



**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**PULA! The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa and the
Water Crisis in Botswana**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Academic Requirement for the
Masters Degree of Theology (Theology and Development) in the School of
Religion and Theology**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Theology (Theology and Development) in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a theological reflection on the water crisis situation in Botswana. In order to do this, the study adopts the threefold method of liberation theology being; socio-analytical mediation, hermeneutical mediation and practical mediation. Firstly, in the socio-analytical mediation we address the social context of the water crisis in Botswana. Secondly, the hermeneutical mediation focuses on the faith perspective of the study. Drawing from the social teaching of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), this mediation will provide a theological response to the water crisis and the scarcity of rainfall in Botswana. Lastly, through the practical mediation, we move towards formulating the strategies of response on the basis of the experiences of the water crisis discovered through the social analysis and an understanding of the position of God in the situation. Resulting from this process, we will propose the development of the contextual theology of *pula*.

The study conducts an overview of the water crisis both on the global scale and in Botswana. In this area we explore themes ranging from water privatization, safe water and sanitation, urbanization, population growth, damming of rivers to drought. Also, we analysed the impact of water crisis on individuals where we covered themes including; limited accessibility to potable water, delayed social and sustainable development and increase in water tariffs. For a theological response, five key ethical themes were identified during examination of the UCCSA tradition. The five key themes are: human dignity and respect; justice and equality; sound use of earth resources; unity and inclusion; and the value of life.

This thesis propose two kinds of actions being; Firstly, the development of the theology of Pula where we considered themes including; the Oikos and Pula, Water as a Gift from God, Water ethic focusing on Pula among others. Secondly, the thesis proposes practical steps that include among others; the establishment of Environmental Office, Rain Water harvesting as well as recycling and Reusing of water.

DEDICATION

This work is posthumously dedicated to my parents, Seutlwadi and Tsholofelo
Tsuangeng.

My dear wife and friend, Thuto Tsuaneng, a strong woman who persevered to the end.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABCFM.....	American Board for Commission for Foreign Mission
ANC.....	African National Congress
BCC.....	Bantu Congregational Church
CCOD.....	Canadian Catholic Organization for Development
CUSA.....	Congregational Union of South Africa
DWA.....	Department of Water Affairs
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
EIA.....	Environmental Impact Assessment
HDR.....	Human Development Report
LMS.....	London Missionary Society
NGO.....	Non Governmental Organization
NSWCP.....	North South Water Carrier Project
PPP.....	Public Private Partnership
RWH.....	Rainwater Harvesting
SACC.....	South African Council of Churches
SADC.....	Southern African Development Community
UB.....	University of Botswana
UCCSA.....	United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
UK.....	United Kingdom
UKZN.....	University of KwaZulu Natal
UN.....	United Nations
UNCED.....	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

UNICEF.....United Nations Children’s Education Fund
UNDP.....United Nations Development Programme
USA.....United States of America
WSSD.....World Summit on Sustainable Development
WUC.....Water Utilities Cooperation

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Chapter 1:

Setting the Scene

1.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the water crisis in Botswana, a land-locked southern African country that is, however, rich in mineral resources such as diamonds, copper and nickel. In this context, rain is highly cherished as it provides the gift of water for the sustenance of life in Botswana. Despite the scarcity and high evaporation rates, rain continues to form an integral part of the societal and national life of Botswana. The Setswana word for rain is *Pula*, and as we shall see it has an important role in the economic, political and cultural life of Botswana. For this reason we have sought to reflect theologically on the theme of *Pula* in the face of the ecological crisis facing the globe and Botswana, and particularly the crisis around water.

1.2 Background: The Global Ecological Crisis

We are rudely awakened by the thought that we are at the brink of a total annihilation of our world. Fast depletion of our natural resources and the massive pollution of air, water and land have caused this threatening situation. While all are affected by the *ecological crisis*, the life of the poor and marginalized are further impoverished by it. Shortages of...water add peculiar burdens to life...A conscious and judicious rejection of extravagant and wasteful use of natural resources should be a priority for all.¹

In order to address the matter before us, it is crucial to seek to understand the key terms that will form a major part of the research. The origin of the word ‘ecology’ reminds us of the historic relationship between the environmental crisis and the planet earth. Ecology originates from the Greek word ‘*Oikos-logos*’ where the root word ‘*Oikos*’ means home and ‘*logos*’ means study. Therefore, ecology means ‘the study of the conditions and relations that make up the house (habitat) of each person and ...organism in nature’ and the way they relate with their environment.² Ecology appreciates and acknowledges the inter relationships of all living things and the

¹ Chandran, JR, 1994. ‘Ecology: A Theological Response’ in Nehring, A, *Ecology: A Theological Response*, Madras: Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, pg. 8.

² Boff, L, 1995. *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm*, New York: Orbis Books, pg. 9

environment that sustains their lives while focusing on the past, the present and future of all lives, human and non-human. Thinking about ecology calls for the adoption of an inter-disciplinary understanding of nature in order to avoid ‘a simplistic, fixed and fundamentalist view of things’.³

Naturally, there is a harmonious relationship and unity within the ecosystem. However, there is a continuous disruption of this harmony and unity imposed on the ecosystem by humanity. This disruption of nature, presents the environment with the main challenge of sustainability and renewal of natural resources. According to Kellman, Gifford Pinchot, one of the first American environmentalists, argued that although we can use forests, lands, streams and the grazing lands for economic benefits, warning should be sounded that ‘we need to be careful not to use the resources too quickly that they will eventually be depleted.’⁴ Although crucial, his warning has not been taken too seriously and as a result, the earth’s ecosystem is rapidly deteriorating.

1.3. Origins of the Ecological Crisis

Kellman, argues that the origin of environmental concerns in the USA dates to before the turn of the twentieth century when people were reacting to ‘what from the 1880s into this century people saw as settlement and people moved westward.’⁵ He argues that people in the West of the USA saw major environmental insensitivity where forests were clear-cut for timber and the land was left bare, grazing land was being over grazed by livestock and left naked and there were growing disputes over scarce water resources. This insensitivity toward the environment led to the conception of “sustainable yields” in forest management. Pinchot articulated that “one should not cut down forest lands at a greater rate than they regenerate themselves by the natural process.”⁶ Pinchot’s notion was stimulated by the human desire for economic wealth

³ Boff, L, *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm*. pg. 10.

⁴ Kellman, S, 1993. ‘Moral Domains, Economic Instrumentalism, and the Roots of Environmental Values’ in Gilroy, JM (ed.), *Environmental Risks, Environmental Values, and Political Choices: Beyond Efficiency Trade-offs in Public Policy Analysis*, San Francisco: Westview Press, pg. 35.

⁵ Kellman, S, ‘Moral Domains, Economic Instrumentalism, and the Roots of Environmental Values’, pg. 35.

⁶ Kellman, S, ‘Moral Domains, Economic Instrumentalism, and the Roots of Environmental Values’, pg. 36.

and development without consideration for the environment as the basis of such wealth and improved lifestyles. In other words, humanity has failed to realise the interconnectedness of the economy with the environment.

In an address to the South African Council of Churches (SACC) Triennial National Conference on the theme ‘Theological Reflections on Economy and the Environment,’ Steve de Gruchy linked the origin of the environmental crisis to the time of the industrial revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this address de Gruchy argues that ‘ecology’ and ‘economics’ are closely linked together. In substantiating his argument, he provides an interpretation of the key words, ‘ecology’ and ‘economy’ as originating from the same Greek word. We have seen that ecology comes from *oikos-logos*. Economy also originates from the Greek word *oikos*. It is composed of two Greek words, *oikos* meaning ‘house’ or ‘home’ and *nomos* meaning the rules of the home. From this understanding, de Gruchy argues that ‘Ecology and economy are thus intimately concerned about the earth, about the way human beings...make use of the bounty of the earth.’⁷ De Gruchy argues that for millennia people in diverse times and places worked to construct their economic life in positive relationship to ecology. This changed during the Industrial Revolution in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He contends that;

The period known as the Enlightenment gave rise to modern science, and modern science became fascinated by nature, the laws of nature and the ability to control and utilize them for human benefit...Our current ecological crises...all seem to stem from this period in history.⁸

The human drivers of the economic change brought on by the Industrial Revolution failed to perceive the intimate relationship between economy and ecology. This failure could be viewed as a deliberate policy, going by the argument by de Gruchy that ‘the whole point of Industrial Revolution was to take our home, the earth...with new forms of power, pummel it into shape as commodities to serve the market for such goods.’⁹

⁷ de Gruchy, S. 2007. ‘Theological Reflections on Economics and Environment,’ An address to the South African Council of Churches Triennial National Conference , pg 2.

⁸ de Gruchy, S, ‘Theological Reflections on Economics and Environment.’ pg 2.

⁹ de Gruchy, S, ‘Theological Reflections on Economics and Environment.’ pg 3.

The twentieth century saw a rise of environmental movements especially in the United States of America, (USA). By 1970 in the USA, environmentalist began to show a great concern over the way the environment was being exploited by human beings. At the time, there were no perceived environmental movements. Gaylord Nelson consulted with Denis Hayes “to organise the first nationally celebrated Earth Day.”¹⁰ From this consultation, the first *Earth Day* was celebrated in 1970. At the time, people were not conscious of the earth, the occasion by Nelson and Hayes ‘awakened US environmental consciousness to population growth, overuse of resources, pollution and degradation of the environment.’¹¹ Since then the earth consciousness spread throughout the world and societies such as the Sierra Club and the National Wildlife Federation were formed in order to carry forward the agenda of the Earth. By 1971, individuals, different world religions and groups such as musicians were engaged in popularizing the global environmental concerns. The global growth of the environmental movement pointed to growth in the environmental awareness and consciousness among nations. It is estimated that in 1990 ‘20 million people in 141 nations demonstrated to increase public awareness of the importance of individual effort under the theme ‘Think Globally, Act Locally!’¹² The outpouring of global popular sentiment at the most recent climate change meetings in Copenhagen indicates the growing public engagement in the issue.

The environmental movement has enabled us to see that the changes in our human way of life often impact on the way of life and nature of the non-human aspects of creation. The current environmental crisis testifies to the fact that environmental awareness can best be achieved as a collective response by nations and individuals in an effort toward saving the environment from total destruction.

1.4 The Poor and the Ecological Crisis

There was a point in time when poor or developing countries, sometimes called the countries of the South, felt that they had nothing to do with the global ecological crisis. For them, they could only be concerned with coming up with structures and

¹⁰ Raven, PH and Berg, LR, 2005. *Environment (5th Edition)*, Hermitage Publishing Services: USA, pg. 26.

¹¹ Raven, PH and Berg, LR, *Environment (5th Edition)*, pg. 26.

¹² Raven, PH and Berg, LR, *Environment (5th Edition)*, pg. 27.

mechanisms that would help them to escape from the poverty trap. KC Abraham points to this perception,

There was a time when the poor countries thought that the ecological crisis is not a problem for us...The environmental issue was the luxury of the industrialised countries. Social action groups and people's movements in the Third World countries thus showed relative indifference to the problem of ecology. Today we realise how urgent this issue is for the whole world...The threat is to the whole of life in general. The life of the planet is endangered. The ecological crisis raises the problem of survival itself.¹³

Naturally, the issues that surround the ecological crisis are neither restricted by borders nor the distance separating nations. In this regard when one country, one continent or subcontinent suffers from an ecological setback there is tremendous pressure placed on the others. This is indicative of how the world has shifted from dependence to inter-dependence. In illustrating this point of inter-dependence, Riccardo Petrella links the West with the Asian financial crisis. He argues that it is an illusion for West Europe and North America to have hoped that they would not suffer the effects of South–East Asian financial and economic crisis. Likewise he contends that ‘it is an illusion to believe that the deforestation of the subtropical countries and the land degradation affecting Asia and Africa will continue to bear local consequences.’¹⁴

In different ways, ecological resources contribute towards the societal economic system. Some features are renewable while others are non renewable and for both, there is need for cautious consumption and guarding against depletion. The economy of any country depends largely on the products of the ecological process such as agriculture and the industry. Through human needs, these products are converted from ecological material into economical inputs. In view of this interrelationship between ecological output and the human desire for economic progress, there is a need to introduce the concept of ‘carrying capacity’ in order to deal with sustainability. Carrying capacity refers to the population that a given ecology can support. In order for this to be possible there are two primary factors that influence the carrying

¹³Abram, KC, 1994. ‘A Theological Response to the Ecological Crisis’ in DG, Hallman, (ed.), *Ecotheology: Voices From The South And North*, 1994. Geneva: WCC publications, pg. 65.

¹⁴Petrella, R, 2001. *The Water Manifesto: Arguments for a World Water Contract*, London: ZED. BOOKS, pg. 3.

capacity, namely; the potential of the environment to yield natural resources and the level of population within the given environment. Since the economic needs for humanity are in coexistence with the environmental yield it is therefore reasonable to call for the sound use and comprehensive management of the ecological supply.¹⁵

Abraham has argued that “the negative impact of people on the environment is recognised to be the product of three factors: the total population, the amount of resources consumed by each person, and the environmental destruction caused by each person.”¹⁶ Population growth comes with the increase in resource demands such as water and as a result, the natural resources are strained leaving the environment very fragile. Industrial pollution is among the major threats that place the environment under critical crisis. For example, an effort to address the growing human demands for food leads to the overuse of chemical fertilizers in agricultural activities. Meanwhile, the continued overuse of the chemicals weakens soil fertility and damages its independent ability to yield good crop harvests. The end result becomes poverty as the ploughing fields are turned barren and infertile. The rivers have suffered from this use of chemicals, as waters are rendered inhabitable for life thereby killing in large numbers fish species. Abraham rightly argues that, ‘the decisions about the kind of goods to be produced and the type of technology to be used are influenced by the demands of the consumerist economy whose controlling logic of growth is greed, and not need.’¹⁷

From this perspective then, the ecological crisis is inseparable from the concerns of ecological justice. As David Field has pointed out, ‘the continued large scale degradation and exploitation of the earth threatens to fundamentally alter the complex inter-relationships of the biosphere and humanity...’¹⁸ In this regard, those who seek justice in the land ought to find ways of speaking for the environment. The ecosystem and natural resources are bountifully providing for the sustenance of life on earth.

¹⁵ This argument is drawn from Elisha Nelson Toteng of the Department of Environmental Science at the University of Botswana.

¹⁶ Abram, KC, ‘A Theological Response to the Ecological Crisis’, pg. 67.

¹⁷ Abram, KC, ‘A Theological Response to the Ecological Crisis’, pg. 67.

¹⁸ Field, D, ‘Confessing Christ in the Context of Ecological Degradation’ *The Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, July 1997, Volume 98, pg. 32.

David Hallman argued that ‘the creation of sustainable livelihoods will not happen without our commitment to justice as a fundamental spiritual value...’¹⁹

1.5 Christianity and the Ecological crisis

While we accept the ecological crisis as an issue of ecological justice we would also like to show that further, it has theological implications attached to it. This recognition, that the ecological crisis is also a theological issue, persuades us to realise that there is a relationship between God and ecology hence there is no area of the ecological sphere to which Christians should show a lack of concern. For the purpose of this study, we hold the view that the relation between theology and the ecological crisis will assist us to address the question that seeks to understand what the Christian faith has to do with the issues of the ecology. In order to respond to this question, we will consider some key theological themes that link this crisis with God. In this way we will be better placed in our understanding of the ‘Christian response to the urgent need for transformation demanded by the rapidly changing nature of our world.’²⁰

Rosemary Radford Ruether articulated that ‘the Church’s mission of redemption of the world cannot be divorced from... the healing of the wounds of nature wrought by an exploitative human industrial system.’²¹ This argument is grounded in the fact that as humanity seeks ways to improve their way of economic living, they exploit the earth thus leaving it wounded. M. I. Wallace argued that ‘as Jesus’ death on the cross brought death and loss into the Godself, so the Spirit’s suffering from persistent environmental trauma engenders chronic agony in the Godhead... This trauma deeply grieves the Spirit who pleads with God’s people to nurture and protect the fragile bioregions we all share.’²²

¹⁹Hallman, DG, 2000. *Spiritual Values For Earth Community*, Switzerland: WCC Publication, pg. 73

²⁰ MacNichol, SN, 1996. ‘Reclaiming, Revisioning, Recreating in Theo-Ecological Discourse’ in *Theology of Earth Community: A Field Guide*, New York: Orbis Books, pg. 68.

²¹ Radford Ruether, Rosemary, 2000. ‘Conclusion: Eco-Justice at the Centre of the Church’s Mission’ in Hessel, DT and Radford Ruether, R, (eds.), *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, Massachusetts: Cambridge, pg. 603.

²² Wallace, MI, 2000. ‘The Wounded Spirit as the Basis for Hope in an Age of Radical Ecology’ in Hessel, DT and Radford Ruether, R, (eds.), *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Wellbeing of Earth and Humans*, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, pg. 61.

According to Genesis 1:31, after creation, God saw everything that God had made and ‘behold it was good.’ After the creation of the universe, God created humanity and gave human beings the privilege to care for the entire creation. However, the last few centuries encountered an era marred with anthropocentrism that ‘meant a neglect of nature and...millions of oppressed human beings.’²³ The endangering of the environment by a few economically able countries and individuals entails endangering of the majority of the human population, the poor. For this reason, humanity should turn to the Earth in reverence and caring for it in every possible way; recognising that God is with us and the whole creation. Although being heavily exploited, creation is the work of God that stands in our time as the ‘new poor’ of our contemporary society. As Sallie McFague puts it, ‘human beings are in a covenantal relationship with God to protect nature.’²⁴ She continues to argue that ‘human salvation or well being and nature’s health are intrinsically connected.’²⁵

1.5.1. Theological framework of the study

We will use the work of the Brazilian Liberation Theologians; Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, as the framework of this study. They speak of three steps: socio-analytical mediation, hermeneutical mediation and practical mediation. These three steps, referred to as ‘mediations’ are coherently laid out in order to assist us to holistically undertake the theological work in an inter-disciplinary environment. Firstly, socio-analytical mediation calls us to address the social context of the crisis, in this case, the water crisis in Botswana. We will conduct the social analysis of the water crisis in Botswana with deeper focus on how it impacts on the lives of the individuals and their socio-economic environment.

We will then move on to the second mediation whose focus is centred on answering the question ‘Why should the water crisis be a matter of theological concern for the UCCSA in Botswana?’ We will be addressing this question from the faith perspective, drawing from the social teaching of the United Congregational Church of

²³ McFague, S, 2000. ‘An Ecological Christology: Does Christianity Have It?’ in Hessel, DT and Radford Ruether, R, (eds.), *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, Massachusetts: Cambridge, pg. 29.

²⁴ McFague, S, 2000. ‘An Ecological Christology: Does Christianity Have It?’ pg. 30.

²⁵ McFague, S, 2000. ‘An Ecological Christology: Does Christianity Have It?’ pg. 32.

Southern Africa (UCCSA) which is a major church tradition in Botswana. Lastly, we find that strength of liberation theology lies in its desire for action, and with the ‘practical mediation’. According to the Boffs “faith challenges human reason but in the Third World it tackles the problem of poverty, now seen as the results oppression.”²⁶ The work that has already been done in the preceding mediations must lead us to the formulation of the strategies of response by asking the question ‘what the faith perspective brings to bear on the experience.’²⁷ Given the experience of the water crisis as discovered through the social analysis and an understanding of God in the situation, we will then propose contextual theology of *pula* and practical steps for action for both the church and the society in Botswana. This is emphasised by de Gruchy in his argument that, ‘the whole process of engaging social science with theological reflection is to put faith into action.’²⁸

1.6 Botswana, the water crisis and the UCCSA

Having provided a broad overview of the ecological crisis facing the earth, and the importance of this issue for the church, as well as the theological method we shall use to approach the issue, I want to turn now to the specific focus of this dissertation, namely the water crisis in Botswana and the response of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA). Chapter two will indicate the extent of the global water crisis as a key aspect of the global ecological crisis. As a citizen of Botswana I am worried of the growing scarcity of water in my own country. Although Botswana has so far managed to maintain a reputable political system that is rated as a model of democracy in the sub-continent as well as progress in the area of economic growth, it is however, faced with an enormous water crisis. As we shall see in chapter three this water crisis in the country affects both human and non-human lives. The most notable are the poor, women, children and especially girl children, and farmers (both subsistent arable and livestock farmers). Under these circumstances, the government often rolls out drought relief programmes that aim to alleviate the drought impact on the poor.

