid African peasant, as so many of these governments and aid agencies and their experts like to think. On the contrary, it is the African peasant who best understands how and why he or she has been forced to damage the environment on which they depend, and it is he or she who is the key to rebuilding their continent.

Cole (2017:350) who tracked and measured inclusive SD progress in South Africa found that at a national level, six out of nine measured environmental dimensions – climate change, freshwater use, arable land use, phosphorus loading, marine harvesting, and biodiversity loss – exceeded the safe boundaries. When reviewing a range of basic services, public goods, livelihoods and living standards in South Africa, the national barometer indicated a deprivation. It was discovered that on provincial level these barometers indicated that national reporting can conceal important heterogeneity in both environmental and social status. He quotes expert interviewees in South Africa:

- "South Africa is so unequal that the national level is not very useful. Spatial referencing is very important if you want it to be useful".

- "It is critical to go to the local level and look at the complexities".

2.2.4 South Africa's triple challenges (poverty, inequality, and unemployment) and the impact on business leaders working towards sustainable development goals

To be sustainable we need to review our triple challenges to achieve sustainability from a corporate and governmental perspective. These are poverty, inequality, and unemployment as our highest currently.

2.2.4.1 Poverty

Without discussing this in detail, StatsSA (2019:1) refers to different proposals used by theorists and researchers to measure an individual's living standard. The most frequently employed by StatsSA is the *objective measurement*⁴ of poverty which uses poverty lines. *Poverty lines* refer to people who live below a fixed minimum monetary amount, classified as poor according to government standards. StatsSA (2019:1) refers to arguments raised by Wang *et al.* (2020) that individuals are capable and the best judges to assess their own welfare status.

*Subjective poverty*⁵ (StatsSA, 2019:2) indicators give a comprehensive picture of poverty in a country, showing a household's living conditions, not reflective in their income and expenditure profile. Three subjective indicators are used by StatsSA to determine subjective poverty, welfare, and well-being.

- According to Posel and Rogan (cited by StatsSA, 2019:1) the Self-Perceived Wealth Question (SPWQ) allows insight into a range of household welfare components, e.g. access to housing and basic services.
- The second subjective indicator used mainly the minimum income question (MIQ) and measures subjective welfare in developing and developed countries in terms of what respondents view as their minimum household earnings.
- The third and final subjective poverty indicator is the income evaluation question (IEQ) based on two opinions; firstly, that the individual can assess their income levels and ability to use verbal qualifiers like "good", "bad", and "sufficient". Secondly, the verbal qualifiers can be converted into a numerical bounded scale used to evaluate income levels.

⁴ Researcher highlights measures of poverty by italics. Original text not italics.

⁵ Researcher highlights measures of poverty by italics. Original text not italics.

Key findings in terms of poverty incidence of households by subjective poverty indicators reported by StatsSA (2019:7) are:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| ○ Self-perceived wealth question (SPWQ) | 26.3% poverty incidence |
| ○ Minimum income question (MIQ) | 57.0% poverty incidence |
| ○ Income evaluation question (IEQ) | 46.7% poverty incidence |

The above indicators show the extent of poverty as a result of the three subjective poverty measures. Furthermore, 26.3% of households perceive themselves as poor, 46.7% of households are placed as living in poverty, and 57.0% of households are classified as poor. It seems that poverty levels rise when there is a perception that one is unable to earn enough income to survive.

The World Bank (2018:xi) reported in *Overcoming Poverty and Inequality in South Africa* that the economy is currently not generating sufficient jobs. Employers seek skilled workers where we have youth and unskilled workers struggling to find employment. This results in increased poverty rates and contributes towards the reality of South Africa's socio-economic challenges which are deep, structural, and long-term. For more than two decades, fiscal policy was used to support redistributive measures, along with a wide range of initiatives implemented by South Africa to address poverty and inequality. Almost half of the population of South Africa is classified as chronically poor living off ZAR 992 per person per month during 2015 prices. The country has a high cluster of low-income earners vs a few very high-income earners (poor vs rich or elite) with a small middle class leading to a high level of income polarisation. Despite progress made in terms of reducing poverty, high inequality contributes towards rising poverty levels and, evident among black South Africans, female-headed households, and children younger than 15. Geography marks poverty as it has a spatial dimension in the country demonstrating the legacy of apartheid among districts and municipalities. Social protection, assistance, and transfers are important when attempting to reduce poverty and inequality amid the extremely poor. Social grants contributed towards reducing poverty during the latter part of 2000 but is fiscally unsustainable. Educational outcomes are found to be uneven across consumption expenditure groups favouring the rich households as well as access to health and assets. Food insecurity and child nutrition contributes further to rising poverty and inequality. To reduce poverty and inequality labour markets need to promote inclusive growth through skills creation, unlocking full potential for everyone.

2.2.4.2 Unemployment

According to Trading Economics (2021a), South Africa's population was reported at 59.89 million in December 2022. The employment status and the labour participation rate are areas to review

when reviewing the welfare of the society. The not in employment, education, and training (NEET) rates refer to young people discouraged with the labour market absorption and participation, who see no value in building their skills base. According to StatsSA (2021:14), during the third quarter of 2021 there was an increase from the third quarter of 2020, of 3.0 percentage points from 43.0% to 46,0% (out of 20,5 million) of young persons between 15-34 years old who were not employed or not in education or training (NEET). NEET rates dropped to 44% in the third quarter of 2022 (StatsSA, 2022). Trading Economics (2022b) reported that the Youth Unemployment Rate was 59.6% during September 2022 compared to the previous period when it was 61.4%.

The labour force participation rate is the number of unemployed persons actively looking for a job and the employed, divided by the total working-age population reported during September 2022 is 58.3% compared to 55.2% during 2020; and 15.76 million people employed during September 2022 compared to 14.2 million people in 2020 (Trading Economics, 2022a).

StatsSA (2021:12) defines unemployment using the official definition and the expanded definition of unemployment.

Unemployed persons as per the **official definition** are people aged 15–64 years, who were unemployed in the reference week, available for work, actively searching for employment or to start a business (four weeks prior to the survey), including people who have a future job or business opportunity although not actively seeking employment.

Unemployed persons as per the **expanded definition** are people aged 15–64 years, who were unemployed during the reference week, not actively seeing employment opportunities due to being discouraged or any other reason.

The unemployment rate reported for 2020 was 28.7% and increased to 32.9% during the third quarter of 2022. Key labour market indicators (StatsSA, 2022):

Table 2-2: Key labour market indicators

	Jul – Sept 2021	Apr – June 2022	Jul – Sept 2022
Population 15 – 64 years (Thousands)	39 745	40 177	40 322
Labour Force	21 925	23 556	23 491
Employed	14 282	15 562	15 765
Unemployed	7 643	7 994	7 725
Not economically active	17 820	16 621	16 831
Discouraged work-seekers	3 862	3 568	3 514
Other (not economically active)	13 958	13 053	13 317

Rates (%)			
Unemployment rate	34.9%	33.9%	32.9%
Employed/population ratio (absorption)	35.9%	38.7%	39.1%
Labour force participation rate	55.3%	58.6%	58.3%

The educational level compared to the amount of the unemployed level during Q3: 2022 (StatsSA, 2022) are:

- 51.5% unemployed with a less than matric qualification
- 38.2% unemployed with a matric qualification
- 6.9% unemployed with other tertiary education
- 2.7% unemployed graduates, and
- 0.7% unemployed with other qualifications.

When reviewing the labour market measures, we see that the labour force participation rate may be affected by the absorption rate, and that the younger age groups and African/black population is at the lowest end of being absorbed into the labour market.

The population of the working age gives us details about whether a certain age group faces more or less challenges. The working age population defined by StatsSA (2022) comprises all persons aged 15 – 64 years. Discouraged work-seekers rose from 2.6 million in 2020 to 3.8 million in 2021 and decreased to 3.5 million during 2022. Although the labour force participation rate increased from 55.2% (Q3:2021) to 58.3% (Q3: 2022), the absorption rate increased from 35.9% (Q3:2021) to 39.1% (Q3:2022).

Table 2-3: Labour force characteristics by age group, race and sex – all population groups

	Tot 15-64y July – Sept 2022 Thousands	Tot 15-24y July – Sept 2022 Thousands	Tot 25-34y July – Sept 2022 Thousands	Tot 35-44y July – Sept 2022 Thousands	Tot 45-54y July – Sept 2022 Thousands	Tot 55-64y July – Sept 2022 Thousands
Both Sexes						
Population	40 322	10 227	10 478	8 823	6 542	4 253
Labour Force	23 491	2 637	7 459	6 901	4 809	1 684
Employed	15 765	1 065	4 440	4 974	3 825	1 462

Unemployed	7 725	1 572	3 019	1 928	985	222
Total not economically active⁶	16 831	7 590	3 019	1 922	1 732	2 568
Discouraged work-seekers	3 524					
Other (not economically active)	13 317					
Unemployment rate	32.9%	59.6%	40.5%	27.9%	20.5%	13.2%
Employed/population ratio(absorption)	39.1%	10.4%	42.4%	56.4%	58.5%	34.4%
Labour force participation rate	58.3%	25.8%	71.2%	78.2%	73.5%	39.6%

From reviewing the data presented by StatsSA, the following conclusions can be made:

- From a population of 60 million and a workforce participation of 40 million, only 15.7 million are employed, 7.7 million unemployed, and 16.8 million are economically not active.
- Although the black/African population's labour force participation rate is at 68.9% during 2022, their unemployment rate is the highest at 47.6%.
- The 25–34 year age bracket labour force participation rate is 85.3%, with an unemployment rate of 50.3% – the highest of all the age brackets.
- Elementary occupations are occupied by 3.67 million people in South Africa and is the highest filled occupation.

2.2.4.3 Inequality

The World Bank (2018:xi) reported that South Africa is amongst the most unequal countries in the world. Consumption expenditure figures indicated an increase in inequality after apartheid in 1994. The country's Gini coefficient was 0.63 in 2015, implying that consumption growth was not

⁶ Not economically active: Persons aged 15–64 years who are neither employed nor unemployed in the reference week.

inclusive and wealth inequality remains high and keeps rising. The richer households are ten times wealthier than the poor households. The labour market shows a clear divide between a small group of highly paid jobs in the larger formal sector compared to the informal sector with the majority of jobs and lesser pay. High pay gaps remain between unskilled, semi-skilled, and high-skilled workers. The influence of race, education level of parents and their occupation, place of birth, and gender influence the inequality of opportunity. Labour market incomes and education drive inequality along with gender and race in South Africa.

Low or no economic growth, decreasing standards of living (SoLs), and quality of life (QoL), are negative outcomes on society due to high levels of wealth inequality (Fortuin *et al.*, 2022).

2.3 Stakeholder Accountability

The 17 SDGs practically show the way to our obligations for future-oriented development. They contain a canon of values largely influenced by religious communities. Caring for the poor, health, education, good governance, justice, peace, and protection of creation are genuinely Christian impulses in the worldwide church (Felmberg, 2020:121).

Unfortunately, since the implementation of the NDP, South Africa has experienced a growth in unemployment, deep-rooted corruption, and an overloaded educational and health system with little progress due to the apartheid legacy problems (Sibanyoni, 2021). Dr Pali Lehohla, South Africa's former Statistician-General, reported that the NPC, an agency tasked with the strategic planning of the NDP, failed as the NDP remained on the shelf, forgotten, and never implemented. Miriam Altman, an economist, and commissioner from the NDP reported that corruption was one of the reasons for failure to reach the NDP's targets and,

our problem was that we had ten years, at least, of State Capture that undermined capacity right across government. One of the critical messages that we are trying to get across is that the state sets the drumbeat for many things. The private sector can work around a state that's not functioning well, but you won't make those big leaps on a development path without a reasonably functioning state (Sibanyoni, 2021).

The responsibility of the SDGs and NDP cannot solely rest on the government, but should be extended to all stakeholders (government, business, civil society, the church, and individuals). Agang (2020:8-9) reminds us that we have been persuaded to believe that Africa's biggest troubles are rooted in corruption and impunity. True to an extent but the world is not corruption free, what is fundamentally wrong with Africa? Aptly put, a Tanzanian proverb reads: "Make some money, but don't let money make you". This is the African problem where the people of South African are letting money make them.

[T]he reason they succumb to the lure of money is fear, which is devastating to social, economic, intellectual, moral and ethical standards. People define themselves by their possessions and their status, and fear anything that threatens these. They lack compassion for the suffering because they see them as a threat to their own security. Leaders fear anyone and anything that may reduce their power, and so they cannot share power with anyone but must instead maintain power over people, by whatever means necessary. Africans have become slaves to fear (Agang, 2020:9).

Politicians play on African people's fears by using religion, ethnicity, and regionality to deceive their fellow men and women. Conflict between people increases fear and, at the back of it all, the elite drain public funds to private accounts. Unemployment, poverty, and conflict is the fruit of the unpatriotic activities of African leaders, yet the people are scared to change because they at least are familiar with this; they fear change. The greatest weapon against this fear is truth. Public theology needs to give African leaders biblical standards to follow and be held accountable to in order to set Africa free (Agang, 2020:10-11).

At the individual level (whether leader or led), where we live and work, we must work in community to glorify God.

2.4 Summary

All stakeholders in South Africa, leaders and the led, of public, private, academia and civil society, need to rethink the current economic-, socio-, environmental- and TBL models as they have contributed towards the challenges we are currently facing, namely: poverty, low incomes, inequality, unemployment, and access to public services, to mention only a few. Excluding the voice of one or a minority of stakeholders during economic, socio- and environmental discourses, policy- and decision-making (whether government, business, or the society) will lead to a misunderstanding of *what is going on* in the attempt to understand *what ought to be going on* and *how to respond* to the challenges we face. Is the church a stakeholder?

Inequality, corruption, and poverty are some of the issues characterised by the post-colonial era that create scepticism in Africa. Although the constitution speaks about democracy, the democratic values which led to the end of the colonial era, it seems that Africa turned its back on democracy, protecting human rights, equality, and participation. Christians need more than biblical theology and -ethics to contribute to civil society and fight corruption. Knowing civil society and what democracy means is crucial in order to become informed participants in the democratic processes (Chiroma, 2020:67).

Various philosophical problems can relate to ethical decision-making based on the theory of divine commands. When using commands selectively without the need for proper interpretations of biblical injunctions and an awareness of the different and changing historical situations it can be dangerous. The emphasis should be on doing God's will which help Christians to engage in earthkeeping. The problem is not that we do not know God's will but that we are unable to do God's will. A problem not of cognition but volition, not of knowing but of willing. We must move away from the notion that as stewards we have domination over the earth but understand our role to have dominion not domination. A theology of stewardship is proposed as an alternative in such domination (Conradie, 2011:81).

Christian stewardship from a public practical theological stance aims to assist the public to see "what theology looks like" in business and links it to the challenges we are facing concerning the SDGs. Christian business leaders are called to be more than just good stewards for business; they are also called to be good stewards for God, thereby leading to reduced depletion of environmental resources, justice and righteousness within civil society, and individuals contributing positively towards the national development, profits, and the environment. The focus of business should not be to merely report on profits but to include aspects concerning their human capital and environmental impact within their TBL measures for sustainability.

Employment for all, elimination of poverty, and great equity are the fundamental goals of the NDP where the country cannot afford to achieve anything but these three top goals. Different intervention strategies are required as the country cannot wait for a trickle-down economics that might uplift the country. Trickle-down economic theory postulates that the welfare of the wealthy will benefit everyone in the economy, e.g., assuming that business owners, savers, and investors will drive the growth of the economy by enlarging businesses which will trickle down to the working class creating employment; in turn, they will drive the demand of the economic growth when spending their incomes.

We have gained perspective, next is to understand the causes of South Africa's triple challenges towards SD. This will be the focus of Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3 – THE CAUSES OF SOUTH AFRICA’S TRIPLE CHALLENGES THAT ARE IMPACTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 presents a literature study of the causes of South Africa’s triple challenges with regard to SD. The objective is to identify some of the reasons for the present situation, mindful of the triple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment in South Africa.

Osmer (2008:82) advises that to correctly interpret circumstances one needs to be thoughtful, interpret various relevant theories, and have or obtain wise judgement by recognising the applicable particulars of a specific situation, discernment of the moral ends concerned, and deciding on fruitful and practical ways to reach these ends. Chapter 3 aims to pay careful attention to interpreting and obtaining wise judgement around the current struggles and challenges South Africa is facing at present, namely the triple challenge: poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to the field of development from a public practical theological stance. Following Osmer’s recommendation, this chapter aims to assess the strengths of different development theories by actively listening to the various theological insights and why some congregational leaders support it (Osmer, 2008:128). These theological insights will be compared with general governance and management theories to find a possible solution.

Chapter 2 highlighted the triple challenges in South Africa – poverty, inequality, and unemployment – and it is evident that the Black population is represented as the majority affected by these challenges. All three challenges directly affect the sustainability of our nation, our economics, our politics, our societies, our environment, our churches, our schools, and our citizens. Aiming for sustainability (economic-, socio-, and environmental policies) requires us to understand our history and our struggles relating to economic-, socio-, and environmental issues to equip us to shape the future we want. SD should not only focus on wealth creation. History can give us insights into the unequal distribution of wealth which became a major factor in discussions relating to development and sustainability where the gap between the rich and poor keeps on widening (Du Pisani, 2006:85).

Our current practice of stewardship is not giving us the wisdom we need to contribute to a new life that the world anticipates from us. The concept of stewardship is a drastically reduced version of the true biblical concept thereof. It has been viewed that stewardship signifies a way of thinking (and one of rationalising) about the acquisition and management of ecclesiastical monies and properties so that the church can get on with its “real” work, the church’s mission, where the word

stewardship conjures negative feelings and left a distasteful connotation for church folk, including clergy (Hall, 1990:13).

3.2 History: Learning from the Past, to Understand the Present (to Plan for the Future)

Swidler (2004:329) concludes that history must participate in the discourses about sustainability, that a resurrection of the discussion of the theory of historians is more beneficial and has concrete consequences for the history we end up writing compared to the unexamined reliance on positivism. The positivism philosophy is the view that one can only trust information when it is factual and observed, thus limited to data collection and interpretation objectively, distancing oneself from personal values during the study (business research methodology). The analysis of the course of history is because of the struggles of people rather than as a result of institutional workings, and a result of spurious concepts like the economy or the market (arguing that the economy or the market are the cause of political struggles). Struggles should be put at the centre.

3.2.1 The Christian stewardship concept

Hall (1990:52-55), although not attempting a historical survey into the course of stewardship, dedicates a chapter to the historical treatment of stewardship. In short, he explains that Christianity underwent many changes during the first centuries, including stewardship. The direction of Christianity was affected due to the movement of Christianity away from its Hebraic matrix into the Hellenistic world, and then the adoption of the Christian religion by Constantine as the official religion of the Roman Empire. This adaptation of Christianity to the social conditions of the Hellenistic world meant certain changes in the basic tenets or beliefs. For example, the common language of that time was Greek, and there was no specific word in Greek that could describe what Jesus, Paul, and other Jewish people meant by the term “sin”. In the Hebraic tradition, sin at its fundamental level means the radical breaking of a relationship – disobedience, rebellion against God, confrontation, and alienation. The Greek word used for “sin” was *hamartia*, which is not relational but refers to personal lack or failure, “missing the mark”. This notion gave way to thinking of sin as both moralistic and legalistic, sins are wrong thoughts, words, and deeds that detract from one’s potential for moral perfection, which is very different from the Hebraic sense of sin as the abrogation of a relationship and the estrangement that comes with it. In the Jewish sense, human unrighteousness and sin introduce “dividing walls of hostility” between a person and God, creation, and their neighbour, alienated from others. For “the other” includes sin against non-human beings, as well as against one’s kind.

From an anthropological view, regarding the science of humanity (Britannica, n.d.), the Hellenistic culture ultimately saw the material world and human body as inferior, the locus of temptation, evil,

and danger, and therefore, unreal. The reality was to transcend matter to be spiritual; thus, to get real, one has to detach oneself from one's physicalness and its associated passions, which might allow you to rise to the realm of spirit. Lifting oneself out of the bondage of flesh into the realm of spirit. This is in contrast to the Hebraic faith, or theological anthropology concerned with human beings and their relationship with God (Encyclopedia.com, n.d.), which was very earthly. The Jews saw God as the creator of the material universe and all creatures; God is depicted personally fashioning the human body, blowing breath into its mouth; and the material world, the body, and all its functions are good. Evil was not seen as matter per se but is regarded as evil and a product of the spirit. Matter is the pawn and victim of a distorted human spirit, not the other way around. With this background knowledge, Hall (1990:59) argues that this left the Christian movement to be a highly spiritualised version of the biblical metaphor, discouraging the development of the stewardship theme as a way of thinking about human existence in its totality. "It atrophied before it had a chance to prove itself". Stewardship was limited to the spiritual side and the worldly meaning thereof remains dormant. For example, a phrase like Paul's that as servants we are "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1), readily fits with the mindset of the Gnostic and other Christian spiritualisers, and not only fails to suggest our stewarding concerning the creation but confirming such persons in their belief that the gospel is a secret code through which to overcome and escape this lost and inferior space.

3.2.2 The concept of development

After World War II, an economic boom renewed optimism about rising living standards worldwide forcing people to change their beliefs and attitudes about growth, and development, and the effects of the environmental crises started looming. Mainstream economists assumed that scarcity would be eliminated by new technologies in the future (Du Pisani, 2006:86).

The notion of development received more attention during the 20th century and Peet (cited by Du Pisani, 2006:88) defined "development" as,

an evolutionary process in which the human capacity increased in terms of initiating new structures, coping with problems, adapting to continuous change, and striving purposefully and creatively to attain new goals.

Development was and is important to maintain high international economic growth rates which are only possible when wealth is equally distributed globally decreasing the gap between the developed and developing countries. Developing countries surfaced as dominant theories of development during the 1950s where the modernisation and dependency theories aimed to offer solutions to this predicament. The modernisation theories, based on liberal values, argue that the developing countries should adopt the Western model by modernising their societies; adopting

features of the economically advanced countries, including the West's mental models (rationalisation), the institution of the West (the market), the goals of the West (high mass consumption), as well as the culture of the West (worship of commodity); and making positive progress through free enterprise. Opposite to the modernisation theory is the dependency theory. The latter, based on the Marxist analysis, focuses on the economic domination of the international capitalist systems which lead to the widened gap between rich and poor, and it proposes an opposite solution, to part with Western capitalist countries and follow an independent one, an autonomous path of development based on the same principles of socialism. Economic growth was not the solution for global inequalities, which highlighted the need for a revision to a new view of development, where SD was a trade-off between growth and conservation, positively minded towards growth and modernisation, and it became clear that anthropocentric views (humankind as the most important component of existence, especially as opposed to God or animals) were stronger than ecocentric views (focused on the environment, not just humans), but that environmental concerns became part of the development discourses (Du Pisani, 2006:88, 91, 94).

History affects the future and how we act. Economics, politics, and the environment are connected, and not independent from each other. Economics and politics must be considered to understand environmentally unsound decisions. The premise of Swidler's (2004:iv) dissertation is that agricultural sustainability is an issue that environmental history is uniquely situated to analyse. She notes that the economic territory is defined and created by the political and social context of the country and that financial considerations can be overridden by decisions based on race, nation, gender, or workplace controls.

Although researching the long-term viability of modern agriculture, Swidler (2004:9) reminds us how mad cow disease shook Europe's livestock industry, and the incredible pollution from the so-called swine and poultry factory farming contaminated state-wide water supplies in the US. Romantic agrarian visions and the questions and fears about pesticides, bovine growth hormone, and genetically engineered crops have turned organic farming into a boom phenomenon. These issues or struggles are described as products of a long and complex history of national and international politics, markets, family structures, labour relations, etc., and argue that the discipline of history should be both a prominent analyst of modern farming and a significant contributor to the debates of just what agricultural practices have been, are, or can be sustainable.

History should in the same way be both a prominent predictor of the current condition and cause(s) of the triple challenges (poverty, inequality, and unemployment) we face as a country and be a significant contributor to the debates of which practices have been, are, or can be sustainable in terms of the economy, society, and the environment.

3.2.3 The South African context

To understand South Africa's context, it's crucial to participate in the historical narrative known as the 'new' South Africa or 'rainbow nation' (Brunsdon, 2019:2). Archbishop Desmond Tutu coined the term 'rainbow nation' to describe the nation after the first democratic election in 1994 (Buqa, 2015:1), expressing the collective identity of the four different ethnic groups merging as one nation. The late president, Nelson Mandela, endorsed the concept during his inaugural speech on 10 May 1994, although received by South Africans with different ethnicities with mixed affinity.

According to Paas (2016:305,306), the Khoikhoi and San are the oldest people of South Africa, although the Bantu also claim ancient rights. The presence of the Sotho-Tswana can be traced back to before the 1400s, as well as another Bantu sub-group, the Nguni-speaking people, and Xhosas. South Africa during the 17th century was influenced by the colonial efforts of Europe, first the Dutch settlers and then somewhat later by the English settlers. During the 19th century, the Bantu groups developed Zulu kingdoms under kings such as Shaka, Dingane, and Mpande. Their wars created a Mfecane, which contributed to the acceptance and spread of Christianity. Islam was introduced into South Africa due to the demand for low-cost labour. The Dutch needed low-cost farm labourers and imported slaves from Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia (Malaysia and Indonesia). During the 19th century, the British settler-farmers established great sugar plantations in Natal, and despite slavery being abolished, they recruited inexpensive labour from India.

The English settlers presented a specific imperialistic agenda (forcibly applied via military action and legislation before and during periods of British rule). A Eurocentric attitude (ethnocentrism suggests antagonistic opinions about African aboriginal stereotypes supported by Europeans concerning non-Europeans) gave South Africa its colonial essence along with an adverse marriage between European views concerning "civilisation" and "Christianity". This was morally justified, and Western dominance became deeply engrained traits of colonialism in South Africa, shaping the class system where the dominated class was white and the lowest class black. The "Afrikaner" was the new nation, although descendants of the original settlers, where a spirit of ethnocentrism was carried with them and led to the social engineering project of apartheid, which became the ideological trademark of the 'old' South Africa, cementing colonial natures in the land. History leading to the 1994 elections will be discussed under the history of South Africa's social conditions (Brunsdon, 2019:3).

3.2.4 South Africa's economic conditions

Producing enough goods, producing enough of the right goods, and, fairly distributing the goods to everyone are the three economic problems to be solved by society (Fourie, 2021:46). Firstly,

societies, in the distant past, solved these problems by reacting to them in one of three ways or using a combination of the three approaches. The first was through the *custom approach* where customs and traditions passed on from the previous generations and elders were followed. The custom approach led to little progress as individuals never challenged the traditions or customs. The second is the *command approach*, for example, the pharaohs of Egypt commanded the people to build the pyramids. The command approach has a great advantage as it forces economic change, however it removes personal freedom. Thirdly, the *market approach* is where all stakeholders do as they please, with no customs or commands that dictate. The consumers in a market approach society guide the production and distribution processes as well as the movement of prices. The market approach requires that the fibres of the society be strong to succeed. It can only succeed where there is trust. These three approaches should not be seen as absolutes but rather as the corners of a triangle where some societies are more in the custom corner, with little command or market activity. Some are more in the market approach with a little command approach; however, the market approach is seen as the preferred solution and is also the focus point in the study of economics due to its success in solving the three economic problems (producing enough goods, producing enough of the right goods, and distributing the goods fairly to everyone).

The market approach can be closely associated with the capitalist system where the market approach focusses on the trade of wealth (goods and services) compared to capitalism which focusses on the creation of wealth, capital ownership, and elements of production.

South Africa's capitalism is not older than a century. During 1868, gold and diamonds were discovered in Kimberley and the Rand, making South Africa a big exporter of precious minerals. South Africa participated fully in an imperial rivalry, with Cecil Rhodes entertaining plans for British dominance of the African continent; investing heavily in South African infrastructure; financing subsidies to white commercial agriculture, and later, manufacturers, encouraging Christian-educated African progressive farmers. Sadly, it changed, promoting low-cost labour policies for the mines. From the onset, mining and racial exclusion was a main role in South African capitalism (Hart & Padayachee, 2013:63).

Parsons and Parry (2018:17) describe that capitalism emerged in different settings as a system of governance of economic affairs which continually evolves over time. They outline capitalism as a system where capital assets or property are mostly controlled by private persons within a political, social, and economic system. Capitalism differs from feudalism as capitalism is distinguished by purchasing labour for money wages, compared to feudalism where direct labour through customs, duty, or demand is obtained. Under capitalism, the price mechanism is used to

allocate resources between users, and the degree of competition and level of government intervention distinguish the exact forces of 'capitalism'.

According to Simpson (2021:355), in 1994 during Mandela's inaugural address, he proclaimed, by entering into a covenant where all South Africans will walk tall, without fear, and build a society signified by "human dignity, a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world. Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world. The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement! Let freedom reign. God bless Africa!" (Simpson, 2021:355).

During the next five years, from 1994 to 1999, the ANC, led by Mandela, would manage democracy-building through the Government of National Unity, through a process of transformation and reconciliation where the new would be built out of the old (Nelson Mandela Foundation, n.d.).

According to Schumpeter (cited by Parsons & Parry, 2018:18), capitalism and democracy were an unstable mixture where successful businesspeople would conspire to bar the entry of new rivals, government bureaucrats would simply smother enterprise with taxes and regulations, and hostile intellectuals would attack capitalism's natural flaws while losing individual freedom. In South Africa's mixed economy, the capitalist economy under apartheid was complicated, skewed by the government's role and interactions along racial lines. The apartheid economy, resting on capitalism, was an exclusive one, and not an inclusive one.

Parsons and Parry (2018:21) refer to Nicoli Nattrass who said that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) helped to deal with the irregularities of the past, including dialogues regarding business and the apartheid government's organised relationship. All businesses – large, medium, and small – were covered by a blanket of 'collective guilt'. The TRC found that most businesses benefitted from operating within a racially structured environment under the apartheid regime. Some were granted amnesty in return for free disclosures or reconciling with victims, proposing wealth taxes to these businesses, focussing more on a systematic analysis where benefits were gained due to the system instead of focussing on individual perpetrators and the moral culpability for it.

This systemic approach shifted the attention away from the wealthy individuals who, by way of personal contracts, gained financial muscle under the system and instead could have been able to direct change faster if they acted more decisively. During 1986, various reports produced at a top-level conference to evolve an economic strategy with business leaders called by PW Botha assumed that a free enterprise, market-based economy was the best model for South Africa, but

never considered that the exclusion of blacks in the entrepreneurial sector, and their general deprivation, lead them to ideologies that were hostile to the promotion of such a model. Disregarding that black attitudes were likely to heavily lean towards redistribution, not economic growth (Parsons & Parry, 2018:51).

During the mid-1980s, South African business communities realised that politics and economics cannot be separate. The Consultative Business Movement (CBM) explored ways that businessmen could meet with credible black leaders and identify areas of common interest. Originally, there was an attempt to ostensibly prove that the majority of South Africans shared similar values and needs through academic debates; however, black leaders insisted that the time for theoretical and academic debate passed, and the only possible avenue for any constructive progress was direct discussion and consultation with the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) structures (Nel & Greal, 1989). The CBM released a set of guidelines in June 1993 on how private companies should adopt peace-building initiatives and participate in peace structures. Local chambers were deeply involved in this process. During the early 1990s, the South Africa Chamber of Business's (SACOB), with their role as an independent mediator and 'honest broker', and to keep parties talking and to remove obstacles to progress, was often overlooked. Apartheid ended due to a combination of factors, but the business made no excessive claims to take the credit thereof. The records suggest that business did play a heroic role in mounting the barricades at every possible opportunity to oppose apartheid. Businesspeople, who were not of the typical activist "barricade material", but through economic pressure often articulated by businesses, played a part in moving the country towards better socio-economic outcomes (Parsons & Parry, 2018:40-43).

An important element not frequently read about as a positive influencer or contributor is the spiritual nature of human nature. Economics that promises happiness and purpose through increasing personal or collective wealth excludes the importance of the spiritual nature of human nature (Naudé, 2020:99).

Neither the capitalist dream of becoming a wealthy self-made person nor the communist dream of an equal society ruled by the proletariat reflects ultimate realities. The purpose of human life is not to accumulate wealth for its own sake (always shifting the boundaries to "more" consumption) but to love others as God loves us and to use wealth to bless others.

Hendrikse and Hefer-Hendrikse (2017:1, 7) state that in theory, the capitalist system is almost perfect, however, the people who operate the system are not. People are at the end of tax evasion, fraud, embezzlement, profiteering, failure to deliver value for money, fraudulent

accounting, and reporting of earnings. Economic freedom presented by capitalism is a two-edged sword.

Used with integrity, it represents the perfect mechanism to do business and create wealth. Use with dishonesty, it allows corporations and individuals to act fraudulently and negligently and results in greed, business failure, individual bankruptcy, and personal shame. The moral of the facts: a corrupt capitalist system is no better than a corrupt communist or socialist system (Hendrikse and Hefer-Hendrikse (2017:1,7).

A long-term strategic plan, financial disciplines, and controls to support a sustainable business model, with the right assets, capital, and reserves to secure the future success of the business is the role of effective corporate governance (Hendrikse & Hefer-Hendrikse, 2017:7). When risks and difficulties are recognised, the role of corporate governance is not to guard against them but to equip individuals to handle risks with wisdom and integrity in the best interest of the business, communicated to all stakeholders. Numerous corporate failures surfaced in South Africa during the 1990s into the 2000s, e.g., Sechold, Tollgate, Masterbond, IGI Insurance, Cape Investment Bank, Prima Bank, Regal Treasury Private Bank, Unifer (rescued by Absa Limited, the holding company, at R1.8bm) and African Bank in 2014. Many of these corporate collapses were financial institutions subject to external regulations which were supposed to protect the public. Would closer involvement and good corporate governance from directors prevent these collapses? (Wixley & Everingham, 2015:7).

The underlying problem, closely related to this study, is the Christian steward's role, and the integrity of the people. Johnson (as cited by Swart, 2013:9) highlighted how Christians are part of and influenced by the capitalist system – a free-market model of neoliberal thought – instead of being influenced by Christian practices and beliefs to be an agent to grassroots families struggling to make ends meet, and instead of being influenced by the consumer culture and corporate capitalism.

Despite actions such as the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), affirmative action, land restitution, housing projects, The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, which contributed to positive results, it contributed more to the growing wealth of the elite without trickling down to the majority. Moreover, unemployment within the impoverished black communities and a lack of skills and training in agriculture and other industries are still evident (Vorster, 2007:23-24).

Weber (1930:xxx) reminds us of the modern Occident (Western hemisphere) with their dominant place in our culture, a rational, systematic, and specialised personnel trade, where the trained official was the pillar of both the modern state and the economic life of the West. The sustainability

of the system is dependent on the specifically trained technical, commercial, and legal government officials influencing everyday life in society. The same principles were now seen in the forces of capitalism (in the hands of the trained organisation of officials). He further states that capitalism has nothing to do with the impulse to gain more and more money. This impulse exists among all types of people, waiters, doctors, artists, dishonest officials, etc. The spirit of capitalism has nothing to do with unlimited greed for gain.

Interestingly, Weber (1930:23-25) draws our attention to historical (and present-day) practices, not only from greedy businessmen and an organisational culture perspective but also from the attitude and reaction of the individual. He gives the example of the modern employer who wants more production or work outputs from his labourers and implements piece rates. This is especially during high-season or harvesting periods where high profit and heavy loss may depend on the speed at which the labourers harvest. Thus, by increasing the piece rate of 1 mark per acre mowed to 1.25 marks per acre in the hope that the labourer would mow 3 acres and earn 3.75 marks as opposed to the normal 2,5 acres normally mowed and 2.5 marks earned. What happened was that the labourer now only mowed 2 acres and still earned 2.5 marks. Working less was more favourable than the opportunity to earn more. Weber refers to this concept as “traditionalism”, where human nature is not to earn more but to earn enough to sustain the simple life they desire.

3.2.5 South Africa's social conditions

The benchmark of what the desired social condition of a country should be is referred to as “social progress”, and is getting increased attention from leaders in government, business, and civil society. Citizens demand better lives (Social Progress Imperative, 2021); social progress is seen when society's basic human needs are met offering the means to build and sustain their lives, creating opportunities for all individuals to achieve the standards they are capable of.

Profits are not a sin. With sustainable, maintainable, and realisable profits business has the means to contribute to social development. Unfortunately, the free market spirit, although good for society, also left irreversible social, economic, and environmental impacts on their surrounding communities due to unregulated business activities due to the increased corporate power and influence (Hendrikse & Hefer-Hendrikse, 2017:386).

As seen in Chapter 2, the social challenges South Africa faces are poverty and access to basic services (water & sanitation, housing, health, education), which are fuelled by inequality (oppression and injustice) and unemployment – the imbalances of the past – causing social unrest.

During 1976, in South Africa, it was questioned by Johnson (2015:1) how long it would take before the then-ruling white establishment encountered a regime crisis. During the Soweto uprising in 1976, there were many predictions of an imminent revolution, and that the country would sink into a protracted race war. Johnson believed these assumptions were wrong and that the white power was far stronger and better entrenched than many of its opponents realised or were willing to admit. Johnson believed that as with many other colonial situations (referring to Indochina, Algeria, and Kenya), the then metropolitan power (France in Indochina and Algeria, Britain in Kenya) would realise that the status quo could not be sustained, leading to a complete regime change from which a new and different country would emerge. After the oil crisis and gold price rising during 1973, Henry Kissinger, Nixon's key national security adviser, drew up a security assessment of Southern Africa, referred to as the National Security Council document 1969 (NSC 69), which stated:

The whites are here to stay and the only way that constructive change can come about is through them. There is no hope for blacks to gain the political rights they seek through violence, which will only lead to chaos and increased opportunities for the communists. Kissinger advised President Nixon that although he should 'maintain public opposition to racial oppression' he should also 'relax political isolation and economic restrictions on the white states' (Johnson, 2015:6).

Johnson's (2015:11) communist mentor Arenstein, pointed out that the ruling National Party regime was extremely conservative and reactionary, but not fascist, which meant that incremental, reformist change was possible. In the end, reformist (supporting or advancing gradual reform rather than abolition or revolution) change was what triumphed.

Continual internal unrest led to the Rubicon Crisis of 1985 when President Botha promised major reforms yet did not deliver. The Rubicon Crisis brought apartheid down. Botha's successor and Nelson Mandela's predecessor, President F.W. de Klerk, gave his famous speech on 2 February 1990 when he abandoned apartheid and welcomed the ANC and other exiles back to negotiate a democratic settlement. This action was cleared in advance by F.W. de Klerk with both the British and Americans. Johnson (2015:13) writes that there was no revolution in South Africa because the black population never wanted to destroy white South Africans, they merely wanted to be incorporated into the economic game based on equality, enjoying access to a democratic political system and good life they observed the whites lived.

White supremacists are wrong that 'Africans can't govern'. Long-term oppression suffered by the black Africans was wrong. In the 1950s, the African nationalist leaders were seduced by the communists, leading to 30 years in jail with exiled bitterness, resulting in the early 1990s as a badly wounded black persona, full of complexes and grievances, working itself out in pretentious

style since then. It was the same for the Afrikaners after the Anglo-Boer War, who hoped for a future, a new government where governance and South Africa's sociological realities take a hand, and consolidate liberal democracy (Johnson, 2015:239-246).

In her quest for justice, Johnson draws our attention to the effects of class in an age of Superpower. Wolin refers to Empire and describes it as where the existing system is recreated to benefit a wealthy ruling class, that is well-connected, including business and forgetting about the poor and the oppression of certain classes by others. Class operation can operate in three interrelated spheres – cultural, economic, and political – intersecting in well-defined ways with gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, where our understanding and development of social justice must assist us in addressing this complex interplay. Although American-based, the researcher believes we share similar challenges in South Africa. Referring to Nancy Fraser's proposed approach to justice integrates concern for *redistribution* in the economic sphere, *recognition* in the socio-cultural sphere, and parity of *representation* in the political sphere. Fraser explains a deep dilemma whereby theology and politics can be centred around two forms standing in tension with each other. One by cultural and symbolic injustices (religious, imperialism, misrecognition, and disrespect of others different than you). The other by socio-economic injustices, rooted in economic-political systems and structures, power, poverty, class exploitation, disempowerment, privilege, and wealth (Johnson, 2012:5, 7).

In terms of South Africa's service delivery crisis, Alexander *et al.* (as cited by Swart, 2013) indicate that one of the causes of South Africa's service delivery crisis is due to the promotion of a neoliberal model of political-economic practice during our post-apartheid era, cutting back on service delivery to gain revenue, where the shift is to run local government like private businesses, focussing on profit rather than service. Privatisation and outsourcing to the private sector fosters corruption, favouritism, and self-enrichment opportunities at the expense of a democratic system on the local level (Swart, 2013:7). Public morality seems to degenerate as we see corruption, domestic violence, and sexual immorality manifest in the new South Africa (Vorster, 2007:36).

South Africa's colonial heritage influenced the history of our education. Legislation was passed during the beginning of the apartheid era, where primary schooling was governed by acts such as the *Bantu Education Act of 1953*, primarily aiming at the segregation of ethnic groups leading to the exclusion of content and quality of curricula resulting in inequality (Brunsdon, 2019:3).

The current undesirable social condition of South Africa is the fruit from our past but also our current injustices and greed.

3.2.6 South Africa's environmental conditions

We are continuously fed with various environmental crises, negative effects of deforestation, the extinction of species, climate change, population growth, and insurmountable waste dumps. Positive progress is made concerning acid rain and ocean depletion; however, our overconsumption, levels of pollution, growing population, over-fishing, and exploitation of non-renewable resources remain a problem. Challenges, for example, include producing nuclear waste to fulfil our current need for energy. Stockpiling nuclear waste is dangerously radioactive for ten thousand years, so our current responsibilities to provide food for everyone, and not overuse the land, or this will influence the needs of future generations. Ecological damage caused by humans should drive us to engage in earthkeeping – caring for the environment – yet we have failed to do so. What is needed is to confess our sins and alter our ways (Conradie, 2011:5-11, 43).

Hall (1990:9, 51, 103) refers to Jürgen Moltmann who commented on the crisis of the biosphere, stating that our environmental crisis is not only in the natural environment but more so a crisis within human beings. Hall continues that the only response to our great physical and spiritual problems is for human beings to reimagine themselves and their true identities. The steward is one of the most provocative as well as historically accessible concepts to contemplate for any person caring about the destiny of our civilisation. Hall asks the question of why this metaphor of steward has not been taken up by evolving Christianity. Why did it play a minor role in church history? If we believed we have been called to be stewards according to biblical reflections, why has more not been made of it in the theology as well as the practice of Christianity in this world?

3.3 Possible Causes Relating to South Africa's Triple Challenges

The need to control everything, where self-interest turns to selfishness (greed), is evident when referring to Swidler (2004:324) who uses the example of hybrid seeds. Swidler (2004) explains that the standard political economy analysis of the corporate drive, in favour of hybrid seeds, does indeed focus on a struggle: the capitalist desire to patent and control the seed supply, by taking these living repositories of millennia of local breeding, out of the hands of gardeners and peasants who save their seeds each year for use in the next season. These hybrid seeds are great for one season but fail to produce seeds useful for another season. She argues that the classic expositions of the decision to pursue hybrid breeding, rather than working on breeding crops yielding viable seeds which farmers can use the following year, show beyond a doubt that the decision was made by and for corporate interest in profit rather than because of any botanical advantage to the hybridisation. The relevance to this study is how this hybridisation changed the

nature of the farmer's work to one focussing on the selfish interest in deskilling, and rather concentrating in the control of seed companies. Swidler (2004:327) concludes that,

traditional environmental knowledge provides us with the 'designs for independent alternatives to the globalisation of a market mentality that at present comes close to overwhelming competition for the hearts and minds of humanity.' When a way of life becomes extinct, it 'limits future evolutionary options...(W)e may be left with just one – the global capitalist consumer society.' Preservation of living, vital subsistence systems provide us with 'radical alternatives to the present world system.'

Swidler highlights that a corporate focus on profit limited or changed the skills of humans while investigating history. Did the leaders of the apartheid regime implement the Bantu Education Act to oppress black development to gain access to low wages, with the focus on increasing profit, or did they believe that it was adequate and the best option to uplift the community? One thing is for sure, the Bantu Education Act did fuel inequality. The same is true for wealth accumulation, the need of the capitalist to accumulate wealth moved from one creating wealth to inheriting and accumulating wealth, creating a new social elite with concentrated wealth, which in turn creates fewer opportunities for individuals outside of the social elite circle to create their wealth and provide for their self-interest.

Christian ethics about human labour received a lot of attention during the last years, where the emergence of a liberal democracy with the philosophy of neo-liberal economic principles changed South Africa's labour environment and poses new questions as some of these practices gave rise to extreme upheaval, violence and intimidation, large scale unemployment, and problems associated with crime and begging (Vorster, 2007:95).

Van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015:734) acknowledge the link between poverty, unemployment, and social justice with a firm focus on the theory of structural poverty. Structural poverty is the belief that poverty is caused by unequal distribution, and/or lack of access to, material and non-material resources, leading to vulnerability prompted by the people's helplessness to deal with their social issues effectively. The modern social analysis emphasised that poverty is forced on people from the outside, with the poor being a victim of political and social circumstances (Vorster, 2007:68).

Most interventions addressing poverty in South Africa have been state-centred and with a top-down approach. This approach did not realise the promise of constitutional rights to life and has proved largely unsuccessful in economic upliftment. With a top-down approach, one stands the chance of "dictating or assuming" what the needs of the poor and marginalised are, e.g., personal safety, security of property, and access to justice, while never discovering their real needs and

expectations. A good example is people living with HIV/AIDS on antiretroviral (ARV) treatment receiving financial support. To qualify for this disability grant, the HIV-positive person's CD4 count should be less than 200 and confirmed on a medical certificate. Research by the University of Cape Town highlights that ARV roll-out offers people the opportunity to restore health but at the expense of losing the disability grant due to the CD4 count rising making them capable of work. Work is scarce, and it was found that some patients sabotaged their recovery to keep on receiving the grant, by not taking the medication (Van Broembsen & Davis, 2008:1).

The ethos of the corporation of those working for the business continues to instil values steered by economic action requiring work ethics (although different to familial and political control), where this discipline is steered by rational control for "the profession" while stewarding wealth which is not your own. Leaders and employees believe and adopt this ethos as the norm; however, the undisguised theological foundations have been replaced by utilitarian and contractual agreements concerning human relationships and "where mammon has become, for many the reigning deity" (Klay, 1986:127).

3.3.1 Poverty

According to Sekhaulelo (2014:2), poverty in South Africa's urban areas is due to unemployment, globalisation, and an economic strategy that enables a few to hoard resources at the expense of many.

Worldwide, extreme poverty is still experienced, despite interventions from international and national role-players. In South Africa in 2011, approximately 20.2% of the population (10.2 million people) lived below the breadline of R321 per month, with 60% of government expenditure being on social grants (van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:734). Social wages or grants should only be offered as a short-term response to alleviate poverty and not long-term as it can lead to dependency, hindering the development of potential. The impact of social grants to alleviate poverty, and the effect on the triple challenges should be investigated.

Sixteen million economically active people live in poverty due to an increase in population, people immigrating from other African countries, and unemployment, while various stakeholders implement either the modernisation- or charitable-based development theories to address poverty (Klaasen, 2017:2).

The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) contributed to the development discourse during both apartheid and post-apartheid in the country and worked with the government developing the most active organised development programmes. According to Kritzing (cited in Klaasen, 2017:2), the DRC's social welfare work during the 20th century could be summarised in three development

models, namely: up to the 1950s, it had a structural holistic approach; it then changed to an institutional approach until the 1970s; followed by a community-based approach between the 1980s and 1990s.

Swart *et al.* (2010:290) commented on Kritzinger's proposed development model and believe that two aspects attributed to the failure of the DRC to take on a revised model of practical socio-economic involvement, namely their theology of social charity, and stipulation, resulting in charity services defined in terms of its application policy.

Both these development approaches (charity and social welfare) provided for the immediate needs of society; however, the sustainability of these development efforts was not taken into consideration. Both of these approaches neglected the responsibility of the individual's development as well as skills- and personal integrity development (Klaasen, 2017:2).

Silvoso (2007:118a) reminds us that from a biblical perspective, throughout the Old Testament, the penalty for idolatry was in the form of famine, pestilence, or drought (cf. Dt 28:15–29) felt in the marketplace where people became more and more hungry, and food was in short supply. The causes for this insufficiency could only be due to divine punishment because of their sin, or an evil system where some hoard resources at the expense of others (cf. Linthicum, 1991:24; Mutavhatsindi, 2008:27, cited by Sekhaulelo, 2014:2).

3.3.2 Unemployment

Population growth, declining economic growth, decreasing employment opportunities, uneducated and unskilled workers, and low labour participation are possible causes of unemployment. South Africa's population as reported during December 2021 was at 60.4 million people with a 58.3% labour force participation rate (Trade Economics, 2021c; 2022a),⁷ compared to countries in Africa where labour force participation rates are, for example, 91.8% in Angola (Sept 21), 71.2% in Namibia (Dec 2018), and 57.04% in Cape Verde (Dec 2020); and globally, referring to the G20 countries, with Switzerland at 83.8%, Germany 79.3%, France 73.3%, Saudi Arabia 61.2%, and Argentina at 46.7% in September 2021.

The NPC (2020:16) reported that the real economic growth rate affects total employment rates. The average real economic growth of 4.7% during 2005 – 2008 contributed towards the total increase in employment by 2.5 million, annually being 826 000 compared to the period between

⁷ Labour force participation rates are the number of persons who are employed and unemployed but looking for a job divided by the total working-age population.

2010 – 2015 where the average actual economic growth was 2.2% per annum, where total employment grew by 2 million, annually being 391 000. Between 2015 – 2019, the average economic growth rate dropped by 0.7% per annum, and the total employment rose to 609 000 for the same period, averaging 152 000 per annum.

The pre-COVID-19 record unemployment rates and the drop in overall economic growth were both direct outcomes of dominant economic players and the choices they made advocating a free market (Szymborska, 2020).

Three consequences of unemployment have been identified by Levinsohn (cited by van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:737), namely: (i) the overall loss of goods and services produced, (ii) the impact of the knowledge and skills not used and/or developed, and (iii) the immeasurable phenomenon of a country losing hope. A vicious circle is clearly seen in the increasing number of discouraged work seekers losing hope of finding work.

3.3.3 Inequality

One of the causes of inequality can be attributed to The Bantu Education Act of 1953. It was instructed that government should control all schools and required an inferior curriculum be used in black schools. The net effect of the Bantu Education Act was to worsen the skills shortage in South Africa, and to raise the wage levels of skilled and semi-skilled white workers at a faster rate than productivity growth. The development of a black middle class was prevented, and this negatively impacted the growth potential of the domestic economy. Black entrepreneurship and opportunities were severely hampered by apartheid which organised business regularly opposed. Over the following years, the organised business agreed that economic development should be inclusive and that an enterprise-driven economy can only survive if all citizens were given a state to uphold and defend business rights. During the 1990s, organised businesses allocated some time to educating their members to prepare them for the changes that were coming, and the development of a human rights culture. Individual companies were also encouraged to focus on social responsibility initiatives by enlarging their mandate to promote economic transformation (Parsons & Parry, 2018:28-36).

Real profits are seen in economic imbalances, and because of these economic imbalances, fewer people control greater wealth (Smith, 2005:75). Okun (1975) argues that where an efficient economic system succeeds, one will also see inequality. Since 1994, South Africa's wealth inequality is not narrowing, where 1% of the population possesses 50% of the country's wealth. Biased decision-making by government regarding social and economic equality can lead to an increase in discouraged workers not wanting to save, which leads to increased inequality (Fortuin

et al. 2022:2); the accumulation of capital by capitalists increases the significance of human capital

in sustaining the rate of return on capital. This shift in capitalist opinion on the provision of public education, unless publicly financed, exists due to limited incentive for capitalists to invest in employees, since this would lead to declining returns on capital. Capitalists and workers therefore both gain from public education.

The trade-off exists due to the focus of the capitalist to accumulate capital and wealth. Wealth creation opportunities will be traded for wealth accumulated through inheritance (not created or distributed) within families and will create a new class of social elites where the wealth is more concentrated.

The National Christian Foundation (NCF) argues that the media contributed to the view that wealth and capitalism equals greed, and that greed can be good (NCF, 2019). Gordon Gekko, in the movie *Wall Street*, claims,

The point is, ladies and gentleman, that greed, for lack of a better word, is good. Greed is right, greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed, in all of its forms; greed for life, for money, for love, knowledge has marked the upward surge of mankind (cited by NCF, 2019:n.p.).

The NCF examined the historical and biblical truths about wealth, greed, and self-interest, and acknowledges that everyone is susceptible to greed due to our fallen nature, the rich and the poor, and an easy distinguishable difference between greed and self-interest. The biblical definition of greed originates from the Greek word *pleonexia*, which means “greed” or “covetousness”. William Barclay (cited by NCF, 2019:n.p.) describes *pleonexia* as an “accursed love of having”, which “will pursue its own interest with complete disregard for the rights of others, and even for the considerations of common humanity”. The difference between worldly greed and biblical greed is that the biblical definition includes the idea that greed fosters *taking something that is not rightfully ours*. The NCF argues that although the concepts of greed and self-interest are seen synonymously, there is a clear difference, and refers to Adam Smith, known as “the father of modern capitalism”, stating that, “it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest”. The difference between self-interest as understood by Adam Smith, and in line with the biblical concept, is that self-interest has a desire to do something of value to others to secure a benefit to oneself. Using one’s gifts, talents, and resources to be useful and to serve others, and in turn providing for oneself. Philippians 2:4 confirms, “Let each of you look not only to his own interest but also to the interest of others”. Unfortunately, many associate “self-interest” with selfishness

which is defined by Dictionary.com as “regard for one’s own interest or advantage, especially with disregard for others” in contrast to biblical self-interest where one provides for self with the notion to also look out for others’ interests and needs. For this study, we will refer to biblical self-interest as part of the Christian stewardship attitude.