²⁶ Boff, L and C, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, pg. 9.

²⁷ Holland, J and Peter Henriot, SJ, 1980. *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*, New York: Dove Communication, pg. 229.

²⁸ de Gruchy, S, 2009. *Reflections on the methodology of Vital Theology*, UKZN: Pietermaritzburg.

In this context the church is only seen when it arrives to offer ‘hand-outs’ as temporary relief strategies. Ignatius Swart argues that this approach by the church is “little more than a temporary alleviation of the symptoms...and should therefore not be confused with development assistance.”²⁹ For this reason, I felt persuaded to conduct this study as way to establish ways through which the church (and in my case, the UCCSA Botswana) could dialogue broadly with institutions and policies of development with regard to the broader sphere of water and its related issues.

1.6.1. From LMS to the UCCSA in Botswana

The UCCSA is the heir to the London Missionary Society in Botswana, the missionary organisation which was instrumental in evangelising Botswana and which for almost a century had a near monopoly in the country. The Botswana Synod of the UCCSA was constituted on the 24 August 1980.³⁰ In many different ways, the UCCSA-Botswana has been strongly integrated into the history, culture and contemporary social life of the nation, and has an important role in contributing to public life.³¹

In pre-independence days the LMS lived harmoniously among the chiefdoms, into which Botswana had developed. The chiefdom affairs were controlled by a council of senior men of the tribe above whom the Chief was the final authority.³² Okullu argued

²⁹ Swart, I, 2006. *The Church and the Development Debate: Perspective on the Fourth Generation Approach*, Stellenbosch: Sun Press, pg. 99

³⁰ At this conference Mr Kgolo Felix Mokobi and Meshack Samuel Serema were inducted as the first Synod Secretary and Chairman respectively. The church was growing into almost in every area of Botswana. Given the distance of one area from another, with meagre financial resources, the Synod was then divided into North and South Regional Councils. Later, it was conceived that ‘the two regions were still too ponderous’ hence ‘they were split further to form five regions.’ Christianity is currently the prevailing belief system in Botswana, with the largest numbers of Christians belonging to the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa.

This was evidenced by the socio-political role that its clergy played at various levels of the State. Among the Ministers of the LMS who were involved with the socio-political landscape in Botswana were Rev Dr Alfred Merriweather, Rev Derek Jones, Rev Brian Bailey and Rev Albert Lock. Rev Dr Alfred Merriweather came to Botswana in 1944 from the United Free Church of Scotland (UFCS) and settled among the Bakwena. He worked at Scottish Livingstone Memorial Hospital (SLMH) as the Superintendent Missionary Doctor. Later he was nominated to be a member of the Legislative Council of the Bechuanaland and subsequently became its first Speaker in 1962. In 1965 he became the Speaker of the Botswana National Assembly. Further, the LMS was visible in the socio-political well being of Botswana with the appointments of missionaries Revs Derek Jones and Brian Bailey as the first mayors of Gaborone and Francistown respectively.

One of the last LMS missionaries to Botswana, Reverend Derek Jones, argued that Robert Moffat of the LMS arrived in 1824 among the Bangwaketse of Chief Makaba, the warrior. Although initially not

that ‘during that period, to be a good citizen was to be a good churchman, or perhaps the other way around.’³³ The LMS established the church in Botswana along the tribal territories among the Bangwaketse, Bakwena, Bangwato and Batawana, the largest tribes of Botswana. These tribes accepted the LMS as a tribal Church.³⁴ Amanze recalls that Richard Sales argued that ‘the missionaries identified themselves with certain ethnic groups and concentrated their efforts...in converting the tribal chief. Consequently, their subjects followed suit and gradually Christian communities begun to grow...’³⁵ Musa Dube argued that as the oldest mainline church in Botswana, the UCCSA has ‘enjoyed the position of being a State church during the colonial times for a long time before other churches were allowed to start work in Botswana.’³⁶

This arrangement contributed positively to the growth of the UCCSA in the urban areas of Botswana. Dr O. N Kealotswe in his unpublished paper entitled ‘Ethnicity and the Church in Botswana’ observed that ‘Christians in towns and cities...go to churches which are associated to their areas of tribal and ethnic origin. Thus any UCCSA in a town or city will be dominated by the Bangwato, Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Batawana and Bakalanga.’³⁷ Through the work of the LMS, many citizens were Christianized so much that even though Botswana is a secular State, the Christian faith plays a pivotal role in the society a feature mostly noticeable where

warmly welcomed, Moffat was able to gain audience with the tribal council and from there ‘the Gospel first touched the people of the country now known as Botswana.’³² His visit marked the beginning of the first missionary body to arrive in Botswana and the beginning of church. David Livingstone followed in 1847 and befriended Kgosi Sechele of Bakwena who subsequently allowed him to settle among the Bakwena in the western part of Kolobeng. Reverend Derek Jones arrived in Botswana in 1954 as one of the last LMS missionaries. He has served both the church and the society in different capacities. For example, he managed the publication department of the Botswana Book Centre from 1960 to 1997. In 1976 he became the manager of Botswana Book Centre until 1993. Jones, retired in 1999 from full time service and still lives in Botswana.

³³ Okullu, J.H, 1978. ‘Church-State Relations: The African Situation’ in WCC, *Church and State: Opening a New Ecumenical Discussions*, Geneva: WCC, pg. 79.

³⁴ The *Dikgosi* (Chiefs) of Bangwaketse - Kgosi Bathoen, Bakwena – Kgosi Sebele, and Bangwato – Kgosi Kgama, are the trio that successfully went to Britain to seek for the independence of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1966. They are hailed in the country as national heroes.

³⁵ Amanze, JN, 2007. ‘From Denominational Pluralism to Church Unity’ in Nkomazana, F, and Lanner, L, (eds.), *Aspects of the History of the Church in Botswana*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publication, pg. 15.

³⁶ Dube, M.W, 2007. “‘God Never Opened the Bible to Me’: Women Church Leaders in Botswana’ in Nkomazana, F, and Lanner, L, (eds.), *Aspects of the History of the Church in Botswana*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publication, pg. 214.

³⁷ Amanze, JN, ‘From Denominational Pluralism to Church Unity’, pg. 20.

almost every national and government functions begin with prayer by a church Minister.

Over the years the UCCSA has spoken on public issues especially regarding the policy of separate development in South Africa. The UCCSA Church and Society reports ranging from 1974 until 1994 are a valuable resource from which we draw how the church debated and engaged with social issues. These reports lay our ground for a theological engagement with the contemporary social issues. Chapter four of this thesis seeks to identify and use these resources to also deal with the ecological crisis. Noticeably, the UCCSA in Botswana has been slow if not inactively involved both locally and nationally in ecological issues, and this needs to change.

1.7 Of Batswana, Pula and Water³⁸

In developing this theological response to the water crisis, I am interested in building a theology of *Pula*. *Pula* literally means rain in Setswana. It is an important word that recognises the importance of rain, or water, for the people of Botswana. Much of Botswana is a desert, and the people of the country are constantly aware of the importance of water.

The Batswana are grounded in the hope of rain that will redeem the country and all lives, both human and non-human. This hope is for rain and plentiful water is entrenched in the national symbols such as the national flag and the coat of arms. In his book, *Very Foolish or Very Brave: Memoirs of an African Democrat*, Sir Ketumile Masire, the former President of Botswana argues that the path to the making of Botswana as a state was one filled with challenges. He recalls the time they wanted to come up with national symbols that would be used to present Botswana both to her own citizens and to the world. ‘When it came to the choice of the national symbols...the flag was a design with...the black colour...the two narrower white stripes. The blue stripes on top and at the bottom represented the sky and the rain

³⁸ Please note the importance of the prefix in Setswana. Botswana is the country; Batswana are the people (sing. Motswana), and Setswana is the language.

representing our national motto, *Pula!*³⁹ In the national flag, the colour blue at the top and bottom are dedicated symbols of hope that it will rain and there shall be enough water and peace in the country will flourish. On the other hand, *Pula* is the national slogan that pronounces peace at the end of every national gathering and is shouted at the end of the singing of the national anthem. In this regard, for Botswana, rain is the lifeblood of the country since it brings life to the environment, animals, livestock, and agriculture, and humankind. Furthermore, ‘Pula’ is the only word engraved in the Botswana coat of arms. The national coat of arms is itself consisting of symbols that boosts the economic sector being trade (the three wheels), crop and livestock farming (heads of sorghum and a cow) as well as tourism (two zebras and ivory).

The presentation of the national symbols such as the coat of arms and the national flag rightly articulate the meaning of *pula* for the citizenry. Pula has two other meanings to Botswana, namely an economic instrument and a symbol of blessing – both deeply connected to the meaning of rain in a water-stressed country.

1.7.1. Pula: An economic instrument

Before Botswana attained political independence from Great Britain in 1966, the country used the South African Rand as the legal currency. This arrangement continued until after ten years of independence of Botswana when in August 1976 a new currency was introduced in Botswana. The new currency was named *Pula*, a reminder to the nation of the value of rain in a dry country of Botswana. The naming of the currency was a national project. According to the former president of the Republic of Botswana Sir Ketumile Masire, ‘when it came to the naming of the currency in 1976, we put it to the nation... Pula (rain) was an easy choice and the decimal coins were thebe (shield) although a proposal was made that the coins be called marothodi (drops of rain).⁴⁰

³⁹ Masire, QJK, 2006. *Very Brave or Very Foolish: Memoirs of an African Democrat*, Gaborone: Macmillan, pg. 81.

⁴⁰ Masire, QJK, *Very Brave or Very Foolish: Memoirs of an African Democrat*, pg. 81.

Given the dominance of South Africa at the time in the regional politics and her economic strength, the government of South Africa was not impressed with Botswana having her own currency. According to former president Masire, following the establishment and introduction of the *pula* ‘there were a number of stories in the South African press about what a mistake we had made and that soon *pula*... would decline in value.’⁴¹ However, Botswana maintained the vision of having her own currency that grew to be among the strongest both regionally and continentally. The links between ecology and economy are clearly indicated by calling the currency ‘pula’. The economic value of pula is encountered after good rain seasons when farmers return from the fields with good harvest. They sell their agricultural produce in order to gain financial capital as well as economic power; in this way pula (rain) provides farmers with the pula (monetary) power.

1.7.2. Pula: A Symbol of Blessings

Generally, for Batswana, Pula is not only about the economic progress of oneself or the country. Coming from a poor national background, Batswana appreciate that the primary need for the environment, individuals and the society is well-being. This desire for well-being is evidenced in the way *pula* is used as a sign of blessing. As the national salute slogan, it is used to depict prosperity, peace, good harvest and good health. Nationally, the use of *pula* in Botswana significantly highlights its meaning, its value and contributions to Batswana and their ecosystem.

Since rain is a scarce resource in Botswana, rainy seasons are often times to look forward to. At birth children can be named after rain as a sign of blessing. For example a girl child may be named *Motlalepula* (The one who comes with rain) and a boy child may be named *Modirapula* (The rainmaker). Similarly, some streets and institutions such as schools are named after rain for instance, *Marua-pula* (The rain owners) Secondary School.

A traditional village system teaches its children to jump in jubilation as they welcome the first rains shouting and singing, ‘*pula nkgodisa, ke tla gola leng*’ (rain, rain, come

⁴¹ Masire, QJK, *Very Brave or Very Foolish: Memoirs of an African Democrat*, pg. 254.

and make me grow up! Rain, I want to grow up!). It was believed that in this way, the gods will pity the children and allow the rain to fall for a prolonged period so that enough water could be collected for farm needs and domestic consumption. In this way health will be restored to the environment, livestock and humanity while the farms blossom with healthy crops for a good crop harvest.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have briefly introduced the ecological crisis and why it is important for Christians to respond. I have noted the three-fold theological methodology I shall use, following the ideas of the Boff's. I have then introduced the focus of the research, namely the water crisis in Botswana and the response of the UCCSA. Finally I have suggested that there are local cultural resources found in the term *pula*, which can be used to both identify the importance of water in Botswana and to construct a theological response to the crisis.

In the next two chapters we will undertake our 'socio-analytical mediation' as we examine the extent of the water crisis both globally (chapter two) and in Botswana (chapter three). This will pave the way for an adequate analysis of the social teaching of the church (chapter four) as our hermeneutical mediation, and for both the theological and practical responses in chapter five (the practical mediation).

Chapter Two

Overview of the Global Water Crisis

A new way of doing theology lies in ‘understanding the world *prior* to speaking theologically about it.’⁴² We therefore need to undertake our socio-analytical mediation as a first step toward theological engagement.

2.1 Introduction

Global developments such as desertification, population growth, urbanization, and various economic activities continue to make water a seriously scarce resource. The previous chapter mentioned the global environmental crisis from a broader perspective. In this chapter we will focus on the global water crisis and discuss some key global water crisis issues such as water privatization, urbanization, population growth, water and sanitation as well as damming of the rivers.

2.2 Realities of the Global Water Crisis

The understanding of the water crisis may vary from one situation to the other depending on the context of water demands. The Botswana Government defines water scarcity as when the available water resources are ‘unable to fully meet the total demand of domestic, productive and agricultural use, including the environmental water needs...’⁴³ Broadening this definition to the global understanding, “water is recognized as the most fundamental and indispensable of all natural resources and it is clear that neither social and economic development, nor environmental diversity can be sustained without water.”⁴⁴ Simply put, water is a finite and a non renewable resource on which all life depends. With the massive wealth of volumes of water available on the planet earth, it remains complex how then, there is such a major global water crisis so much that nations are set to go to war over the resource.

⁴² De Gruchy, S, 2009. ‘Kerina as Both Citizen and Christian: Teaching Pastors Why the Gospel Needs the Law in our Public Life’ in *Journal of Constructive Theology: Gender, Theology and Religion in Africa*, 2008/2009, (Double Volume), 14, (2), 15, (1), 125 – 138, pg. 130.

⁴³ Botswana Government, Department of Environmental Affairs, July 2006. *Water Accounts Botswana (1992 – 2003)*, Gaborone: Government Publishing, page 11

⁴⁴ Ashton PJ, May 2002. ‘Avoiding Conflicts over Africa’s Water Resources’ in *Ambio, JSTOR*, Volume 31, No. 3, Sweden: Allen Press. Pg. 237

The total volume of water on earth is estimated to be 1,360 million cubic kilometres enough to cover the globe to the height of 2.7 kilometres when spread evenly. Ironically, in the world of so much plenty there is a scarcity. According to Sterling and Vintinner, 70 percent of the planet earth is covered with water.⁴⁵ However, 97 percent of this water is sea water, 2 percent is locked in ice caps and glaciers and a large proportion of the remaining 1 percent lies too far underground to exploit.⁴⁶

Further, there is unevenness in the distribution of freshwater resources all adding up to an explanation of the current global and regional water crisis. According to Postel, 'in their quest for better living standards and economic gain, modern day society has come to view water only as a resource that is there for the taking, rather than a living system that drives the workings of a natural world we depend on.'⁴⁷ The use of water for one purpose decreases the water available for other demands. Such variances in water management and distribution have often threatened social and international security, peace and stability. This position is articulated by Postel where she argues that 'population pressures and rising demands press against the limits of supplies, international frictions over water are intensifying.'⁴⁸ Socio-economic water crises cannot be separated from the developments experienced as a result of industrialization. Here, we recall the argument by de Gruchy that the drivers of the 'remarkable change in human economy and society, not only failed to see the relationship between ecology and economy, but delighted in the divorce.'⁴⁹

The global water crisis is often exacerbated by the human demand for freshwater which has risen sevenfold in the last century compared with the world population that has increased three-fold during the same period. This is an alarming indication that water demands grow at a higher rate than the population growth. Basically, this means, 'supplies per person, a broad indicator of water security, drop as population

⁴⁵ Sterling, E, and Vintinner, E, 'How Much is Left? An Overview of the Crisis,' in Lohan, T, *Water Consciousness: How We All Have to Change to Protect our Most Critical Resource*, 2008. San Francisco: AlterNet Books, pg. 15

⁴⁶ Postel, S, 1992. *The Last Oasis: Facing Water Scarcity*, Earthscan Publication: London, pg. 27

⁴⁷ Postel, S. *The Last Oasis: Facing Water Scarcity*, pg. 19

⁴⁸ Postel, S. *The Last Oasis: Facing Water Scarcity*, pg. 73

⁴⁹ de Gruchy, S, 'Theological Reflections on Economics and Environment.' pg 3

grows.⁵⁰ In any given country, when the population growth surpasses the level that can be sustained comfortably by available water resources, then such a country is faced with serious water crisis. As a matter of urgency, there is a need to harmonise the human water needs ‘with those of a healthy environment.’⁵¹ Given that more than 99% of the world’s water is not available for both human use and the life of most terrestrial organisms, it therefore implies that the condition of water crisis requires new ways of using and managing the already critical available resources. Most of the water is locked up in the glaciers and ice caps. As a result, less than one percent of the world’s water is usable by the world population of 6.5 billion people. With this little percentage for such a huge number of people it is not surprising that water conflicts are endemic.

For this reason, the call to formulate a global working water management policy is fundamental and overdue. F.A. Hassan argues that presently, 2.3 billion people live under water stressed conditions and if this state of affairs is not curbed, then by 2025, half of the projected global population, 3.5 billion people, will be affected by this situation.⁵² To reverse this situation, if it will be possible, it seems there is a lot that would have to be done. For example, there are great variances in the use and availability of water per household. The 2006 *Human Development Report* of the United Nations recommends the minimum threshold of 20 litres per family in the developing countries yet an average family in Europe uses 165 litres compared to Canada where an average family will use 350 litres.

The poor, especially women and children in the Third-World countries, are the ones who often experience the effects of the water crisis more than the rest of the population. Thus, the 2006 *Human Development Report* (HDR) maintains that ‘deprivation in access to water is a silent crisis experienced by the poor...Some 1.1 billion people in the developing world do not have access to a minimal amount of clean water.’⁵³ This means that although the minimum threshold of water per daily use per person is twenty litres, as according to the HDR, most of the 1.1 billion people

⁵⁰ Postel, S. *The Last Oasis: Facing Water Scarcity*, pg. 28

⁵¹ Postel, S. *The Last Oasis: Facing Water Scarcity*, pg. 19

⁵² Hassan, FA, 2004. *Water and Ethics: A Historical Perspective*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Curriculum Organization: Paris, pg. 10

⁵³ UN 2006 Human Development Report, 2006. *Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pgs. 1 and 5

who have no access to safe and clean water only use 5 litres a day per person. Comparatively, this is an equivalent of one tenth of the average daily amount used to flush toilets in the developed countries.⁵⁴ Our societies continue to experience the disparities and suffer from depleting water resources due to population growth, urbanization, industrialization and global warming. According to P.J. Ashton the water crisis is accountable for inhuman conditions in poorer countries. He argues that, ‘this situation is particularly acute in the more arid regions of the world where water scarcity and associated increases in water pollution...are linked closely to the prevalence of poverty, hunger and disease.’⁵⁵

Today, the continued pollution of underground and surface water sources not only exacerbates the water crisis but also reduces the efforts of overcoming the crisis in the near future. It seems obvious that achieving improved water conservation mechanisms and water use patterns will not be an ‘easy walk’. In order to attain a balanced use of water, the policies, laws and institutions related to water resource management and structures should strive towards achieving the three basic tenets of water efficiency; water equity; and ecological integrity.