Humanistic psychology (Ellen, 2019:1) and the way people see and evaluate themselves contradict God’s view of humans, revealing an unbiblical view of self that is preoccupied with self, along with the rejection of the reality of humankind’s sin and dependency on God. The Christian community has been impacted by these secular views of self-esteem⁸ where it is believed that you must love and accept yourself (humanistic self-love teachings) before any behaviour change can occur, and which is rooted in people’s view of themselves as the centre of everything. Biblical scholars have described humans, made by both immaterial and material, with a mind, will, affections, physical body, and brain. The ability to perform, think, desire, and do right or wrong within a specific situation is dependent on the human’s mind, will, and affections. Humans have the freedom to choose but have no control over the outcomes of choices, the choices of others, or challenges faced during life. It is important, then, that a person’s view of him-/herself is based upon standards set by God to be able to live a sustained life according to the purpose for which he/she was created.

3.4 The Role of Christian Stewardship in Sustainable Development

Is there a possible trade-off between fulfilling the role of Christian stewardship working towards SD and market efficiency and/or SD?

From a market-based economic perspective, to state that Christians cannot work, prosper and live life with average levels of integrity is to claim that all Christians move towards a level of ethical failure, demoralising all to a level where the Christian faith is of little value. “Christian faith communities are far too diverse in their visions of the Christian life and their social ethics to suggest a single, coherent notion of stewardship” (Krueger, 2002:1).

3.4.1 Christian stewardship, sinner and saint

Christians are sinners and saints, not the one or the other. If one ignores this, one might assume people to either be the best, or the worst. While Paul addressed the Corinthians, he acknowledged that although they are a ‘New Man’ who is willing and eager to love God and act according to His will, he also acknowledged the ‘Old Man’ who is still alive and active, to be faithful stewards of

⁸ Ellen focusses on 20th and 21st century concepts of self-esteem propagated by many philosophers, psychologists, and Christian leaders in contrast to biblical theological framework of self (Ellen, 2019:3).

possessions and not immune from Satan's temptations. Scripture also warns against the selfish use of one's material goods (Ja 4:3) (Valleskey, 1989:6, 8).

The concept of "stewardship" has often been misunderstood as it has been associated mainly with money (Boloje & Groenewald, 2014:1). Money being one of many ways Christians show appreciation to God, e.g., tithing. Malachi is closely associated with tithing. Malachi 3:6-12 is concerned about the disrespect the people had for the Lord. People reflected their covenant relationship with Yahweh by the way they used their wealth and personal possessions. Unfortunately, their attitudes showed a lack of love, commitment, and depth. Malachi shows the need for total Christian stewardship, which denotes taking care of some else's estate or property entrusted to them. Humans have been entrusted with how we take care of every detail concerning our lives, from our time, the work we do using our talents, with our values, attitude, behaviour, our money, etc. (Van der Walt, 2012:3).

The *theocentric way*: one type of Christianity is where it is believed that the main mission of the church is to turn human beings towards the eternal. Hall (1990:104) argues that this camp is often the one which believes that in Jesus' summary of the Law, the love of God has priority over the love of the neighbour, practically meaning that real love means doing everything possible and in one's power to convert one's neighbour to Christ. Hall emphasises that he fails to find this meaning in the context in which Jesus used in the parable defining who our neighbour is and the love for our neighbour in Luke 10:29.

The *Christian humanism group*: this group's priority is to spread the message of the gospel as a world-building message and posture. The ethical, world directed thrust of the gospel is the goal of true faith. Moral responsibility, along with a concern for one's neighbour and the betterment of the social order, is a must and built into their faith. Hall (1990:108) argues that Christian liberalism dared to say to the world that for humanity our Christian priority is to be committed to the world, and that by definition this means not even to put God before one's neighbour, and that for anyone who wishes to pursue stewardship more than truncated forms will retain a healthy respect for liberalism, "for stewardship can be regarded as a way of being in and for the world only if the human dimension and direction of the gospel is the heart of the matter. The Liberals embraced an unabashedly anthropocentric version of the Christian belief". There is a danger, that the followers of liberal traditions allow the gospel to make human and historical orientation good on the basis of a worldview that is less realistic about evil. Negative history must form part of the theological discourses and discernment, including naming evil for what it is. This included not challenging the destruction of nature by the industrial society, due to their highly positive anthropology nature.

Total Christian stewardship requires complete devotion by the individual regarding all their resources and opportunities for the service to God and all of humankind (including earthkeeping). When the individual is not fully committed in their stewardship responsibility, it can show an absence of love, dedication, and depth to their covenant relationship with God, and can be viewed as against God's will and sin (Boloje & Groenewald, 2014:1). When the heart is not right with God, it is unable to produce works pleasing to God. Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts to God-pleasing stewardship of giving. Greed, covetousness, divided loyalties, faulty priorities, not being content, the absence of trust, unbiblical self-interest, and materialism are sins to be highlighted as standing in the way of doing good works (Valleskey, 1989:8).

Malachi exposed Israel's corruption, but he also offers hope (Bible Project, 2023). The Malachi prophecy is based on a series of disputations directed toward God's sinful people. Six disputes are framed and conclude where God demands observation of the law and announcing the future coming of Elijah. The six disputes (Longman, 2013:1095) were concerned about God's love for the people (Mal 1:2-5); the contempt that the priests showed God (Mal 1:6-2:9); about Israel's breaking of the covenant (Mal 2:10-16); concerning God's justice (Mal 2:17-3:5); regarding repentance (Mal 3:6-12); and on harsh words against God (Mal 3:13-4:3).

According to Rogerson (as cited by Boloje & Groenewald, 2014:3), Yehud offered less animals to the temple as sacrifices due to their switching from agriculture to horticulture which left the land with less animals. Although Rogerson confesses that his view stays speculative, Malachi 1:14 disapproves of what was going on as the people knew that it was their duty to bring sacrifices. They brought blemished sacrifices, and although having allowable male flock in their stock, they mocked Yahweh and themselves by offering the worst stock. Interestingly, support for local religion ceased when Xerxes became king in 485 BC. Tax structures changed to favour Persians; Xerxes also limited the reduction of the ethnic Persian economy by exhausting the provinces' resources. Incompetency or dishonesty, or both, were evident under the administration of Judah, where high taxes led to severe poverty (Neh 5:4, 15) the Persian economic policies caused inflation, including scarcity of food (Neh 5:3), resulting in the takeover of property (Neh 5:5, 8). During the 5th century, interest rates increased under Cyrus and Cambyses from 20% up to 40%–50% (Boloje & Groenewald, 2014:4).

Corruption has been highlighted as one of the causes of our triple challenges and one of the biggest obstacles to working towards SD. It is key to fully understand and create awareness around the causes of corruption to limit the negative impact it has on the economy, but more so on human development. Tiky (2010:3, 8, 89) argues that lower levels of corruption occurred during the apartheid regime due to a minority in power, under an undemocratic system, with little probability of being caught. While not dependent on foreign patrons to remain in power, there was

no need to resort to bribery to remain in power and keep their advantageous positions. Tiky's research, which was conducted in 2010, is concerned with understanding why South Africa displayed as a low corrupt country while the country harboured conditions that led other developing countries to high corruption levels. These harbouring conditions included elements of colonialism with little European territory; implementing an economic system dependent on mineral resources and cash crops; and a weakened judicial institution, where unlawful leaders served in the interest of global capitalism within an international system. He noticed the influence of structure (determinism, which refers to elements such as economy, institutions, religion, history, social class, gender, and culture influencing individual choices), and those outlining the influence of agency (freedom, the capacity of the individual to make independent free choices), on human thought processes and behaviour when researching the causes of corruption.

The study on the causes of corruption is complex; corruption cannot be caused by one single factor, but is the outcome of several factors. Tiky (2010:31) found that where the economic development was low, the quality of the institution was inadequate and social variables were answerable for the levels of corruption in developing countries. Tiky uses regression analyses to report on the probable relationships between corruption and dependent variables affecting the levels of corruption in developing countries, which include the extent of free trade, government size, rule of law, political alternation, ethnic fragmentation (human capital), European population, and colonisation. This is merely the correlation of variables connected to corruption and not the causation, which is the fundamental concern of his research and the base of this research study which takes us back to the causes of agency behaviour vs. stewardship behaviour. He argues that although there is no specific combination or condition answerable for high corruption, he found that there must be at least two conditions present, with one certainty that any combination must contain the rule of law which influences levels of corruption. Within all developing countries, it was found that where the rule of law was absent, high levels of corruption were present; the flip side, however, was that low corruption levels were present in a society that followed the rule of law (Tiky, 2010:42, 45).

Klitgaard (as cited by Tiky, 2010:3) added that corruption "is a crime of calculation, not passion", and that it is more likely when a low-earning public official calculates his/her probability of getting caught compared to the benefits gained from his/her illegal actions. Thus, the potential cost is lower than the potential gains, and the motivation is self-interest or greed.

Corruption undermines the rule of law, where service quality and competence are neglected while threatening to break the good principles of democracy, justice, and the economy (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012).

Tiky could not understand why, although there were harbouring conditions for high corruption, South Africa indicated low levels of corruption up to 2010. Unfortunately, the harbouring conditions did lead to high corruption thereafter. The researcher supports the finding of Tiky (2010) that to eradicate or lower corruption, it calls for good corporate governance (rule of law), adding the necessity of committed stakeholder accountability regulated with a stewardship governance culture.

3.4.2 Corporate governance

Corporate governance's roots date to thousands of years when the ownership and management of businesses were separate. The owners needed tools to control the performance of the business. The concept of stewardship emerged when an auditor discovered that proper stewardship took place by the managers. The Industrial Revolution introduced opportunities for bigger businesses as opposed to owner businesses. The complexity of shareholding and large sums of capital within the businesses called for a form of regulation and control, protecting the owners' interest. Corporate governance was first only involved with company legislation and common law. In South Africa, the Companies Act dealt with matters about the appointment of directors, operations of the board of directors, and the roles of the auditors, but little else. Extensive academic literature evolved concerning principal-agent relationships. Today corporate governance is a major issue in business (Wixley & Everingham, 2015:1).

Gleason (Hendrikse & Hefer-Hendrikse, 2017) explains in his foreword that corporate governance means the way the managers behave and how a company is managed. Despite efforts to clearly define and give substance to the rules and laws on the proper administration of companies, continued misconduct by company stewards is part of everyday commercial life. Unfortunately, 'greed' is at the centre of many corporate collapses. How managers behave and commit to their responsibilities is beyond the realm of human statutes; it relates to ethics. The question posed is whether economics and corporate governance are driven by the common good.

Individuals influence the welfare of society by their actions and behaviours. The question posed is what is the difference between an individual who acts and behaves for the long-term best interest and well-being of their business and communities compared to others who solely focus on their successes? Hernandez (2012:3) differentiates between the agent theory and steward theory. She explains that the agency theory paradigm is economics-based where humans are seen as actors who seek to maximise self-interest. It seeks to safeguard the owner against the agent's self-interest. Demsetz *et al.* (as cited by Hernandez, 2012:3) recommend that companies use control mechanisms such as governance structures (board of directors) and executive pay schemes (pay-for-performance) to ensure that the agents' interest is aligned to the principals'

(owners) interests. Stewardship theory, on the other hand, offers an alternative view where the company actors work towards greater long-term utility, focused on others with prosocial behaviour rather than short-term self-interest behaviour. The stewardship theory is more relationship-centred, creating a culture of collaboration, promoting trust in manager's behaviours, and placing the long-term interest of the organisation ahead of personal self-interest.

The need to create mastery can lead to pride which leads to the Fall, for mastery is the illusion of all illusions. The need to master and control the world will sooner lead to the need to later control the controller. The internal world of the controller is the human spirit, and it has to be predictable and harmless if this control is to be complete and for the common good, not for their own pursuit. The "Invisible Hand" described by Adam Smith which stipulates that individual freedom, even self-serving could serve the common good, assisting the selfish, random deeds of profit seekers to produce the best of the world for the majority, in the spirit of capitalism. Unfortunately, the assumption of the secular, post-liberal, postmodern world that the invisible authority will see to the ordering of society, has now been realised to be the visible authorities that can only create order if imposed from above (Hall,1990:86).

3.5 Summary

The purpose of the chapter was to conduct a literature study concerning the causes of South Africa's triple challenges towards SD to think, interpret the various theories, and obtain a wise judgement. The study ultimately wants to contribute to the field of development, from a public practical theological stance.

Sustainability in terms of economic-, social-, and environmental policies requires us to participate in discourses about sustainability, to understand the history, including our struggles, to equip us to shape a better future for all.

The current practice of stewardship is a reduced version of the true biblical concept thereof, and does not equip us to contribute towards the life the world needs. Christianity was affected due to the movement of Christianity from its Hebraic matrix into the Hellenistic world, followed by the adoption of the Christian religion by Constantine as the official religion of the Roman Empire. This movement affected various basic beliefs and tenets of Christianity, one being the influence of the Hellenistic culture where to get real one must detach yourself from your physicalness, lifting yourself out of the bondage of flesh into the realm of spirit. Thus, matter was transcended to be spiritual, and the material world and human body was seen as inferior. The spiritual world, the locus of temptation, evil, and danger was seen as unreal. This is in contrast with the Hebraic faith, which was earthly, and evil was not seen as matter per se but regarded as evil, and a product of

the spirit – matter being the victim of a distorted human spirit, not the other way around. Hall (1990:59) argues that this left the Christian movement to be a highly spiritualised version of the biblical metaphor, discouraging the development of the stewardship theme as a way of thinking about human existence in totality. The gospel is not a secret code only for the spiritual realm but part of our daily realities.

World War II marked an era of economic boom and created hope to raise living standards worldwide where growth, development, and the effects of our actions on the environment started looming. Development was important to maintain economic growth rates and was only possible when wealth was equally distributed globally, decreasing the gap between developed and developing countries. Economic growth on its own cannot address global inequalities. This highlights the need to revise or renew our view of development, where SD stands at the centre of growth and conservation, although anthropocentric views are stronger than ecocentric views they do not neglect environmental concerns which form part of the development discourses.

Economics, politics, and the environment are not independent of each other but are connected. Chapter 3 gave insights into the historical narrative of our ‘new’ South Africa or ‘rainbow nation’ dating back to the Khoikhoi and San people (not forgetting the Bantu). South African economic conditions evolved into a mixed economy where the market approach can be closely associated with the capitalist system. In theory, the capitalist system can be seen as perfect; however, the people who operate the system are not which was evident during the study as it leads to corruption, fraud, poor service delivery, oppression, unemployment, poverty, and inequality due to unbiblical self-interest, namely, greed. Greed then can be seen as taking more than what you need which is not rightfully yours, compared to the biblical concept of self-interest, where one serves others with your talents and gifts to provide for the needs of self without taking what is not yours, or to take more than what is needed.

It is important to understand that our behaviours, attitudes, and thoughts have been influenced by our past, capitalism, colonialism, and by apartheid. Reimagining and actively practicing our Christian stewardship responsibility as business leaders is crucial to developing a sustainable economy, society, and environment for our community, influenced only by the standards set by God to live a sustainable life in self-interest, including others’ well-being.

The Christian steward’s role and integrity of the people is highlighted as a focus area for SD, one not influenced by a free market model of neoliberal thought but instead influenced by Christian practices and beliefs acting to work towards the triple challenges (poverty, unemployment, and inequality) our country currently faces.

The invisible hand of the Christian steward business leader needs to develop as the business has more and different resources at its disposal compared to what government can offer regarding the triple challenges our country faces. The view of Christian stewardship is imperative to manage resources and contribute to SD and national progress. This is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 – REIMAGINING CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH WORK AND SOCIETY

4.1 Introduction

The objective of Chapter 4 is to investigate from a public practical theological stance whether Christian stewardship can provide a theological model for South African business leaders involved with SD, and how Christian stewardship and public practical theology may advance moral values in civil society. The purpose is to examine what the ideal stewardship model from a Christian perspective can offer to develop the Christian steward's self-interest and responsibly manage their finances, possessions, and talents (accumulation and distribution) for the well-being, sustainability, and SD of the citizens and the country – asking what should be going on. As an individual, we need to acknowledge that we are stewards with dominion (not domination) over the earth and our purpose is to manage and develop it sustainably. To sustain, manage, and develop a community, it is key to understand the context of the community and thereafter attempt to define and understand what ought to be going on.

The term stewardship has a long history in terms of encouraging responsibility and accountability, apart from its meaning relating to Christianity in the sense of "responsible use of resources" or wise management of what is at one's disposal. During the 80s, the New York Times made references to "concern about the stewardship of America's great corporate bureaucracies", "Mrs. Thatcher's economic stewardship" in Great Britain, and even the "stewardship of tradition" in baseball exercised by the New York Yankees. It is thus not an uncommon term (Reumann, 1992:65).

All creation praises God for His manifest love for the world (DeWitt,1996:1). We are reminded of this by God's kingdom and God's Word:

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge...Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world (Psalm 19:1-2, 4).

God's generosity and hospitality first, as well as ours, is what the word stewardship means according to the Bible. In Deuteronomy 26 we are taught about the ceremony of the first fruits during harvesttime when the farmer offered his first fruits of the grain harvest to the temple confessing to the priest that God's promise came true, relating to the promise made to Sarah and Abraham, concerning the land. The farmer through this ceremony then testifies and remembers his ancestor Jacob living in Egypt, and because of the ancestor's prayers during the oppression by Egypt into slavery, God freed them and brought Israel to the Promised Land. Self-reliance was

seen as a type of idolatry – fear of love and trusting in one's own ability and efforts, as opposed to God's gracious generosity, which created faith and trust in God – an active love (Klein, 2009).

Carriker (2020), although referring to the 2019 fires in the Amazon, drew the attention of political leaders and church organisations worldwide regarding the worldwide environmental impact it has on the well-being of the future of our planet. He gives a Christian response claiming that to care for the creation inherently defines our very humanity, whether Christian or not, and highlights that the biblical drama requires much more attention in Christian teaching as it is concerned with the beginning and conclusion of the current and new creation. Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:15 defines humanity's purpose and mission to care for God's creation and continues even after the Fall in Genesis 9. This is certainly true for people who see a suffering creation in need of redemption (Rom. 8:18-25). Followers of Jesus should show their love of God by loving their neighbour (Lk 10:25-37), imitating Jesus' earthly mission of proclamation, teaching, and healing, and making disciples in all four corners of the world by teaching them obedience to all that Jesus commanded.

Osmer's normative task focusses on three areas that will form the basis of the framework of this chapter, namely theological interpretation, ethical reflection, and good practice.

4.2 Theological Interpretation of Christian Stewardship

4.2.1 What is Christian stewardship?

According to Boloje and Groenewald (2014:1), Christian stewardship should be perceived with different perspectives and lenses and not just as tithing or funding for missions, as most often referred to.

Christian stewardship is concerned with the believer's whole life – every detail and facet of their life – including caring for creation and others. Tithing is a single element of the Christian's responsibility to God and is practiced when the believer takes total stewardship seriously. Not tithing is a people problem, not only a money problem (Davis, 1987:97). Stewardship implicates why, how, and what the steward does in life, in society, at work, within a family or within a community. To gain a theological interpretation of the role of the Christian steward, scriptures for the purpose of this study were selected to understand the practical applications (why, how, and what) the steward (also referred to as the self) can use to positively contribute towards SD:

- *Why*: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex 20:1-3). *How*: “So, God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every best of the earth, on every bird of the air, on

all that moves on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every living thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs” (Gen 9:1-3). “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (1 Cor 4:1-2). “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins”. *What*: “Therefore, be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak of the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1 Pet 4:8-11).

4.2.2 Biblical theological framework: Christian stewardship

To understand the role of the Christian steward, it is important to understand, be aware of, and appreciate the self and the general biblical truths of self. Ellen (2019:81) highlights a general biblical-theological framework of self, and the honour and details relating to humans created in God’s image, the nature of humankind, the Fall of humanity, the redemption of humans by what Jesus Christ’s did for us, and the agenda of humans. It is important to review the core of what we believe as Christian stewards and how this influences the way we respond to life, including the triple challenges.

Just stewardship requires of us to explore the relationship of our Creator-God, God’s creation, and God’s assigned stewards of creation. The framework for this thinking is: Creation, Fall, Redemption (DeWitt, 1996:22).

4.2.2.1 Creation

Ellen (2019:81) explains that humans are created in the image of God: although it is not clearly defined, it is implied to be connected to the immaterial, relational, moral, and responsibility aspects of humankind. Created in God’s image articulates humans’ dignity due to the life of humans being respected and not destroyed, created as relational beings with social and dominion responsibilities, to rule under the authority of God, not in autonomy apart from God. Human beings were not created in their own image.

To describe the nature of humans [from a theological anthropological view], human beings were created male and female distinct from all other creations (Gen 1:26-27). God took the ground, and with His breath of life, created humankind (Gen 2:7) with both a material body and an immaterial soul/spirit. Immaterial relates to heart, soul, or spirit (mind, conscience, will, desires,

and emotions) by which human beings can understand or grasp meaning (Eccl 1:16). The mind is where one discovers or becomes aware of things (Eccl 1:17-18), deliberates, and discerns things (Prov 24:30-32; Heb 5:14). The mind can desire and devise plans (Eph 2:1-3; Prov 16:1-9), make decisions, and dream (Lk 16:3-4; Dan 4:5). Human actions are determined by the inclinations of a person's mind (Lk 6:45). The state of a person's mind is decided by what controls the mind (Rom 8:5-8). For example, if evil dominates, human beings will practice evil deeds, and vice versa, if the mind is directed by the Holy Spirit, they will practice godly deeds. Humans are not left to themselves to decide how they think about or function in life. The conscience of a person makes him/her aware of their responsibility and accountability towards God concerning what is right and wrong, resulting in a sense of pleasantness or unpleasantness in the heart (1 Sam 24:1-15; 2 Sam 24:10; 1 Jn 3:21). Material relating to a person's physical body consists of physical features internally and externally, enabling humankind to function on earth. The physical body and immaterial part of a person cannot be separated while on earth (Gen 2:7; 1 Cor 15:35-38; Phil 1:19-23).

Five creation themes are found in the opening chapters of the Scriptures showing the importance of the dawn of Creation, the people in their image of God's love, and God's redeeming work. These are: (i) the wholeness and relationship of God, humanity, and land; (ii) the divine ownership of all creation; (iii) the habitability of the land; (iv) the goodness of creation and God's creatures; and (v) stewards of creation (DeWitt, 1996:26-28).

4.2.2.2 Fall

The fall of humankind was when the original sin was committed in the beginning by Adam and Eve (Gen 3:1-10). Adam and Eve's sin has negative consequences impacting their own but also the lives of others. Adam's sin led to all of humankind being born with a sinful nature (Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9; Gen 6:5; Matt 15:15-20; Rom 8:7; Rom 7:7-24). Adam's sin led to humankind's sin before God and others (Rom 3:10-18, 23; Eccl 7:20; Rom 8:5-8), leading to spiritual death, the separation of humankind from the influence of God's power, presence, promises, indwelling, fellowship, and communication while under control of the devil (Eph 2:1-5). Adam's sin leads to positional sin, conditional sin, and practical sin in the life of every person, believing that he can live in complete sufficiency and autonomy without living for and depending on God on all levels (Ellen, 2019:81).

Ellen (2019:16) refers to various research studies indicating that when a person views themselves as being the centre of the universe (not God), it leads to where they should be everything they can be (apart from their connection with God), and while humans' need for liberation is not from the nature of sin, one can question these the compatibility of these views with the biblical-

theological framework of self. Hui (cited by Ellen, 2019:17) discovered that in a culture where individualism is practiced high motivation is achieved from goals attained such as self-sufficiency and self-glorification, prioritising high levels of competition and hedonism, distance from an immediate family with the focus on themselves above their family, autonomy, emotional independence, and individual initiatives resulting in self-exaltation and not humility as expected by God or humans (1 Pet 5:5-6). Oyserman *et al.*'s (cited by Ellen, 2019:31) research discovered that independence, freedom, objectives, competition, identity, privacy, self-knowing, and direct communication are major parts relating to individualism, which is the dominant way of thinking in Western culture. Ellen proved that a biblical- theological framework of self is an antithesis to these mentioned secular self-esteem insights. Understanding the biblical-theological framework for self can assist us to establish how we might respond to the triple challenges in South Africa. God is a God of order, and structure; He gives humans processes to follow for life and work, including warnings (Gen 2:1-24). When pursuing to serve God, Ellen (2019:79) refers to John MacArthur's explanation, that everyone is to know God, become like God, serve God, and be born again in Jesus Christ (Jn 3:1-18). One cannot boast about the ability to serve as it is all granted by God (Eph 2:8-10). God gave Christians a new identity, a new creation in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:17). Christians are to walk by the Spirit of God to fulfil their calling (Gal 5:1-23) and not depend on their own power or secular humanistic beliefs such as self-esteem.

4.2.2.3 Redemption

Ellen (2019:81) explains that the redemption of humankind means that humans are sinful and need deliverance from their sin⁹ through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sin is defined as humankind failing to live according to God's standards and demonstrate God's character. The consequence of sin is humankind's separation from God. Jesus Christ lived perfectly, was crucified, buried, and resurrected; He took humanity's punishment for sin, delivering humans from sin, and reconciling humankind back to the covenant relationship with God forever. Humankind must put their trust in the person of Jesus Christ, confessing with their mouth and believing in their heart that God has raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and humankind will be saved (Rom 10:9). When humankind does not acknowledge Jesus Christ and does not live in a relationship with Jesus Christ, people will spend their life separated from God and live in sin. The agenda of humankind is to know that humans are not created independently of their destiny but with a purpose. The concept of self-esteem focuses on the self, whereas a biblical theological framework of self is where humans surrender themselves to God and operate according to God's agenda for humankind's life, being

⁹ Original text defined sin as positional sin, conditional sin, and practical sin. The researcher could not find any academic reference to these three "types of sin" and therefore refers only to sin.

a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1-8) described in five areas. Everyone is called by His name and created for His glory (Isa 43:7; Rom 11:36; Col 1:15-17; 2 Cor 5:9, 15; Matt 5:14-16). Humans must socialise with God, know God intimately through obedience to the Word of God (Jn 17:3; 14:21), and move beyond intellectual knowledge into an experiential knowledge of God (Eph 3:14-19; Heb 11:6). Humankind is to seek sanctification in Jesus Christ, maturing to reflect the character of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (Eph 4:11-32; Col 3:1-25). Humankind is to build and develop God-honouring churches and communities for those trusting in Jesus Christ and the love of God to humans and one another (Heb 10:24-25; 1 Jn 1:1-3; Rom 12:8-13; Jn 13:33-35). Humankind serves God by serving others, using the abilities given by God to help others (Eph 2:10; Rom 7:4, 12:1-8; 1 Pet 4:10-11).

4.2.2.4 Theological reflections on the steward motif

Hall (1990:41-51) discusses the scriptural concept of stewardship from its theological, Christological, ecclesiastical, anthropological, and eschatological assumptions to understand the inclusive character of the metaphor of the steward as assumed in biblical literature.

- The *theological dimension*: The steward is commissioned and accountable to the eternal sovereign, Yahweh / Elohim. "Thou shalt have no other gods"; "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof". When this idea is combined with anthropological implications it has enormous question marks over human presumption, and our material realities, including our authorities. God should always be pictured as the owner and sovereign of everything and everyone.
- The *Christological dimension*: the theology of stewardship is first of all a Christology. In the New Testament Jesus is presented not as the owner but as the authentic and preeminent steward: "all are yours; and you are Christ's and Christ is God's" (1 Cor 3:22-23). Jesus defines and fulfils the office as the steward of "God's varied grace" (1 Pet 4:10). Jesus is not concerned about His life and desires nothing for Himself. He is obedient to the one He represents; He lays down His life for His friends, never thinking about His possessions, not even the possession of His own life. Not only is our stewardship exemplified by Jesus but in keeping with Paul's mystical regard of Christ including the Old Testament and New Testament teachings through the Spirit and through faith that we are initiated into.
- The *ecclesiastical dimension*: the stewardship image provides a biblical picture of God, Christ, and the church as a stewarding community. The great steward's work, as part of the body of Christ, includes the disciple community. One would have wished that the New Testament writers would be more specific in writing about how one should apply for our stewardship role specifically in terms of how we are supposed to deal with the government,

economic structures, our ethical social responsibility, and our relation to the extra-human world.

- The *anthropological dimension*: The New Testament intends us to think of Christians as stewards. The stewardship metaphor does not stand alone, “but in many ways in which the Scriptures define humanity’s posture vis-à-vis the Creator and the other creatures. The commandment of love God and neighbour by no means limits the neighbour to one’s fellow Christians”. The new humanity is “putting on” the Pauline imagery described in Colossians 3:10, which is the authentic humanity of Jesus; this identity and vocation are what our Creator intends for all, as Irenaeus put it, *Gloria Dei vivens homo*, the glory of God is humanity truly alive!

The *eschatological dimension*: being a steward is to be accountable to the End. “Turn in the account of your stewardship!”; stewards must be watchful (Lk 12), trustworthy (1 Cor 4:2), and blameless (Ti 1:7) – but not just of moralistic concern. They have to report on what they have used and misused based on the talents and gifts given to them by their Creator through grace (Eph 3:2).

4.3 Ethical Reflection

“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people” (Prov 14:34). Inequality is at the centre causing poverty and unemployment in South Africa.

Social justice in present-day South Africa is an important component influenced by the heritage of the apartheid era. The needs of the poor have been neglected as the social inequities in post-apartheid focused primarily on civil and political rights, and for this reason, the sense of feeling unjustly treated is still evident. Unemployment and poverty affect human dignity (van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:738).

A call to repentance, keeping of the ordinances, and returning to God, is what God desires. Boloje and Groenewald (2014:7) describes ethical practical truths for Christian stewardship, and that the economic view of the Old Testament ethics focused on the land of Israel which was an important category defining tradition. Although the land was given to the Israelites as their heritage, they had to rely upon God’s provision. “The land is mine and you are resident aliens and tenants with me” (Lev 25:23). A key feature in the covenant relationship was how the Israelites treated and considered the land and its yield. The land and its produce created awareness and remembrance of Israel’s dependence and reliance on God’s trustworthiness and relationship. Boloje and Groenewald (2014:8) recommend practical principles and thoughts regarding ethical and practical

standards and morals to be followed by Christians, acknowledging Yahweh's ownership of everything.

The motivation for total Christian stewardship is to recognise and appreciate God's sovereignty over his creation with the faithful management of the individual's purpose. Stewardship includes all activities and behaviours (including prayer, worship, charity, and evangelism) a Christian does to show their love and thankfulness to God for his grace and mercy. It is a matter of the heart, soul, and mind where the Christian honestly seeks to love God and their neighbour as themselves (Valleskey, 1989:1).

From a Christian steward's perspective, ethical reflection(s) should be based on the principles provided by God which can be challenging if not clearly defined in Scripture. Peppers (2016:26) explains that ethical decision-making is the process when an individual must decide when a moral problem arises, and one must participate in a particular behaviour. The behaviour can be challenging in the sense that behaviour considered unethical by one can be tolerable by another party. Palazzo *et al.* (as cited by Peppers, 2016:30) refer to assumptions by several models of (un)ethical decision-making where individuals are capable to assess their decisions from a moral point of view. Ethical blindness, however, occurs when people unconsciously act unethically; it is the brief inability of the decision-maker to sense the ethical aspect of the situation and decision to be made. Ethical blindness calls into question the idea of making an intentional ethical decision where the individual weighs unusual opportunities against their own values, and purpose, inclusive of the value of others and the world.

Theological interpretations regarding ethical reflections (what is right and wrong) should spring forth from our innermost parts, our motives, and our hearts. Society and business are ready for competent ethical leadership, where the emphasis is on ethics and the care for society – servant leadership (Peppers, 2016:39). Although leaders influence the culture and ethics of an organisation significantly, it is proposed that ethics is not the sole responsibility of the leaders but also the employees, Christian stewards.

Vorster (2007:4) writes that humans were created with a sense of morality – a gift from God, and Scripture, teaching humans about desired morals. Without going into the detail of how one should view Scripture, e.g., the classic Reformed view or the modern-day resurging of religious extremism via the theory of mechanical inspiration to mention only two, this study conforms to the classic Reformed view of Scripture called the *organic theory*. “The organic view rests in the confession that in Scripture we hear the word of God in the words of men”. Vorster refers to The Larger Westminster Catechism (1648) which reflects the classic view of this authority in question 4:

Q4: How doth it appear that the Scriptures are the Scripture?

A: The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the Scripture, by their majesty (Hs. 8:12; 1 Cr. 2:6-7, 13; Ps. 119:18, 129) and purity (Ps. 12:6; 119:140); by the consent of all the parts (Ac. 10:43; 26:22), and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God (Rm. 3:19, 27); by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation (Ac 18:28; Hb. 4:12; Jm. 1:18; Ps. 19:7-9; Rm. 15:4; Ac. 20:32); but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very Scripture (Jn. 16:13-14; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27; Jn. 20:31).

The following arguments can be derived from the above statement concerning the authority of Scripture. Scripture is the internal evidence of the Word, confirming that it is God's word, where He progressively introduces Himself as the Creator; Sustainer; as the Covenant God of Abraham; gracious and righteous; the Father of Jesus Christ; and as the Holy Spirit and His church – the new covenant community. He is the God of the final victory of His Kingdom. Scripture is a continuous message where various messages unfold, accepting the consent of all its parts, interpreted by a complete exegetical process to understand the culture, languages of a specific text, and reconciling it with the complete story – the revelation history. The power of the gospel to convince and build up believers unto salvation, including influencing and transforming societies, shaping cultures, bringing moral changes and improving the lives of many, and bringing hope to the afflicted. “Christ, never wrote a word himself, did not start a university or a school and was not a military conqueror and promote his ideas with conquests. Yet his message became the strongest spiritual force the world has ever seen” (Vorster, 2007:7). The witness of the Spirit inspired both biblical writers of ancient times as well as believers over centuries, enlightening people reading the Word to come to faith in Christ and accept the kingship of God.

Wright (as cited by Vorster, 2007:45) argues that ethics in the Old Testament are all fundamentally theological, reflecting God's character, will, actions, and purpose. God taking the initiative in grace, redeems and then shows His ethical demand. Ethics then is a matter of responding in gratitude, not blind obedience. All moral discourses should be understood in this framework.

The ethical perspective concerning labour is that labour is a command from God, and that labour is part of worship, as a constructive contribution towards development through the service to both the community and one's neighbour. Labour must improve the quality of life of the community, promote justice in the community, develop an ethos of responsibility within the community, serve peace, and be constructive. Traditions and norms pertaining to responsible labour include (Vorster, 2007:98-100) that labour always enjoys significance because it is part of the process of re-creation. Occupations must be seen as callings from God where God provides individuals with gifts and talents to fulfil their calling. People work as caretakers for God and labour must be

fulfilling and undertaken with integrity, honesty, sincerity, and willingness. No worker is unimportant, and no worker can be a slave to another, although the worker must be reliable.

A model of leadership that promotes accountability and an ethical corporate culture is needed to address the problem of institutional corruption. Although antecedents of stewardship behaviours are unknown, the stewardship theory presents factors promoting accountability for the well-being of organisations (Leavell, 2016:1). Hernandez (2012:40) proposes that examining the psychological elements and processes that create stewardship behaviour might help business to understand, develop, and sustain the symbiotic integrity of business and society.

4.4 Good Practices for Christian Stewards

The larger Westminster Catechism (1648) provides a foundation for the Reformed hermeneutical principles, which opens the way for reflection on biblical ethical theory. Biblical ethical principles are generally called norms, which indicate how decisions and choices should be made. Vorster (2007:9) refers to De Bruyn who differentiates between principles and norms. Principles are timeless and fitting to all situations, e.g., the commandment of love, being obedient to God, His justice, and principles of respect for human life. Norms gives direction and are formed by the principles in a specific situation.

The principles governing good practices applied by Christian stewards will only be relevant if the church has a valid and contributing voice in the public domain. De Gruchy (2007:39) calls that public theology; it is about life and should be understood by both Christians and non-Christians using a common language. It is more than just a theological reflection; it is about practically living Christian theological values and beliefs. It is where Christian tasks are explained to the public both from a theoretical reflection, and from a practical action point of view (Magezi, 2018:6).

Ethics is also concerned with human attitude, which is important in biblical anthropology. Biblical teaching on human attitude involves the awareness and acceptance of humankind's degeneration with the possibility of regeneration. Human attitude degenerated with the Fall, but by the grace of God in Christ, human attitude obtained the possibility of regeneration (Vorster, 2007:13). The attitude of the worker towards labour as service to one's neighbour should also be conducted with a dedication to their work because work creates more work for others. Paying taxes enables the government to create jobs and maintain social services. Labourers also share the responsibility to look after the poor and not only after themselves, and to make financial contributions to the church to enable the church to care for the poor (Vorster, 2007:98-99).

4.4.1 The role of public practical theology

Dreyer (cited by Magezi, 2018:6) argues that practical theology was the main focus regarding the practices of church and clergy. Those days are gone, with a broadened vision including the context of everyday life – locally, nationally, and on a global level. Osmer and Schweitzer (2003:218) describe the task of public practical theology which can be differentiated in three ways, namely: (i) where practical theology includes the public as one of the audiences, including everyday situations in its study, (ii) contemplating, and (iii) facilitating dialogue between theology and the current culture. Although a precise meaning is debatable, Paeth (2004:1) explains that public theology suggests an all-inclusive theological consideration ingrained in biblical wisdom, philosophical breakdown, historical insights, and social formation seeking to uncover the theological problems and matters within human culture, society, and experience.

Good practices for public theology, in addition to including constructive dialogues, should also include the work done by sociology, economics, environmental studies, and natural studies to have a meaningful impact and to be relevant and applicable outside the walls of the church, so that it can be an effective public advocate for a Christian view of society (Paeth, 2004:48). Various works of Jürgen Moltmann were studied by Paeth in the context of how public theology contributes from church to civil society. He explains that for Moltmann the Christian community must understand their purpose and missions from a stance focussed on the coming kingdom of Christ and apply these principles within a modern pluralist society. Some of the key principles are that God's kingdom comes to the poor, the heavily laden, humiliated, and abused – the outcasts of modern society. God calls individuals to create hope where there are unfair conditions, giving rights to the rightless, forgiving sins, and reconciling broken relationships. Another principle is to believe in Jesus Christ not just as a moral exemplar or political revolutionary, but as the Son and logos of God. Furthermore, practically living and working to give hope in public life, knowing that it is not only the role of theologians, religious leaders, priests, pastors, and experts, but includes active laypersons, where the Christian identity should not only be seen in social and political actions but, with other social movements, maintain its non-identity, moving from a realm of ease and privilege to one of worldly oppression and disadvantage.

Public theology “refers to the *engagement* of a living religious tradition with its public environment – the economic, political, and cultural spheres of our common life” (Benne, 1995).

If true stewardship takes its place in society and the church today, it must be from a genuine theology and praxis; the “bottom line” is that the resurrection faith of the people must be concrete and committed to not abandoning this world needing all the care, love, and sacrifice we can

commit to it. This is the Christian ambiguity, the priority that we have to get straight (Hall,1990:121).

Koopman (2014:986) refers to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's work and how it reflects a theology of a life together in unity, with justice and reconciliation being the main tasks of public theology. This is also supported by Russel Botman who dedicated his life to living a life together in dignity towards all living things. Koopman refers to Dirkie Smit who stated that this life together is crucial for reconciliation and justice, and that all Christians should be given the opportunity to get to know, love, and serve each other and carry each other's burdens. He calls on churches and theologians to make South African's aware of this dream of a country in unity, justice, and reconciliation. This is public practical theology.

4.4.2 The church as partner

Hall (1990:61-65) argues that the "dehellenisation" of the Christian faith is one of the most crucial requirements of Christian theology as well as the disestablishment of Christianity. Before Christianity was adopted as the religion of the Roman Empire, the Christian faith existed as a voluntary, countercultural movement, embraced by people at their own risk. To be a Christian before 313 CE was to opt for life outside respectability and against the dominant culture stream. After the establishment of the Christian religion, the Council of Nicaea (325) was convened by Constantine, which influenced the individual responsibility of the Christian person because stewardship was seen as a responsibility of everyone together who claimed to be members of the body of Christ, referring to Acts 2:44, leading it to becoming an officially supported cult, with support extended to the material as well as less tangible matters. Thus, there was no need on the part of the Christian to take ownership of their stewardship role because the church's needs would be provided for by the state and society at large, leading to the Christianity that identified more with the dominant political and economic classes of society under the conditions of the establishment. Spiritualisation of the faith and its political establishment continues to influence the development of stewardship, up to today.

The church has a social function uniquely found in its role within contemporary society. It should assist in defining good practices to follow. This does not mean the church has to take on extra roles outside of their scope, but becoming a contributor within our wider society is critical (van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:740).

The church's role and how congregations learn from each other is of critical importance. Smit argues that the real relevance of the church's purpose and role is sometimes forgotten, but when

we observe what the typical person on the lowest level is doing, this is when the role and relevance again becomes clear (Smit, 2008:105-106).

By addressing and making effort to alleviate poverty and lessen unemployment the church can in one way ensure that social justice is implemented in society. Batista *et al.* (as cited by van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:740) argue that the church should acknowledge that humans are dependent on social structures where the church's role is in exposing, being in solidarity with the affected, understanding what causes poverty and suffering, and aiming to change the state of affairs that sustain poverty.

4.4.3 Christian mission to care for creation: society, economics, and the environment

António Guterres (July 2022), the Secretary-General of the United Nations, calls on everyone to work towards achieving the SDGs in support of world peace, dignity, and prosperity on a healthy planet.

4.4.3.1 Society

Groff and Smoker (2014) quote various religions and spiritual traditions in the world promoting and contributing to building a culture of global peace. This study focuses on the role of the Christian steward for business leaders involved in SD. When imagining a South Africa at peace, it is necessary to “consult” different spiritual perspectives and their views concerning peace. Sikhism believes that God will bestow abiding peace in people's minds when they sing of God, hear Him, and let His love take root within them – then all sadness and depression will go away. For Islam, a Muslim is a person submitting to the will of Allah and is an establisher of peace through his/her acts and behaviour. Hinduism believes the Lord lives in the heart of every creature and will be turned upon the wheel of Maya. They have to take shelter in him; he will provide peace by his grace. The purpose of the whole Torah is to promote peace according to Judaism. Perfect Liberty Kyodan believes everything exists for world peace, whereas Christianity believes that the peacemakers are blessed for they shall be called sons of God. The Sacred Pipe, by Black Elk, Lakota Sioux Medicine Man, believes that peace comes from within the souls of men when they realise that in the middle of the universe lives Wakan-Tanka.

From the above, it seems that most, if not all religions, are searching for peace; hence, it is important to implement good practices regulating peaceful dealings. Good stewardship should contribute toward a culture of peace, including peaceful profit-making, which will reflect as an act of worship, glorifying God. Stümke (2020:45) understands that peace according to Christian principles is experienced in the inseparable righteousness of people and the justice in the land. Peace is concerned with personal experience, political experience, and social achievement. This

study supports and extends the notion that peace also includes the righteousness and justice experienced in the economic- and environmental concerns of life.

In Chapter 3 evidence reflected how good practices have been corrupted due to the rules of law not enforced or adhered to by a selfish, ethically blind minority dominating public life. The call for peace, dignity, and a healthy planet is a call from humanity and the society of Jesus.

Willard (1998:299) refers to the earthly 'society of Jesus' where his people on earth are committed to living life as His students and co-labourers, promising that He would be with them every moment, making provisions for those who are apprentices to Him in kingdom living. When this happens people will find Jesus admirable in every aspect of life and constantly seek His presence and to be directed, taught, and supported by Him in everything in their lives as He is the head of the community, learning how to do everything 'in the name of the Lord (Col 3:17) as if He was doing it. He will transform the inner life of humans, and his example will become our natural (and supernatural) course of action.

Interested in how public theology can progress and support substantive moral values within an instrumentalised and secularised society, Paeth (2004:3) addresses the fundamental problem of the increasing power of public life. In this regard, he looks to Max Weber who refers to it as "instrumental" and "formal" modes of rationality, seeking to categorise the rationality of human actions, based on empirical and quantifiable measures.¹⁰ This notion is in contrast with Christian ethics, concerning the nature of human good, and a vision of the world to come. It challenges the relevance of Christian ethics in modern life. Religion would be no more than an aesthetic escape valve when Christianity has nothing to add to modern life, the values of democracy, and liberalism including freedom when attempting to give meaning to a meaningless life. Constructive Christian social ethics must become relevant and partake in modern life issues.

In society, we have the minority, but also the majority, voice. Sharbaugh (2009:8) writes that the majority of voices embrace a "common theology" asserting that a sovereign God created and ordered life under his governance, recognising the order of creation with the current social structure of the ruling class, legitimating the existing structures. Walter Brueggemann (cited by Sharbaugh, 2009) argues that although the Old Testament claims this "common theology", at the same time it testifies to a crisis in that theology. As crucial importance the crisis is represented by

¹⁰ Weber's analysis of the different types of rationality and recognises four different modes of reason in society: Instrumental-, value-, formal-, and substantive rationality. Although these modes are not exclusive to each other, he highlights the rise of the instrumental and formal modes. These as being expressive of the emergence of modern forms of economic life. See Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) 24-5, 85-6. Cf. Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation". In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 77ff.

the minority voice, embracing pain. He writes that faith is against not having a voice, it is against a culture where some voices concerning power and the powerlessness are excluded in a society, and where social power no longer has the ability to listen. The Bible instructs us to have a voice on behalf of the powerless; it should be a testimony – as if it is the voice of God. God's revelation is in the middle of the unsolved issues of this life.

Johnson (2012:1) refers to biblical scholars suggesting that the Word of God can be read to resist the power of the Empire, and examined whether the question of class matters in an age of Empire. Referring to Walter Brueggemann who saw the Word of God as a narrative observer of a God united against the Empire, intervening for the common ones, inviting us to a future shaped like the *basilica* of God, a world where no one is hungry, poor, oppressed or exploited, especially immigrants, widows, orphans, and the poor. Biblical faith disrupted the Empire, witnessing an alternative vision. Christian religious instructors must support believers to be faithful to their baptismal work, accepting the freedom one has in God to resist evil, engage in public life, restrain Empire, and understand the concept of class and how it shapes us.

Nation-building should form the basis of all stakeholders' and societies' visions. Human dignity must be respected; it is not a new concept, and it aligns with old patriarchal ideas in indigenous cultures as respect for males, women, and children opposed to a life marked by poverty leading to alcohol abuse, addiction, and brutality affecting societies. Education is core to nation-building and should be the responsibility not only of government but of churches and other religious institutions, NGOs, and civil society (Vorster, 2007:37).

Vorster (2007:73) argues that if the destiny of the poor is viewed from a Christian ethical point it is in contrast to neoliberalism. Although there are positive contributions made by neo-liberalism, he calls for a quest to include philosophy and policy bringing immediate and direct comfort to the poor, referring to what Küng refers to as a philosophy in "neo-liberalism with a social responsibility", or as Terreblanche refers to a paradigm shift needed towards a philosophy of social democracy in our country.

4.4.3.2 Economics

Protestant work ethic promoted during the early 16th century unleashed some of the greatest powers that capitalism produced. The capitalist revolution was attributed by Max Weber to Calvinism. Calvin, as also instructed from a biblical stewardship notion, supported the right of private ownership of property, and promoted free enterprise. Free enterprise generated some of the highest living standards, increased life expectancy, and some of the great advances in history were from industry and medicine. The Reformation was one of the most important eras during

this century, giving us the Word of God, religious and conscience freedom, the rule of law, the break of power, and constitutionally restricted republics. It highlighted God's sovereignty; the final authority of the Word of God; Jesus as the head of the church; and everyone as justified by the grace of God based on the salvation work of Christ, by faith alone. The law and liberty of the Western world and beyond was influenced by these pedagogies regarding the corruption of humanity, the covenant, and the role of the church and government. Everyone became part and benefitted from this Faith and Freedom movement (Hammond, 2017:196-197). Hammond invites all of us to re-examine the history and principles of the Reformation. He quotes Martin Luther as follows:

If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God, except precisely that point which the world and the devil are at the moment attacking, then I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Him. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battle front besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point (Luther, quoted by Hammond, 2017:196-197).

Weber (1930:xxx) notes that capitalism is “identical to the pursuit to profit, and forever *renewed* profit, using continuous, rational, capitalistic enterprise”. This complete capitalistic order of society is one where an individual capitalistic enterprise will be doomed to extinction if not taking advantage of its peaceful profit-making opportunities. Weber (1930:19) refers to Benjamin Franklin's quotation from Proverbs 22:29: “Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men”. The role of virtue and proficiency in a calling can be seen when the earning of money is done legally, which was also part of Franklin's ethics. Weber reminds us of this and links it to a person's responsibility in a calling which is the characteristic of the social ethic and foundation of a capitalist culture. Where the individual feels responsible towards the content of his professional activity, not so much the profession but the attitude towards work (Weber, 1930:141), the conscious acceptance of ethical maxims by all stakeholders is crucial for the sustainability of the present-day capitalistic structure.

The purpose of Christian life is not about wealth accumulation but about loving God and loving others. First Corinthians 4:1-2 reiterates: “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful”.

Sibilio (2006:263) reminds the servants that they are accountable to God; they hold moral authority over humans before God, distinguishing the gospel of Christ from cults, knowing that morals should not only be learned but lived. Christian business leaders should be stewards the mysteries of God, learn them, live them, and be faithful. Stewards must be watchful (Lk 12), trustworthy (1 Cor 4:1&2), and blameworthy (Ti 1:7).

The purpose, vision, mission, and values of an organisation will guide what the real focus or heart of the organisation is. Similar to that of a church as mentioned earlier, what the typical person on the lowest level is doing is when the role and relevance once again becomes clear (Smit, 2008:105-106).

Peaceful profits are not acquired when business pays low wages (Weber,1930:25). From an individual view, a sense of responsibility is indispensable, and “an attitude, at least during working hours, is freed from continual calculations of how the customary wage may be earned with a maximum of comfort and a minimum of effort”. Work must be carried out as if it is a calling not summonsed by low or high wages but can only be carried out due to an arduous educational process.

From a business perspective, inequality should be considered as one of the most important areas to contribute positively to the triple challenge. A just and fair society, according to Benton (2013:33), has three overlapping areas. These are:

- *Existential equality*. Everyone has the right to exist and access to means to sustain their life. As business leaders, what is the role we play in giving the community we operate within access to a sustainable life?
- *Legal equality*. Everyone, whether the least or the greatest in society, should be subjected to the same law. As business leaders, do we treat everyone the same under the same law or do we have different laws and regulations for different ranks?
- *Political equality*. All humans are equal before God. True democracy is where everyone has a voice. As business leaders, do we listen to every voice?

Fortuin *et al.* (2022:2) advise that governments conducive to growing the economy and reducing wealth inequality must focus on reorganising the labour market, enlarging revenue, allocating more finances and resources to education and infrastructure, decreasing debt and public wage bills, and privatising state-owned enterprises (SOEs) that are not productive.

Conradie (2011:8, 15) reminds us of the role of each Christian and to look after the environment. He calls on the church to expand their involvement and not narrow it down to only be concerned with human salvation, the doctrine of divine transcendence, the emphasis of the Judaeo-Christian tradition on human domination over nature, and perceiving the environmental- and ecological crisis as “new age” or as the biblical apocalyptic prophecies. The Christian faith and Christian theology must include ecology in discourses concerning the meaning of faith and theology to recognise and see the ecological- and environmental crisis as an opportunity for Christian renewal

and reformation. The spiritual dimension of this crisis must be acknowledged, and the way out of this dilemma is religious. Faith communities can foster an environmental ethos and make valuable contributions. All Christian churches can offer resources, buildings, awareness programmes, etc., to address environmental challenges effectively.

The biblical concept of “covenant” in both the Old and New Testaments includes all of creation and there is no distinction between the justice of people and justice for other parts of the created order. In terms of land, possession, dispossession, and repossession it is essential to understand that the land meant the *place* to the Hebrews. *Place* is where one makes vows, lives out promises, and finds covenant. Land was not only a resource but a *place*. According to Walter Brueggemann (as cited by DeWitt, 1996:39), it was intimately bound to culture and *shalom*. Justice was to be done in the land, together with its people. Nature, psyche, and society are “just”.

4.4.4 Christian steward and/or personhood development

From the previous chapters, it has been found that the responsibility of the individual to take control of their skills and personhood (integrity) development is lacking in the overall vision of the NDP 2030 and can contribute remarkably to the inclusive vision of the UN and the triple challenges South Africa is facing (Klaasen, 2017:1).

Interestingly, Klaasen (2017:2) notes that the church (post-apartheid) in partnership with the state, continued with mainstream development approaches and contributed largely to the debates through institutions such as the Ecumenical Foundation of South Africa (EFSA). Engagements with positions of the Bretton Woods institutions and the modernisation and dependency theories focussed on economic development with a holistic approach to development, shifting from the liberal free market economic policies (advocating technological progress and modernisation) to a social-economic plan focusing on human capital and capabilities. Technology and modernisation are being replaced by social capital and human capabilities, where human beings became the centre of development (Swart *et al.* 2010:16-17). Instead of human capital with an attached market value which leads to the progress of economic exchange and sale of commodities, the focus should have rather been on the development and nurturing of the personhood of people to accept and take responsibility for development (Klaasen, 2017:3).

4.4.4.1 The individual

According to Masters (1994:11), Christian honesty can be tested by the individual’s willingness to take up the task of stewardship.

There is a fine line between the development of the secular self and the development of biblical personhood. Ellen (2019:115-124) argues that within a secular context the self-esteem of human beings is redefined. Humans are seen as good people needing adjustment and balance and not as sinners in need of a Saviour. Self-esteem is where humans are the centre of all which becomes the key to development, and that humans need self-actualisation. The worship of creation is set above the worship of the Creator. From a Christian perspective, the focus is shifted away from a person's self-esteem and belonging to Christ, where the focus is on living justly before the sight of God and understanding their role and responsibilities, and how to operate. It includes repenting of what is wrong and walking according to what is right. Humans' outcome cannot be directed by self-actualisation but only by the sovereign hand of God.