2.3 Key Issues of the Global Water Crisis

The water crisis affects all the spheres of human life in different ways since humanity has diverse ways of livelihoods. UN-HABITAT correctly notes that people have access to water in different forms and from different resources. However, there is a need to know ‘whether the water supplies are safe, sufficient for their needs, regular (available 24 hours a day and throughout the year), convenient (piped to their homes or close by), and available at a price they can afford.’⁵⁶ Where this question is answered to the contrary, it will add up to show the state of the water crisis that humanity has to deal with. The key role of water in the socio-economic development of both the poor and non poor countries is immeasurable. It is therefore understandable that where there is a crisis of water general development and

⁵⁴ 2006 HDR, pg. 5

⁵⁵ Ashton PJ, ‘Avoiding Conflicts over Africa’s Water Resources’, pg. 237

⁵⁶ UN-HABITAT, 2003. *Water and Sanitation in the World’s Cities: Local Action for Global Goals*, London: Earthscan, pg. 2.

livelihoods are severely affected. For this reason, this section of the thesis will focus on key issues of the global water crisis.

2.3.1 Water Privatization

Water privatization came about as the recognition of the need for clean drinking water in the cities of the United States of America led to the formation of the private water companies. These companies were ‘set up with shares to provide infrastructural investments.’⁵⁷ At the close of the eighteenth century a Bill was passed in Britain to license one of the first private water companies, *Weymouth*, to supply water to very populous towns since they were ‘not properly supplied with freshwater...and should have a constant supply.’⁵⁸ Since the eighteenth century, there has been a growth of private water companies enclosing water resources and where the water resources were enclosed by local authorities, private water companies often work towards taking over through the support of the present day governments.

Generally, privatization occurs when the state sells its assets to a private company ‘along with the maintenance, planning and operational responsibilities that these assets entails.’⁵⁹ In the United Kingdom this model of privatization was first practised under Margaret Thatcher in the late 1980s and was formerly known as Divestiture. Under Divestiture, the state is only left with monitoring and regulatory oversight authority. However, this model has since been abandoned, especially where water privatization is concerned. Most countries and some private companies prefer to privatize their waters using a public-private partnerships (PPP) model. Under this model of privatization, there is no transfer of state assets or where infrastructure and equipment was transferred, it is then transferred back into public ownership after a given period of time. The focus in this model is on the transfer of managerial and operational functions of the company. According to Mac Donald and Ruiters ‘this

⁵⁷ Strang, V, 2005. ‘Taking the Waters: Cosmology, Gender, and Material Culture in the Appropriation of Water Resource’ in Coles, A, and Wallace T (eds.), *Gender, Water and Development*, Berg: New York, pg. 29.

⁵⁸ Strang, V, 2005. ‘Taking the Waters: Cosmology, Gender, and Material Culture in the Appropriation of Water Resource’ pg. 31.

⁵⁹ McDonald, DA, and Ruiters, G, 2005. ‘Theorizing Water Privatization in Southern Africa’ in McDonald, A and Ruiters, G, (eds.) *The Age of Commodity: Water Privatization in Southern Africa*, United Kingdom: Earth-scan, pg 14.

model is used across the world by leading water and construction firms such as Suez and Vivendi who operate this way in over 12,000 towns and cities.⁶⁰

Water privatization is a growing market issue in which communities that have freshwater resources in their care may lose them to profit-seeking institutions. Already, most of these communities have helplessly watched as their water resources were taken away from them in the interest of profit making. This scenario has provided ground for McDonald's argument that privatization must be seen as a social intensification of capitalism and a shift in state-society relationship.⁶¹ The state withdrawal from the public responsibility of ensuring safe and clean water for its citizenry empowers private enterprise to take over the management and distribution of water mostly in urban areas. As a result, water is being bottled as a privatization privilege for the powerful with little or no benefits to the poor who through the process are subjected to high water tariffs. Evidently, "water is on the world agenda as an economic good, a commodity that can be *owned* by the rich and powerful and distributed by the highest bidder."⁶²

The debates over water services privatization are highly intensive. Advocates for the neo-liberal policies contend that privatization is a result of the state's failure to offer quality service to the public. They hold the view that 'state officials are rent seeking, inefficient, unaccountable, inflexible and unimaginative.'⁶³ Therefore, they promote privatization as offering a more efficient and improved service with better quality and results. However, these arguments are counteracted by NGOs, civil rights movements and some members of the public who are concerned with the welfare of the poor and seek to advance the pro-poor approach to development. They argue that under privatization, the general public has often suffered poor service delivery despite the arguments advanced in favour of privatization as being more efficient than the private sector. The private sector aims for good financial returns from their investments and therefore the increase of water charges that leaves the majority of individuals and families without safe and clean water is not necessarily their concern. Interestingly, at the initial stages, some private water companies have promised that they will at some

⁶⁰ McDonald, DA, and Ruiters, G (eds.), 2005. Page 14

⁶¹ McDonald, DA, and Ruiters, G (eds.), 2005. Page 13

⁶² Global Economic Justice, Volume 4, Number 3. November 2005

⁶³ McDonald, DA, and Ruiters, G (eds.), 2005. Page 30

stage give everyone access to clean and safe drinking water. Regretfully, for example, in Zimbabwe, according to Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCOD), Biwater ‘eventually withdrew from a water privatization scheme because the local population could not pay the rates the company wanted in order to earn its desired profit.’ In addition, CCOD continues to show that public ownership can excel as in the case of Botswana where ‘publicly managed water system reached 303,000 people in 1998, a tenfold increase from 1970.’⁶⁴

2.3.2 Safe Water and Sanitation

‘Clean water and sanitation are...fundamental to what people can do or become. Access to water is not just a fundamental human right...it also gives substance to the other human rights and is a condition for attaining wider human development goals.’⁶⁵ In the world whose population is 6.5 billion, it is regrettable that 1.1 billion people in developing world lack access to clean and safe water while 2.6 billion do not have access to sanitation. Water accessibility and sanitation is fundamental for the health of all individuals. It is crucial that all individuals have access to water and sanitation. This is because no person can exist without water nor live without excreting human waste, which usually finds its way back into the water system. This brings in the primary question of ‘whether the water supplies are safe, sufficient for human needs, regular, convenient, and available at a price they can afford.’⁶⁶ On the one hand, is the question of daily disposal of used water and human waste. Hence, in a similar way as in water availability, UN-HABITAT raises awareness that ‘the issue is not whether they have provision for sanitation but whether they have a quality of provision that is convenient for all household members (including women and children), affordable, and eliminates their contact with human excreta and other wastewater...’⁶⁷

The inadequate provision of water and sanitation in the world especially in Latin America, Asia and Africa has immensely contributed to experiences of poverty, the high infant mortality rate and illnesses that subject individuals to early deaths. Today,

⁶⁴ Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, Fall 2003, Toronto:

⁶⁵ 2006 HDR, pg. 27.

⁶⁶ UN-HABITAT, 2003. *Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities: Local Action for Global Goals*, London: Earthscan, pg. 2.

⁶⁷ UN-HABITAT, *Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities: Local Action for Global Goals*, pg. 2

it is estimated that ‘at least 2.5 billion people in the world lack proper sewage, access to clean water and sanitation.’⁶⁸ The UN 2006 HDR stated that “the Millennium Development Goals provide a benchmark for measuring progress towards the human right to water. That is why halving the proportion of the world population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation – Goal 7; target 10 is a key target in its own right.”⁶⁹ Although the goal does not specifically make mention of sanitation, water supply projects will subsequently have to deal with the collection of wastewater its treatment and its disposal.

This omission was redressed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held Johannesburg between late August and early September 2002 where the need for an additional target on sanitation was upheld, namely, ‘to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation.’ Lack of basic sanitation is a major cause of other social ills such as a high infant mortality rate and diverse illnesses such as cholera that entraps individuals into poverty. According to the Global Water Supply and Sanitation Assessment 2000 Report “access to safe water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal are universal needs and, indeed, basic human rights. They are essential elements of human development and poverty alleviation and constitute an indispensable component of primary health care.”⁷⁰

A closer study of the 2000 Water and Sanitation Report reveals that there is evidence that the current situation of water and sanitation can be changed if people were to be provided with adequate sanitation service, safe and clean water as well as hygiene education which ‘...represents an effective health intervention.’⁷¹ Inadequate clean water and improper sanitation are not only issues of public sanitation but are also issues of economic growth and industrial productivity. That is, short term solutions to the water and sanitation crisis, coupled with relief measures for individuals who lead their lives where there is inadequate sanitation and insufficient access to safe and clean drinking water will, with the course of time, prove to be financially unsustainable.

⁶⁸ Lohan, T, ‘We All Live Downstream’ in Lohan, T *Water Consciousness: How we all have to Change to Protect our Most Critical Resource*, 2008. San Francisco: AlterNet Books, pg. 8

⁶⁹ 2006 HDR, pg. 4.

⁷⁰ Global Water Supply and Sanitation Report 2000, pg. v

⁷¹ Global Water Supply and Sanitation Report 2000, pg. v

As a result of exposure to illnesses, such conditions of living will render individuals to be unproductive with low work output while only a few children will be able to be enrolled in schools. The UNDP 2006 HDR has maintained that ‘clean water and sanitation are among the powerful drivers of human development through extending opportunity, enhancing dignity and helping create a virtuous cycle of improving health...’⁷² In this regard, access to water supply and sanitation is a fundamental need and a human right that every nation and institution should advocate for its own people.

2.3.3 Urbanization

Urbanization is a process where there is the movement of people from the rural areas to the urban areas with the purpose of settling for various reasons such as economic, social and political. It can be further understood as the process where the rural areas are being transformed into being urban areas. Seokwang in his unpublished thesis entitled ‘The Impact of Urban Expansion and Population Growth on Productivity of Forestlands: Rustenburg Local Municipality’, argues that the process of urban expansion can occur by physical concentration of the population and economic activities in cities or towns.⁷³ There is no international agreement on what number of people defines ‘urban’, and the understanding of ‘urban’ varies from one context to the other. Many countries base their definition of ‘urban’ on several factors including population size, social factors, economic factors and population density. Historically, human society had a predominately rural lifestyle. For example, ‘when Europeans first settled in North America, the majority of the population consisted of farmers in rural areas. Today, approximately 25 percent of the people in the United States live in rural areas and seventy five percent ...in cities.’⁷⁴ The trend where the population growth in the cities is higher than in the rural areas due to urbanization is common in most countries.

⁷² 2006 Human Development Report, pg. 5

⁷³ Seokwang, M, 2007. *The Impact of Urban Expansion and Population Growth on Productivity of Forestlands: Rustenburg Local Municipality*, University of Pietermaritzburg: KwaZulu Natal, pg. 16.

⁷⁴ Raven, PH and Berg, LR, *Environment (5th Edition)*, pg. 212

Biswas holds the view that ‘the provision of clean drinking water, sanitation and storm water disposal has become a major challenge for the urban centres of the developing world...In 2000, 47.2 % of the global population was urban and is increasing steadily.’⁷⁵ Since the Industrial Revolution, the provision of clean and safe water as well as water and sanitation has become a critical issue for the urban areas. However, by the first half of the twentieth century, the problem had greatly improved for the developed countries especially given their financial ability while for the developing countries the problem had worsened as a result of population growth and rapid urbanization. This meant that most people in urban areas of the developing countries did not have access to basic services such as water. The rural livelihoods that were predominantly based on farming began to suffer as people moved into urban areas abandoning agricultural resources. Commerce and industry slowly took over from farming as the main source of living, and further imposed stress on urban water resources.

The United Nations projects that by 2030, half of the world’s population will be living in the urban areas. This projection shows that there will be more pressure on the already depressed water resources. Today, Dar-Es-Salaam, the capital city of Tanzania, is one of the fastest growing cities in Africa urbanizing at a rate of 8 percent per annum.⁷⁶ The water infrastructure of Dar-Es-Salaam, constructed in the 1950s, recently had its water pipes extended. However, the growing city population rendered the distribution system incapable of serving the city population. In Bangalore, India the city population of 6.5 million people needs approximately 900 million litres a day yet it is threatened by common water shortages. Rapid urbanization around Bangalore ‘has destroyed many wetlands areas (of the 51 lakes in the city in 1973, only 17 remained in 2007).’⁷⁷ A joint report of World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children’s Education Fund (UNICEF) in 2000 revealed that during the year 2000, there were 2845 million people globally, living in the cities. Of this number, 173 million lived without access to clean and safe water.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Biswas, AK, ‘Water Management for Major Urban Centres’ in *Water Resources Development* Volume 22, No. 2: Routledge: Mexico, June 2006. page 183

⁷⁶ Society for International Development, December 2008, ‘Urbanization and Water’ in *Development: Water for People, Issue 51, No. 1*, pg. 2.

⁷⁷ Society for International Development, pg. 5

⁷⁸ WHO and UNICEF, 2000. *Global Water Supply and Sanitation Assessment Report*, Geneva: WHO and UNICEF Collaborative Council, pg. 80.

2.3.4 Population Growth

Population growth is a key factor in the contemporary water crisis. The population growth widens the disparities between the water-rich countries and water-scarce countries. For example, Sterling and Vintinner have argued that each person needs “a minimum of about 13 gallons per person per day to maintain an adequate quality life...yet in Kenya an average person uses only 3 gallons of water per person per day while in the United Kingdom residents use around 30 gallons per person per day.”⁷⁹

Lohan contended that the global ‘demand for water is doubling every 20 years, outpacing population growth twice as fast.’⁸⁰ The continuous global population growth causes the water table to fall even deeper as there is manipulation to extract more groundwater. According to Lohan the current statistics indicate that the demand for fresh water will exceed the global supply by over 50 percent in less than twenty years. The role of water in life is evident and cannot be substituted. Therefore, the global population growth is challenged by the global water demands to supply and sustain human life and the entire ecosystem. As the world population continues to grow the global water crisis becomes more threatening. In Asia the population growth overwhelms the available safe and clean water supplies. For example, in India where ‘20 percent of the world’s population has access to 4 percent of the world’s freshwater, 8,000 villages have no local water.’⁸¹ To this position, Raven and Berg add, ‘The water supply in Indian cities...is so severely depleted that water is rationed from a public tap.’⁸²

While the global population growth overwhelms the already strained water resources, it also ‘affects humans by limiting the amount of food they can grow.’⁸³ There will be more people with less crop production to meet their demand. As population growth heightens food demand it also increases water use in agriculture, a sector that is already consuming 70 percent of the global available freshwater. Meanwhile, as the agricultural sector attempts to rapidly address the global food demand, it subsequently

⁷⁹ Sterling, E, and Vintinner, E, pg. 24

⁸⁰ Lohan, T, ‘We All Live Downstream’

⁸¹ Raven, PH and Berg, LR, *Environment (5th Edition)*, pg. 313

⁸² Raven, PH and Berg, LR, *Environment (5th Edition)*, pg. 313

⁸³ Raven, PH and Berg, LR, *Environment (5th Edition)*, pg. 313

resorts to the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and concentrated animal feeds for livestock. Leslie argues that given that some of the petroleum chemical fertilizers are either over applied or the plants cannot absorb all the nitrogen in them, ‘they either run off the land or seep through the soil into water sources...’⁸⁴ He continues to argue that at global level ‘poultry...and cattle factory farms spill millions of gallons of manure and other waste into water ways.’⁸⁵ Through these processes, agriculture becomes involved in contributing to the global water crisis. Additionally, the UNDP warns that that the amount of water used for irrigation may be doubled by the year 2025 should the current status of demand persist.

2.3.5 Damming the Rivers

There are multiple reasons often advanced in favour of the construction of dams, including domestic and industrial water supply, hydroelectric power generation, irrigation, and tourism. Interestingly, these seem to be good reasons, yet they have not considered the environmental effects of dam construction projects. Diverting of river waters to supply dams is one of the major courses of water scarcity especially for the down stream dwellers.

Leslie warns that despite the dependency on dams by some for their livelihoods, there is enough evidence that dams do more bad than the anticipated goodness. For example, Juliet Abuiin has pointed out that ‘nothing is more destructive of riverine and riparian species like a dam. It traps sediments and nutrients, alters a river’s temperature and chemistry and upsets the geological process of erosion and deposition that sculpt the surrounding land...’⁸⁶ In the light of this argument, it is evident that dams bring with them temporary relief to the challenges of the livelihoods of people while leaving permanent environmental damage and misery. Three Gorges, one of the largest dams in the world, found in China, has a reservoir of 600 km, and one of the highest running operations costs ranging between US\$25 billion and US\$40 billion. With the construction of this dam at least 1.6 million people were displaced while

⁸⁴ Hauter, W, ‘Agriculture’s Big Thirst: How to Change the Way We Grow our Food,’ pg. 76

⁸⁵ Hauter, W, ‘Agriculture’s Big Thirst: How to Change the Way We Grow our Food,’ pg. 76

⁸⁶ Abuiin, J, 2005. *Damming Rivers – Costs and Benefits: A Case Study of the Proposed Bujagali Power in Uganda*, Rural Development Media Communications: Uganda, 6 – 9 September 2005, pg. 2.

many communities, about 13 cities, 140 towns and 1350 villages) suffered flooding due to the same river.⁸⁷

Advocates of dam building projects argue that dams are a response to water shortages and are the only way to supply water through untapped water resources. They seldom talk about the impact of dams in the communities. For example, Leslie observed that the downstream impact of a dam is visible in how it ‘disrupts water and sediment flow; reduces biodiversity; causes...lower crop production, and decreased fish population.’⁸⁸ In Botswana, for example, the construction of Dikgatlong Dam, the largest dam in the country, led to the ‘people of Polometsi and Matopi having to be relocated to make way for the project...also necessitated the reburial of 130 remains from both Matopi and Robelela.’⁸⁹

Undoubtedly, the building of dams benefits a few, but these are mostly political bureaucrats, construction consortiums and the financing institutions while environmentally disadvantaging the poor. The construction of dams requires massive amounts of money. For example, in Uganda, the proposed dam to be built on the River Nile 8 kilometres down stream of Kiira is estimated to cost US\$ 530million and is to be funded by the Government of Uganda. Civil Society organisations in Uganda, Environmentalists and the World Bank have been concerned about corruption and the insufficient environmental impact assessment (EIA). Meanwhile the Dikgatlong Dam in Botswana is estimated to be constructed at a contract price of P1.2 billion. In other words, when constructing dams priority is given to socio-economic returns with less sensitivity to their permanent environmental disfigurement and their long term impact on those who depend on rivers for their livelihoods.

⁸⁷ Leslie, J, ‘The Age of Consequences: A short History of Dams’ in Lohan, T, *Water Consciousness: How We All Have to Change to Protect our Most Critical Resource*, 2008. San Francisco: AlterNet Books, pg. 83

⁸⁸ Leslie, J, ‘The Age of Consequences: A short History of Dams’, page 84

⁸⁹ <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=1&aid=11&dir=2008/February/Monday4> : Accessed 02 September 2009

2.4 Conclusion

The first United Nations conference on water held in 1977 in Mar del Plata, Argentina drew the attention of the world leaders to ‘the scale of the problems concerning access to water of sufficient quantity and quality, and of the risks associated with the growing shortages and degradation of supply.’⁹⁰ Since then the water crisis has been a priority on global political agendas. At all levels the significance of the problems of optimizing the use of freshwater resources in the future, the need to reverse the current trends of over-consumption, pollution, and the rising threats from drought and floods are key issue of discussions. The success against the water crisis is a necessity for the survival of generations to come.

This chapter dealt with the global water crisis and discussed some key factors that drive this crisis on a global scale. This chapter has prepared the ground for the next chapter that focuses on the Botswana water crisis situation.

⁹⁰ Petrella, R, 2001. *The Water Manifesto: Arguments for a World Water Contract*, London: ZED Books, pg. 22

Chapter Three

The Water Crisis in Botswana: The Situation and Impact

3.1 Introduction

In 1966, Botswana obtained political independence from Britain. Since then, Botswana has grown from being amongst the poorest countries in the world into being the middle income country it is today with a considerable increase in per capita income. Owing to its liberal economic policies, the country has enjoyed rapid economic growth and the provision of basic services to the population. However, economic and population growth has also led to a growth in demand for basic services especially potable water. With low rainfall and high evaporation rates and low conversion of rainfall to runoff, Botswana continues to experience high water demand that imposes stress on already strained water resources. Meanwhile, sustainable development requires a reliable quantity and quality of water and as such a water stressed country like Botswana may risk its ground water resources being depleted through ‘mining’ of water resources.