4.4.4.2 The leader

Management education recently involved teaching business ethics due to large organisations facing major problems. The problem with teaching business ethics is that it places a negative view on managers, leading managers to be undecided, uncertain, or even justify bad conduct, thus being ineffective and counterproductive to solve the major problems concerned in the organisation. Donaldson (2008) presents a pro-management theory which offers a positive appreciation of managers consisting of three components, namely: structural functionalism, strategic functionalism, and stewardship. Stewardship theorists argue that feelings of autonomy and responsibility are the driving factor of the employee's motivation to perform.

Individuals have a remarkable influence on the welfare of society. Leadership is a significant component of an organisation's ethical culture which illustrates the standards of behaviour and conduct of employees (Peppers, 2016:33). Understanding the underlying causes of what makes individuals feel responsible for the long-term well-being of others instead of focussing on their success can help with the underlying principles or antecedents of why stewardship behaviour or culture is necessary for SD. It is important to compare the agency theory used mostly by organisations – which focuses on an economics-based paradigm where humans seek to maximise self-interest, with the stewardship theory – which is an alternative view where the individuals or stakeholders see the greater long-term utility by focusing on others, a prosocial relationship-centred behaviour instead of a short-term opportunistic self-serving behaviour (Hernandez, 2012:2).

Parris and Peachy (as cited by Peppers, 2016:39) note that servant leaders have distinctive personalities, willing to serve others. The servant leadership concept is evident in individuals like Mother Theresa, Moses, Harriet Tubman, Lao-tzu, Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Confucius, and Jesus Christ as the decisive illustrator of a servant leader.

Jesus taught us to pray, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done. On earth as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:10). He gives us a “life-tip”: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matt 6:33). When asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus answered them: “[T]he kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ for indeed, the kingdom of God is within” (Lk 17:20-21).

Willard (1998:329) reminds us about the church’s role in teaching and understanding the kingdom of God. He highlights that some internationally known leaders commented on how little is said in Christian teachings relating to the kingdom of God, where some admitted never hearing or ever preaching about this topic.

4.4.5 What ought to be going on: poverty, unemployment, and inequality

Sunter and Illbury (2021:63) refer to a saying by the Stoics: ‘The rules of the game lie in the circle beyond your control; if you had the power to change them on a whim, they would not be rules’. According to Grant (2017), Stoicism, an ancient school of philosophy (currently a popular comeback), believes in a strict “dichotomy of control” – the world is split into what we can control and what we can’t. Suffering is seen as ‘self-inflicted’ when we believe that we have power over that which we can’t control. The solution, according to the Stoics, is to focus on that which we can control – our opinions, behaviour, our wants, what we do not like – instead of external circumstances. This mindset can lead to people to accepting things that should not be accepted, merely because we do not have control over them. The big difference between the worldview of the Christians and Stoics is that Christians ask God for help and guidance, while the Stoics seek help from within.

Van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015:734) refer to Patel who asserts that to reduce poverty, we need to create practical social networks, and relationships built on trust between individuals, groups, and communities. In other words, in a community suffering from poverty-related issues, the same will be reflected in their social interactions and processes.

The NDP 2030 vision should be a verb for all Christian stewards, and a vision of what ought to be going on.

By 2030, we seek to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. We seek a country wherein all citizens have the capabilities to grasp the ever-broadening opportunities available. Our plan is to change the life chances of millions of our people, especially the youth; life chances that remain stunted by our apartheid history (NPC, 2012:5).

Swart (2013:9) asks whether the South African Christian churches can contribute something more to development than merely charity and empowerment to address poverty in the country. He refers to Susanne Johnson's (2012) contribution (although American-based, it is still relevant for South Africa) concerning Christian diaconal practice relating to the poverty challenge. Johnson from Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Texas, is a practical theologian and professor of religious education. She contends that economic globalisation and the neoliberal market-economic capitalism dominates Christian practice. Her strict analysis of the moral bankruptcy of the present system reveals how this influences dominant Christians and how they have been culturally compromised by this system. Johnson argues that faith communities have for many centuries been shaped by remembering the poor as a real historical practice characterised by different traditions. She highlights that too many people are disappearing into the bottom of history due to uncontrolled free market forces. The dominant neoliberal worldview results in a value orientation where the unregulated and free market leads to the most efficient way to create economic growth benefiting all partners and establishments in a society.

This dominant neoliberal worldview is driven by greed, believing greed is good (Johnson, 2004:197). In Chapter 3, a clear definition was given of the difference between greed and self-interest. The latter is based on biblical principles and takes into account the interest of self and others (trickle-down effect). Greed, on the other hand, is concerned with the accumulation of wealth for self despite the common good, and does not have a trickle-down effect.

From a biblical perspective, practically applied Sekhaulelo (2014:2) explains that the Lord restrained poverty by implementing economic legislation, safeguarding the poor against interest, and not showing partiality during disputes. Another regulation was to provide produce and alms to the poor along with the overall uplifting and sustaining of the welfare of the poor.

Poverty alleviation and care for the poor are important throughout the Word of God. In the Old Testament there is frequent mention of orphans, widows, and strangers, whom the covenant people must care for (Dt 19:17-19). The year of Jubilee was instated to prevent poverty, and exploitation of the poor was harshly judged (Is 7:6; Am 2:6-7) and described as the fruit of a disconnected relationship with God (Is 1:23). In the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6:1-4), the Prophetic Address (Matt 25:31-46), the life of the first congregation (Acts 2:41-47), and the apostle's call to care for the poor (2 Cor 9:1-15; Gal 2:7-10; Jas 2:1-9) all addressed Christian ethics regarding the order to care for the poor.

The link between unemployment and poverty is clear when one considers that limited or no employment opportunities have a fundamental effect on reducing sustainable poverty as payable

work equips the individual to look after the basic needs of their own and their families' needs (van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:736; Vorster, 2007:72).

God-honouring uses of individual possessions can be used for physical support of the self and family (cf. Mk 7:9-13), to help the needy (cf. Lk 3:11; 12:33; Jas 2:14-16; 1 Jn 3:17-18), and to support the government (cf. Matt 22:17; Rom 13:6-7).

4.4.6 Governance

Former South African president, Nelson Mandela, said:

Even the most benevolent of governments are made up of people with all the propensities for human failings. The rule of law as we understand it consists in the set of conventions and arrangements that ensure that it is not left to the whims of individual rulers to decide on what is good for the populace. The administrative conduct of government and authorities are subject to the scrutiny of independent organs. This is an essential element of good governance that we have sought to have built into our new constitutional order (Mandela, 2002:n.p.).

A long-term strategic plan, financial disciplines, and controls to support a sustainable business model, with the right assets, capital, and reserves to secure the future success of the business is the role of effective corporate governance (Hendrikse & Hefer-Hendrikse, 2017:7).

In his article aimed at education, Brunsdon urgently calls for the decolonisation of the colonial knowledge, structures, and epistemologies that are evident in the new dispensation of South Africa. Decolonisation challenges practical theologians to choose, to regress into an old 'selfish' approach of doing practical theology, or to take a 'selfless' approach to doing practical theology. According to Brunsdon, the colonial essence of South Africa can be seen on at least three levels, namely: the spiritual-psychological, physical, and intellectual levels. This highlights that the Euro-ethnocentrism which accompanied the colonisation of South Africa, firstly, had spiritual and psychological effects, whereas the West inevitably assumed the 'cultural backwardness' of the Global South and believed it was their moral duty to civilise the world. From a physical level, it was concerned with reviewing governance methods and losing political independence. The colonial verve resulted in intellectual losses, referred to as the colonial mind, where the imperialists believed that their knowledge and epistemologies were superior to all forms of local knowledge, where it offered a non-violent way of 'teaching the colonised to become a mirror image of the coloniser'. Shongwe and Kgatla (cited by Brunsdon, 2019:3) describe these methods as "convincing someone of the inferiority of their own culture and knowledge" and educating them with the coloniser's knowledge. As a result, the colonised forgot about their own culture and ways

of doing things (Brunsdon, 2019:8). Brunsdon identifies a big opportunity for practical theology whereby we move forward and become 'selfless', thinking wider than the Western practical theological identity, which we have been conditioned to know and believe to be the best (Brunsdon, 2019:5).

Brunsdon (2019:8) became 'selfless' and realised that theology must be relevant, that we all undertake our role as steward and owner in the context we find ourselves in. The future requires more of us than to hold each 'other' accountable for the 'sins of the fathers'.

Contributing towards resolving the conflicts in South Africa, three grounds have been identified by Brunsdon (2019:5). These are:

1. *The pressing contextual reality one finds oneself in.* This encompasses our multi-cultural reality in the new South Africa, where everyone (the minority included) has an equal voice. Self-destructive governance, lawlessness, and a failing economy defines our country, making us vulnerable and insecure. This leads to poverty, inequality, and very high rates of crime and violence, corruption, unemployment, and xenophobia, showcasing our moral decay.
2. *The Christian nature of practical theology.* Practical theology is a welcoming and forgiving space, inviting everyone – all God's creatures – to the table of reflection. This includes critical reflection in line with Scripture and the Christian ethos.
3. *The ecological nature of knowledge.* This includes interacting with epistemologies other than what you are familiar with, without neglecting your own paradigms and knowledge.

Hernandez (2012:3) differentiates between the agent theory and steward theory. She explains that the agency theory paradigm is economics-based where humans are seen as actors who seek to maximise self-interest. To safeguard the owner against the agent's self-interest. Demsetz *et al.* (as cited by Hernandez, 2012:3) recommend that companies use control mechanisms such as governance structures (board of directors) and executive pay schemes (pay-for-performance) to ensure that the agents' interest is aligned to the principals' (owners) interests. Stewardship theory, on the other hand, offers an alternative view where the company actors work toward greater long-term utility, focused on others with prosocial behaviours instead of a self-serving, short-term opportunistic behaviour. The stewardship theory is more relationship-centred, creating a culture of collaboration where the organisation promotes behaviours benefitting the organisation, and trustworthy behaviour in leaders and managers. Stewardship places the long-term welfare of a group above individual self-interest.

Hernandez (2012:40) reminds us of the rift found between social responsibility and organisational practices which can be differentiated by the chasing of individual self-interest at the cost of collective welfare. Scandals, like corruption and greed within the business arena, highlight the need to investigate and understand how organisations are governed. Hernandez proposes a stewardship governance where stewardship behaviours serve a shared valued end, providing social benefits to collective interests over a long-term, linking the organisational objective of sustainability, “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland Commission, 1987).

Central to God’s covenant are redemption, works, and grace. Christian stewardship is not only concerned with prayer, worship, charity, and evangelism, but also with considering that even during hard economic realities we serve each other with all our resources (limited and scarce) as God graciously gives, knowing that Yahweh provides all the needs, privileges, and assignments to individual Christians (Boloje & Groenewald, 2014:10).

4.5 Summary

The Word of God, together with godly fellowship, will lead Christian stewards to follow and adhere to good practices and ethical decision-making, learning, and living. Second Timothy 3:16 reads, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”.

Individuals have a major influence on the welfare of society. Understanding factors contributing to individuals who feel a long-term connection or commitment to the well-being of others, compared to a focus based on the welfare of their success, can be helpful when defining what ought to be going on and what the difference between stewardship (selfish) and Christian stewardship (self-interest) represents.

Normative approaches, such as stewardship governance, which influences individuals, leaders, and businesses who maintain and sustain our economics, societies, and the environment, should be set on the same standard for each country, community, business, and individual reflecting basic human needs. Normative approaches can change over time and should be continually analysed as they provide the “rules of the game” and how societies develop. It should be a non-negotiable to operate a business in a society where the basic needs of most of the community are not met. It should be the responsibility of every person in their role as Christian stewards to take this role seriously. ‘Selfless’ leadership is what ought to be going on concerning our daily dealings, whether it is within government, business, or civil society (including the church).

Institutions should offer valuable development programmes and tools to equip individuals or groups to take up their role as Christian stewards and develop as human beings (personhood) in all aspects of life, especially developing spiritually and not becoming ethically blind. Learning and living from God concerning our Christian stewardship role will lead to reduced poverty, reduced unemployment, and advocate equality.

God's vision of justice is to be practiced by the church. An alternative community not influenced by the market-driven church – an alternative community where stewards live in covenant with the living God (Vallet, 2001:221) – forms the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5 – CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP FOR SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESS LEADERS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to define alternative practices and strategies from a Christian stewardship perspective, along with a public practical theological model using theological resources for business leaders aiming for SD.

This chapter will use Osmer's fourth task for practical theological research to address the pragmatic question of how the Christian steward must respond or what must be done to overcome or improve the triple challenge South Africa is facing to develop a sustainable model to be used by business leaders. This study does not attempt to present a conclusive or final plan, as direct engagement with local stakeholders should be present to identify their current specific problems and find solutions together. The role of government, the private sector, and civil society (as well as the church) should be to implement strategies and instil a stewardship culture by promoting human dignity; creating spaces for people to develop and participate in empowering others to take responsibility; and being accountable and becoming involved in the improvement and development of their personhood, community, and society: nation-building.

The objective is to articulate how the Christian stewardship paradigm can enable South African business leaders to attain and work towards reaching SDGs more effectively and, in turn, build and develop the nation. The framework of this chapter will be built around the purpose, vision, mission, and values required to build a sustainable practice that will improve the welfare of all stakeholders and society. Defining an exact and definite purpose, vision, mission, and values according to Christian stewardship is beyond the scope of this study, and future research is continuously required to adapt to the practicalities of changing life, environment, and economics.

Hall (1990:17, 25, 74) reminds us of the depth and breadth of stewardship as an ancient wisdom piece about human vocation, "what we have been harbouring in our midst (hiding under our collection plates!) is a pearl of great price". Human identity and vocation are influenced by the stewardship metaphor in the Scriptures because human identity is associated with God, firstly, and with the creation, secondly. From a biblical perspective, defining a human being is from first to last relational; we are who we are, and we are perceived by the people we stay with, interact with, and have our being – standing in relationship with God, with other human beings, and with the "other kind" – not human creatures of God. The human, appointed as God's steward, is accountable and responsible to God for his/her fellow creatures. The Bible is the living Word of the living God for living human beings. *Sola Scriptura*, God's involvement in the world is

inseparable from the life and involvement of the Saviour Jesus Christ, and it is through the “lens” of Jesus Christ that the church should view and interpret the world. If we look at the world currently, it is easy to see that human beings should find a new way of conceiving their identity and vocation; alternatively, if not, then we are facing a catastrophic future. For this reason, the biblical stewardship metaphor should be seriously considered to define our identity and vocation in a new way. The scriptural references noted in this study make us aware of our purpose and need to learn to live these from the core of our hearts.

5.2 Inspired by Scripture

5.2.1 Exodus 20:1-3: The Ten Commandments – the covenant with Israel

Ancient legal material and collections were discovered, one being the famous Code of Hammurabi dating back several hundred years before Moses. These collections were made up of sample rulings for specific types of cases and what penalties for which offenses, instead of indicating certain right or wrong behaviour or telling people what they should or should not do. The Ten Commandments is a type of law prescribing certain types of behaviours and is called apodictic law. These apodictic laws were rarely found in legal collections in the ancient Near East. Due to the apodictic form of the Ten Commandments, it acts more as a covenant than a category of law (Walton & Matthews, 1997:107).

Jesus said that He came to fulfil the law, not to destroy the Law (Matt 5:17), and that He makes people think about the inner meaning of the Commandment (Matt 5:21-28). Today we still have to ask ourselves, what is it that God wants to teach us through the Ten Commandments? Dobson (1977:108) poses that as Christians when we refer to the first commandment – that we shall have no other God, is it then still appropriate to speak of Mount Everest as the Mother Goddess? For others, it is a question regarding what we put first in our lives; do we put God first, our wealth, our family, our power? Jesus confirmed that when we put God first everything else in our lives will find its proper place in the pattern of life which God prepared for us (Matt 6:24-34). By obeying the first commandment it demonstrates Yahweh’s incomparable might and love, and His faithfulness to the promises He made to His people, beginning with Abraham. This first commandment sets Israel apart from other nations making them unique, where the allegiance is

to God only, in that Yahweh is not the head of a pantheon¹¹, there are no gods in His presence only angels (1 Ki 22:19-20) (Enns, 2000:414; Walton & Matthews,1997:107).

5.2.2 The covenant with Noah

The waters are gone, and God promises never again to flood and destroy the earth, launching a new creation in continuity with the original creation where Noah is turned into a new Adam. God again blesses humans and commands them to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 9:1; cf. 1:22, 28). He solidifies their dominion over animals (v. 2; cf. 1:28), resupplies them with food (v. 3; cf. 1:29-30), and presents them with a prohibition (vv. 4; 2:16-17). The order of the animals listed in Genesis 1:28 is now listed in reverse order in Genesis 9:2, and they will respond to humans in “dread and fear” and will be delivered into the hands of the human being. To be “delivered into someone’s hands” is an idiomatic statement, meaning you are in their power, a power which creates fear and dread among non-humans. God also gives animals as food to the humans for the first time, as formerly it was only vegetation. The new creation takes on a new aspect where the blessing of the creatures is seen in view of preservation from destruction and where human existence is now dependent on killing where a tension exists. Animals are now delivered into the hands of humans with “fear and dread” in contrast to the Creator’s good will towards all living things. An obvious tension is now evident between the blessing God gives all living beings including the concession to kill (O’Connor, 2018:143-144).

5.2.3 Models of the wisdom of the cross, to apostles and other Christian leaders

Paul shares his reflections on the nature of Christian leadership and shows the Corinthians how the wisdom of the crucifixion which should be applied in their assessment of the apostles and other Christian leaders. The Corinthians wanted to be seen as and judged as the wise in society. Paul reminds them that God is the judge and humans are to bestow praise to Him. In 1 Corinthians 4:1, Paul refers to leaders like himself, Apollos, and Cephas, the same group of apostles and prophet/teachers to whom Paul said: “declare God’s wisdom, a mystery”. These leaders are described as “servants” and “co-workers”, and they should get their true identities from God and no one else. Paul declares the status of the Christian leaders using four terms: “servant” in 3:5, “subordinate” or “assistant” in 4:1, “fellow workers” in 3:9, and “manager” in 4:1 and in 4:2 which highlights the ultimate responsibility to God himself. When in this position, one must be trustworthy as the “manager” is charged with a range of tasks, which include to take initiative and be pro-

¹¹ Standard in ancient beliefs which had a pantheon, a divine assembly ruling the realm of gods, the supernatural, and the human world. These were typically a deity designated to a pantheon, and he, like other gods, would have at least one consort (female partner) (Walton & Matthews, 1997:107).

active when representing the master in a way that befits him, is reliable, and in good faith. Instead of assessing leaders on their wisdom, eloquence, and impressive personal presence, God's basis for judgement is different and calls to assess their leaders, "*those given a trust must prove faithful*" (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010:169-172).

The faithful servant of God can be trusted to present the gospel appropriately, not "with wise and persuasive words but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (2:4), and as 4:8-13 goes on to demonstrate, not as a shining success, but as "the scum of the earth," a status in keeping with their crucified Lord. The contrast with much religious practice today is marked.

5.2.4 First Peter 4:8-11 – referring to the characteristics of the Christian community

Peter draws the attention to the whole family of believers and God's readiness to "judge the living and the dead" (v. 5). This textual unit represents an eschatological shadow over the whole of life within this family, and God's generosity, empowering the Christian community for service to glorify God. Peter has two motifs (vv. 10-11), namely: eschatology, and the household of faith. Peter draws the Christian communities' attention in the tensions inherent in living in and engaging in the wider world. Cohesiveness among insiders and community solidarity is critical. Each phrase of this textual unit is tradition-laden, drawing on forms of instruction characteristic of the Christian community. Peter emphasises that communality in v. 7a reproduces a standard formula for eschatological pronouncement; v. 7b. depends on a catechetical pattern; v. 8a reprises the love command; v. 8b is proverbial, deriving from Proverbs 10:12; v. 9 draws on the familiar motif of hospitality; vv. 10-11a recalls the motif of "spiritual gifts" (e.g., Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12), and may borrow from the Jesus tradition represented in Luke 12:42; v. 11b is a doxological closing.

Peter turns his attention to the Christian communities' internal life; he compares it to a household and calls for harmony among believers. In the Greco-Roman political philosophy, the household was a microcosm of the body politic focusing on a range of social relationships and obligations, including distribution of power, boundary making and keeping, etc. The household represented a person's position in the world and how to delay or command respect towards others. The relations within the household had a ripple effect on the outside world of the household. Thus, Peter calls on Christians to have a mutuality of "one another", exercise unwavering love, and embrace the ideal of other-oriented service without reference to honour or power. These practices and behaviours (patterns of thought) cannot but have a positive ripple effect on the outside world, a world characterised by status-based allocation of power and privilege. The repetition of distinctive patterns of behaviour forms in us a certain identity. Eschatology is a cornerstone of the Christian imagination – a lens to view how we live day-to-day, our values and beliefs, individually and collectively: our attitude.

5.3 The Christian Stewardship Attitude

Whatever we do, it should be done with a Christian stewardship attitude. The Christian steward's attitude should be leveraged or used to engage in conversations with all stakeholders to be better stewards. The church, acting as the agency with positioning, numbers, and mobilisation networks, can guide discussions regarding personal convictions as a Christian challenging what is not right, and with the message of the gospel, individual Christians and the church as institutions, can work together to achieve the SDGs.

DeWitt (1996:101) reasons that to honour God as Creator is our ultimate purpose, and we do this in our role as a Christian steward (in terms of environmental issues and justice, socially and economically). The author proposes a stewardship framework that applies the following three steps:

- Awareness (seeing, identifying, naming, locating)
- Appreciation (tolerating, respecting, valuing, esteeming, cherishing)
- Stewardship (using, restoring, serving, keeping, entrusting).

The above-mentioned stewardship framework can be applied in all aspects of life. For example, to understand our purpose in life we have to be aware of our Creator, the creation, along with our identity and vocation as human beings. We become aware of the purpose by seeing, identifying, naming, and locating creation. Then we appreciate creation and our purpose as human beings by appreciating others, which then leads to a stewardship attitude where we use our gifts to restore, serve, and keep, and we can be entrusted to fulfil our purpose to glorify God with everything we have been given. Success in achieving our stewardship goals, depends on the appropriateness of our acts and how technologies and policies are put into practice, and then upon the values of the people involved, referred to in this study as *personhood* (DeWitt, 1996:122).

As humans, being aware of and appreciating God's work (creation, fall and redemption) will lead to the need to be part of, care, and act as stewards. For example, DeWitt (1996:4-16) reminds us of God's seven magnificent provisions for creation, as celebrated in Psalm 104, and stewards should be reminded of the incredible goodness and beauty that creates awe, wonder, and respect for the Creator and creation through the eras. Examples of these include the earth's energy exchange with the sun, where greenhouse gases make the Earth's temperatures warm enough to sustain the biosphere. The "ozone layer" is provided to protect all living creatures from the damaging radiation making the Earth habitable. When thinking of soil, soil builds and develops. Being aware of composting makes soil richer and better and takes place without any human cultivation. The process teaches patience, including God's patience as a Provider, when

considering how the dynamic fabric of roots and the organisms in the soil all bind the surface of the biosphere. Recycling is not a new invention. The creation uses, re-uses, and uses again the many substances in the soil, water, and air to maintain their living and non-living fabrics. These ecosystems are maintained and continue from one generation to the next. The process of percolation (water moving through or over soil, rocks, etc.) and evapotranspiration (water evaporates to the air) are two natural processes important for the provision for purifying water in creation. The ventilation system, or global circulations of water and air of the biosphere, provides the “breath” of life at the planetary scale, essential for watering the fabric of living things that enclose the Earth. Think of the 250 000 species of flowering plants, the provision of the continuation of species, even the adaptation to new situations, the earth is blessed with fruitfulness and abundant life. God created all human beings with the ability to explore and learn from His Creation by creation, and not only through that which is stated by modern science. Everyone has access to this learning experience. All these provisions by God are there for our benefit and one can only stand in complete awe when realising the wonder of it all.

Freedom of belief is important within the Christian stewardship framework and how we should, or not, interact with non-Christians. Vorster (2007:153-157) recommends an active plural option,¹² one where all religions should function in the public domain where everyone is allowed the opportunity to confess and profess their choice of religion and practice and observe it in public worship without any obligation to do it but out of free will. The researcher supports this option given Vorster’s research into practices of both the Old and New Testament confirming that there is no mention in the New Testament that government should defend the Christian faith by the sword, or prosecute any other religion but, that Christ recognises the authority and command of the Roman emperor, and Paul and Peter were expected to obey the power and pray for the leaders even if non-Christian. With this said, it is not expected that we should have or obey any other god(s) but God, we must obey His will, with the Christian attitude of love, stewardship, self-denial, and obedience to God which should manifest in the treatment of everyone including non-Christians.

¹² Based on the options for implementing religious rights, H. Warnick (cited by Vorster, 2007:157) distinguishes between an active neutral option and an active plural option for the implementation of the right to the freedom of religion. Vorster (2007) further identifies three extra options functioning in this debate, namely: the active state-religion option, the active universalistic option, and the active theocratic option. Vorster supports the active plural option.

The history of stewardship is highly influenced or susceptible to the specific interests of the day including the passions of the church administrative staff and individual theologians. It is time to apply the heritage of the term to the stewardship role of the future (Reumann, 1992:61-62).

Three biblical principles provide guidance on how stewards should look after the Lord's earth (DeWitt, 1996:28-30).

- *Earthkeeping principle*, just as the Lord keeps (*shamar* in Hebrew, meaning loving, caring, sustaining, and keeping) and sustains us, so shall we keep and sustain the Lord's creation.
- *Fruitfulness principle*, "enjoy but don't destroy creation's fruitfulness". In Gen 1:20 and 22 God declares, "be fruitful and increase..."
- *Sabbath principle*, creating a sabbath rest for creation as instructed in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 where one day is set aside for people and animals to rest. God also gives a sabbath year, a time for rest and restoration, where the land is protected from relentless exploitation, rejuvenating the land and getting things together again.

Usable practices will be articulated, including being aware of, to appreciate, and to steward the topic under discussion. Usable practices, including the attitudes, norms, and principles of Christian stewardship for business leaders working towards SD will be identified within the context of the business world and marketplace.

5.4 Purpose

5.4.1 The human

"The first task of the leader is to define reality", as suggested by CEO Max De Pree of Herman Miller, a furniture company in America, which has been cited as one of the best employers to work for. He explains that a leader who understands the realities that are affecting the organisation is a more effective leader. Such a leader drives the organisation towards success, which is coupled with his/her commitment to a "covenantal" relationship that has profound ethical implications. It is characterised by working together (not taking advantage of each other) towards a common goal, bound by this "covenantal" relationship, or mutual agreement and social contract (Caldwell *et al.* 2002; De Pree, 1989:11, 53).