The water crisis situation of Botswana is worsened by recurrent periods of drought. For this reason, rain – *pula* – is one of the celebrated ‘divine gifts’ in the country, as we noted in chapter one. This chapter will provide a brief introduction to Botswana and discuss key features of the water scarcity in Botswana and how it impacts on Botswana and their livelihood.

3.2 Botswana: Geographical Location

Botswana is a land locked country situated at the centre of southern Africa and shares borders with South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Botswana covers 582,000 square kilometres extending 1,100 kilometres from the north to the south and 960 kilometres from the east to the west. The climatic condition of Botswana is described as a dry where most of the country is arid or semi arid. The landscape of Botswana is ‘predominantly flat to gently rolling tableland. There are two dominant physiographic features in Botswana being the Kalahari Desert in the West of the

country and the Okavango Delta in the North West. The Kalahari Desert in the West covers over two thirds of the total area of the country.⁹¹

Freshwater resources are limited if not totally deficient in the western part of the country. Originally the name was '**Kgalagadi**' and was later changed by the British colonizers from '*Kgalagadi*' to the popular '*Kalahari*.' The name is composed of two words, '*kgala*' and '*-gadi*.' '*Kgala*' meaning 'to evaporate' while '*-gadi*' is a suffix that states 'greatness or mighty.' Therefore, joined together, the two words make the name 'Kgalagadi' that means 'the 'Mighty Evaporation.' The name 'Kgalagadi' is indicative of the high level of water scarcity in the region. Meanwhile, in the north-western part of the country there is the Okavango Delta, the largest inland delta in the world covering '15,000 square kilometres of lush verdant wetland.'⁹² The Okavango River, flows into Botswana 'from Angola and soaks in the sands...forming channels and islands that comprise the Okavango Delta.'⁹³ Brough asserts that the Okavango Delta together with the river system of the country contains 95 percent of all the surface water in Botswana. With vast areas of open water, green wetlands and abundant wildlife, the Okavango Delta brings the beauty of nature to this part of the country. The eastern part of the country consists of loamy-clay soils with 'the predominant landscape as savannah grasslands and woodlands.'⁹⁴

3.3 Climate Condition of Botswana

Botswana has low and highly unreliable rainfall. The average annual rainfall is about '416mm per annum ranging from 250mm in the extreme southwest to 650mm in the north.'⁹⁵ It is observed that 90 percent of the rainfall in Botswana occurs during summer between the months of December and February while the months of November to April are often hot and humid. Due to erratic arid climatic conditions the annual evaporation rate exceeds the low annual rainfalls. 'Afternoon showers and

⁹¹ Butt, A, *A comparative case study of the politics and policy development of sustainable water resources: Southern and Eastern Africa*. Madison, USA. Pg. 1

⁹² Brough, A, 1997. *Botswana: How to Make the Most of your Visit*, London: New Holland, pg 107.

⁹³ Swany, D, 1995. *Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia*, Lonely Planet: Hawthorn, Australia, pg. 405.

⁹⁴ Water Profile of Botswana: http://www.eoearth.org/article/Water_profile_of_Botswana :accessed; 27 April 2009

⁹⁵ Water Profile of Botswana: http://www.eoearth.org/article/Water_profile_of_Botswana :accessed; 27 April 2009

thunderstorm... while the days are often warm and sunny and nights are cool to bitterly cold.’⁹⁶ Botswana often experiences light drizzle or heavy and torrential rains. Mostly, the common rainfall in Botswana is the convectional type, which occurs in unstable conditions and is caused by a rapid rise of air masses due to high temperature, rapid cooling at high altitude and subsequent condensation leading to rainfall. However, at times the country has the experience of other types such as orographic and depressional types of rainfalls. This therefore accounts for the experience of extremes in temperature and weather conditions.

3.4 Key issues of the water crisis in Botswana

In relation to key factors to the water crisis, Toteng has argued that the water scarcity in Botswana is a function of both the biophysical and anthropogenic constraints. Although it has been taken lightly that the situation is as a result of the geographical features, in his argument, Toteng maintains that humanity plays an immense role in this scenario. Human constraints includes for example, over-pumping of ground water as well as pollution of surface and ground water from agricultural waste and human settlements, and lack of water conservation such as rain-water harvesting. In view of this argument, where the key issues are categorized into two, the biophysical issues of water crisis in Botswana would include, Climate: As an arid to semi arid country, Botswana experiences poor and unreliable rainfall; Geography: Botswana is predominantly flat therefore mostly unsuitable for reservoirs; Rivers; In Botswana there are few perennial rivers and all are trans-boundary. Given these factors, Toteng contends that ‘although not much can be done to alter the biophysical environmental conditions that causes water scarcity in Botswana, much can be done to change human constraints.’⁹⁷ We turn now to look at aspects of the water crisis.

3.4.1 Population Growth

Botswana is a scarcely populated country whose human population has steadily increased over the years. The population almost doubled between the 1981 and 2001

⁹⁶ Swany, D. *Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia*, pg. 405.

⁹⁷ Toteng, EN, 2008. ‘The Effects of the Water Management Framework and the Role of Domestic Consumers on Urban Water Conservation in Botswana’ in *Water International*, Vol. 33, No. 4, pg. 478.

period when it increased from 941,027 to 1,680,863. Human population growth has intensified the use of natural resources, especially the limited water resources in Botswana. For this reason, the need and use of an integrated policy that manages and monitors the relationship of the growing population with the water resources is key. In fact, the third International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in September 1994 ‘highlighted the seriousness of unchecked population growth with a world population of 6 billion increasing by about 100 million people a year.’⁹⁸ This concern is applicable to the context of Botswana fifteen years later.

Thomas Malthus argued as long back as 1798 that ‘human population would inevitably increase faster than agricultural production.’ He further contended that ‘whereas population increased exponentially, the quantity of natural resources were fixed.’⁹⁹ Although his argument has been condemned by critics as conceptually flawed and unnecessarily pessimistic, it remains a source of direction for the case of Botswana where the population growth continues to stress the limited water resources in the country. In fact, even though the population density of Botswana is low, in consideration of fragile water resources, it can be argued that it is relatively high. Van Buran argues that the 2001 population census indicated that between 1991 and 2001 the Botswana population ‘grew by an average of 2.4 percent per year...where 52 percent of the population lived in the urban area.’¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, the majority of the population live along the eastern part compared to the western part of the country due to reliable water resources that attracts agriculture and industrial activities which are sources of job creation. The major setback with this type of population settlement is that the more human activities are in a limited space of land, the more stress will be imposed on the already severely strained water resources.

Recently, Botswana’s Minister of Mineral, Energy and Water Resources (MMEWR), Ponatshego Kedikilwe was addressing the National Water Resources Management Conference held in Gaborone Botswana and he alluded to the effects of population growth by stating that “the reality is... as the population continues to grow and water

⁹⁸ Wilson, GA and Bryant, R.L, 1997. *Environmental Management: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*, London: UCL Press, pg. 40.

⁹⁹ Wilson, GA and Bryant, R.L, 1997. *Environmental Management*, pg. 40.

¹⁰⁰ Van Buran, L, 2009. ‘Botswana: Economy’ in *Europa Regional Survey of the World: Africa South of the Sahara 2009 (38th Edition)*, Routledge: London, pg. 111.

demands increase rather exponentially and as societies become more urbanized, solutions become more and more complex."¹⁰¹

Table 1: Population and Population Growth Rate in Botswana

Indicators	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Population	574,094	941,027	1,326,796	1,680,863	1,826,022	2,326,022
Population growth %	3.1	4.1	3.5	2.5	1.29	1.29

Source: Botswana Central Statistics Office

Note: 1971 to 2001 are census population figures while 2011 and 2021 are projections.

3. 4.2. Drought in Botswana

Botswana has been experiencing drought since the time of pre political independence. To this far, the severest drought in the history of Botswana was experienced in a period spanning six years, 1981-1986. This experience of drought was worsened by insufficient rainfalls and high levels of water scarcity in the country experiences throughout the years. The word ‘drought’ originates from the Anglo-Saxon word ‘*drugoth*’ which means dry ground. It is ‘a climatological condition of sharply lower than normal levels of rainfall in a region over a significant period of time often resulting in losses of agricultural crops, livestock, and increased pressure on human institutions.’¹⁰² According to Toteng, in Botswana ‘drought is recurrent, and it adversely affects rainfall availability, water and pollution of surface and ground water.’¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=1&aid=5&dir=2008/July/Wednesday30>, accessed 14 May 2009

¹⁰² Siegle, J, 1990. *Botswana’s Approach to Drought: How Disaster Relief can be Developmental*, (Unpublished Master of Science thesis), Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University: USA, pg. 2.

¹⁰³ Toteng, EN, 2008. ‘The Effects of the Water Management...’ in *Water International*, Vol. 33, No. 4, pg. 478.

3. 4.2.1 Effects of Drought in Botswana

Unreliable rainfalls bring national experience of drought that causes high animal mortality and crop failures during the ploughing season. These drought conditions leads to the incurrence of high drought related expenses by the State where short term drought relief initiatives will be implemented thus diverting resources especially financial, from other long term national development projects. Drought relief programmes such as supplementary feeding both at government schools and clinics protects the poor from suffering from malnutrition.

Farming in Botswana largely relies on rainfall and much less on irrigation. For this reason, drought affects both subsistence farming and livestock keeping farmers upon which their livelihoods depend. During the longest drought of 1981 - 1986 'in the eastern region where most crop production and cattle rearing occur, rainfall was from 25 – 60% below normal in 1983 and early 1984.'¹⁰⁴ He further states that at the time, 'losses were concentrated among smaller herds whose owners rely on communal watering holes...The value of lost crop production was P6.2 million in 1983 and in the same year, the loss from drought for livestock and crops alone was P34 million.'¹⁰⁵

In his journal article entitled 'Understanding the disjunction between urban planning and water planning and management in Botswana', Toteng argues that 'the recurrent drought phenomenon in Botswana contributes to urbanization, because it contributes to the decline of rural subsistence agriculture...'¹⁰⁶ Drought deprive subsistence agricultural farmers their love for farming while escalating the rate of rural - urban migration. Many individuals who relocate to urban areas in search for better means of livelihoods often loose their agricultural assets such as land and livestock. For those who remain behind, mostly women, often travel long distances in search for safe

¹⁰⁴ Siegle, J, 1990. *Botswana's Approach to Drought: How Disaster Relief can be Developmental*, (Unpublished Master of Science thesis), Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University: USA, pg. 69.

¹⁰⁵ Siegle, J, 1990. *Botswana's Approach to Drought: How Disaster Relief can be Developmental*, (Unpublished Master of Science thesis), Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University: USA, pg. 70.

¹⁰⁶ Toteng, EN, 2002. 'Understanding the Disjunction Between Urban Planning and Water Planning and Management in Botswana' in *International Development Planning Review*, 24 (3), pg. 273

water. From this standpoint, drought has the potential to turn the vulnerable members of the society into the majority of the population within a short time because;

It not only alters daily and seasonal earnings but destroys the future remunerative capacity of individuals and families. As the drought season advances many more people pass into the most vulnerable category through loss of employment or selling off of cattle and other assets in order to survive.¹⁰⁷

Drought causes famine. Famine is a condition that occurs as a result of under-nourishment and often leads to severe loss of weight, dehydration and other such related illnesses. It can be underscored that famine occurs as a result of a breakdown in institutions affecting the supply or demand of food. It is mostly associated with drought and as a result, poorer crop harvest and high animal mortality rate. During the period of drought, food demand goes high giving rise to food prices in the market. Siegle argues that ‘consequently, when large numbers of people suddenly loose their food entitlement due to sharp rise in food prices...the conditions are ripe for famine.’¹⁰⁸

3. 4.2.2. The role of State water supply institutions during drought in Botswana

The role of water supply to citizenry is a responsibility of different government water sectors including the public enterprise Water Utilities Cooperation. During the drought period in Botswana, the District Councils (DCs) assist farmers in the very remote areas by supplying drinking water for their livestock. While others may depend on privately owned boreholes where they pay an agreed fee, those who cannot afford them usually depend on open community dams which are also used for drinking by animals and therefore, they are health hazardous. The urban areas are constantly water supplied by the Water Utilities Cooperation (WUC) while the major villages such as Kanye, Molepolole, Maun and Serowe are supplied by the Department of Water Affairs (DWA). The DWA hands over the water supply of the remote areas of the major villages to the Water Unit Department (WUD), a

¹⁰⁷ Jacques, G, ‘Drought in Botswana: Intervention as Fact and Paradigm’ in *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, 1991, 9 (1), pg. 33-60, pg. 34.

¹⁰⁸Siegle, J, 1990. *Botswana’s Approach to Drought: How Disaster Relief can be Developmental*, (Unpublished Master of Science thesis), Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University: USA, pg. 3.

department in the DCs. In order to address the rainfall scarcity and water scarcity in the rural areas, the DCs have initiatives that include storage tanks built at schools and clinics, rainwater harvesting, drilling of boreholes and community standpipes.

Community leadership is also involved in ways that could assist in the conservation of water and drought alleviation initiatives. For example, in Moshupa, a Southern District Council village, certain restrictive measures were imposed in order to respond to the 1991/92 drought. The imposed restrictions were;

...on consumption; keep the boreholes in repair...and use several water browsers for interim shortages. The DWA is also encouraging schools to retain pit latrines rather than to install flush toilets even in large villages.¹⁰⁹

Recently, there was severe drought in 2004 that led to a decline in water levels at Gaborone dam, a dam that serves the areas of Gaborone city and surrounding areas. Water levels in this dam declined to as low as 17%. As a result, the WUC was compelled to impose water restrictions on non essential uses in the Greater Gaborone Area as a way of reducing water demand by at least 25%.

3.4.3 Urbanization in Botswana

From a global perspective there are many different ways of viewing urbanized areas. The most popular view of urbanization is from the economic, social, and cultural features. Seldom is the view of urbanization from ecological perspective despite the fact that the urban activities are enabled by the ecological capacity of any given urban area.

Botswana has been experiencing rapid urbanization growth since the early 1980s. According to the 1981 population census, only 18, 2 percent of the total population lived in the urban areas. Twenty years later, in 2001, the population of the urban areas had more than doubled with 52.1 percent of the total population now living in the

¹⁰⁹ Jacques, G, 'Drought in Botswana: Intervention as Fact and Paradigm' in *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, 1991, 9 (1), pg. 33-60, pg. 49.

urban areas of the country.¹¹⁰ Mostly this growth rate of urbanization is often related to unemployment levels in the rural areas. According to Toteng, ‘in Botswana, urban planning is a major state activity that shapes urban development, but it does not give much consideration to water planning...This is despite the crucial role played by water in national and urban development...’¹¹¹ Elsewhere, Toteng argued that ‘the major impact of urban growth is that there has been a disproportionate pressure placed on the country’s limited water resource by urban settlement...’¹¹² Urbanization imposes severe pressure on water resources since the rate of urban population growth in Botswana is outpacing the available social and economic facilities linked directly to the limited resources of water within these urban areas. The process of rural-urban migration is central in the way Botswana experienced urbanization. The effects of water crisis in urban areas are deeply felt not only by individuals but also by the State given that ‘water is hardly given serious attention in urban planning processes in Botswana.’¹¹³

Acute shortage of accommodation in urban areas has led some individuals to unlawfully construct informal settlements in vacant spaces on the outskirts of the cities and towns. Such informal settlements have a considerable bearing on water and sanitation provision ‘since public or official private water and sanitation providers may be forbidden by law from operating in such settlements.’¹¹⁴ From these informal and sometimes illegal settlements, these people find alternative means of having water for their households even through illegal means of diverting water supply pipelines. Sometimes, women and children often bear the responsibility of ferrying the water from distant points. Regretfully, some children are even withdrawn from schools to assist their mothers with the fetching of water.

¹¹⁰ In Botswana, some major villages surrounding urban areas are considered as semi-urban because among other reasons, they have enjoyed industrial growth. Further, because of their proximity to towns and cities, they also provide residence to commuters who could not find accommodation in cities and towns. For this reason, population growth in these areas is fast.

¹¹¹ Toteng, EN, 2002. ‘Understanding the Disjunction Between Urban Planning and Water Planning and Management in Botswana’ in *International Development Planning Review*, 24 (3), pg. 288.

¹¹² Toteng, EN, 2004. ‘The Private Sector, Urban Water Conservation and Developing Countries: A Stakeholder Theory-Driven Perspective From Botswana’ in *South African Geographical Journal*, 86 (2), pg. 113 – 121.

¹¹³ Toteng, EN, ‘Understanding the Disjunction Between Urban Planning and Water Planning and Management in Botswana’ in *International Development Planning Review*, 2002. 24 (3), pg. 273.

¹¹⁴ UN-HABITAT, *Water and Sanitation in the World’s Cities: Local Action for Global Goals*, pg. 104.

3.5. The impact of the water crisis on the people of Botswana.

As a result of the water crisis, different sectors and spheres of life are affected in Botswana. We have just dealt with the key issues of the water crisis in Botswana; we will now consider some of the key themes of the impact of the water crisis on the Batswana

3.5.1. Limited accessibility to potable water

The water crisis has serious effects on household economies and individual health and well-being. According to the 2006 HDR, ‘across the developing world the daily struggle to access water is a constant drain on the human, financial and physical assets of poor households, regardless of whether the country or locality in which they live is water scarce.’¹¹⁵ For example, people in *Tsolamosese*¹¹⁶ in Gaborone in Botswana, suffer the high cost of water payments in terms of travel and accessibility while those in *Phakalane Estate*¹¹⁷ have access to water at the twist of the tap enough for household use and to fill the swimming pool. Water scarcity in Botswana affects the poorer communities the most as their access to clean and safe water is limited by their economic viability. The quality and quantity of water is compromised as they can not afford to pay high tariffs of water. The former president of Botswana Mr Festus Mogae was reported to have told the World Water Forum conference in Kyoto that although he supported the privatization of water, ‘this should not limit access water to the very poor.’¹¹⁸

The 2006 HDR has argued that the water crisis is above all a crisis for the poor. In qualifying this point, the report argues, ‘the perverse principle that applies across much of the developing world is that the poorest people not only get access to less water, and to less clean water, but they also pay some of the world’s highest

¹¹⁵ 2006 HDR, pg. 80

¹¹⁶ Tsolamosese is an urban settlement on the outskirts of southern Gaborone. There is no adequate water infrastructure in this area and therefore no proer City Council water source . These conditions, makes people to rely on alternative supplies of water. Recently, the Ministry of housing embarked on demolishing their structure referring to them as *Bo-Maipahela (Settlers in how)*.

¹¹⁷ *Phakalane Estate* is a privately owned upbeat suburb in Gaborone.

¹¹⁸ <http://queensu.ca/msp/pages/In-The-News/2003/Mar/15.htm> :accessed: 23 July 2009.

prices.’¹¹⁹ In this regard the poor, especially women, travel long distances to get access to clean water, which impacts upon them not only financially but also health wise. When they do get access to water, they often store it in big metal drums for future use. After a while the rust puts their health and that of their families at risk. This reminds us of the gender aspect of the water crisis, for as Wallace and Cole have alluded, ‘women are defined as essential providers and users of water. They are expected to play multiple roles in the provision of water, sanitation, improved health...because they are effective instruments in water provision.’¹²⁰

3.5.2. Delayed Socio-Economic and Sustainable Development

Water is among the major resources needed for socio economic and sustainable development. While we argue that water is life, we can also argue that water is development because without a reliable supply of water it is not possible to develop industries. Socio-economic developments of any country are highly dependent on the quantity and quality of the available water. According to the report of the United Nations and World Water Assessment Programme entitled *Water: A shared Responsibility*, The UN World Water Report No. 2, ‘poor quality water and unsustainable supplies limit national economic development and...livelihood conditions.’¹²¹

Recently, the Member of Parliament for Tati East, Botswana, Mr Guma Moyo has decried the inconsiderate consumption of water and highlighted that unless there is a change of attitude on water consumption, sustainable development could be adversely affected. At the ground breaking ceremony for the construction and commissioning of Dikgatlhong dam in Botswana, the Member of Parliament is reported to have said, ‘the consensus is that the growing water scarcity and misuse of freshwater pose serious threats to sustainable development.’¹²² Water is a social, development, and environmental good without which it is not possible to advance socio economic

¹¹⁹ 2006 HDR, pg. 7

¹²⁰ Wallace, T and Coles, A, 2005. ‘Water, Gender and Development: An Introduction’ in *Gender, Water and Development*, Berg: Oxford, pg 8.