The loss of meaning is evident in the plethora of books, plays, and films, and is celebrated by atheistic existentialism which represents the great spiritual fact of our era. It is difficult for Christians to understand that human beings, the multitudes, in this present century do not have a transcendent purpose in existence. Due to the loss of meaning, humans try to find order in this busyness. They do so by substituting the sense of transcendent meaning by devising curricula to

prioritise values that legislators construct and implement as codes of human rights and the like. By comparing our present century mindsets with that of the ancients (Jerusalem and Athens mindsets), who did not engage in morality by consensus, they at least assumed the good preceded and conditioned our values (Hall, 1990:82). In this present world where we substitute a sense of transcendent meaning by prioritising values, etc., it is the ideal opportunity for the Christian steward and the church to introduce our alternative community living in loving covenant with the living God, loving our neighbour as ourselves.

The Bible knows with precision and depth the most prominent answers that humans have given about their being, purpose, and destiny, on the one hand, the Homo sapiens created exalted images of themselves as gods, or demigods, or superhumans; that we are in control of our fate, full of potential and greatness, answering to no one. On the other hand, also aware of our delight in degrading ourselves, images that we are low, wormlike, bestial, meaningless, or pathetic, “a sexual twitch” (Sartre), a “nihilistic thought in the mind of God” (Kafka). Both these views of the images of humans are rejected in the Bible:

Against the equally frequent human attempts to hide in our frailty and bemoan our finitude, it presents a God who calls us to stand on our feet and be God’s covenant partners in the sustaining and enhancing of life (Hall, 1990:28-29).

The human’s purpose is directly connected to the innermost part of the human being – the heart – described as the control centre of personhood (Tripp, 2021). The purpose is therefore linked to what you believe the End to be, which defines our meaning and purpose. The Christian perspective is that the End of life on earth is the beginning of an eternal life with God (Jn 11:25; Matt 10:28; Phil 3:20-21). First, we need to love God as the Redeemer and Creator, accepting His love for creation and humans, and actively follow Jesus who created, sustains, and reconciles everything (DeWitt, 1996:100), before we can fully understand Christian stewardship.

5.4.2 The business

The purpose of a business, according to Nevins (2019), is to have a purposeful vision and be profitable. “Profitability” means long-term sustainable returns, achieved in a good, responsible, accountable, and ethical manner, being mindful to find the best solution to take care of the needs of all stakeholders.

A business (Hendrikse & Hefer-Hendrikse, 2017:20-24) is an enterprise or operation providing products or services involving functions and activities (buying, selling, producing, and accounting), operating in various environments (physical, political, environmental), and creating decision-making and problem-solving opportunities for management, in return for profits or cash

flow. The latter is determined and influenced by consumer needs and sustained by the consumer's satisfaction, and it is managed by certain set objectives (sales, costs, and profits). **The business framework** comprises four areas of responsibility, namely:

- *The workplace.* Employee rights, health and safety, development and training, and rewards.
- *The marketplace.* Ethical practices with consumers and suppliers.
- *The community.* Meeting realistic expectations of what the community expects from the business.
- *The environment.* The business is to be environmentally friendly and sensitive.

The business environment consists of the economic-, political-, physical-, social-, health-, regulatory-, and global economic environment; the national authority, regulated by various statutory legislation; and non-statutory and statutory bodies. The goal of a business is to ensure the long-term shareholder wealth maximisation. This is sustained by considering the TBL, the economic-, socio, and environmental aspects identified by Elkington (as cited by Barkemeyer *et al.*, 2014:6), also sometimes referred to as the people, the profit, and the planet aspects. The business environment, and its profit-making and job creating ability, affects the SD of a country. The ethical manner in which it is conducted should be challenged by church, the leaders, and individuals to make sure they do not become ethically blind.

DeWitt (1996:145) discovered in his study relating to the economy of the market, which is the business world, that the market economy emerged from the Western mindset and is central to how we perceive our role as the stewards of creation. The market economy affects what we value, use, and preserve, with no authority except the free self. Creation is seen as a resource, which is reduced and abstracted to land, labour, and capital. Price and the ability to pay the price affects how creation and human beings are treated. Opinions are only valued from those with purchasing power, leaving no room for the intrinsic good. Money talks. The same applies to production where people (the poor and future generations) without purchasing power have no say. Satisfaction is perceived as good even if it causes destruction to self, the community, or creation.

Kishtainy (2017:13-15) explains that human beings must work to survive, which is all due to sin. Jesus warned people against work, and that they should not commit sins while working, as it might shut them out of heaven because they only land up caring about getting rich, being jealous of other people's wealth, or end up loving clothes, jewels, and money more than God. Augustine transformed the society and economy of the Greeks, the cities of kings and small states, with wise rules into the City of God. Christ was at the top, as the Saviour of humanity, and the City of God was governed by human laws as well as God's laws. Aquinas, on the other hand, saw the society

and economy as a beehive where the bees were given roles by God: some gathered honey, others built walls, and others served the queen bee. In the human economy, some are working the land, others pray, and some fight. To not be greedy and desire other's money, was the most important thing to Aquinas. From this, we can ask: what constitutes a person to have a self-serving attitude compared to a biblical self-interest (where providing for self includes the notion to look after others) attitude?

Christian stewardship, as presented, is the total devotion of the individual's life to God. There are various sizes of businesses – small, medium, and large enterprises. Business life cycles can be short, medium, or long-term, with small, medium, or large profit margins. What is important is the purpose of the business and how the business operates to gain profits. The purpose of a business should therefore be linked to the overall purpose of humans, as people operate within the business. The purpose should be to glorify God first. *Why*: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex 20:1-3).

Hernandez (2012:3) describes two factors that cause people to feel responsible for the long-term well-being of the business and communities – the agency theory and the stewardship theory. The *agency theory* is an economics-based paradigm where humans are viewed as rational actors seeking to maximise their self-interest and optimise their gains, despite the benefit of others or a collective, and regardless of the consequences of the principles (as cited by Jensen & Meckling, 1976). In contrast to the agency theory is the *stewardship theory*. The latter draws from sociology and psychology where the actors see a bigger long-term utility, focusing on others (biblical self-interest) with a prosocial behaviour instead of self-serving, short-term opportunistic behaviour. Stewardship places the “long-term best interest of a group ahead of personal goals that serve the individual's self-interest¹³”. Cafferky (2015:117-118) confirms this notion of self-interest where the narrow view of self-interest leads to selfishness, where the concern for the welfare of others is considered only when it helps you get what you want. The broad view of self-interest includes all the interests you have as a human including the needs of others.

Practically, when defining a “purpose”, one should ask how the business glorifies God, and ask the questions Kishtainy (2017:241) posed for any business seeking true biblical self-interest which includes the interest of their stakeholders and the environment. How do we live well in a human society? What makes people happy, fulfilled, and feeling that they truly thrive?

¹³ Non-biblical self-interest which does not consider that self-interest includes the interests of others as described in Chapter 4 of this study.

5.5 The Vision

The goal (or underlying vision) of a business is to ensure the long-term shareholder wealth maximisation (Hendrikse & Hefer-Hendrikse, 2017:21), which is sustained by considering the TBL, the economic-, socio, and environmental concerns identified by Elkington (as cited by Barkemeyer *et al.*, 2014:6).

The amount of fairness of profit margins and wealth maximisation, which is beyond the scope of this study, should be researched in more detail from a biblical perspective; however, the why, how, and what we do to accumulate and distribute wealth is important for the Christian steward attitude and relates to this study which will be discussed in detail during this chapter.

Referring to the vision statement of the NDP 2030, which reads and reflects on personhood being accountable for development (Klaasen, 2017:3):

We, the people of South Africa, have journeyed far since the long lines of our first democratic election on 27 April 1994, when we elected a government for all. We began to tell a story then. We have lived and renewed that story along the way. Now in 2030 we live in a country which we have made. We have created a home where everybody feels free yet bounded to others; where everyone embraces their full potential. We are proud to be a community that cares. We have received the mixed legacy of inequalities in opportunity and in where we have lived, but we have agreed to change our narrative of conquest, oppression, resistance (NPC, 2012:1).

Based on the NDP's vision statement, it starts with the beginning of our "first democratic election" and develops to a potential future with three parts (Klaasen, 2017:3):

- "A country which we have made". The people are active participants.
- "Where everybody feels free yet bounded to others". The whole South African community.
- "Embrace their full potential". People can reach their full potential.

Any businesses or institutions operating within South Africa should adopt the vision of the NDP 2030, which includes economic, social, and environmental aspects, and partake in actively working towards achieving it through their specific business vision and goals.

Hall (1990:126-154) calls on all Christians and non-Christians to enlarge our vision and realise that it is the duty of all humans to be responsible stewards. All humans comprehend the language of "liberation of the oppressed", and together human acts of liberation can be accomplished in a true spirit of joy and unity despite rudimentary motivational differences within the groups. This joy is not based on the anxiety and prideful joy of Babel, but on the joy of Pentecost where people of

many different backgrounds begin working together, communicating with each other despite barriers created by past assumptions and commitments. Certain principles emerge in our realities of today, confronting and enlarging our stewardship vision and attitude:

- *Globalisation*: the whole earth is a steward's responsibility. To genuinely love parts (child, husband, parent, native land) of the earth will also expand to love for the whole earth. Globally, there are not parts anymore; it is a single and continuous whole. "No border between nations, no matter how well-armed, can prevent the fall of acid rain or the fallout from nuclear accidents". Any system of meaning – religious or secular – that does not see things as a whole, is irrelevant. Jerusalem in the Bible places its concern for the wholeness of vision, reconciliation of the parts, and the breaking down of the dividing wall of hostility at the centre of its message.
- *Communalisation*: The biblical understanding of a steward is not an individual but a community; individuals are not excluded but they participate in the stewardship of a community. We are conditioned to believe that everything worth doing must be achieved as individuals. We must be successful; if we fail, we fail as individuals, even individual failures in society, e.g., unemployment, environmental tension and illness, psychic stress due to overcrowded cities and an egotistical sense of purposelessness, are all connected to societal disorders. No major problem in the world can be confronted without human solidarity. Authentic individuality is kept in dialectical relationship within the community as prescribed biblically, e.g., in the theology of the creation, of redemption, the covenant, the church, and kingdom, in its ethics in marriage, of the family, of friendship. Freeing ourselves from the practice of individualism and privatism and learning how to live our oneness in Christ, the *koinonia*, is pivotal.
- *Ecologisation*: Our concern extends to more than just the humans but includes all created life on earth. Problems cannot be solely solved by the theology of stewardship without including the doctrine of creation and the doctrine of redemption for human as well as all created life, including the willingness to sacrifice some of our human well-being for the sake of the extrahuman.
- *Politicisation*: There are two implications today, one is that stewardship must be rescued from the appealing spirit of charity and philanthropy which is not working, and secondly, from the extrication of stewardship from its association with economic capitalism. Honest discussions around moral and social problems in modern industry should be addressed, e.g., replacement of workers by machines, inequality of income, ethics of varying standards of living, democratic rights of workers, becoming involved in searching for new forms of community, economic discussions reflecting an inherent concern for justice, equality of opportunity, and compassion.

- *Futurisation*: The steward should not only act for the benefit of the current generation but make sure that future generations are positively affected by the decisions made today. Hebraic Scripture always refers to the children's children and "unto the third and fourth generation", our responsibility is towards those who will inherit the earth.

The Christian stewardship community should be the alternative community put forth by God, called to relentlessly pursue God's vision of intent for a justice that is specific and concrete, subversive and uncompromising (Vallet, 2001:223). The vision of any institution or human being should be influenced by Vallet's statement.

5.6 The Mission

Bain and Company (2018) define a mission statement as a statement defining the company's business, its objectives, and its approach to reaching those objectives. The mission comprises what we do to achieve the overall vision or goals of life – a group, society, or organisation, including what both the individual and the business does. The mission relates to what the company does.

Weber (1930:28-38) explains that Benjamin Franklin was filled with the spirit of capitalism which can be seen as a set of values and an attitude of hard work and progress, rejecting worldly affairs in pursuit of wealth and possessions. In articulating useable practices of Christian stewardship to enable business leaders to steward sustainable businesses, the researcher believes it is important to understand the origin or fundamentals of business presented by Weber. He explains that it was not the capitalistic entrepreneurs of the profit-oriented aristocrats who had the so-called spirit of capitalism, but the rising lower middle class. Not the "elegant gentlemen of Liverpool, but the self-made parvenus of Manchester" rising from their modest circumstances.

The normal and comfortable life of the putter-out in the textile industry was typical as follows: The peasants came to the town of the putter-out, presenting their cloth (linen) which they made themselves from raw material. The putter-out would review the quality and pay a customary price for it. The putter-out's customers, who were at an appreciable distance, were middlemen, looking for traditional qualities, placed orders, and sometimes before delivery, these were passed on to the peasants. Personal campaigns to acquire customers was a long-term activity building long-term relationships. Business hours were only five to six hours a day, and incomes were moderate but enough to live a respectable life. Competition among each other was good and there was an agreement on business fundamentals. The norm was to visit the tavern after a day's work and drink plenty with like-minded friends, making life comfortable and leisurely. This changed and leisureliness was destroyed when a young man from one of the putting-out families decided he wants more. He went into the country, selected the best weavers, employed them, and increased

the supervision of their work, turning them into labourers and no longer peasants. Marketing effects changed as he went directly to the consumer, identified their specific needs, personally solicited customers, and visited them annually to adjust the quality of the product to their specific needs. The principle of large turnover and low prices was introduced where those who did not adapt to this new system were put out of business. A painful competitive battle emerged. Fortunes were made, and the old leisurely and relaxed attitude toward life was exchanged with hard frugality. Some rose to the top because they desired to earn and not consume, whereas those who wished to keep to the old ways were forced to shrink their consumption – this is the spirit of modern capitalism. “Its entry on the scene was not generally peaceful. A flood of mistrust, sometimes of hatred, above all of the moral indignations” (Weber, 1930:31).

Business success depended on a sort of liberal enlightenment, where the association between religious beliefs and conduct was commonly absent and, where any existed, it was normally negative. When you asked them about their restless activities and why they are never satisfied with what they have, they would possibly answer, if they had any at all, that it was to look after their family and that business is an integral part of their lives. An ethical attitude similar to Benjamin Franklin’s spirit of capitalism was now unthinkable. Life-work was morally indifferent. As long as they stuck to the tradition of the church and, in cases where their actions were against church doctrine (e.g., usury), it was tolerated because when these rich people died, substantial amounts of money went to religious establishments as conscience money, sometimes back to the debtors when it was unjustly taken from them in the first place. What was forgotten by some, was that providing goods and services, including labour, from a sound organisation, was always part of the capitalistic spirit, but more important, was that it was the purpose of life-work. Franklin comprehended this truth in his efforts to improve the municipalities in Philadelphia, mentioning the joy and pride of employing many people, and being part of the economic progress of his hometown.

Kishtainy (2017:233) argues that economists are not always taking a strong position regarding the distribution of wealth. Some believe it is better to be in a wealthy society where a few are richer than others compared to a poor country where all are equally living on scraps. Modern economists are more concerned with efficiency and not with the distribution. Kishtainy refers to Kenneth Arrow and Gerard Debreu, who proved the First Welfare Theorem: no resources are wasted because there is a perfect supply and demand. It links to the Pareto efficiency which states that no one person or party can be better off without making someone worse off, although it looks after the perfect supply and demand and does not waste resources. The problem is that even unequal outcomes can be efficient. When government redistributes income (taking from the rich and giving to the poor utilising taxes) it can hinder and upset efficiency. Thus, distribution

leads to great equality but also a slower economy. Some believe that inequality is good and encourages people to work in the hope of getting richer. They forget that hope becomes unrealistic when inequality is extreme and then lose hope completely. A generous minimum wage can also reduce inequality and improve efficiency and we know that a productive economy depends on a healthy and educated workforce. When inequality is extreme and it leads to workers no longer being able to afford healthcare and education, it leads to an unproductive economy. The question is, can we do anything about it? Yes, we can, because inequality is partly the result of the choices societies make, including the mission to accumulate wealth.

Hall (1990:31-34) reminds us that there are 26 references to steward or stewardship in the Bible. The Hebrew Scriptures use the terms both technically and literally, and it describes an actual office or vocation in society. In the Old Testament, a steward was a superior servant (not an ordinary servant taking orders or bids on behalf of others), a supervisor servant, who was responsible for the management of something belonging to another, making decisions, giving orders, and taking charge. The office requires a special kind of trust of the owner or master. The steward is normally accountable to a royal person – a king or ruler (Gen 43-44; 1 Chron 27-28; Dan. 1:11, 16). In Isaiah 22:15-21, we learn that no matter how important the steward may be, he is neither ultimately authoritative nor irreplaceable. In Luke 12:42, in the New Testament, “steward” and “servant” are used interchangeably, and stewardship together with being alert and attentive are characteristics of Christ’s true followers. The disciples were charged with the responsibility for Christ’s household during His earthly absence, including the responsibility of the mysteries of God (1 Cor 4:2). This includes: the gospel itself, which was intended for the whole family of humanity; God’s household; and stewarding God’s universal grace. Ephesians 3:1-2 reflects on this where the steward takes part in the very “household” of God, to share “this grace” (v. 8) with everyone, bringing them into God’s household. Stewards of this household – the disciples – are to see that the people (the servants) who dwell in this household are properly fed and protected from thieves. The stewards were warned (similar to Isa. 22) that if they forget their place and role and begin to think that they are independent, and treat these “servants” as they please, that they will be severely punished.

First Peter 4:7-11 explains the mission (including values) of the steward perfectly. It includes the notion of an end that is near; that we are all in the same boat; our consciousness of the end; and the gift of life, that the end brings a sense of fuller glory of our own transience, and our creaturely unity. We are all in “God’s boat, God’s ark. Here, the eschatological and the ecclesiastical presuppositions of stewardship are inseparably linked with one another (Hall, 1990:39, 47). Stewardship is a calling for all human species.

But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen (1 Pet. 4:7-11).

We are called to serve with our gifts; therefore, what we do should be a reflection of the gifts bestowed upon us. Every human being has the responsibility to decide how best to use and conserve their time, energy, and resources – how best to “economise”. This includes analysing the costs and values similar to what economists do whether or not money is involved, and is equally applicable to individuals and groups, to the poor and the well-off. “Economic analysis is an especially crucial skill for Christians who have been called to cope with the demands of both Caesar and God” (Klay, 1986:11). It is posed that one should “economise” how one spends their time, energy, gifts, and resources within their jobs, working together (with fellows and the institutional structures) to achieve a certain mission prescribed by the business or institution which positively or negatively affects society.

The mission is the objective to achieve the vision that is as reflected, which most times relates to profits. In short, therefore, understanding the mission is to gain wealth. DeWitt (1996:147) explains that wealth is acquired where materials are taken from the natural world that uses photosynthesis, growth, and development of plants, and then adding value to these materials. People apply human labour to these materials and then get things and money in return for these things. Wealth, in part, is created by human beings from plants and animals. Wealth accumulation is good, but, when the resources are misused and abused, then it creates problems. The meaning of wealth is often reduced to individual wealth and does not include the wealth of creation. For example, the wealth of the individual, community, society, nation, and the material and resources (including raw material, e.g., trees, oil, and creation’s provision of rain, solid water, etc.) altogether.

What we do (our mission) to accumulate wealth (gain profits) is of utmost importance for Christian stewards who should ensure that it is conducted ethically and that they do not become ethically blind causing inequality, unemployment, or poverty but a just inclusive society.

The true spirit of capitalism is not one of individual ego but one where the whole society or community benefits and makes profit peacefully. This should be evident and practiced in the Christian steward mission statements, whether for the individual or business.

5.7 The Values (culture)

Ethical values can contribute to the ethical wealth of a nation when ethical values are intrinsically valued by citizens, and embedded and supported by the institutional fabric of the society. These ethical values in turn drive economic performance and contribute to the realisation of a good society (Jennings & Velasquez, 2015).

A classic error made by many top economists is that the market is amoral, having no moral status, and that everyone is free to buy and sell what they like when they like. Humans are moral, therefore, when they are involved in any market transaction(s), morals are involved. Amoralism is a convenient way to opt out of responsibility for one's actions, and, as for the immoral powerful businesspeople, many are just wage, tax, and credit card slaves (Smith, 2005:161).

Culture is rooted in the verb "to cultivate", which means "to till the soil". It refers to the way people act upon nature and, from a practical perspective, it is how we choose to grow together as people; on a deeper level, it is the beating heart, a way of life. The way we choose to live and interact with each other should never be marginalised by economics, as culture gives people and communities character (Smith, 2005:122).

Ethics can be defined as the study of basic principles determining conduct. It is the process of thinking about action and then, based on that thinking, taking action. Interest in business ethics is rising since what we call ethics today also leads to corporate scandals, which have been part of business for centuries. There are various benefits to paying attention to ethical issues in business, such as recruiting good employees who want to stay employed longer, choosing more productive employees, and utilising ethics to improve relationships with customers. From a biblical point of view, being an ethical business means to take part in the community and supporting a flourishing life (Cafferky, 2015:43-45, 52).

When considering ethics, values, and human attitude, the researcher refers to Vorster (2007:13) who writes that humankind degenerates but there is the possibility of the human attitude to regenerate through the grace of God through Christ. How we instil and govern sound culture and ethical values is where public practical theology can offer usable practices to make the society aware of, appreciate, and be good Christian stewards based on a theological framework.

5.8 Governance

Regarding corporate governance, Wixley and Everingham (2015:5) reflect on Peter Bruce's article in *Business Day* on 4 March 2002 which discussed the collapse of Saambou and Regal Treasury Bank, and the role of corporate governance in the context of the collapse. He praises

the German's practice of separating executives and nonexecutives with a supervisory board that watches managers. The power of this supervisory board lies with the greatest creditor of the business. On these supervisory boards sits the unions, shareholders, and other stakeholders, creating social consensus regarding practically every business in Germany as everyone on this board is deeply rooted in it.

Based on the corporate scandals under the ethics flag, a new model for a corporation is needed to be sustainable. One that is a combination of the German model of a socialist-market economy, a Japanese model in the business dimension, and the American shareholder sovereignty. Each, however, have not proved to be adequate standing alone. Hendrikse and Hefer-Hendrikse (2017:480) suggest:

Perhaps South African business can show the way with its own triple bottom line corporate model, combining economic, social and environmental dimensions, which will be the catalyst for nation-building in both boom and doom times. A corporate governance code of conduct is no panacea for business success or corporate governance practices. These start with the individual. Similarly, governance does not start with the corporation, but with people, that is directors, managers and employees.

In searching for balance, we know that markets do not tend towards balance, and they need a visible hand to regulate them to ensure fairness. The purpose of the regulator is to add value by safeguarding the system's integrity and stability. When making money becomes the god of capitalism, it creates problems. Contentment has no value to those wanting economic growth; economic growth needs people who are restless and people who want more. Faith wants people not to worry about what they eat and drink; the entrepreneur wants them to worry and for some to differentiate and choose the best quality they can afford (Smith, 2005:163, 185).

5.8.1 Corporate governance

Corporate governance, seen as the most significant development in the business strategy for the 21st century, forms a unique partnership involving shareholders, business, and community stakeholders when conforming to a culture of performance. In action, corporate governance is a sustainable value-based business model that makes the world a better place – now and in the future (Hendrikse & Hefer-Hendrikse, 2017:481).

One of the research streams in management theory is the power and governance structure within a company. The function of leadership is to achieve the organisation's purpose by producing or adapting to change where the leader provides direction, aligns the resources available to achieve objectives, and motivates the stakeholders to produce the desired outcomes. Leadership

functions remain the same; however, the leadership needed should be flexible in response to the growth of the organisation, the maturity, and the response to the internal and external pressures (Greiner, 1998; Mintzberg, 1981).

Corporate governance is mainly concerned with long-term strategic planning to secure future success, focussing on financial disciplines and controls to support a sustainable business model. The validity of the financial disciplines and controls are beyond the scope of the study; however, the ethics used in business are in line with this study, therefore the researcher proposes a stewardship attitude, culture, and governance model. This study will only comment on the Social and Ethics Committee's (SEC) composition and responsibilities under CSR due to the impact the committee has on the overall ethics in business.

5.8.1.1 Social and Ethics Committee (SEC)

Wixley and Everingham (2015:117-188) highlight that, unique to South Africa, every listed company and state-owned company¹⁴ in the country is obliged to set up a social and ethics committee in terms of section 72 and Regulation 43 of the Companies Act, 2008 (including various other compliance regulations). It highlights the purpose of companies in South Africa whose responsibility areas include giving attention to, monitoring, and reporting on various social and ethical matters outside of normal shareholder profits as compared to a capitalist nation like the United States of America (USA). In the USA, for example (as per the New York Stock Exchange Commission on Corporate Governance), the board is accountable to shareholders to perform by achieving the fundamental objective to create long-term sustainable growth in shareholder value for the organisation.

Compared to South African companies which have additional responsibilities, it includes areas to oversee and report on by the SEC. These duties include social and economic development, good corporate citizenship, the environment, health and public safety, consumer relationships, and labour and employment.

As referred to earlier in the study, law can be interpreted diversely by different audiences. The same applies to ethics. Wixley and Everingham (2015:188) bring to our attention that, given the name of the committee, there is no reference to the codes of conduct of ethics. Focusing on the prevention of corruption where equality is highlighted but ethics is notably absent.

¹⁴ There is an exemption provided for in s 72(5) of the Act, if it is 'not reasonably necessary in the public's interest' to have an SCE, 'having regard to the nature and extent of the activities of the company'.

The social and ethics areas of responsibility as indicated in the statutory and King IV Practice Notes (2020:4) are as follows:

- The *Economy* (economic development, fraud and corruption, broad-based black economic empowerment, and responsible and transparent tax practices).
- The *Workplace* (employment equity, decent work, employee safety and health, employee relations, education of employees, fair remuneration, and organisational ethics).
- The *Environment* (the environmental impact, pollution, waste disposal, and biodiversity).
- The *Society* (community development, donations and sponsorships, public health and safety, advertising, consumer protection, consumer relations, human rights, and stakeholder relations).

Membership of a company's SEC should consist of at least three directors or prescribed officers of the company, one being a director not involved in the day-to-day management of the company's business or involved with the business during the previous three financial years (Companies Regulation 43(4)).

This structure opens the possibility where the SEC's focus can lead to oversight of management as membership comprises the majority being executive directors or prescribed officers. King IV recommends (Principle 8, paragraph 70): that the SEC should, subject to the legal provision, have executive and non-executive members, with a majority being non-executive members of the governing body.

Principle 7 specifies that the governing body should be objective and effective when carrying out the governance role, and have a balance of business, commercial, and industry experience, knowledge, skills, diversity, and independence reflected among the members, encouraging diversity among members (executive, non-executive, and independent non-executive) with the majority being non-executive members (mostly independent). The minimum standards of the body will be the appointment of the chief executive officer (CEO) and at least one executive. Rotation of the members are highly recommended allowing new expertise and perspectives.

The composition of the SEC is very similar to the notion of public practical theology in that various stakeholders should be involved to find solutions specific to the current challenges of society. This is an opportunity for Christian stewardship culture and governance to influence business ethics from a public practical theological perspective, especially in terms of ethical governance and what it comprises.