¹²¹ UN-Water/WWAP, 2006. *Water: A Shared Responsibility*; The UN World Water Development Report 2, United Nations: Geneva, pg. 13.

¹²² <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=1&aid=11&dir=2008/February/Monday4> : Accessed 02 September 2009

developments. The growth of world economies in both developed and developing countries evolve around the quality and quantity of available water. In Botswana, where diamonds are central to the economic growth of the country, the scarcity of water in the country is a serious threat to the viability of diamond mines. This has led the mine management to be concerned at how the water scarcity could hamper economic development and progress of the country. For this reason when speaking at a preparatory meeting for, a conference whose key objective was to promote technology to reduce the use of new water by mines, Blackie Marole, Managing Director of Debswana a (subsidiary of DeBeers Mining Company), said ‘we are acutely aware of water scarcity in this country and that if we do not reduce our requirement for this precious resource, we may run out of water before we run out of diamonds...’¹²³

3.5.3. Increased water tariffs

Financial challenges in the water services are an experience of both the supplier and the consumer. In South Africa ‘access to water is increasingly determined by the consumer tariffs that seek to cover full cost of the service.’ This is a situation whereby water tariffs are arguably high not as a result of high consumptive behaviour but due to water service provider’s choice of recovering costs incurred in the provision of water. This scenario is most likely to be the case in Botswana in the near future especially that the water services are being transferred from public service (the Department of Water Affairs (DWA)) to the Water Utilities Cooperation (WUC) which is a public enterprise. As a public enterprise, ‘WUC operates on a commercial basis.’¹²⁴ Therefore, it is inevitable that under commercial principles, services go with tariffs and where the consumer defaults payment they are likely to be disconnected. Disconnection follows the full cost recovery system that commercial institutions (water suppliers included) have adopted.

According to Toteng, Botswana does not have either an integrated water resources conservation policy or water demand management policy. Tariffs are the common

¹²³ <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=4&aid=13&dir=2007/September/Thursday20>: Accessed 18 September 2009

¹²⁴ Toteng, EN, 2008. ‘The Effects of the Water Management...’ in *Water International*, pg. 481.

measures in place to instill conservation among the consumers. With the demand of water going high as a result of insufficient rains the prices are bound to increase. In Botswana, water pricing is based on 'equity, efficiency and affordability. Equity is about ensuring that all citizens have access to water to cover at-least their basic needs.¹²⁵ This may be compromised as drought continues to impact on the water resources and indeed on the poor. The 2006 HDR highlights this in arguing that,

Water tariffs shape the access to water for the poor households. Most governments regulate tariffs to achieve a range of equity and efficiency objectives. They are designed to provide water that is affordable to households and to generate enough revenues to cover part or all of these costs of delivery.¹²⁶

The above is inclusive of Botswana, but more should be done to guard against the situation where the poor are often the ones who pay more for water, as further argued by the 2006 HDR. Meanwhile consumers need to be informed that unsparing consumption of water may have negative financial bearing on the government budget. This results in the Government incurring high expenditures in water development projects such as physical infrastructure thereby deferring other national planned activities. For example, huge sums of money were spent on the North South Carrier Water Projects (NSCWP) Phase I and II to improve the accessibility of water to the citizens who reside in the southern part of the country.¹²⁷ Currently, NSCWP Phase II entails the construction of Dikgathong Dam whose estimated cost is P2 billion. Although this expenditure symbolises the commitment of the government to serving its own people with this valuable resource, due to this scarcity money often has to be diverted from such developments as health and education. In light of this predicament, elsewhere, other governments have resolved to fully privatise the water sector.

¹²⁵ Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, 1991. *National Development Plan 7: 1991 -1997*, Gaborone: Botswana Government,

¹²⁶ 2006 HDR, pg. 84

¹²⁷ NSCWP was a result of the Government of Botswana to to supply reliable water supply for Gaborone city and the surrounding areas and the major village en-route to the year 2025. NSCWP was commissioned in 2002 by the GOB on the policy to promote conjunctive schemes. The concept of wellfields provides for good management meaning when the water levels in Letsibogo are high, wellfields are switched off to groundwater levels to recover. This government initiative is a water supply project that uses both surface and groundwater. The NSCWP starts from Letsibogo Dam in Mmadinare (Northern part of Botswana) and links major well-fields to Gaborone through large pipeline of over 400km.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the water situation in Botswana. It discussed the key factors that contribute to the water scarcity of the country. Although the key issues discussed are not exhaustive, they are however, among the major themes of water scarcity within the country. The question that we face now concerns how the church will respond to this human and ecological crisis. We turn to this in chapter four.

Chapter Four

The UCCSA Social Teaching

4.1 Introduction

The potentially disastrous consequences of global ecological crisis demands of the Christian church that it re-examines the marginalization of the ecological concerns in the light of the fundamental truth claims of the Christian gospel.¹²⁸

In chapter one, we laid out the theological method that we are using, which is drawn from liberation theology. In chapter two and three we undertook our socio-analytic mediation as we sought to understand the global water crisis, and how it impacts upon Botswana. We are now ready to undertake our hermeneutical mediation. Although there are many ways that we could do this, we however, have chosen to do this from within the theological tradition of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, which has a strong legacy and presence in Botswana.

From the mid years of the twentieth century, and especially after 1948, those churches and missions located in the Congregational tradition were among the systems of church organization who were opposed to the policy of separate development adopted by the Nationalist party in South Africa as a system of governance. In 1967 when the three strands of Congregationalism in Southern Africa united, this vision continued under the banner of the new church, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, (UCCSA). The UCCSA does not have a clearly articulated body of teaching which one could call its social teaching. Nevertheless, the UCCSA always fiercely and directly condemned apartheid as sinful and unjust during its meetings. Today, in post apartheid South-(ern) Africa, the minutes and recordings of the UCCSA meetings between 1974 and 1987 can provide a resource for dialogical engagement with the Church and the world. I will argue that it is from these sources that the UCCSA social teaching emerges and that today they can become part of the informed discussions that will create a wise theological response to what is now a global predicament, the water crisis with special focus on Botswana.

¹²⁸ Field, D, 'Confessing Christ in the Context of Ecological Degradation' in *The Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, July 1997, Volume 98, pg. 32

In view of the above, this chapter will give an overview of congregationalism in Southern Africa leading towards the formation of the UCCSA. Having accomplished that, the chapter will focus on the social teaching of the UCCSA and how it is useful in the current ecological crisis.

4.2 Congregationalism in Southern Africa

Congregationalism¹²⁹ came to Southern Africa through the arrival of the LMS missionaries led by Dr Johannes van der Kemp in 1799. As an ecumenical Society, the LMS mission was ‘not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, or any other form of Church order...but the Glorious Gospel of the Blessed Lord to the heathens.’¹³⁰

The second strand of Congregationalism, the American Board for Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM) was formed in 1810 in the USA. The ABCFM arrived in Durban, Natal, South Africa at the invitation of the LMS in 1836. While in Natal, the ABCFM was more committed to becoming a church than being a mission; this commitment was realised when the ABCFM was constituted as the Bantu Congregational Church (BCC) in 1960.

The third strand of Congregationalism although not a missionary movement, but rather a settler movement was the Congregational Union of South Africa (CUSA). According to de Gruchy, ‘English settlers, traders, miners, soldiers and teachers – arrived in both Natal and Cape colonies’¹³¹ among whom were Congregationalists who worked to establish congregational fellowship that led to the formation of CUSA in 1877.

¹²⁹ Congregationalism is a product of the Puritan movement. The Puritans desired to ‘ensure that English church life – liturgy, vestments, discipline and government was according to the pure word of God.’¹²⁹ This was a the time when the established Church paid allegiance to the Queen of England, a situation that prompted the Congregationalists to maintain that ‘Christ alone is King and Head of the Church...and that a true church is independent of any kind of external control.’¹²⁹ These events led to the English Reformation, from which congregationalism came into being as a form of the orthodox dissent against the doctrines and practices within the Church of England especially the subjection to parliamentary control.

¹³⁰ Briggs, DR, and Wing, J, 1980. *The Harvest and the Hope: The Story of Congregationalism in Southern Africa*. Craft Press: Pretoria, pg. 13.

¹³¹ de Gruchy, S, ‘Dissenting Calvinism: Reflections on the Congregational witness in South Africa as part of the wider Reformation traditions’ in *Theologia Viatorum*, pg. 168.

The three strands of Congregationalism (LMS, BCC and CUSA) operated independently from each other although their members worked together to the extent of constructing the first united church in 1937, the Witwatersrand Congregational Church.¹³² In 1959 the CUSA Council suggested that discussions be initiated that might lead to the ultimate union of the three bodies in southern Africa.”¹³³ In 1960 the BCC and LMS Assemblies resolved that the merging consultations could be commenced on the basis of the memorandum drawn up by CUSA. Each body appointed seven members to their first informal consultative meeting held in May 1961. After seven years of consultation, a consensus to unite was reached in 1967. The inaugural Assembly was held in Durban on October 3, 1967.¹³⁴ As a result of the work of its predecessor bodies, the UCCSA was established in five southern African countries; Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

4.3 Reverend Joseph Wing: The First Secretary of the UCCSA

Joseph Wing was born in London on the 9 January 1923. In 1949, Wing got engaged to Marjorie and they married in May 1951 a year after his ordination. Joe, as he was affectionately known, was dedicated to the missionary service of the LMS at his ordination. According to Steve de Gruchy, Wing’s plan was to go to China, but had to be assigned to Africa as the mission in China was closed in 1950. Upon arrival in South Africa, Wing worked in Taung until 1959 when they had to relocate to Johannesburg in the midst of urban diversity and political instability. While in Johannesburg he ‘became pastorally and administratively involved in uniting the three strands of Congregationalism in Southern Africa’ leading to the birth of UCCSA in 1967.¹³⁵ At the inaugural Assembly of the new UCCSA in Durban, Wing was appointed the UCCSA Secretary,¹³⁶ the responsibility he held until his retirement in 1987 at the age of sixty five. Among other duties and responsibilities, Wing was

¹³² de Villiers, P. 1999 ‘Unity: The formation of the United Congregational Church’ in de Gruchy S (ed.), *Changing Frontiers: The Missionary Story of the UCCSA*. Pula Press: Gaborone, pg. 151.

¹³³ The Harvest and the Hope, pg 281.

¹³⁴ From this Assembly, Rev Joseph Wing and Rev Ken Main were elected the first Secretary and Chairperson of the UCCSA respectively.

¹³⁵ de Gruchy, S. *A Remarkable Life: The Story of Joseph Wing*: pg. 1

¹³⁶ Wing was appointed Secretary and not General Secretary as he is commonly referred to. The position of the General Secretary only started when the role of Secretary was divided in General Secretary and Administrative Secretary. See footnotes on de Gruchy, S. *A Remarkable Life: The Story of Joseph Wing*: pg. 1.

appointed the Convenor of the Church and Society Department of the Denomination from 1974, the position he held until his retirement in 1987.¹³⁷ Upon his retirement, he was approached to be the President of Federal Theological Seminary (Fedsem) which was based in Pietermaritzburg, the role he held until he went back to serve Bathaping at the Kuruman Moffat Mission station until he passed on in 1992.

He was one of the last of a long line of distinguished representative of LMS to serve in Southern Africa. Against this overview, the role and contributions of Reverend Joseph Wing remain a legacy that the UCCSA continues to cherish.

4.4 The UCCSA Church and Society Department

As the injustice of apartheid continued to increase the UCCSA considered establishing a department that will focus on theological engagement with issues of socio-injustices at the time. According to Rutherford KC, the need to meet and fulfil mutual help, information and inspiration prompted the establishment of Church and Society as a faculty through which the Church responded to social and political issues and their impact on the people of God.¹³⁸ The primary task of this department was to guide the Church in its prophetic role and to assist it to maintain a critical distance toward the political order of the day in order not to compromise the church's theological articulation.

Given the opportunity to formulate the role of Church and Society Department, the 1975 Assembly delegates put down the following as part of their recommendations that the Assembly largely considered and formed the basis of the role of Church and Society Department;

The Church should continue to work for justice through the courageous exercising of its prophetic role in society. Further, the Church should do whatever is necessary to counter racism, discrimination and the unfair distribution of resources while at the same time it engages in exposing injustice... The Church and Society Department

¹³⁷ De Gruchy, S, 2005. 'A Remarkable Life: The Story of Joseph Wing' in Degruchy, S and van Der Water, D. (eds.), *Spirit Undaunted: The Life and Legacy of Joseph Wing*. Cluster Publications: Pietermaritzburg, pg. 60.

¹³⁸ UCCSA, 1972 Church and Society Report, pg. 29.

should come up with an educational programme on issues of social justice in order to sharpen Christian conscience.¹³⁹

Meanwhile, Wing had already argued that;

The department recognises that in a plural society like our own, Christian attitudes and norms will often conflict with group attitudes and norms...What seems prophetic and true to the Department may seem unnecessary and unpatriotic to some members of the Church and vacillating and compromising to others. A Church and Society Department cannot claim a monopoly of Christian truth. It must, however, by its very nature assume a prophetic role in relation to social issues and speak and act in a manner which is consonant with its understanding of the Biblical concepts of justice and reconciliation as they relate to our society as a whole, and in order to be true to its prophetic mission the Church must always assert the rights of conscience against all human authority.¹⁴⁰

Through this department the UCCSA was persuaded to ‘reject the puppet parliaments of apartheid...with all its acts and instruments as being theologically unacceptable, socially disruptive, economically unsound and politically unjust.’¹⁴¹ This Department served both the UCCSA and the society through raising awareness, teaching, reflecting and acting on matters of social justice. From the annual reports of this Department we have come to discover the key theological themes as the ones upon which the UCCSA social teaching is grounded.

4.5 The Social Teaching of the UCCSA

Congregationalism is founded on dialogue and the right to dissent. These principles are not only basic to our Churchmanship – they are also a motivation of our social concern and social action.¹⁴²

At a time when it was formed, the UCCSA was delicately poised on the edge of all conflicts that confronts the modern world. ‘It is part of the ‘First World’ and also of the ‘Third World’. It was a time of a ‘racially segregated South Africa, a Black democracy in Botswana, a Communist dominated Mozambique and the emerging states of Zimbabwe and Namibia.’¹⁴³ During this time most African countries were encountering political struggle for liberation while others were on transit from

¹³⁹ UCCSA 1975 Church and Society Report, pg. 2.

¹⁴⁰ 1985 Church and Society Report to the Assembly, No. 30

¹⁴¹ UCCSA, 1983 Church and Society Report, pg. 5

¹⁴² 1978 UCCSA Assembly Report, pg. 3.

¹⁴³ CHURCHSOC May 1979.

colonialism to independence. In southern Africa, these political developments were a challenge to the 'infant' church of whose Secretary, Reverend Wing was persuaded to observe that 'there is no easy answer to the question: What does the Lord require of the Church in southern Africa today?'¹⁴⁴ However, the church managed to transform these challenges into opportunities that assisted it to focus on how it dealt with social realities that transcended borders and necessitated the need for social teaching on which the moral fabric of the society would be grounded and the consciousness of individuals guided.

With apartheid on its agenda, the UCCSA Assemblies and Executive meetings provided ground for the formation of the social teaching of the UCCSA. Des van der Water and Steve de Gruchy, both ordained Ministers of the UCCSA, elaborates this by in arguing that, 'every year the Assembly of the UCCSA, its Executive committee and its Secretariat spent hours discussing the apartheid policy and seeking ways...to overcome its effects.'¹⁴⁵

4.5.1 Understanding the significance of the social teaching of the church

The UCCSA was conscious of the reality 'that its social action and its concern for social ethics are a valid form of its ministry, complimentary, not alternative, to its ministry exercised at a personal level...of Christians.'¹⁴⁶

In light of the above, the social teachings should be understood as a set of principles that provide social wisdom for human relationship with others, gives social wisdom about culture, structures and institutions that influence the way of life of humanity. On the basis of its social teaching, the Church is expected to make sound theological responses towards issues of national concern guided by its social teaching. . The social teaching provides guidance and influence on members of the church and how they can cope with challenges and situations at individual and collective levels.

¹⁴⁴ 1978 UCCSA Assembly Report, pg. 12.

¹⁴⁵ Van der Water, D, and de Gruchy, S, 1999. 'Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee of South Africa, October 1997' in de Gruchy, S (ed.), *Changing Frontiers: The Mission Story of the UCCSA*, Gaborone: Pula Press, pg. 232.

¹⁴⁶ Wing, J, 1977. Church and Society interim Report

The UCCSA believes that, from its inception in the New Testament, the Church has been set in a social order which has been dominated by the policy of the State, and the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord has brought it into conflict with the laws and social structures of the society. In this regard the church has been entirely dependent on the social wisdom of the Gospel. At its 1978 Assembly, the UCCSA resolved to appoint a taskforce that would, in the light of the Scripture, prepare an in-depth study of the role of the church in a society marred with socio-political challenges. The reason being that the church should address ‘...itself with greater integrity to the complexities and conflicts which motivate the desire for liberation and the establishment of a just social order...’¹⁴⁷

4.6 Key themes of the UCCSA Social Teaching

In reading and reflecting on the Church and Society reports of the UCCSA between 1974 and 1987, a period when Joseph Wing was the Secretary not only of the UCCSA but also of the Church and Society Department, it became clear that there are five key ethical and theological principles that the UCCSA Assembly and Executive often dealt with. These key themes can therefore represent the UCCSA’s social teaching and they are: (i) Human Dignity and Respect; (ii) Justice and Equality; (iii) the Value of Life; (iv) Sound use of Earth Resources; and (v) Unity in Church and Society. We will examine each one in turn.

4.6.1 Human Dignity and Respect

The UCCSA believes that every person is created in the image of God (Genesis 1: 26 – 27) and that all individuals deserve the dignity and respect bestowed on them from the time of creation. At its 1974 UCCSA Executive Committee meeting, observed that ‘human rights are derived from the freedom that God conferred upon man (*sic*) at creation, anything which threatens or limits that freedom obscures man’s (*sic*) dignity and potential.’¹⁴⁸ In view of this conviction of the UCCSA, when dealing with the principle of human dignity and respect the point of departure is that being created in

¹⁴⁷ Memorandum for Consultation on Human Relations, pg. 2.

¹⁴⁸ UCCSA Executive Committee, 1974. Minutes of the proceedings, Johannesburg.

the image of God is the grounding of every human being's worth for dignity and the right to respect and to be respected.

According to the CHURCHSOC No. 23,¹⁴⁹ Dr John Philip, one of the LMS missionaries¹⁵⁰, 'believed that man (*sic*) possess the eternal human dignity which God has conferred upon him (*sic*) by His own divine action in creation and redemption.'¹⁵¹ The UCCSA articulates this legacy of its faith and holds the view that human dignity and respect 'is not licence: it is exercised under the authority of the morals of God which also constitutes the basis of justice in a society.'¹⁵² This principle is not based on what humanity has earned or endeavours to achieve but rather on the primacy of God's creation.

In view of the position held by the UCCSA with regard to the principle of human dignity and respect, Wing, in the 1978 Report to the UCCSA Assembly charged that 'the policy of separate development is an attempt to take away the pride and dignity of the Black people as it measured human dignity through the whiteness of the skin...'¹⁵³ He further argued that 'this Church re-iterates the conviction enunciated by its Assembly...that Black Consciousness upholds the dignity of Blackness and the refusal to be depersonalised by White attitudes and policies which reduce Black humanity and dignity to a minimum.'¹⁵⁴ Such dehumanising approach to socio political issues not only dehumanised the Black people but also dehumanised the advocates of the same policy that separated people on the basis of their race.