Corporate governance forced a duty on business and the leaders to maximise long-term wealth creation beneficial to all stakeholders. With this, successful leaders are those who ignore short term decisions to inflate market value and work on long-term wealth creation for the stakeholders. Caldwell *et al.* (2002) confirm that ethical stewardship in business is also committed to:

welfare, growth, and wholeness of stakeholders, rising to the level of honouring transformational obligations that create new opportunities and reframe traditional command-and-control notions of leadership.

According to Hendrikse and Hefer-Hendrikse (2017:480), 25% of business success is attributed to aptitude, qualifications, and skills, whereas 75% is attributed to attitude and action.

- *Aptitude* does not come naturally; it has to be developed and educated. The directors, management team, and business partner stakeholders should possess the necessary skills of governance practices, and part of the company's governance mission to make the company a better place for all. This involves governance empowerment, involving the TBL of economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- *Action* is concerned with a personal action plan that is initiated by the chairman and delegated to executives, accepted with responsibility by both the boardroom to the grassroot levels setting priorities, timelines to achieve objectives, clear communication channels, and frequent feedback on progress and results.
- *Attitude* is concerned with one's commitment to the company as a whole, including the shareholders and stakeholders, with honesty, integrity, and honest intentions.

As presented earlier, governance methods can be either based on an agency theory or stewardship theory, where agency theory is self-directed and stewardship theory is based on biblical self-interest (an attitude affecting action). Agency theorists proposed a governance model constraining employee behaviour through rules and regulations, whereas stewardship theorists propose a model of governance promoting the potential of employees to contribute towards strategic objectives, decision-making, and employee behaviour that advances the collective benefit (Hernandez, 2012:14).

A corporation should develop the means and norms to monitor its actions, shaping them as moral agents. Vorster (2007:117) explains that the responsible corporation is in the same way brought into fruition as the Christian attitude characterised by a life of love, stewardship, selflessness, and obedience to God. This study poses a Christian stewardship governance model to shape, develop, and model the actions of moral agents, the business leaders, involved in SD.

5.8.2 Christian stewardship

5.8.2.1 Governance

Economic activity will permanently corrupt moral values for many generations without good stewardship. Under Christian stewardship we own nothing; we are merely lending it (Smith, 2005:17).

A steward's first responsibility is to be able to know and discern what is right and what is wrong. Moral values originate from a person's culture and community. Stewardship values must move with the times and have an underlying moral code. People need balance to have a measure of happiness in their lives; the key to balance and stability is discipline. Stewardship is getting this balance right at a given point in time. The quality of our stewardship lies in understanding relationships and dependencies and reducing the potential for error. "Human's needs are interconnected with each other and therefore there is interdependence" (Smith, 2005:27, 36-37,82).

Krueger (2002:2) notes that Christian stewardship embraces both human and natural "capital". Humans seek well-being for the whole community of earth, implying a sense of responsibility and connection with and to the welfare of all living things on and in the world. In business language, humans serve as "managers" to organise resources and functions of the organisation for the sake of its owner.

Stewardship governance implies that, firstly, employees experience self-direction and a sense of control due to employees being included in the decision-making process. Through employee development, they gain control over their own career growth. Secondly, the individuals are motivated and committed to the ongoing well-being of the organisation by identifying with the organisational attributes; and thirdly, through strategies, they build a sense of connection with and emotional attachment to the organisation and its components where the individual meets their basic need for belonging. A sense of psychological ownership is instilled in the individual with an "internal drive to protect that which is psychologically owned", and the individual adopts an internal longing to act in protection of the joint interest of the organisation (Hernandez, 2012:27).

Christian stewardship differs from normal stewardship in that the Christian own's nothing but is part of creation; has dominion over creation; is an image bearer of Christ because he/she belongs to Him. When the individual is aware of this honour and appreciates being part of God's creation, then the role of stewardship will be adopted to act in protection of the collective interest of God.

Krueger (2002:375-380) argues that due to different faith communities' and their diverse visions and opinions on Christian ethics, the complex economic context and our limited vision of God's intentions, there can be no single blueprint to implementation of Christian stewardship. He recommends themes, ideas, and standards informed by the Christian faith which can help develop and live towards a vision of stewardship in a market-based culture.

These themes include *stewardship acknowledging God's sovereignty* – entering the market economies with integrity and faith; being sensitive that economic outcomes are morally in line with God's law; and that they should never be influenced by dominating role players. Stewards should make sure idolatry is not central; they must not think we can accomplish outcomes by ourselves; and they must acknowledge that to take part in the market is instrumental in nature, not an inherent good.

Usable practices where Christian stewards are part of the discourses of governance committees should *search limits to the market* by seeking appropriate boundaries for legitimate market activities, e.g., Christians must argue that sexual intercourse, human identity, and human parts should not be on the market. Some products and services can be more in between the lines but should nevertheless be reviewed and discussed by stewards.

Stewards as service to one's neighbour – knowing God trusts stewards to use God's resources not for oneself only but for a neighbour for the common good. This entails investigating the motive of the heart and intention when entrusted with all talents, possessions, time, etc., holding the stewards accountable to serve the neighbours and put all resources to the right use.

Stewardship as the practice of virtue – the market economy gives opportunities to exercise virtues and qualities of trust to sustain human community. Corruption is not a virtue, but ethical values are and should be put in practice by stewards in the market.

Stewardship as the just management of people where management instils a culture of justice and fairness. *Stewardship as the quest for systemic connections* entails seeking an inclusive community of peace and justice, excluding no stakeholder, and realising that everything is connected. It is where we can see the face of Christ in anyone in need, and stewarding the entire earth's resources.

Stewardship as care for the larger community of life. When is enough, enough? When do we operate in a sustainable manner, meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the capacity or future generations to do the same? Christian stewards need to engage in these serious debates to partake, shape, and express fundamental faith commitments.

Stewardship as an expression of the faith of a church community. Resources of the congregation should be used by stewards to serve and engage in faithful practices of stewardship. The church can have a budget allocated to the teaching of stewardship through education and worship.

Stewardship as seeking judgement, forgiveness, and grace. Although we fall short of God's call of love and justice, our work does make a difference to the health and well-being of our neighbours. We are all saved by faith; offering our efforts in humility, we fall on God's mercy and seek His forgiveness and grace.

5.8.2.2 Personhood development (including leadership)

The proposed Christian stewardship model should reflect the people of the country to be active participants in the country's development and not just passive observers or receivers of welfare. Leaders (private and in government), labour, and civil society acknowledge the value of personhood where the person accepts the responsibility and accountability of development. This notion has more to do with doing than knowing. Within Christian anthropology the person's identity is connected to their calling, and to be created in God's image has more to do with doing what is right than knowing what is right (Klaasen, 2017:4):

Personhood is an acting agent who is continuously formed and forming. Personhood is closer to the orthodox view of creation, namely that one is in a living process of formation and not a fixed finish product.

Personhood, as in Christian anthropology, should not be about the independent self, but expressed in the relationships we have with self and others. To develop as a person is an individual's responsibility; it includes interacting with others and the vulnerability to evoke responsible action for development (Klaasen, 2017:6).

5.8.2.2.1 Disciple of Jesus

Ellen (2019:103) argues that humankind's mission in life is not to feel good and achieve self-actualisation by "finding oneself"; instead, mankind is to organise their lives and follow the directions and example presented by Jesus Christ in all aspects of life, as prescribed in the Bible.

Humankind's actual life should be focused on being a disciple of Jesus. Discipleship is acknowledging the need to be led by Jesus who is interested in my life, where a person leads his/her life as if Jesus would lead it if He were human. Discipleship for Jesus is not about what I do, but about how I do everything, 'religious' or not. Jesus' teachings presuppose life, showing Christians how to live the life given to each, using opportunities, time, location, family, neighbours,

gifts, and talents. Considering the work we do for a living can be seen as one of the clearest ways possible to focus on our role as apprentices to Jesus (Willard, 1998:310-318).

Personhood development needs more focus as it influences all aspects of life, our worldviews, our beliefs, our attitudes, our habits of thoughts and, for some, they have been conditioned to believe that they can never change. But, as Vorster (2007:13) mentioned, through the grace of Jesus Christ, the human's attitude can be regenerated. The effect of individuals with a biblical self-interest attitude working in an ethical organisation will have a regenerated effect on SD.

The following domains are proposed to develop when empowering individuals, groups, and communities (Weyers, 2011:403-407): the spiritual and cultural, the emotional, the physical, the social and municipal, the occupational, the environmental, the financial and material, and the intellectual.

Our jobs should be conducted with the highest possible good in every aspect, pursuing it with a conscious anticipation for the direction from God. Many desire to be a student and co-labourer with Jesus in all aspects of their lives, including professing- and non-professing Christians. What is lacking is an understanding that this type of life (discipleship) is accessible to all and not a distant, beautiful idea, for all, whether in ministry or not (Willard, 1998:314-319).

Willard (1998:313) reminds us of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount teachings leading Christians to: -

a gentle but firm non-co-operation with things that everyone knows to be wrong, together with a sensitive, non-officious, non-intrusive, non-obsequious service to others, should be our usual overt manner. This should be combined with inward attitudes of constant prayer for whatever kind of activity our workplace requires and genuine love for everyone involved. As circumstances call for them, special points in Jesus' teachings and example, such as non-retaliation, refusal to press for financial advantage, consciousness of and appropriate assistance to those under special handicaps and so on, would come into play. And we should be watchful and prepared to meet any obvious spiritual need or interest in understanding Jesus with words that are truly loving, thoughtful, and helpful.

One of the biggest obstacles for humans to become a disciple of Jesus is the Christian way of thinking that to be a disciple is terribly difficult and will destroy your life, fearing that if you refuse to surrender to God, you will be sent to Africa as a missionary. To be a disciple of Jesus, it is important to acknowledge, according to Willard (1998:319-326), that one has fellowship with Jesus, learning from him how to be like him. To be a disciple relates to knowing and believing there is nothing more valuable. It entails loving and really believing that Jesus is the most remarkable person that ever lived, and that it is the greatest opportunity in life to belong to Him.

From an individual level, due to us not having control over the roles other people play, make time, during a few quiet hours per day, privately, to ask. Express your desire to Jesus to see Him more fully as He really is (during history and now) the one holding the universe in existence. Share this with a knowledgeable minister or friend who is praying and talking with you regarding what we are doing. Dwell in the Word of God. “If you dwell in my word, you really are my apprentices. And you will know the truth, and the truth will liberate you” (Jn 8:31-32). Practice the teachings; know what they are and what they mean. And that although you will be imperfect at first, trust Jesus to meet you where you are – where you confess your insufficient actions to try and put His word into practice. The decision and intention over your life, to be a disciple of Jesus, is to be made; it does not just happen. We do not float into discipleship. Help others find their way into discipleship. Once you find your way into the life of obedience and fulfilment in Jesus’ kingdom, you will inevitably want to share this new reality with the people around you. To make disciples, we must be disciples of Jesus, proclaiming, manifesting, and teaching the kingdom of God, as well as why and how it works.

5.8.2.2.2 God honouring habits and skills

Nurturing positive habit formation through developing God-honouring habits and skills in the Christian life, and cultivating certain practices as stillness, isolation, or prayer are examples of skills to develop to learn who you are and what you can become (Ellen, 2019:125). Ellen (2019:125-134) recommends various ways to nurture positive habit formation to develop a true self-identity that displays the character of Jesus Christ by demonstrating knowledge, self-control, endurance, brotherly kindness, and love (2 Pet 1:1-9). Some of these ways are listed below:

Total *restructuring* encompasses identifying areas in life where one is not in submission to God and restructuring them to be able to walk according to God’s will. For example, changing false thoughts about oneself based on what God says is true about the self. Another example is taking captive one’s inner thoughts opposed to the knowledge and character of God (2 Cor 10:5).

Study, engage, and be led by the Word of God on a journey to learn more about God’s character, and His perfect will for our lives.

Meditation is where one reflects, listens, rehearses, or contemplates God’s Word and lives accordingly. Hearing and obeying God’s voice and Word.

Memorising the Word of God enables you to shape your soul and speak the same language, as well as divinely inspired thoughts and wisdom.

Praying. While restructuring, exploring, contemplating, and remembering, one pursues the skill of praying to foster positive habit formation into the proper identity of self. Pouring out your heart to God over what He has ordained you to be. Asking God to show you where you lack and to empower you to work in who you are to be as prescribed by God. Ephesians 2:10 says it beautifully, “for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”. Luther (cited by Hammond, 2017:199) described prayer the hardest work of all, where the one who prays is in a warfare against two opposites, namely: one, the excitement, and the other, unworthiness and the fear we feel inside. Bold prayer perseveres without stopping despite fear; this is well pleasing to God. “As a shoe maker makes a shoe, or a tailor makes a coat, so ought a Christian to pray. Prayer is the daily business of a Christian” (Luther, quoted by Hammond, 2017:199).

Understanding one’s identity, and silence and solitude, are two habits a Christian steward can do and share with others. *Identity.* In its necessary to understand that one’s identity is not dependent on your growth, or what you do, but on what Jesus Christ has done. It entails walking in humility, dying to who one has been, to be who one is becoming in Jesus Christ. A proper view of self includes that we have been created to serve with our spiritual gifts (1 Pet 4:8-11). Leading a life of integrity, true to God’s standards. *Silence and Solitude.* This entails voluntary and temporary abstention from speaking in order to reach a spiritual goal, and meditating and listening to the Word of God to develop a proper self-identification through the character of Jesus Christ.

5.8.2.2.3 Ethical leadership

The importance of ethical leadership is a sought-after characteristic as the global competition and sustainability of organisations are becoming more and more complex. Trust is broken between leaders and followers. Trust is crucial for the sustainability of the organisation as broken trust affects employee loyalty, lowers wealth creation, and increases transactional expenses.

James Carpio (2002:71-74) observed that the temptation of self-interest must be resisted by the leaders of this age and rather be motivated by values prescribed by the ethical stewardship approach, to build trust and be trustworthy. Businesses, leaders, and individuals must be assisted to understand temptations and resist them or learn from them.

5.9 Nation-Building Practices

Christian ethics is concerned with nation-building. Change, development, and growth are biblical concepts that talk to the heart of the Christian gospel. Nation-building includes political-, economic-, and social development with a moral character (Vorster, 2007:21).

In their study that investigated the Dutch Reformed Church's (DRC's) involvement at a congregational level to fight poverty, the approach adopted by van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015) focussed on reducing the vulnerability of the poor due to a lack of assets, resources, and opportunities. It also concentrated on equipping the poor with how to cope with the realities of their social concerns. In the same way, government, business, the society, and the church can adopt and implement these three areas to combat the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and social inequality in an influential way (van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:748-751).

1. **To honestly represent the “voices” of everyone (all stakeholders):** the promotion of inclusive citizenship¹⁵, processes to affirm and defend the dignity of people¹⁶, and acknowledging the dependency of people on the social structure that needs to change as it sustains poverty¹⁷.
2. **The focus of service is to alleviate poverty or reduce poverty.** Short-term crisis aid to assist with basic human needs, e.g., food and security, falls under poverty alleviation. More equitable distribution of resources, knowledge, and skills is needed. Forming of networks and partnerships, with the emphasis and primary focus to understand the people's needs on the grassroot level, are also pivotal. If not, poverty will be maintained. Beneficiaries must be educated to take ownership of development and together a self-help culture should be cultivated. Prevention and the reducing of poverty should be a reflection of active practicing where Christians live their values and principles in society. Beyers (as cited by van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:750), who sees poverty as a human condition, contends that religion can make a notable contribution in the attempts to alleviate poverty through three interrelated functions:
 - a. Focussing on the spiritual aspect of human well-being (going beyond material),
 - b. Teaching ethical values leading to appropriate responses to address poverty,
 - c. Where suitable action and active participation can alleviate poverty.
3. **Empowerment of congregations:** Active citizenship means creating spaces where a person is part of a group with a clear vision (communicated and developed) to actively play a role in the community in which they are situated. It is a place where there empowerment exists through sustainable networks, along with skills and development opportunities to attend to

¹⁵ Department of Arts and Culture (2012:55-57) cited by Van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015:748).

¹⁶ Nordstokke (cited by van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:748).

¹⁷ Batista *et al.* (cited by van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015:748).

and address the real needs of the community, e.g., leadership skills, and addressing specific social issues within a specific context.

DeWitt (1996:42-43) argues that good stewardship principles include that everyone should have the opportunity to be a steward and a place to care for creatures. Deprivation of this freedom ultimately denies humans their stewardship right to preserve and keep creation. Stewardship is best done in a community with others, and one should be sensitive that just stewardship is at risk as global economies develop. Intellectual rights, cultural rights, and ethics should address these concerns in favour of the whole creation and not from an economical perspective,

5.9.1 Economic practices

DeWitt (1996:59) argues that *stewardship* is the relationship between human economies and the economy of God's wider creation. Oeconomy or Economy, whether applied in the working of the cosmos, comes from the word *oeconomia*, meaning the management of the household. The problem with our current economic practices is that it deprives people of God-assigned stewardship representing an exclusive economy. When humans are regarded as commodities or consumers only, we are missing their true identity and vocation. The market itself is a gift from God but we have to use it responsibly and not worship the market. We have to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. We firstly have to seek God and His will, and not what the market's will is first; it is not about social Darwinism claiming survival of the fittest. Value is determined by those with purchasing power. Money, and money alone, determines whether ideas, thoughts, and opinions are taken seriously. We are above that! Our use of property, labour, and prices should be reviewed to create a more inclusive economy. For example, overtime should be avoided as it harms health over a long time (Smith, 2005:96). In a developed world there is an entrepreneurial downward pressure to cut high labour costs, and in an undeveloped world there is an upward pressure to increase labour costs (Smith, 2005:249). Should the labour cost not be "dictated" or prescribed by the local community in terms of minimum wage accessibility to basic services and housing?

DeWitt (1996:158-159) argues that biblical justice is emancipating, and that justice restores life, a fruitful and happy life, and a right for every human being to fulfil their calling. In terms of the influence business has on the contribution of just stewardship, the following contributions can be made to create a "pure" ethical economy to develop and apply the principles of just stewardship in terms of how the business' "firstfruits" can be used. Tithing, providing services, and assisting to achieve just stewardship of creation, as well as developing and exercising how to manage according to biblical wisdom, are ways to be testimonies and examples of just stewards. When the leaders exercise these principles of just stewardship and find themselves at a disadvantage

in the market, they should push for a just policy. Businesses can contribute by cooperating and developing standard ethical codes of conduct in the economy as well as assessing their impact of the operation on the environment.

5.9.2 Social practices

Smith (2005:99, 105) remarks that throughout life a steward will strive and hope for a beautiful home, one that comforts all with peace and tranquillity, where the business masks drop, and he finds the real person. Individual happiness can affect a whole community, as stewards in economics we need to understand the effect of our actions on others, ensuring to either minimise their unhappiness or maximise their happiness. “Some of the worst crimes in history have been perpetrated by unhappy, lonely individuals”.

Whenever we share our bread with the hungry, we are serving the Lord (Matt 25:41-46); and when we do not feed the hungry, we are not serving the Lord. God’s provision for the poor to gain what they have lost can also be seen in the Jubilee legislation in Leviticus 25 and Deuteronomy 15, where a healthful rhythm of the original creation is seen as each member of the Covenant People was to live in peace, freedom, love and caring – with neighbours, elderly people, the unborn, and the land.

DeWitt (1996:51-58) recommends that we look at human’s basic needs, food, safety, money and education. These points are elaborated on below.

Food. This includes the amount and quality of food we have available to offer, the land available to the poor to produce food, and to earn a living to meet their basic needs, e.g., clothing, food, and shelter. An interesting study concerning disincentives to local food production found that in areas where food production possibilities are inadequate, low-cost or free food was found to be a disincentive, as it led to no or reduced opportunities for job creation. Where individuals were offered the opportunity to steward some part of God’s creation, it gave new hope to the poor. Concession grants can be implemented to people who farm on their own land and feed themselves.

Safety and land. Safe living spaces need to be created for people to be protected from crime and abuse. In monetary economies, the lack of money or the absence of opportunities to earn money, with the dearth of land denies people the opportunity to access food. In subsistence economies, people must have access to land to produce food. Everyone should have the right to access land (Vorster, 2007:55).

Money. People need to earn/obtain money, whether it is from a job or received from welfare from relatives or government. People migrate from rural areas to the cities with the hope of finding an opportunity to earn money. This adds pressure on the local government's fiscal realities, and the sad reality is that these migrants are not able to receive the necessary education, urban sanitation, health services, or social securities. Incentives to move the cities should be eliminated and rather provided when rural areas are developed. Transport, and postal and communication services should be provided in rural areas. Access to money should be made available to provide authentic opportunities in terms of credits and small loans to the poor. Influencing and giving direction in terms of debt, trade, markets, aid, loans, and trading relationships are needed to restore to the poor the capacity for them to become stewards of land and life. Smith (2005:195) recommends that governments should control the economic growth through credit level management where credit limits are just and regulated to ensure few people are in danger of bankruptcy. Opportunities should be made available for small scale industries and businesses to the poor.

Education. Education should be accessible to everyone in all areas. Continuous research should be conducted to gain the needed knowledge and to develop individuals according to their specific needs. Transformation of South Africa's educational system can be viewed as one of the pillars of nation-building along with an ethos of human rights and respect with sound work ethics. Home language and education should be encouraged where it is practically possible (Vorster, 2007:38).

5.9.3 Environmental practices

Everything must be ecologically compatible; markets must subserve what is good for the local land, its community, and its ecosystems for the long term. Ecological principles defined by DeWitt (1996:40-41) are important for land stewardship and entails that the integrity of the whole ecosystem and whole landscape is essential for the proper functioning of creation's biochemical cycles. Fruitfulness of land and its creatures as in Genesis 1:22 depends on healthy and intact contiguous habits. The fruitfulness of soil must remain undiminished for the well-being of all creatures, and the development of agriculture and technology must be sensitive to local biological, geological, and meteorological limits and potentials in the ecological region. Humans were created and need only a certain amount of contact with the "otherkind" to be whole biologically, psychically, and spiritually.

DeWitt (1996:153-154) recommends practical activities to ensure that the interest of all communities are met. These include the following: Environmentally sound alternative energy development to reach and sustain clean water and air should also be encouraged. Furthermore, competitive disadvantages for environmentally sound businesses should be reduced or

eliminated. Correcting situations that force the poor to degrade their environment and waste depositories. In terms of governance, including opportunities for a business involved in SD, from a stewardship perspective, can include governance and practices where creation is protected and preserved, limiting agribusiness development, and addressing future consideration (e.g., soil loss, the ozone, and global warming).

5.9.4 Practical biblical business practices

Rabbi Lapin (2014) reveals business secrets from an Ancient Jewish wisdom perspective based on biblical principles. He refers to the efficiencies and value of a specialised market economy, abandoning complete independence for specialisation and exchange, that has been used by the Jewish population for millennia. This is also proposed by Adam Smit, who advocates the use and inclusion of the individual's talents and skills to earn their living.

He shares that “an infinite God created us in His image with infinite imagination, potential, creative power and desires” (Lapin, 2014:5). The universe was created for connection. Success means swimming with the current, not against it. People are motivated by a higher purpose. God wants us to be obsessively preoccupied with serving one another, providing for one another's needs and desires. God created 92 elements to use, combine, blend, or mix with other things. God intended for us to seek ways to bond, combine, and connect. Referring to Jacob's blessing, and that of Moses where each tribe had its own speciality, dependent upon each other, characterised by unity with diversity. Specialising in one talent means serving better compared to doing everything oneself and denying others the opportunity to serve with their talents. Who you are is more important than what you know. Developing a character through accepting God's word and internalising it and then acting on it is what makes the difference. Israel's failures in the wilderness were not related to their knowledge but to their disobedience and the moral implications thereof. Be meek, open to new directions, hearing the soft sounds, and faint footsteps. Practice silence for 10 – 15 minutes a week. Develop all four dimensions of your life. We have spiritual and physical needs met by what the world can offer physically or what the world can offer spiritually.

We love the people we help more than the people who help us. Give beyond your needs, don't live beyond your needs. The painful truth is that recipients of benevolence from others create a feeling of resentment. Humans find it difficult to be grateful when receiving things for free; when we love and serve others, we tend to love them more compared to people who help or love us. You need other people to shape your authentic identity. Connection with other people helps us preserve our sense of virtues and worthiness; we are nothing when alone.

To serve means that you need to follow before you can lead. “True leadership means showing others your ability to be subservient to higher powers”. Rules are there to keep. Impose boundaries and structures to raise the limits on yourself and others. “The more we restrict our freedom by setting rules and limitations on ourselves, the freer we are to be productive”.

Making money is a spiritual activity. Earnings and profits are a reward from God for forming valuable relationships with others by serving them faithfully and effectively. Economic exchange happens when two thinking beings exchange goods or services; there is loyalty, and this is spiritual. Work should be meaningful and add to the employee’s sense of value for his contribution made. Ancient Jewish wisdom restricts an employer from giving or instructing his labourer to do purposeless work. “The difference between the animal instinct of a squirrel gathering nuts and the inherent nobility of a human being earning a living becomes clear when you perceive economic enterprise in its correct position, at the spiritual end of the spectrum” (Lapin, 2014:34). Retirement is unhealthy, and there is no Hebrew word for it. So it cannot exist. People’s skills, knowledge, and experience will always be useful, maybe just in different settings. Don’t isolate when retired.

Do not let your fear get the better of you – press on, make fear your friend. Move forward although the road is unclear. Face the future as the Israelites did the Red Sea. Change is scary, we need to learn to deal with and cope with it with biblical truths. Change often contains the seed of growth, even if it is painful. Depending more on the things that never change, and acknowledging that things change, like science, medicine, and technology, but that God and the spiritual, the governing of human behaviour and the way the world works, and the physical rules of nature, never change.

Table 5-1: Human being with physical and spiritual needs compared with a world delivering physical and spiritual needs

	World delivers physically	World delivers spiritually
Physical needs (required for life)	Food, shelter, water, air, etc.	Esteem from peers, friends, connections, etc.
Spiritual needs (not required for life, but required for well-being)	Savings, discretionary income, financial security, etc.	Faith, spirituality, understanding, charity, etc.

Christian sociology is all about the main task of the Christian stewards cultivating a new public theology, disciplined, diverse, and alert to the new birth of the cross-cultural and historically informed. It is a valid voice that contributes within the current structures of piety and control, spirituality and work life, and the influence of technology, etc. If this becomes intrinsic to the life of faith in our time, people will find a new sense of vocation that can give guidance to their lives, and new covenantal way of struggling in community with the complexities of modern life. If the clergy link a Trinitarian theology to a new understanding of how current societies operate, practical methods to evaluate and transform the dynamic and pluralistic structures of the current political economies, then the people of God will be able to become stewards indeed (Klay, 1986:176).

Public practical theology can assist in hearing the voices of the community and give biblical guidance to create a just, equal sustainable society for everyone.

5.10 Summary

To be practical is to be aware, appreciate, and steward. To do this one has to be open to listening to various voices, not similar voices.

Stewardship is a calling for every human being. We have to be inspired by God's Word for guidance to do good works (2 Tim 3:16). Christian stewardship is a gift, a privilege to stewarding the mysteries of God (the Gospel of Jesus Christ). It is a call for an alternative community where God is the leader. *Why*: to honour God and have no other gods but Him (Ex 20:1-3). *How*: to be fruitful and fill the earth where everything is given in the hands of humans to steward (Gen 9:1-3). We do it by being faithful servants of Christ and stewarding the mysteries of God (1 Cor 4:1-2). Above all things, have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins. *What*: to be hospitable to one another, serving with our gifts received from God, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen (1 Pet 4:8-11).