By reducing human dignity to a minimum, the proponents of the apartheid policy showed lack of respect for humanity and undermined the concept of 'ubuntu;' this is the notion that holds the view that *you are because I am and therefore we are*. The

¹⁴⁹ CHURCHSOC is a fact sheet that used to be published by the UCCSA and issued by the Church and Society Department of the UCCSA.

¹⁵⁰ Dr John Philip was strongly opposed to the slave trade industry and called for its abolition. As a result, he became unpopular with some sectors of the population in South Africa during his time and was charged with being more a politician than being a missionary. As a result, he was told to confine himself to spiritual matters and to stop meddling in politics. To this charge he replied 'If a Minister is guilty of dereliction of his duty in advocating the cause of the oppressed or in relieving the necessities of the destitute, I plead guilty of the charge' (CHURCHSOC May 1979).

¹⁵¹ UCCSA, CHURCHSOC No. 23,

¹⁵² Report to the UCCSA Assembly, 1974

¹⁵³ Report to the UCCSA Assembly, 1978.

¹⁵⁴ Report to the UCCSA Assembly, 1978.

UCCSA was formed within an African society where this notion of ‘ubuntu’ is upheld and with the belief that one has to give respect in order to gain it. This approach follows a notion of an interdependent society, the same concept upon which congregationalism in southern Africa was grounded. Unlike the apartheid system that demonstrated lack of human dignity and respect, the UCCSA advocated for individual and collective human dignity ‘which far from being a threat to the security of the State, could result in the highest welfare of the whole...nation.’¹⁵⁵

4.6.2 Justice and Equality

The *Koinonia Declaration*¹⁵⁶ which the UCCSA endorsed affirms that;

We believe that God is a God of justice, and that His justice is a principle implanted in the hearts and the lives of His children. We believe that God should be obeyed by practising His justice in all spheres of life...We believe that Christian love as defined by God’s law supplies the norm for practising justice. This means having the opportunity of doing unto others what one would have them do unto oneself. We believe that justice embraces inter alia, equity...¹⁵⁷

According to CHURCHSOC No. 23 the church has a responsibility to drive the attainment of the above articulated statement of faith. It is in this regard that the injustice that was going on in South Africa led the UCCSA to note that ‘the church is a community of suffering and prophetic witness...the place where desperate persons find their humanity and their Redeemer.’¹⁵⁸ The political system in South Africa brought about a crisis amongst the people of South Africa that required ‘positive action from the church...in terms of the needs of the people affected by the crisis.’¹⁵⁹ Certainly, among the affected who experienced hardships were the poor and the oppressed hence the UCCSA held the view that as for the church, ‘suffering and prophetic witness will become clear when we rediscover what it means to identify with the poor, the voiceless and the wretched of the earth For God has a bias in favour

¹⁵⁵ Report to the UCCSA Assembly, 1974.

¹⁵⁶ The KOINONIA DECLARATION was issued in November 1977 by a concerned group of Calvinists. This Declaration begins with the ‘Divine Imperative’ to love one’s neighbor as oneself and applies it equally to the Church and Society, recognizing that Calvin not only said “ecclesia semper reformanda” but also “societas semper reformanda.”

¹⁵⁷ The KOINONIA DECLARATION Article 4

¹⁵⁸ UCCSA, CHURCHSOC No. 23, pg. 2.

¹⁵⁹ Report of the Church and Society Department to the 1985 UCCSA Executive, pg. 3.

of the poor; the ministry of Jesus gave great importance to the poor.¹⁶⁰ Against this backdrop it was reasonable for the church to identify with the poor and be prophetic towards their liberation. For this reason Wing argued prophetically that ‘the Church which is the Body of Christ in the world, must also side with the oppressed. For if it does not, then, it has a crisis of integrity...’¹⁶¹

Another sphere of justice that was central to the UCCSA was detention and banning without trials of ‘some of the best leaders in South Africa, who would have a contribution to make in the present crisis.’¹⁶² The UCCSA had described detentions and banning without trials a ‘a monster which deprives people of their freedom without recourse to law.’¹⁶³ In this light the UCCSA maintained that ‘where the rule of law is not operative, the justice which God requires of us cannot be fully practised.’¹⁶⁴ As the government continued to ignore the church and silence those who spoke against its way of governance, the UCCSA, at its 1982 Assembly, re-stated its argument that ‘raids on Church offices as well as on the homes of highly respected Churchmen...are to be deplored as an inept and reprehensible method of obtaining information from Churches... We have repeatedly stated that churches have nothing to hide and that we are not ashamed of our activities in the pursuit of justice and the defence of human rights.’¹⁶⁵ Although the pleas of the church that ‘there is no justification for people being banned or detained without being charged in a competent court of law’ the UCCSA maintained that ‘man is innocent until proven guilty by a competent court of law.’¹⁶⁶

With regard to social justice, the UCCSA maintained that the Christian faith must be involved in the reality of the society of which the church is part. The 1980 Church and Society report to Assembly argued that;

The UCCSA has based its concern for social justice on Biblical teaching...that God has never been indifferent to the conditions of

¹⁶⁰ UCCSA, CHURCHSOC No. 23, pg. 2.

¹⁶¹ Wing, J. 1986. Comment on the Kairos Document. In van der Water, *The Legacy Of A Prophetic Moment*, pg. 251.

¹⁶² Report to the UCCSA Assembly, 1978.

¹⁶³ 1976 Report to the UCCSA Assembly.

¹⁶⁴ 1976 Report to the UCCSA Assembly.

¹⁶⁵ 1982 Report to the UCCSA Assembly.

¹⁶⁶ 1982 Report to the UCCSA Assembly.

injustice to which the poor and the oppressed are subjected. This Department is of the opinion that the Church...must respond in love and justice to the challenge of poverty and oppression. This means that the church must come closer to the poor and the oppressed; it is not enough to be a church “for the poor”, God is calling us to a Church “with the poor.”¹⁶⁷

From this position, it emerges that the principle of justice characterised the reports of the UCCSA since justice emanates from God and as Martin Luther King, Junior, articulated: ‘injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.’¹⁶⁸ Therefore, the UCCSA maintained that democratic governance will not be achieved without a fundamental commitment to the principles of justice by the government of the day.

The struggle for justice also encapsulated the search for equality. As *The Message to the People of South Africa* articulated, ‘the first Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, discovered that God was creating a new community in which differences of race, nation, culture, language and tradition no longer had power to separate man from man (*sic*)...’¹⁶⁹ The commitment of the Church to the basic ideal of equal treatment stood out as the hallmark for perseverance in the struggle against apartheid.

For this reason, we recall that the UCCSA at its 1978 Assembly, as a way of re-affirming its commitment to rapid and peaceful change, instituted a taskforce to prepare a study on ‘Human Relations in Southern Africa in light of the Scriptures.’ The taskforce articulated that ‘the church must be the spokesperson for justice for the oppressed. This involves addressing itself to the oppressed and the oppressor, and awakening them to the possibility of fuller life.’¹⁷⁰

4.6.3 Sound Use of the Earth Resources

The 1975 Church and Society report to Assembly stated that;

¹⁶⁷ Report to the UCCSA Assembly, 1982.

¹⁶⁸Phillips, D. 1999. *Martin Luther King Junior on Leadership*, New York: Warner Bucks, pg. 105.

¹⁶⁹ “A Message to the People of South Africa,” is the work of Theological Commission of the South African Council Churches and was published in 1968. Individual Christians were invited to sign the document as an expression of their Christian commitment. The Message was given as a basis for study and action. It heightened protests and oppositions by the ecumenical bodies against the apartheid government of South Africa at the time.

¹⁷⁰ Memorandum for Consultation on Human Relations, paragraph 16, pg. 7.

It is clear that the congestion of cities, the destruction of living creatures, the plunder of fuel and minerals and the erosion of soil hold out frightening possibilities for the future unless we are prepared to curb excess, manage on less and use the earth resources to promote the health of all and not just the wealth of a few.¹⁷¹

According to the 1974 Assembly report of the Church and Society department the UCCSA has always ‘believed and proclaimed that ‘the earth is of the Lord and the fullness thereof.’¹⁷² Generally, it came clear that the UCCSA understands this articulation as laying emphasis on the fact that all humanity has been given the responsibility of stewardship over creation. It is for this reason that in 1984 the UCCSA Assembly was drawn to the realization our ecological duty is ‘a responsibility for the conservation of all life and we cannot allow the wanton destruction of the environment that is going on around us’ whose consequences threatens both the quality of human life and the conservation of the God’s creation.¹⁷³ In view of this conviction, the UCCSA noted with concern that ‘some Christians have proceeded to use what God has placed in the world for the good of all as if they had an exclusive right to it.’¹⁷⁴ From this viewpoint the UCCSA articulated that humanity should develop a positive attitude towards the use of the earth resources. This was emphasised by the 1974 Assembly where Wing argued that, ‘the prodigal use of the basic resources that God has placed in the world together with the tendency to pollute the environment...were attitudes that called for Christian responsibility.’¹⁷⁵

Following the 1974 Assembly, the UCCSA articulated the message of using the earth resources with care. The said message stimulated the discussions on the earth resources under the slogan, *Saving, Sparing and Sharing* in 1975.¹⁷⁶ The message under this theme was to encourage humanity to be prepared to ‘curb excess and manage on less as they use the earth resources for the health of all as opposed to the wealth of a few.’¹⁷⁷ Later, in 1985, the *Saving, Sparing and Sharing* campaign was followed by a resolution that directed the Church and Society Department ‘to prepare

¹⁷¹ 1975 Report to the Assembly, pg. 38.

¹⁷² 1974 Report to the Assembly, pg. 29.

¹⁷³ 1984 Report to the Assembly, pg. 19.

¹⁷⁴ 1974 Report to the Assembly, pg. 29.

¹⁷⁵ 1974 Report to the Assembly, pg. 30.

¹⁷⁶ 1976 Report to the Assembly.

¹⁷⁷ 1976 Report to the Assembly.

relevant background material on the conservation of the environment and to make appropriate arrangements for the observance of Conservation Sunday.’¹⁷⁸

Further, during the same 1985 Assembly, it was resolved that ‘one Sunday in Spring each year should be observed as the ‘Conservation Sunday...the second Sunday in September is being suggested...’¹⁷⁹ These developments were undergirded by the knowledge and belief that ‘the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it’ and therefore humanity should desist from any measures of exploitation but rather be mindful that they have a duty of ‘responsible Christian stewardship.’¹⁸⁰ It was for this reason that Wing brought to the attention of the Assembly the fact that the ecological crisis does not have a ready answer but rather that members should study and support the initiatives of the Church and Society Department.¹⁸¹

4.6.4 Unity and Inclusion

At the 1978 UCCSA Assembly, there was tension that threatened unity within the church amongst members and therefore, since the church is a member of the society, the society was to be affected. For this reason Wing charged that;

Our unity within the UCCSA was not achieved without effort, and is therefore very precious. The fact that our unity has not been broken...is little short of a miracle. These have been years of rapid social change and the external pressures and the internal tensions have been considerable; there is a sense a sense in which they have “made us” when they could have “broken us”.¹⁸²

Informed by its historic unity of the three strands of congregationalism, the UCCSA continues to promote the notion of unity both ecumenically and in society. From the time of its formation, there was great social disconnection of individuals from others based on race, a concept that was driven by the political order of apartheid governance. The UCCSA, conscious of its social responsibility ‘to reflect the unity...of God’s people in its own life and work’ continued to reject and condemn

¹⁷⁸ 1985 Report to the Assembly.

¹⁷⁹ 1985 Report to the Assembly.

¹⁸⁰ 1975 Report to the Assembly.

¹⁸¹ 1975 Report to the Assembly.

¹⁸² UCCSA 1978 Report to the Assembly.

apartheid as evil and vowed to stand as an institution that ‘may offer to the world the pattern of an alternative society.’¹⁸³

United with other institutions of the Reformational conviction, the Calvinists, the UCCSA, in 1977, was a signatory to the *Koinonia Declaration* and took full association with it thereby allowing it to be circulated for studies at all levels of its structures. At its 1978 Assembly, the UCCSA hailed the *Koinonia Declaration* as ‘one of the most positive responses to the crisis in human relations in South Africa.’ The report continued, the *Koinonia Declaration* ‘calls for practical and political action in society based on Biblical and Reformed Theology.’¹⁸⁴ From this Declaration the notion of peace is comes clearly from Article 5 where it articulates;

We believe that the Body of Christ is one, and this unity includes rich diversity. This principle should be acknowledged and actualised by members of the Body in all spheres of society...We dissociate ourselves from all forms of extreme Black and White national consciousness which identify the gospel with the history or group interests of any one group excluding all other groups...

In the contemporary post apartheid and colonial era, the UCCSA is still committed to upholding the principle of unity in both the Church and society. In the face of its wealth of diversity and existence at a time of political oppression in South Africa, the UCCSA appreciates that total agreement on all issues at all time is not practically possible.¹⁸⁵ It is for this reason that following the 1979 UCCSA Executive Committee meeting, the UCCSA upheld the view that ‘conflicting convictions can co-exist in tension within the UCCSA, and that the point of tension may be the point of growth.’¹⁸⁶

4.6.5 The Value of Life

The Memorandum for Consultation on Human Relations opens with an affirming statement; ‘Assembly affirms Jesus Christ as the Lord of all life...It believes that the

¹⁸³ UCCSA, CHURCHSOC No. 23, pg. 3.

¹⁸⁴ UCCSA 1978 Report to the Assembly.

¹⁸⁵ CHURCHSOC No. 23, May 1979.

¹⁸⁶ 1979 Minutes of the UCCSA Executive Committee.

Church is set in the world to be a sign of the Kingdom of God...'¹⁸⁷ At the time, not only South Africa but also some UCCSA constituent countries such as Botswana, had legalized death penalty. However, the political landscape in South Africa at the time used it grossly against those who differed with the system of governance, particularly the Blacks. For example, 'South Africa was said to be having the highest rate of judicial killing in the world' so much that during the year 1972/73, '55 people were hanged in South Africa most of whom were Blacks.'¹⁸⁸ This was against the 1970 resolution of the South African Council of Churches, where the UCCSA is a member, that 'the conference of the Southern African Council of Churches notes the formation of the Society for the Abolition of the Death Penalty in South Africa...'¹⁸⁹

For this reason, the UCCSA maintained that our Lord's law of love that abrogates the law of vengeance should influence our thinking on the subject of capital punishment. In this regard, Wing recalled the words of Brian Johanson who argued that 'the idea that retribution is the most essential element in punishment is a barbaric concept.'¹⁹⁰ This is substantiated by the view that the UCCSA articulated at the 1975 Assembly that 'from the Christian point of view, punishment is certainly not retributive, for in the sight of God none of us could bear the consequences of his deeds and thoughts and survive.'¹⁹¹ Hence, the church conceded that punishment should be remedial and rehabilitative rather than being retributive. Against this argument the UCCSA stated that 'capital punishment imposed by the State is an illogical way of testifying to the sanctity of life. It teaches the society to be callous.'¹⁹² Hence Karl Barth is remembered for his words, 'by punishing murder with death we are attacking that which we purport to defend, the sanctity of life.'¹⁹³ Admittedly, capital punishment was a challenge to the church hence the UCCSA sought an ecumenical approach to the subject.

¹⁸⁷ Memorandum for Consultation on Human Relations, pg. 2.

¹⁸⁸ 1975 UCCSA report to the Assembly.

¹⁸⁹ 1970 UCCSA report to the Assembly.

¹⁹⁰ 1975 UCCSA report to the Assembly.

¹⁹¹ 1975 UCCSA report to the Assembly.

¹⁹² 1975 UCCSA report to the Assembly.

¹⁹³ 1975 UCCSA report to the Assembly.

4.7 Engaging the Social Teaching Themes with the Water Crisis

Although the UCCSA does not have a policy on the water crisis, we however appreciate that due to its consciousness of the global ecological crisis, the UCCSA was able to call upon its Synods and Regions to focus on saving the earth. This, according to de Gruchy and van der Water, was ‘long before any significant public or ecclesial concern with ecological matters.’¹⁹⁴ This assertion is evidenced by the 1974 Assembly warning by the Secretary, Rev Wing, ‘that the natural resource of the earth may be limited.’ At the same Assembly he continued to argue that ‘...the use of the world’s resources at the present rate of consumption will exhaust them by the year 2042.’¹⁹⁵ Following these concerns and warnings the UCCSA resolved at its 1985 Assembly to have an annual Conservation Sunday.

4.7.1. Human Dignity and Respect and the water crisis

In the contemporary society where social challenges include water crisis, ‘congregationalism continues to express deep social concern with advocacy for the principle of human dignity’ and respect.¹⁹⁶ It is in light of this understanding that we will apply this principle to our post apartheid era that is now marred with the ecological crisis, particularly water crisis, a key aspect of this study.

Human dignity and respect should take precedence in the distribution and management of water as a scarce resource. When it comes to the management and distribution of natural resources such as water, it is common that some members of the society are often excluded on the basis of social reasons such as their economic status. The poor and the marginalised often fall victims of this exclusion. According to the 2006 HDR ‘exclusion from clean water and basic sanitation destroys more life than any war...’¹⁹⁷ This exclusion does not recognise the 2006 Human Development Report (HDR) argument that ‘access to water is not just a fundamental human right...it also gives substance to other human rights...’¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ De Gruchy, S, 2005. ‘A Remarkable Life: The Story of Joseph Wing’ \pg. 65.

¹⁹⁵ The UCCSA 1974 Report to the Assembly.

¹⁹⁶ Report to the UCCSA Assembly, 1980.

¹⁹⁷ 2006 HDR, *Beyond Scarcity*, pg. 27.

¹⁹⁸ 2006 HDR, *Beyond Scarcity*, pg. 27.

Further, a relationship that exists between water and human dignity cannot be underemphasised. This strong link is articulated with regard to sanitation by the 2006 HDR where it states that;

Access to safe, hygienic and private sanitation facilities is one of the strongest indicators of human dignity. For millions of women across the world inadequate access is a source of shame, physical discomfort and insecurity...The loss of dignity associated with a lack of privacy in sanitation helps to explain why women attach more importance than men to sanitary provision.¹⁹⁹

It is in this regard that we maintain the position by the UCCSA that human dignity and respect can assist in maintaining the highest welfare of the nation where people are viewed and respected as created in the image of God. Each individual is worth respect given that all are created in the image of God (Genesis 1: 26 27). Against this argument we maintain that the church is called to make this principle of human dignity as apparent as possible in this era of water crisis as it was during the history of apartheid. At no cost should water be used to dehumanise individuals or deny them their personal human dignity and respect. In accordance with this viewpoint David Hallman's argument is relevant to Batswana, where he states that 'we must approach the natural world with much greater humility.'²⁰⁰

4.7.2 Justice and Equality in view of the water crisis

Today, in the struggle for a healthy and sustainable ecosystem, a healthy biodiversity, management and equitable distribution of water and the natural resources, the principle of justice and equality is paramount. The principle of justice and equality calls for a just society where there is equal opportunity in the distribution of resources. Blank argued that 'when every person is recognised as a full member of the household, then the community has a responsibility to provide each individual with a full set of opportunities.'²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ 2006 HDR, *Beyond Scarcity*, pg. 48.

²⁰⁰ Hallman, D, 2000, *Spiritual Values for Earth Community*. Geneva: WCC Publications, pg. 50.

²⁰¹ Blank, RM, 1992. *DO JUSTICE: Linking Christian Faith and Modern Economic Life*, Cleveland: United Church Press, pg. 48.

The social teaching of the church unreservedly condemns any system that limits access to resources to a certain group of people. In fact, the Botswana national's vision, Vision 2016, states that 'no citizen of Botswana must feel or be seen to be disadvantaged as a result of gender, age, religion or creed, colour, national or ethnic origin, location, language, or political opinions.'²⁰² According to the Christian scriptures in Galatians 3: 26; 'There is neither Jew or Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' From this scripture we can see the notion of justice and equality a full support. In Botswana, most households in both the rural and the urban areas have access to a stand pipe in their yard hence water is readily available at the twist of the tap. During rainy season, God gives rain to all in equal sharing regardless of their status. Leonardo Boff is quoted in Hallman where he argued for a 'new socio-environmental ethic to challenge those systems that exploit the poor majority in order to maintain privilege for the wealthy minority and simultaneously to confront those systems that exploit the natural world for short term gains.'²⁰³

The principle of justice and equality stand to confront the current phenomenon of water privatization. Private companies are pushing the Governments to move from public water supply to privatization. Among other reasons advanced in favour for privatization is that the service provision will be more efficient. While there may be an element of truth in this assertion, it comes with cost to maximize profit. The UN-2006 HDR contends that 'many households lack the capacity to meet cost recovery charges on a commercial basis...Poor people...are already paying far more than they can afford to pay to meet their basic water needs in water markets that reinforce their poverty.'²⁰⁴ This trend will heighten inequality in the water provision with the poor being disconnected owing to high prices. Therefore, if this principle can take precedence in water issues, then water scarcity can be successfully counteracted.

²⁰² Botswana Government, Vision 2016: A Framework for a Long Term Vision for Botswana, Gaborone: Government Printers, pg. 22.

²⁰³ Hallman, D, 2000, *Spiritual Values for Earth Community*. Geneva: WCC Publications, pg. 74.

²⁰⁴ 2006 HDR, *Beyond Scarcity*, pg. 51.

4.7.3 Sound uses of the earth resources and the water crisis

The wider creation of God has an integrity that the Church and indeed the entire community should work to protect, sensitively use and fully conserve the limited natural resources such as water. Individuals and institutions have an obligation to conserve and preserve water. Despite this obligation, it is clear that humanity continues to consume water unsparingly just as is the case with other natural resources. For example, in his 1974 report to the Assembly Wing asserted that, ‘the petrol crisis reminded us of the fact that the natural resources of the earth may not be unlimited. Our prodigal uses of the basic resources which God has placed in the world together with the tendency to pollute the atmosphere and thus destroy our own environment are trends which call for the exercise of Christian responsibility.’²⁰⁵

Samuel Rayan, SJ warns that ‘the earth and the things it holds are not to be taken for granted, nor to be treated as dead, nor used as if they had no identity and truth of their own.’²⁰⁶ He argues that human beings ought to acknowledge and recognise them for they have their own identity and therefore they should be treated with respect. If not, he warns, ‘against every disrespect shown the earth would rebel...’²⁰⁷ Indeed, the ‘rebellious’ of the earth is evidenced today in the global water crisis challenge that threatens life in general. Water and its source should not be destroyed but rather they should be treated with reverence.

The UCCSA has been conscious of the environment as a gift from God and as a resource that all Christians should take it upon themselves to care for.²⁰⁸ As years passed, Wing proposed that UCCSA should have a Nature Conservation Sunday. In his 1984 report to Assembly, Wing maintained that ‘we have a responsibility for the conservation of all life...we cannot allow a wanton destruction of environment...as such course of action threatens, not only the quality of human life but the conservation of God’s creation.’ Human life and development will be halted if the continued destruction of the environment especially the water resources is not curbed. If water

²⁰⁵ UCCSA 1974 Report to the Assembly.

²⁰⁶ Samuel Rayan, SJ, 1995, *The Earth is the Lord’s* in Hallman, DG (ed.), ‘Ecotheology: Voices from South and North,’ Geneva: WCC Publication, pg. 136.

²⁰⁷ Samuel Rayan, SJ, 1995, *The Earth is the Lord’s*, pg. 136.

²⁰⁸ UCCSA 1974 Report to the Assembly.

resources are properly cared for and the available water efficiently utilized then, human health will greatly improve since; ‘human health is inextricably linked to a range of water related conditions: safe drinking water, adequate sanitation...and healthy freshwater ecosystem.’²⁰⁹

4. 7.4 Unity, Inclusion and the Water crisis

We have seen above that the UCCSA has always committed itself to the principle of unity and inclusion so much that its work and response towards social issues ‘may offer to the world the pattern of an alternative society.’²¹⁰ It is on the basis of this strife for unity that we apply the UCCSA principle of Unity to the contemporary water crisis in Botswana. At this level we will consider how the principle of unity can influence the role that the community could play under the context of water crisis and rain scarce country such as Botswana.

Unity is a fundamental principle in the life of any socially progressive nation that persuades people not be comfortable with having more while others have less or nothing at all. For the Church, as an institution, it will be of primary value to attain a full cooperation between men and women. The struggle for ecological justice and protection of scarce water resources should bring to the attention of male and female human beings that in the struggle for justice and the integrity of creation, they need each other equally. More often than not, the truth of unity is often accepted in theory and less in practice. In order to achieve fully the notion of unity, the church should therefore speak against the injustice where human beings place themselves over the rest of non-human creatures. For example, the Church, as a social institution utilized its principle of unity and made significant progress in the fight and non violent resistance of the apartheid system of governance in South Africa.²¹¹ There is need for a united approach in dealing with a crisis. From this social teaching of the church societies can learn that a united nation through its institutions, could fundamentally achieve a restoration for the wounded earth. Peter Leigh proposes a community based restoration as an approach that could actively engage local communities in ecological

²⁰⁹ UN-Water/WWAP/2006/3, Water: A Shared Responsibility, pg. 18.

²¹⁰ UCCSA, CHURCHSOC No. 23, pg. 3.

²¹¹ 1984 UCCSA Report to Assembly

restoration. He contends that this is a process through which ‘humanity reconnects with the environment, often in meaningful ways, to heal a segment of an impaired earth.’²¹²

Unity can cultivate among communities a culture of sharing the available water and water resources as a way of enhancing life and building relationships. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) argues that ‘sharing water is essential to meeting the goals of equity, efficiency and environmental integrity and answering the more complex questions’ such as water security.²¹³

4.7.5 The Value of Life and the Water crisis

As it has already been argued, water is the cradle of all life. The UCCSA testified in favour of the sanctity of life during the struggle against apartheid.²¹⁴ The church argued that capital punishment does not act as a deterrent for crime. This principle should be applied to the sanctity of the environmental life particularly, to the life of water resources and the meagre rains that Botswana often receives.

JH Cones argued that ‘People who fight against white racism but fail to connect it to the degradation of the earth are anti ecological – whether they know it or not. People who struggle against environmental degradation but do not incorporate in it a disciplined and sustained fight against white supremacy are racists – whether they know it or not... The fight for justice cannot be segregated but must be integrated with the fight for life in all forms’²¹⁵ The UCCSA fought against racism while at the same time being aware of the environmental crisis sought to institute a Sunday to observe nature’s life. It can be argued that this was a struggle for life not only human life but also the sanctity of the environmental life.

²¹² Leigh, P, 2005: The ecological crisis, the human condition and community-based restoration as an instrument for its cure. *Ethics in Science and Environmental Politics*, 3-15, pg. 6.

²¹³ UN-Water/WWAP/2006/3, Water: A Shared Responsibility, pg. 373.

²¹⁴ 1975 UCCSA report to the Assembly.

²¹⁵ Cone, JH, 2001. ‘Whose Earth Is It, Anyway?’ in Hessel, D, and Rasmussen, L, (eds.), *Earth Habitat: Eco-Injustice and the Church’s Response*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, pg. 23.

Both water and life are gifts from God and humanity has responsibility to care and protect them. Although all forms of life have common status as creature of God and entirely dependent on water, however, humanity has ‘capacities for personal relationships and moral responsibility that are uniquely in God’s image.’²¹⁶

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed key themes of the UCCSA social teaching. From the social teaching, it is evident that the UCCSA was largely concerned about the way humanity was being dehumanized by the political system of the time. As a social institution, the church used these key themes to establish a set of moral and ethical groundings that facilitates dialogue between the church and the society that faces varied social, moral and ethical challenges. We have argued that these key themes provide a solid theological basis for the UCCSA to be able to respond to the water crisis in Botswana. The following chapter will go further to advance a practical Christian response to the water crisis in Botswana.

²¹⁶ Barbour, IG, 2000. ‘Scientific and Religious Perspective on Sustainability’ in Hessel, DT and Ruether, RR, *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, Harvard University Press: Oxford, pg. 391.

Chapter 5

Response to the Water crisis in Botswana

5.1 Introduction

In chapter one, we laid out our theological framework. In chapters two and three we provided the social-analytical mediation, and in chapter four we have engaged with the theological tradition for the UCCSA as our hermeneutical mediation. We have seen how the social teaching of the UCCSA has something important to say about the water crisis. Now we need to move to the next step of our method which is to propose practical action. We suggest that there are two aspects to this practical action. The first is the need to develop a contextual theology in the face of the water crisis, and the second is a set of practical steps that can be taken.

5.2 A Contextual theology of water with focus on *Pula* in Botswana

As a first step towards ‘practical mediation’ we are convinced that the church in Botswana should articulate a contextual response towards the alleviation of the water crisis. The church should demonstrate the meaning of being a Christian in a country challenged with serious water scarcity and insufficient rainfall; a country whose people view and understand the coming of rain a symbol of life blessings and economic prosperity.

In this regard, Steve de Gruchy’s definition in his article entitled ‘A Christian Engagement with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework’ fits our context. He argued that being a ‘Christian means to participate in the *Missio Dei*...This means to bear witness to the work of God in partnership with others – both within and outside the Christian church - to make our communities, our society and our world a place that is closer to God’s vision of *shalom*.’²¹⁷ Shalom has to do with abundant life as Jesus articulated in John 10: 10. From this viewpoint, we argue that ‘abundant life cannot be enjoyed where fresh and safe water is deficient. Shalom means enjoying relationship

²¹⁷ De Gruchy, S, ‘A Christian Engagement with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework’ in *Missonalia*, April 2005, 33, (1), 55-72, pg. 56.

with God, other humankind and nature. In order for this relationship to be fruitful, humankind ought to understand that water is the condition of all life.

5.2.1 Oikos and Pula

While we will use the UCCSA social teaching to propose the theological response towards the water crisis in Botswana, we will further engage with the Oikos theology in searching for a contextual response to the water crisis focusing on Pula in Botswana. As Hessel puts it, ‘an ecologically reformed church inhabits the Earth lovingly as home or *Oikos*, ‘house of the earth.’²¹⁸ *Oikos* is the root word to the two English words ‘ecology’ and ‘economy’. According to Leonardo Boff, the word ecology originates from the Greek word ‘*Oikos-logos*’ where ‘*Oikos*’ means home and ‘*logos*’ means study. Simply, ecology means ‘the study of the conditions and relations that make up the house...’²¹⁹ The *Oikos Journey: A Theological Reflection on the Economic Crisis in South Africa*,²²⁰ argues that if we are able to think of the *Oikos-logos* as the concern about the environment and the *Oikos-nomos* as the rules for the household, then we are in a position to engage with both God’s environment and economics. From this perspective we hold the opinion that the Oikos-theology ‘provides us with a better understanding of the relationship between the natural resources (the ecology) and the access to and distribution of these resources (economics).’²²¹

The household metaphor carefully seeks to establish a harmonious co-existence between humankind and the entire ecosystem where the economic needs of the former respect the limitations of the latter. In this co-existence, humankind finds it unjust to exploit the ecosystem such as water resources for economic needs. Humankind depends on water for life and economic progress hence they hold nature in an esteemed and caring relationship. In his unpublished doctoral thesis, A.E. Warmback

²¹⁸ Hessel, D, 2001. ‘The Church Ecologically Reformed’ in Hessel, D, and Rasmussen (eds.), *Earth Habitat: Eco-Injustice and the Church Response*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, pg. 192.

²¹⁹ Boff, L, 1995. *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm*, New York: Orbis Books, pg. 9.

²²⁰ The *Oikos Journey* is a popular document within the South African Churches that came about as a result of the theologians and many other resource persons in KwaZulu Natal who were concerned with the economic system in post-apartheid South Africa. Refer to this document for more information on the relations of the economy and the environment.

²²¹ Warmback, AE, 2005. *Constructing an Oikothology*, pg. 251

observed that ‘it is helpful to have an understanding that incorporates human beings, for it helps to understand that the well being of human beings is closely connected to the well being of the rest of the nature.’²²² The relations between humankind and the created world show that none is superior to the other.

In the Botswana situation, I would argue that we need to contextualise this to develop a Theology of Pula. Here we are reminded of what we said in chapter one. We have argued that Pula holds an economic value (*Oikos-nomos*) in the socio-economic life of Botswana. An introduction of the new currency in Botswana named Pula in 1976 was a signal that as a young independent State, Botswana will have to depend on ‘Pula’ for developing and growing the economy of the country. All the currency denominations carry the national coat of arms that bears symbols representative of the three major sectors of the economic growth in Botswana being; agriculture, industry and tourism. As a sign that the three sectors of the economy depends on water, the word Pula has been sealed at the bottom of the coat of arms.

Like the *Oikos*, with its concern about the economics, in the context of Botswana, the church stand to appreciate Pula as unifying factor for the country in the interest of justice yet that can be abused in the greediness of some. At this level Pula, as an economic instrument is a subject of economic justice. For this reason, the need to develop a contextual theology of *pula* will assist the church to link *pula* with God thereby qualifying the involvement of the church in the issues of justice and socio-economics of the country. Among others these issues include the management and distribution of water resources particularly relating them to the poor.

Further, a similar trend arises where the *Oikos* is concerned about the environment (*Oikos-logos*), and Pula is concerned about the environmental well being and the livelihoods of Botswana who are traditionally crop and livestock farmers. During the highly scarce rainy season, Botswana often refer to the land as ‘wearing khakhi’ meaning that it is dry and therefore livelihoods are at risk. Elsewhere, this is linked to what Steve de Gruchy referred to as the ‘Olive Agenda.’ Botswana believe that life is

²²² Warmback, AE, 2005. *Constructing an OIKOTHEOLOGY: The Environment, Poverty and the Church in South Africa unpublished thesis*, School of Religion and Theology, University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg, pg. 13.

at prime when there is sufficient rain and the land scape of the country is green; green from the crops in the farms as well as green with enough vegetation to supply grazing and water for livestock and wildlife.

As a community blessing (*Oikumene*), pula enhances the spirit of unity and sharing. Within the traditional farming setup, Batswana come together to share ideas on farming or exchange of farming resources such as machinery (tractors), ploughs and seeds. This spirit is continued after harvest season when individuals and communities gather to share harvest at their *kgotla* (traditional gathering place where the chief is the chairperson) to celebrate *dikgafela* (traditional festivals after a good harvest where a portion of harvest is taken to the tribal grain storage for re-distribution during drought period). The concept of harvest festival is adopted by the UCCSA Botswana as an annual event on the church calendar. Among livestock farmers, there is sharing and exchange of bulls for breeding purposes. This pattern of community living and sharing is often extended to support for one another as communities during challenging times such as death through donations of food. In this way, the contextual theology of Pula provides a platform from where the church can articulate the notion of national unity and communal living as a way of dealing with social challenges.

To further engage with this area of the study, we will consider some key theological reasons why the UCCSA in Botswana should be involved with the water crisis issues of the country.

5.2.2 Water – God’s Gift for all life

God is the creator of all life. With water, God was able to create life. The creation story begins with ‘the Spirit of God moving over the face of the waters.’²²³ One of the key principles in understanding how God gives the gift of water is through rain. A traditional Botswana setting holds the same understanding as that of a Hebrew worldview where ‘hell was under ground, we lived on the ground and God lived in the heavens.’²²⁴ From this understanding, since rain falls from heaven on the ground and caused life to flourish, it is a great symbol of God’s gift of water to life. The church

²²³ Genesis 1: 2, (Revised Standard Version)

²²⁴ De Gruchy, S, ‘Water of Life: God’s Special Gift’ in Council for World Mission, *Inside Out*, pg. 22

should protect the gift and its resources, water and water resources, because they are always a reminder of the Giver. In this way, it is right for the Church to be concerned some individuals do not share in this gift due to the abuse and overconsumption to which water is subjected. It is being subject to the market for profit where it will benefit a few to the detriment of the poor. Human and non human life is threatened by the continued decrease in the supply of water as a result of poor water demand management leading to unfair distribution of available safe water while losing huge amounts of water; deforestation that has interrupted the hydrological circle; climate change; as well as poor industrial and domestic waste management that often leads to the pollution of water resources. It is in this regard that Christians should consider the universe as the body of God while water is the blood of the earth. In thinking this way of water, the universe and God, the church will be empowered to always remember that water is a divine gift that must be revered because of its relationship with the Giver. While respect for water is a respect towards the giver, God, it is further crucial for it bestows such dignity on the Spirit of God that was on the water before the creation.

5.2.3 Stewardship for Water

Under the conditions of water scarcity that confront Botswana, the church should respond theologically by empowering its members and the communities about stewardship of water. Stewardship is the principle that considers the most efficient, equitable and sustainable use of water. It is one of the primary concepts of the Christian ethics. Motivated by the Christian ethics, stewardship recognises that water is a gift from God and must be used with utmost dignity. Anthropocentric consumption and the will to dominate the water resources (as in the rest of created order) have strengthened the paradigm that humankind is superior to other creatures and the purpose of the rest of creation is to contribute to human economic progress. The false claim that humankind has a divine right to dominate nature and the unrepentant human attitude towards the use and consumption of natural resources continues to foster the water crisis in Botswana. It is therefore, of great significance to appreciate that sound stewardship of water and water resources goes beyond the two resources to the beneficiaries of the resources. That is, a good steward of water resources is a good steward of the life that will benefit from that resource. It is in this

light that Christians must re-commit to the re-reading of the scripture and re-evaluation of traditions. Hopefully, a contemporary re-reading of the scripture may lead to a 'rediscovery of a different understanding of what God's intention may be for how we humans relate with the rest of the created order.'²²⁵

The circumstances to which water and water resources are subjected as detailed above, threatens human life. For this reason, the Church is called to a ministry of stewardship, that is a ministry of caring. As we care for the water resources, we acknowledge that they are not ours but God's and that water can still exist without 'us' whereas we could never exist without water. Stewardship provides a fresh understanding of our relations with water and a major shift from the common domination phenomenon over water resources by the few non poor. The church is called to use ensure that water is consumed in gratitude to the benefit of all life on earth. For those who are having access to water in excess, they should be grateful and use it mindful of those in other parts of the world who live below the universal requirement of water per person per day. When the church takes its rightful pace as stewards of water, it will join its effort with those who are already engaged in speaking against social injustice where water is being privatized, the poor are being disconnected from water supply because they could not afford the bill and water pollution among the rest.

5.2.4 Water and Gender based domination

Janet Henshall Momsen argues that gender is 'the socially constructed attributes to being a woman and a man, of being masculine and feminine. These attributes are not naturally or biologically given or determined by birth, but are acquired by culture and traditions in our society.'²²⁶ Haddad asserted that gender as a social construct 'identifies the relationship between the sexes in terms of power relations played out in social institutions such as the family, religion, culture, and education.'²²⁷ Of these attributes of gender, power is deeply entrenched in the relationship of men and women where the former is subjected to oppression, subordination and denial to full

²²⁵ Hallman, D, *Spiritual Values for Earth Community*, pg. 50.

²²⁶ Momsen, JH, 2004, *Gender and Development*, London: Routledge, pg. 2.

²²⁷ Haddad, B. "Gender, Development, and Faith: The Church and Women's Struggle to Survive" in *Missionalia*, November 2003,. 31, (3).

contributions to socio-economic development issues. Mainly, some men in positions of power have promoted patriarchal culture as they tend to benefit from it.