The Christian stewardship attitude and actions have not been practically defined stipulating consequences when not adhered to. It is difficult to discern what is right and what is almost right, due to how humans have been influenced in the past (and present) on what is correct according to God. Humans should be made aware of the greatness of God. They need to appreciate everything in life and learn to steward from God in a covenant relationship, at the core of which is a heart that wants to firstly glorify God. In fellowship, we cannot do it alone.

Public practical theology has to make a major contribution in terms of defining what the Christian stewardship responsibility entails showing business leaders how theology looks in terms of working towards achieving our SDGs to overcome our triple challenge.

Governments should include a Christian voice in discourses concerning SDGs to deliver and support a framework of justice where every human has the opportunity to live a good life and be a steward, where evil is restrained, and where society and the whole of creation flourishes.

From a business perspective, the SRC is involved in influencing a vast area concerning business practices. Based on the definitions of the composition of the SRC, it is proposed that the church and the Christian steward community must aim to get involved as independent non-executive members of this committee to influence ethical values. Defining and developing ethical values and norms, including personhood development, should be the responsibility of the church in partnership with businesses to develop and sustain a wealthy just nation. Public practical theology is to be the voice, “the regulator and judge”, in terms of ethical governance and stewardship governance. The next chapter summarises the study’s findings and makes several recommendations for a re-imagined Christian stewardship practice for business leaders involved in SD.

CHAPTER 6 – SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents the findings of the preceding chapters; revisits the aim and objectives of the study; and summarises the overall research process. In addition to acknowledging the limitations of the study, recommendations are made for future studies based on the insights of this research.

6.2 Purpose and Approach of the Study

The study explored the possibilities of reimagining Christian stewardship as a new paradigm for business leaders involved in SD. The main aim of the study was to probe the notion of Christian stewardship from a public practical theological paradigm. It examined the concept of stewardship from a biblical perspective and the importance of integrating stewardship principles into the practices of business leaders. The objectives of the study were to:

- Describe the current challenges and problems South Africa and business leaders are experiencing in terms of achieving the SDGs.
- Identify some of the reasons for the current situation, mindful of the triple challenge of poverty, inequality, and unemployment in South Africa.
- Investigate from a public practical theological stance whether Christian stewardship can provide a theological model for South African business leaders involved with SD.
- Articulate how Christian stewardship can enable South African business leaders to attain and work towards reaching the SDGs more effectively.

In order to reach the set aim and objectives, an exploratory literature approach was applied to collect the data. Sources consulted included academic books, academic journals, postgraduate dissertations, and other reliable media resources. Christian stewardship from a public practical theological stance aims to assist the public to see what theology looks like in business, and link it to the challenges we are facing concerning the SDGs.

A current perspective regarding SD from a South African perspective was investigated (Chapter 2) to understand what sustainability and SD comprises of in relation to the background, context, and challenges within the economic-, social-, and environmental elements of South Africa's triple challenge to overcome, namely poverty, inequality, and unemployment, and the impact these challenges have on business leaders working towards the SDGs as well as investigating all stakeholders involved in the process.

Chapter 3 investigated the possible causes of the triple challenges that are currently being experienced in South Africa, to learn about the history that shaped the present, and to equip us to develop a better future. The role of the Christian steward involved in SD was also explored which led to researching what corporate governance is as it involves the proper administration of companies.

Reimagining Christian stewardship and its relationship with work and society (Chapter 4) was to identify the normative task recommended by Osmer. It focussed on three areas, namely: theological interpretation, ethical reflections, and good practice.

Based on the insights of the previous four chapters, Chapter 5 focussed on what theology looks like for Christian stewardship, with the purpose being to enable business leaders to deal with contemporary issues facing the nation.

6.3 Summary of Research Findings

6.3.1 Nature and scope of South Africa's triple challenges towards sustainable development

The current state and challenges that are experienced in South Africa in terms of achieving the SDGs, and the impact of these goals on business leaders, was investigated. The NDP's vision for 2030 is to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality in a country where it is known that all citizens have the capabilities to take on the opportunities that are available, changing the lives of millions of people stunted by the nation's apartheid history.

SD can be defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Commission, 1987). Sustainability, on the other hand, is described as the balance between economic, environmental and social factors in equal harmony; these link with South Africa's triple challenges that need to be overcome, namely: poverty, inequality, and unemployment.

The private sector's interest in SD is rising, but unfortunately CEOs, political leaders, and public administrators present their politics, projects, and initiatives based on their contribution toward SD (Ukwandu, 2015:166).

When the country's GDP (economic production and growth levels) grows, it has a trickle-down effect on society where more employment is created, higher salaries can be paid, there is more spending by consumers, and raised confidence by firms to invest more, which forms the basis of the nation's economic growth in the future. The flip side is that when the GDP growth is low, the economy might face a recession leading to unemployment, lower wages, and less interest to

invest. South Africa is integrated into an international political economy that is mainly capitalistic with opposing ideologies over what economic system and governance standards should prevail. Our ruling party, the ANC, is becoming increasingly divided. The flame of discontent grows the revelations of corruption, referred to as a cancer, with the phenomenon of state capture emerging, one of the nastiest and most destructive manifestations yet. The latter is fuelled by state-owned enterprises and the political elite who seek to enrich themselves at the cost of the citizens and our country's economic future. Many businesses and individuals are captured in this complex web of dubious and illegal transactions, all abusing their power. This has resulted in the country's triple challenges, rising unemployment, deepening poverty, and being perceived as one of the most unequal countries in the world, taking South Africa backwards. The wounds and scars of the country can be attributed to being self-inflicted (Simpson, 2021:450). It is time for the country to rethink its economics. Corbridge and Goulet (cited by Matshazi, 2017:44) propose that policymakers, researchers, and governments, especially developing countries, should assess whether the current economic growth model is sustainable to overcome the nation's triple challenges.

Our current socio-economic situation indicates an unsustainable business environment. Social justice and socio-economic development are thus central, where all stakeholders take part, especially the business community, with the goal of building a just, healthy, and robust environment (Anwana, 2020:1). South Africa's social unrest is due to the country's desperately poor black communities' anger, who are protesting more violently and fiercely against their living conditions due to inadequate or the lack of service delivery from their local municipalities (Swart, 2013:1). To confirm the latter, Smith (2005:93) refers to a Martin Luther King explaining that riots can be seen in the same light as that when people are voiceless and neglected, they can become like children throwing temper tantrums just to be heard. The study found that the actions of the elite, the representative bodies, and the leaders (public and private) are driving the people into deeper poverty (in 2012, 50% of the people were considered to be living in abject poverty), yet they are blaming the poor for their poverty (Hattingh, 2009; cf. Von Holdt, 2011:20-22).

Our environmental sustainability, living within the means of our natural resources, faces implications due to industrialisation and land use pre-1994 in South Africa. The effects which are mostly felt by the poor, is mainly due to controversial and irresponsible corporate behaviour that has caused solid waste, with little obligation towards the workers and communities in these affected areas. The complexities concerning the environmental sustainability should be viewed on a local level, not nationally or globally.

Our economy is not generating enough jobs. South Africa has a lot of youth and unskilled workers, but unfortunately, employers seek skilled workers. During the third quarter of 2022, South Africa's NEET rates were 44%, with the youth unemployment rate at 59.6% during September 2022. Our discouraged work seekers stood at 3.5 million people during the July–September 2022 period. South Africa is seen as one of the most unequal countries in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 0.63 in 2015, where richer households are ten times wealthier than poor households. The labour market shows a clear divide between the small group of high earners in the formal sector compared to the majority of lesser paid jobs in the informal sector. High pay gaps between the unskilled, semi-skilled, and high-skilled workers as well as the influence of race, the occupation and education level of parents, place of birth, and gender are influences contributing to the inequality in opportunities.

Agang (2020:8-9) reminds us that Africa's biggest challenges are rooted in corruption and impunity. The responsibility to overcome the country's triple challenges, the SDGs, and achieve the NDP's goals cannot solely rest on the government. Various stakeholders contributed towards the triple challenges, and everyone should be involved in overcoming them – the government, business, civil society, the church, and individuals.

Chapter 3 covered the possible causes of South Africa's triple challenges towards SD. Ultimately, the study wants to contribute to the field of development from a public practical theological stance. Insights from various development theories were gathered including theological insights. Stewardship was introduced at this stage of the study, and as currently practiced, this drastically reduced authentic biblical concept does not contribute to a new life that the world anticipates from us. Being informed about our history contributes towards understanding the possible causes of our triple challenge. The study reviewed the history of the Christian mindset, and how it has been influenced and formed by various influences from the Hellenistic world, to Constantine, to the history of South Africans from the Khoikhoi, San and Bantu, the influence of the various settlers, our colonial heritage and the influence thereof, up to our forefathers' actions during the apartheid era, and our current actions and behaviours as a 'rainbow nation'. The concept of development received more attention after World War II and during the 1950s. Here, modernisation and dependency theories aimed to offer solutions to our predicaments. This included how our current economic-, socio-, and environmental conditions were formed and influenced by our past. The forming of our economy, our capitalistic system, our system of governance, which evolved over time, was seen as a perfect system with a trickle-down effect or the invisible hand contributing and developing everyone in society. The country made significant progress since 1994 but, unfortunately, due to corruption, we have moved backwards leading to the triple challenges. The

human heart, with the need to control everything, and the people operating the system, have made this system exclusive and not an inclusive sustainable one.

The business sector reports on their TBL in terms of sustainability. TBL consists of economic-, socio- and environmental elements also referred to as the people, profit, planet elements. A country's sustainability is measured on the same elements. It seems from the study that the focus of all stakeholders might be more on the economic element, neglecting the socio- and environmental elements.

An important element neglected is the positive influencer or contributor of the spiritual nature of human nature. Economics that promises happiness and purpose by increasing personal or collective wealth excludes the importance of the spiritual nature of humans (Naudé, 2020:9).

The motive of our hearts should be to glorify God. The problem is not that we do not know God's will, but that we are unable to do God's will. As stewards created and appointed by God, we do not dominate the world but merely have dominion over the world; we search to understand God's will in the theology of Christian stewardship, which is a new paradigm in working towards SD.

Why: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex 20:1-3). A Tanzanian proverb reads: "Make some money, but don't let money make you".

6.3.2 Public practical theology, a contributing voice to sustainable development

People fear change. The greatest weapon against this fear is truth. Public theology needs to give African leaders (government, business, churches) biblical standards to follow and be held accountable in order to set Africa free (Agang, 2020:10-11). Malachi exposed Israel's corruption, but he also offered hope. Six disputes are framed. These concerned God's love for the people (Mal 1:2-5); the contempt that the priests showed God (Mal 1:6 – 2:9); Israel's breaking of the covenant (Mal 2:10-16); God's justice (Mal 2:17 – 3:5); repentance (Mal 3:6-12); and harsh words against God (Mal 3:13 – 4:3). God demands observation of the law and announces the future coming of Elijah.

Tiky (2010:31, 42) found that low economic development, poor institutional quality, and social variables were responsible for the levels of corruption in developing countries. Furthermore, his research found that when the rule of law was not present corruption tended to be higher. Law abiding societies tend to have lower corruption. Corruption has been highlighted as one of the major causes of our triple challenge as well as one of the biggest obstacles to work towards SD. Public practical theology must contribute towards understanding and creating awareness around

the complex causes of corruption to limit the negative impact on the economy, our country, and our human development. The role of public practical theology – of being part (not solely responsible) of defining the rules of the law, implementing the rules of the law, teaching the rules of the law, and governing the rules of the law from a theological perspective – with a Christian stewardship governance culture, is contributing positively to overcoming our triple challenges and achieving SD. For this to be achieved, the authority of Scripture needs to be acknowledged as the internal evidence of the Word, with God's word leading Christians in their role as stewards.

6.3.3 Reimagining Christian stewardship and the relationship between Christian stewardship, work, and society

The normative task of Osmer was applied during Chapter 4 of the study guided by the question, "What ought to be going on?" The study was concerned with reimagining Christian stewardship and the responsibility it places on every human being, not only the responsibility of the church or the government.

Reimagining Christian stewardship and the relations between Christian stewardship, work and society led back to the NDP 2030 vision.

By 2030, we seek to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. We seek a country wherein all citizens have the capabilities to grasp the ever-broadening opportunities available. Our plan is to change the life chances of millions of our people, especially the youth; life chances that remain stunted by our apartheid history (NPC, 2012:5).

The NDP vision 2030 is what ought to be going on in South Africa; it's an enormous task that needs various stakeholders, working together for the common good to glorify God.

Christian stewardship has been mostly associated with money, where Christians show their appreciation to God by means of tithing. Malachi teaches us that the people reflected their covenant relationship with God by the way they used their wealth and personal possessions. Unfortunately, their attitudes showed a lack of love, commitment, and depth. Malachi shows the need for total Christian stewardship, where humans have been entrusted by God to take care of His possessions through their time, energy, talents, values, feelings, behaviour, money, and everything else (Van der Walt, 2012:3).

Another question was whether there is a trade-off between fulfilling the role of the Christian steward working towards SD and the market efficiency and/or sustainability. To claim that from a market-based economic perspective Christians have to live life and move towards a level of ethical blindness to survive, is to demoralise everyone to a level where the Christian faith is of

little value. “Christian faith communities are far too diverse in their visions of the Christian life and their social ethics to suggest a single, coherent notion of stewardship” (Krueger, 2002:1).

Hall (1990:41-51) refers to the scriptural concepts of stewardship from its theological, Christological, ecclesiastical, anthropological, and eschatological assumptions to understand the inclusive character of the metaphor of the steward as assumed in biblical literature. It affects every detail of our lives and will reflect in the fibre of our beautiful country when we obey and live it, but we are sinners in need of a Saviour.

The study referred to various arguments pertaining to what Christian stewardship means and what the core attitude of the Christian steward should be. The study progressed from the Christian steward only responsible for tithing and how money is utilised, to one where all aspects (economic, social, environmental-, physical, and spiritual elements) concerning human life, including those of others and future generations, are stewarded.

Public theology is more than theological reflection, it calls to live out Christian theological beliefs and values. It is about life. It is where Christian tasks are explained to the public from a theoretical reflection, and from a practical point of view (Magezi, 2018:6). Public practical theology and Christian stewardship go hand in hand, the one cannot go without the other. In that a reimagined notion of Christian stewardship will show work and society “what theology looks like” for both who are working towards a sustainable future.

6.3.4 Christian stewardship: A new paradigm for business leaders working towards sustainable development

The way people see themselves and forms their identities contradicts the way God views man, this leads to an unbiblical view of self where one is preoccupied with self, rejecting the reality of sin and not being dependent on God (Ellen, 2019:1). The Christian community have been impacted by these secular views of the self, believing that you must love and accept yourself (humanistic self-love teachings) before any behavioural changes can occur. Human’s view is placed at the centre of everything. The biblical view of mankind is that we are both immaterial and material, with a mind, will, affections, a physical body and a brain. Humans have the freedom of choice without control over the outcome of choices, the choices of others, or challenges faced during life. To live a sustained life is to live a life based on the standards set by God for the purpose God created humans.

The concept of Christian stewardship emphasises the importance of responsible management and utilisation of resources. There has been a growing interest for the need for businesses to adopt sustainable practices to reduce the impact of their operations on the environment and

society. Christian stewardship provides a unique framework for business leaders to integrate sustainable practices into their operations while at the same time fulfilling their responsibility to manage resources in both a responsible and ethical manner.

Chapter 5 addressed the pragmatic question of how might the Christian steward respond to overcome the triple challenges of South Africa to develop a sustainable model for business leaders. A stewardship culture will, inter alia, promote human dignity; create spaces for people to develop and participate in empowering others to take responsibility; be accountable and become involved in the improvement and development of their personhood, community, and society; and positively contribute to nation building. The framework of the chapter was built around the purpose, vision, mission, and values required to build a sustainable practice to improve the welfare of all stakeholders. To truly understand the concept of “Christian stewardship” and how we can practically apply it in terms of a business’s purpose, vision, mission and values, the study sought inspiration from four scriptures, and investigated the history and practical applications thereof. The Ten Commandments, which prescribe certain types of behaviours, are a prime example of apodictic laws and act more as a covenant. Exodus 20:1-3 requires of us to have no other gods but God. This was confirmed by Jesus who said that when we put God first everything else in our lives will find its proper place in the pattern of life which God prepared for us (Matt 6:24-24). The covenant with Noah was specifically selected where Noah is turned into a new Adam (regeneration of the human being made possible through Christ) and the original vocation of humankind again confirmed to have dominion over every living thing. Paul refers to leaders, like himself, saying: “declare God’s wisdom, a mystery” (1 Cor 4:1), where the leader’s true identity from God is as a “servant” in 3:5, “subordinate” or “assistant” in 4:1, “fellow workers” in 3:9, and “manager” in 4:1 – highlighting their ultimate responsibility to God himself and presenting the gospel appropriately. First Peter 4 calls on Christians to have a mutuality of “one another”, exercising unwavering love and embracing the ideal of other-oriented service without reference to honour or power. These practices, attitudes, and behaviours (patterns of thought) have a positive ripple effect on work, society, and the world.

The Christian steward’s attitude should be leveraged or used to engage in conversations with all stakeholders to be better stewards (awareness, appreciation, and stewarding). The church, acting as the agency, with positioning, numbers, and mobilisation networks can guide discussions regarding personal convictions as a Christian challenging what is not right. With the message of the gospel, and with the integration of individual Christians and the church as institutions, they can work together to achieve the SDGs. Chapter 5 included a section on practical examples or references to being aware of the wonders of God’s creation; by being aware, we appreciate and recognise the increased need to be part of it, as a steward.

Christian stewardship is being aware that all Christians (and humans) are both saints and sinners. To understand the role of the Christian steward, it is important to understand, be aware, and appreciate the self and the biblical truths of the self. Public practical theology contributes immensely in this area, i.e., to understand the difference between unbiblical self-interest and biblical self-interest, where the interest of self involves the interests of others, neighbourly love with a transcendent purpose in existence, and an alternative community living in loving covenant with the living God.

The way people see themselves and form their identities contradicts the way God views humans; this leads to an unbiblical view of the self, where one is preoccupied with the self, rejects the reality of sin, and is not dependent on God (Ellen, 2019:1). The Christian community has been impacted by these secular views of the self, believing that you must love and accept yourself (humanistic self-love teachings) before any behavioural changes can occur. Humans' view is placed at the centre of everything. The biblical view of mankind is that we are both immaterial and material, with a mind, will, affections, a physical body, and a brain. Humans have the freedom of choice without control over the outcome of choices, the choices of others, or challenges faced during life. To live a sustained life is to live a life based on the standards set by God for the purpose God created humans.

The human purpose is directly linked to the heart, described as the control centre of personhood (Tripp, 2021), and the purpose is linked to what you believe the End to be. The main purpose of businesses is to have a meaningful vision and be profitable. Business should be conducted in an ethical manner; this should be challenged by the church, the Christian steward business leaders, and individuals making sure that businesses do not become ethically blind. Stewardship places the long-term best interest of a group ahead of personal goals that serve the individual's unbiblical self-interest.

The vision of a business is to ensure long-term shareholder wealth maximisation, sustained by considering the TBL (Hendrikse & Hefer-Hendrikse, 2017:2; Elkington, as cited by Barkemeyer *et al.* 2014:6). The amount of fairness of profit margins and wealth maximisation was beyond the scope of the study; however, the why, how, and what businesses do to accumulate and distribute wealth should be with a Christian steward attitude. Business should work with government and all other stakeholders to achieve the NDP 2030 vision, which includes economic-, social-, and environmental aspects.

The mission of businesses relates to a statement defining the business' dealings, its objectives, and the approach to reaching those objectives. It is posed that one should "economise" how one spends their time, energy, gifts, and resources within their jobs, working together (with fellows

and the institutional structures) to achieve a certain mission prescribed by the business or institution which positively or negatively affects society. The true spirit of capitalism is not one of individual ego but one where the whole society or community benefits and makes profit peacefully; this should be evident and practiced in the Christian steward mission statements, whether for the individual or business.

Values can be ethical and unethical. Ethical values can contribute to the ethical wealth of a nation when they are intrinsically valued by citizens, and embedded in and supported by the institutional fabric of the society. These ethical values in turn drive economic performance and contribute to the realisation of a good society (Jennings & Velasquez, 2015). Culture is rooted in the verb “to cultivate”, which refers to the way people act upon nature, and how we choose to grow together as people on a deeper level; it is the beating heart – a way of life (Smith, 2005:122). Considering ethics, values, and human attitude, Vorster (2007:13) writes that humankind degenerates but the human attitude can regenerate due to the grace of God through Christ. This is the focal point of this study which seeks to contribute towards development, namely personhood development. How we instil and govern sound culture and ethical values is where public practical theology can offer usable practices to make the society aware of, appreciate, and be good Christian stewards based on a theological framework.

Corporate governance was implemented due to business owners needing mechanisms to control the performance of their businesses. This was seen as the most significant development in the business strategy for the 21st century, forming unique partnerships with shareholders, business, and community stakeholders when conforming to a culture of performance. In action, corporate governance – a sustainable value-based business model – will make the world a better place – now and in the future (Hendrikse & Hefer-Hendrikse, 2017:481). The concept of “stewardship” emerged when an auditor reviewed that proper stewardship took place by managers. To avoid falling into the ‘greed’ trap, business owners and leaders should instil a Christian stewardship culture, which is a tall order, as a true biblical concept of stewardship is often not understood. Such a culture is where the company actors work towards greater long-term utility, focussed on others with prosocial behaviour rather than self-serving short-term opportunistic behaviour. Stewardship behaviour is looking after the long-term interest of the group, the current and future needs and interest of the society, ahead of personal goals that serve an individual’s unbiblical self-interest.

The invisible hand of the Christian steward (including public and private, the church, civil society, everyone) is to be developed in society, e.g., personhood development based on a theological framework. Business owners and leaders need to develop as the business has more and different resources at its disposal compared to what government can offer regarding the triple challenges

our country faces. Personhood development is concerned with total human development, which includes the positive influence of spiritual development (this may even be the most important area of development needed).

Some practical implementations derived from the study for Christian business leaders involved in SD are to glorify God with everything, and not to have any other gods. The economic-, social-, and environmental elements must be in harmony with each other to work towards SD. Therefore, the focus must not just be on the economic element with the belief that it will have a trickle-down effect helping and developing everyone in society. Labour must be meaningful; occupations must be seen as a calling, improving the quality of life of the community, promoting justice in the community, developing an ethos of responsibility in the community, serving peace, and being constructive. Leaders must be ethical and not ethically blind. Governance practices should be audited with ethics included as the core attitude of governance. Social ethics committees can expand their membership and include more external stakeholders (company executives, suppliers, customers, employees, community members, including the church). The church needs to have a contributing voice in the public domain, where public theology should use a common language that is understandable to everyone, including people outside of the Christian tradition (De Gruchy, 2007:39). Stewardship governance implies that, firstly, employees experience self-direction and a sense of control due to employees taking part in the decision-making process, and that through employee development they are in control of their own career growth. Secondly, the individuals are motivated and committed to the ongoing well-being of the organisation due to identifying with the organisational attributes; and thirdly, through strategies building a sense of connection with, and emotional attachment to, the organisation and its components where the individual fulfils his/her basic need for belonging. A sense of psychological ownership is instilled in the individual with an “internal drive to protect that which is psychologically owned”, and the individual adopts an internal desire to personally act in protection of the collective interest of the organisation (Hernandez, 2012:27).

The proposed Christian stewardship model should reflect the people of the country to be active participants in the country's development and not just passive observers or receivers of welfare. Within Christian anthropology, the person's identity is connected to their calling; this is to be created in God's image and is concerned more with doing what is right and not only knowing what is right. Personhood, as a Christian anthropology, should be concerned about the autonomous self, which is expressed in the relationships we have with the self and others, and taking responsibility for development (Klaassen, 2017:4, 6) – a new paradigm for business leaders working towards SD.

6.4 Limitation of the Study

The study was undertaken to explore the possible contribution of the Christian stewardship notion for business leaders working towards SD from a public practical theological stance. The study did not attempt to present a conclusive or final plan as this was beyond the scope of the study where direct engagement with local stakeholders had to be present to identify their current specific problems with the aim to find practical solutions together. The study concludes that a true biblical notion of Christian stewardship, including the practice thereof, will contribute towards SD; however, the true biblical practices concerning ethical behaviour and practices within business require further exploration.

6.5 Recommendations for Further Studies

This study has recognised the potential of a reimagined Christian stewardship as a new paradigm for business leaders working towards SD; its potential contribution towards personhood development and a true identity in Christ; the affect it has on ethical values; and its contribution towards the NDP 2030 vision. Results from the literature study call for a reassessment of theological perspectives concerning true biblical Christian stewardship practices from a public practical theological perspective. Chapter 5 used the purpose, vision, mission, and values framework used by business. The study cannot define an exact or correct purpose, vision, mission, and values according to Christian stewards, which is not only an area for further research but also requires continuous adaptation to the practicalities of a changing life, environment, and economics.

In an attempt to foster living together in unity and promote justice and reconciliation to the glorify God, the researcher became increasingly aware of the possibilities that can develop from a public practical theological approach.

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made for further research:

- Christian faith communities' visions of the Christian life and their social ethics are to be reimagined in an attempt to define a coherent biblical notion of Christian stewardship.
- Continuous research is needed on the practice of Christian stewardship in relation to economic-, social-, and environmental concerns to be relevant within our continuously changing lives, including rethinking the relevance of our current economic growth model and if it is suited to contribute to SD.

- Research regarding normative approaches concerning Christian stewardship governance practices defining the individual's role(s) and responsibilities, the "rules of the game", and the effect on society in terms of SD, is also recommended
- The development of specific training and development programmes in personhood development needs further investigation.
- The effect of a Christian stewardship culture relating to the sustainable performance of a business should be explored further.

The following quote by Charles Spurgeon aptly brings this study to a close:

There are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. We should be better Christians if we were more alone, waiting upon God, and gathering through meditation on His Word spiritual strength for labour in his service. We ought to muse upon the things of God, because we thus get the real nutriment out of them. . . . Why is it that some Christians, although they hear many sermons, make but slow advances in the divine life? Because they neglect their closets, and do not thoughtfully meditate on God's Word. They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it; the water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink it. From such folly deliver us, O Lord . . . (Blue Letter Bible, n.d.).

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[Open%20Day%20Operation%20Phakisa%20President%20Speech.pdf](https://www.operationphakisa.gov.za/cc/Documents/-Open%20Day%20Operation%20Phakisa%20President%20Speech.pdf) Date of access: 12 April 2021

ANNEXURES



PROOF-READING

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27 March 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: LANGUAGE EDITING

This letter serves to confirm that I have edited the thesis titled:

**Christian stewardship for South African business leaders: A public practical
theological study**

By

A.A. Dörnbrack

Please feel free to contact me if you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Lee-Anne Roux