Women often carry the burden of poor water supplies as they have to walk long distances in search of safe water for their families where it is scarce. Sadly, at times they are rendered powerless over this water they work hard to bring home. The condition that 1.1 billion people in the world do not have access to safe and clean water, and only 50 percent of the world's population has access to piped water; 'the figures are 4 percent for Africa, 12 percent for South Asia and 8 percent for South-East Asia'²²⁸ lay conducive grounds for women to be subjected to travelling long distances in search for drinking water. Search for safe drinking water is a duty which is more time consuming leaving little time for other household chores such as childcare, cooking and cleaning in situations where male domination of women is viewed as 'being natural...and therefore inevitable and not even to be discussed in issues of justice.'²²⁹ Not only are women providers for domestic consumption, also 'they... play multiple roles in the provision of water, sanitation, improved health, and increased productivity' at national level.²³⁰ However, they are sidelined in the policy making institutions and when considered, they are pulled back by policies that tie 'women tightly to the socially ascribed gender roles they play in relation to water in most poverty context.'²³¹

Therefore the Church is bound by its strive for justice to participate in water issues and to make a response declaring that all are create equal in the image of God. The church recognises the full dignity of women in both the church and society and it is this recognition that could lead to the liberation of women from the heavy duty of being sole providers and mangers of water.

²²⁸ Wallace, T, and Coles, A, 2005. 'Water, Gender and Development: An Introduction' in Wallace, T, and Coles, A, *Gender, Water and Development*, Oxford: Berg, pg. 2.

²²⁹ Okin, SM, *Justice, Gender and the Family*, 1989. United State of America: Basic Books, pg. 7.

²³⁰ Wallace, T, and Coles, A, 2005, pg. 8.

²³¹ Wallace, T, and Coles, A, 2005, pg. 9.

5.2.5 Water ethic with focus on *Pula*

The UCCSA is a covenant church. Historically, Congregational forebears accepted that a group of Christians are a church. As a way of ensuring that members identify with this notion, there was a collective adoption of Robert Browne's definition of the local church as 'a company of Christians which by a willing covenant made with their God, are under the government of God...' ²³² From Browne's definition, the local church is 'governed' by the rules of God.

The UCCSA Botswana as a household of God, concerned with the growing insufficiency of water and scarcity of rain in the country, should propose a water ethic and an ethic of *pula* for Botswana. ²³³ We have seen that a Theology of *Pula* can be developed to give meaning to the social engagement of the church with the water crisis. Out of this can develop a water ethic that symbolises that individuals and communities are of the need for their behavioural change towards their unsparing consumptive measures.. When there are concerns about the health of the water resources it is an indication that individuals understand that water management has gone awry because 'we are trying to meet insatiable demands by continuously expanding a supply that has limits both ecological and economic.' ²³⁴ The basic principle for a water ethic carries the same mechanism, just as in any other ethic; 'social approbation for the right actions: social disapproval for the wrong action.' ²³⁵

The UCCSA-Botswana exists at a time when human life is being threatened by the societal disconnection from the life giving qualities of water. Many individuals have water at the twist of their taps thus they think little of water beyond the point of contact. Postel asserts that 'we have lost a sense of respect for the wild river, for the complex workings of a wetland, for the intricate web of life that water supports.' ²³⁶ The tendency of a wasteful consumption in a society which is challenged by the crisis of water contributes to the high tariffs of water as way of placing high value to water

²³² Briggs, R, *The Covenant Church*, pg. 18.

²³³ In this context, members of the household include water users at domestic, agricultural and industrial levels. Furthermore, it includes all individuals and institutions.

²³⁴ Postel, S, *The Last Oasis*, pg. 183.

²³⁵ Leopold, A, 2006. 'The Land Ethic' in White, JE, *Contemporary Moral Problems (eighth edition)*, Belmont: Thompson Wadsworth, pg. 429.

²³⁶ Postel, S, *The Last Oasis*, pg. 184.

and to reduce wasteful and unproductive consumption. It is under these circumstances that the UCCSA-Botswana ought to realise that Botswana needs ‘a set of guidelines and responsibilities that stops us from chipping away at natural systems until nothing is left of their life sustaining functions...’²³⁷ This would be the practical outworking of a theology of Pula.

At this level, the social teaching of the UCCSA can be augmented with a water ethic. This water ethic will help water consumers in Botswana to protect water resources and conserve water as well as establishing new ways of utilizing rain water. This will renew humankind – water relations, create a shift towards a holistic approach that perceives people and water as related parts of a greater whole. Fundamentally, the value of life to which the social teaching draws our attention will be upheld. Hopefully, this water ethic will lead us to see that “it is not only right and good but necessary that all living things get enough water before some gets more than enough.”²³⁸

The current statistics highlighting that 1.1 billion people living without access to safe and clean water while over 2.5 billion people in the world lack both access to proper sewage, access to clean water and sanitation propels us to draw from the notion of justice in the social teaching. It is ethically immoral that the lives of multitudes are at risk globally while huge sums of money are spent on huge military budgets. For example, Postel highlighted that it was estimated that it would take \$36 billion per year which is equals to 4 percent of the world’s military expenditure, to bring to humanity clean drinking water and access to safe sanitation. Humankind ought to live and depend on less and sharing what is surplus. In striving for just living the church would have to seek collaborative approaches with institutions and Non Governmental Organizations who advocate for conservation, efficiency and reuse of water.

²³⁷ Postel, S, *The Last Oasis*, pg. 185.

²³⁸ Postel, S, 2008. ‘Why We Need A Water Ethic’ in *Water Consciousness: How we all have to Change to Protect our Most Critical Resource*, San Francisco: AlterNet Books, pg. 190.

5.3 How the UCCSA Botswana can practically live the ethic of Pula in the context of Botswana?

Despite the persistent and disturbing water crisis in Botswana and the theological obligation to care for the entire creation of God, the church (UCCSA Botswana) has no practical response to the situation. Perhaps, as a social institution, it has either perceived itself existing only to proclaim the Gospel or it has failed to recognise and use its power and to diligently carry out its social responsibility. This failure has led to the perception that the State is about ensuring safe water reticulation in the country while the church is about prayer. While it may be so, it is however regrettable that the Church has not yet located itself as a full partner with the State and other NGOs in establishing mechanisms that minimize the effects of the water crisis on the poor. The situation is hardly improving thus ‘many governments, the United Nations and...environmentalist groups have recognised the gravity of this situation, and general awareness is growing of the urgent need to halt or drastically slow it down.’²³⁹ Sowunmi makes a stern challenge concerning the need to respond to the degradation of the natural resources;

The time has come for all those who wish to contribute to the renewal and conservation of the environment to initiate or intensify practical measures to achieve this goal through a change of direction in the relationship with the rest of the created world.²⁴⁰

5.3.1 Establishment of Environmental Office

In the past, the UCCSA identified reasons that led to the formation of the Church and Society Department. Among the reasons the Department was established was to guide the Church in keeping a prophetic position and in the formulation of theological responses towards socio-economic and socio-political developments as a result of the apartheid government at the time. Rutherford indicated that the need to meet and fulfil mutual help, information and inspiration prompted the establishment of Church and

²³⁹ Sowunmi, MA, 1995. ‘Giver of Life – ‘Sustain Your Creation’ in Hallman, DG (ed.), *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North*, WCC Publication: Switzerland, pg. 149.

²⁴⁰ Sowunmi, MA, 1995. ‘Giver of Life, pg. 149.

Society as a faculty through which the Church responded to social and political issues and their impact on the people of God.²⁴¹

With its history and current role in the socio political development in the country, the UCCSA Botswana continues to be involved in the national activities of the country such as participating on national events like World Environment day. However, this participation is often associated only with leading in prayers or in the closing benediction. Certainly lack of environmental conservation programmes by the church denies it full impact on its role of saving our God given natural resources such as water resources and conservation of rain water. The UCCSA-Botswana seem to have fallen into Hessel's observation in stating that 'congregations typically conduct religion business as usual with little time for the shared human vocation of earth keeping (Genesis 2: 15).'²⁴²

Therefore, a new focus and vision on water and water related issues should be encapsulated within the programmes of the UCCSA-Botswana as a matter of urgency. The establishment of the Environmental Office could guide and assist the UCCSA Botswana in rolling out such programmes and focus on water issues such as water demands, water and sanitation, rapid urbanization among others. This office could renew the 'theologically grounded human claim that human beings have a divinely mandated duty to care for the created order and be good stewards of our collective inheritance.'²⁴³ In this way Botswana would be called to treating natural resources especially water resources with dignity and respect. With the continuing deterioration of the climate, Botswana is getting hotter and therefore drier and therefore the Church should lead in the nurturing and treasuring of the created order.

5.3.2 Revive Conservation Sunday

At the 1984 UCCSA Assembly, Church and Society Department drew the attention of the Assembly delegates to the need for the conservation of the environment. It was observed that,

²⁴¹ UCCSA, 1972 Church and Society Report, pg. 29

²⁴² Hessel, D, 2001. 'The Church Ecologically Reformed' in Hessel, D, and Rasmussen (eds.), pg. 186.

²⁴³ Boston, J, *Holding Humanity to Account for the future state of the planet*, (Department of Accounting and Information Studies) University of Wellington, USA

We have a responsibility for the conservation of all life and we cannot allow the wanton destruction of the environment which is going on all around us. The consequences of such a course of action threaten not only the quality of human life, but the conservation of God's creation.²⁴⁴

Following the above strongly worded statement, it seems the Department successfully persuaded the church to realise that environmental conservation 'is almost as vital a matter as a just social order because it also has serious consequences for our future life together...'²⁴⁵ With this strong persuasion, the 1985 Assembly had to resolve that the Church should observe Conservation Sunday on the second Sunday of September each year.

This 1985 Assembly resolution was to establish a Conservation Sunday in all the UCCSA churches. A fundamental presupposition was that humanity does not own the creation, but rather that God entrusted humanity with creation for their own consumption and that they sustain and protect it for the future generations. If the church can rise to the challenge and revive the Conservation Sunday, it would have presented the current generation with an opportunity to save natural resources for use by the next generations. It may come with a new name such as Water Conservation Sunday, but the legacy is still there. If we go by De Gruchy's viewpoint that *Oikos nomos* is about God's rule that 'ensures that the earth sustains human life and that human life respects the sustaining power of the earth,'²⁴⁶ then the restoration of Conservation Sunday can provide an annual platform where the general membership of the UCCSA liturgically commit themselves to protecting water resources and the general stock of natural capital to which there is no substitute. The UCCSA has structures such as Women and Youth Fellowships, Mission Council and others, through which the vision, mission and vision of the Conservation Sunday can spread beyond the Church.

²⁴⁴ Report of the Church and Society to the 1984 Assembly

²⁴⁵ Report of the Church and Society to the 1985 Assembly

²⁴⁶ De Gruchy, S, Address to Diakonia, pg. 7

5.3.3 Rain water harvesting (RWH)

The semi arid to arid climate conditions of Botswana presents a formidable challenge to both crop and livestock farmers. Meagre and unreliable rainfall of Botswana that ranges between 250mm to 650mm per annum often frustrates well laid farming plans. Basically, this is an annual threat to survival for all lives, both humankind and the ecosystem. Therefore, for Botswana, especially the poor and farmers, conservation and efficient water usage are of primary significance. Low rainfalls in the country rapidly stress the water supply sources most of which are ground water. In her paper entitled 'Rain Water Harvesting for Rural Water Supply' Kamutati cites the Department of Water Affairs 2000 Monitoring Report where it was pointed that '80 percent of Botswana inhabitants receive their water from underground sources.'²⁴⁷ These conditions fully constrain the efforts of the Botswana government to make water accessible to all citizens. Further, low rainfalls exacerbate the problems of food security and schemes linked to it such as government initiatives like drought relief. For example, in 2007 the former president of Botswana Mr Festus Mogae, in his statement of drought declaration lamented that;

The total area planted, under both communal and commercial sub sectors is approximately 72000 hectares, which is only 22 percent of the total cultivable land. Total cereal production is estimated at 31000 tonnes, comprising about 92 percent from the commercial sub sector and 8 percent from the communal subsector. This production will meet only about 10 percent of the estimated national requirement of 322 245 metric tonnes for major cereal (sorghum, millet, maize and wheat).²⁴⁸

What is rainwater harvesting? RWH is the state where rain water is collected for use 'through collection and storage, either in soil or in man-made dams, tanks or containers bridging dry spells and droughts.'²⁴⁹ It is not a new technology in Botswana although it has for a long time suffered insufficient promotion. Rainwater can be harvested in different technologies. Barron of Stockholm Environment Institute presents two ways of RWH namely; *in situ* and the *ex situ*. It is argued that '*in situ*

²⁴⁷ Kamutati, A, *Rain Water Harvesting for Rural Water Supply*, (undated), Gaborone: Botswana Technology Centre.

²⁴⁸ Botswana Government, *Poverty and Food Security, Monitoring Bulletin 2, June 2007*, Gaborone: Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, pg. 1.

²⁴⁹ Stockholm Environmental Institute, 2009. *Rainwater Harvesting: A Lifeline for Human Well-Being*, Stockholm: UNEP, pg. 1.

rainwater harvesting technologies are soil management strategies that enhance rainfall infiltration and reduce surface runoff.’²⁵⁰ These include, terracing pitting and ploughing across the slopes especially where farmers often suffer crop failure due to loss of rain water and soil erosion. Indeed it may be difficult to control outtake of water as ‘moisture storage for crop uptake is 5 – 60 days.’²⁵¹ *In situ* type is good to recharge the soil water for crops.

The second type of RWH technology is *ex situ* systems whose ‘rainwater harvesting systems capture areas external to the point of water storage.’²⁵² Most common used facilities include rooftops, road catchments, rock catchments and pavements and with these techniques water is normally easy to store. Storages include wells, man-made dams, ponds and cisterns. Usually, it is easy to extract water from these storages for different uses.

As the water demands in Botswana escalate and the government is constrained, rainwater harvesting emerges to be an alternative that has not been fully promoted. For this reason, the belief of the church in the fullness of life as articulated by Jesus Christ in John 10: 10 coupled with its social teaching principle of the value of life, should propel the UCCSA Botswana to explore rainwater harvesting as an alternative approach of enhancing life, countering drought and combating the increasing water demand.

The church (UCCSA- Botswana) with its large following, many of whom, in the rural areas, are farmers, can be a resource centre where people are taught and access information on rainwater harvesting mechanisms. In some areas where water has to be fetched from a community standpipe, women and children especially girls, often face the injustice of walking long distances to fetch it. Therefore, where rainwater is used to improve domestic water supply, this will set women and children from this demanding duty and daunting task they often find themselves faced with. In most

²⁵⁰ Barron, J, 2009. ‘The Water Component of Ecosystem Services and in Human Well-Being Development Targets’ in Stockholm Environmental Institute, *Rainwater Harvesting: A Lifeline for Human Well-Being* Stockholm: UNEP, pg. 10.

²⁵¹ Barron, J, ‘The Water Component of Ecosystem Services and in Human Well-Being Development Targets’ pg. 10.

²⁵² Barron, J, ‘The Water Component of Ecosystem Services and in Human Well-Being Development Targets’ pg. 10.

areas, the church (UCCSA Botswana) has large buildings where tanks can be mounted on their side or even constructed in order to utilize rooftop collections. This collection could be distributed among the poor in times of needs or be used for vegetable gardens which in turn will be used to supply the need in the community. This approach can also be explored by community members as a way of sustainable livelihood strategy.

Generally, the government of Botswana uses water tariffs as a way of water conservation especially in the industrial sector. Toteng highlighted that ‘the state in Botswana...has the power and legitimacy to set the policy framework within which private companies...could draw guidance for their action. It is conceivable that if there was a clear...government policy on water conservation to encourage companies to conserve water, they would do so.’²⁵³ The church can work in association with industries to use rainwater harvesting measures to save water and save money. RWH projects could be interesting in renewing the lives of many and giving them hope through the challenges of life especially regarding food security and well-being. Such projects will increase water availability and improved sanitation. The notion of justice and respect for human life could be upheld where water is sufficiently within the reach of the community.

5.3.4 Recycle and Reuse Wastewater

As Botswana continues to suffer the escalation of the surface water supply and the depletion of ground water sources, the alternative to treating waste water as resource to be used productively also grows rapidly. According to Kgathi and Masamba ‘reuse of wastewater is one of the options for integrated water resources management (IWRM) practised...in Botswana.’²⁵⁴ Postel contends that ‘water pure enough to drink serves many functions that do not require such high quality-including irrigating crops and lawns...and flushing human waste into a sewer.’²⁵⁵ The viewpoint of Postel

²⁵³ Toteng, EN, 2004. ‘The Private Sector, Urban Water Conservation and Developing Countries: A Stakeholder Theory-Driven Perspective From Botswana’ in *South African Geographical Journal*, 86 (2), pg. 113 – 121, pg. 119.

²⁵⁴ Kgathi, DL and Masamba, WRL, *Re-Use of Wastewater at the Selebi Phikwe Copper-Nickel Mine, Botswana*, (undated), Harry Oppenheimer Okavango Research Centre, Maun: University of Botswana, pg. 1.

²⁵⁵ Postel, S, *The Last Oasis*, pg. 127.

carries more weight in a water stressed country like Botswana. Currently, the Botswana government has started a programme that moves away from on-site sanitation, (that is, where individual households used on site sanitation system), to waterborne sewerages for all in major areas, cities, towns and villages. Undoubtedly, this development will further stress the already stressed water resources in Botswana. Indeed, as development and population grows especially in the urban areas, the volumes of wastewater are bound to also increase drastically.

Recycling of wastewater is different from re-use of wastewater although the two are often used synonymously. Re-cycling refers to the treatment of the wastewater in order to allow it to retain its original quality before re-distributing it for further use. The concept of re-use, however, refers to the ‘using of wastewater before it undergoes any major purification in order to revert its quality to the original form.’²⁵⁶ However, recycling and reusing of wastewater is a likely alternative. From the *Oikos* perspective, recycle and re-use are both concerned about the ecology and the economics. For example, when used in crops, trees, fodder feeds and vegetable gardens, waste water which is often seen to be rich in soil nutrients, will ecologically strengthen the soil and relief the use of safe drinking water for crop watering. Economically, less will be spent on the purchase of chemical fertilizers. Postel notes that ‘farmers ...spend heavily on chemical fertilizers to give their crops nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium that domestic wastewater contains in large amounts.’²⁵⁷

The UCCSA social teaching principle on sound use of natural resources, will certainly promote the notion of recycling and re-using wastewater. However, the church should engage in capacity building (public teaching) on ways to use recycled or reuse of wastewater. This is emphasised by Toteng who while accepting that recycling and reusing water is a way of conservation, draws our attention to the sector of the population who do not trust either recycling or reuse of wastewater. In his study conducted around Gaborone, ‘91.5 percent stated that recycled wastewater should be

²⁵⁶ Kgathi, DL and Masamba, WRL, *Re-Use of Wastewater at the Selebi Phikwe Copper-Nickel Mine, Botswana*, (undated), Harry Oppenheimer Okavango Research Centre, Maun: University of Botswana, pg. 4.

²⁵⁷ Postel, S, *The Last Oasis*, pg. 127.

used for other things’ while ‘58 per cent felt wastewater should not be reused because it is dirty.’²⁵⁸

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have looked at how in the midst of water crisis and meagre rainfall, the church (UCCSA) in Botswana can respond to the water crisis. The first task is to develop a local, contextual theology of Pula. Then there are a number of practical steps that can be taken to put this theology into practice in the form of an ethics of Pula. We have noted these to include; establishing an Environmental Office by the church, a revival of an annual Conservation Sunday, rain water harvesting and Recycling and reuse of waste water.

²⁵⁸ Toteng, EN, 2008. ‘The Effects of the Water Management...’ in *Water International*, Vol. 33, No. 4, pg. 482.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we conclude by summarizing the whole study through providing an overview of all the chapters. After this summation, we will consider some of the possible areas for future study that have been realised through the process of the study.

6.2 Summary of the study

In this study, we have dealt with the water crisis situation in Botswana. We have considered that while Botswana is economically doing well, the country is severely challenged by the water crisis. Drought is a common phenomenon in the country with scarce annual rainfall. These climate conditions have contributed to the general belief and hope for rain in the future in Botswana. Hope for rain in the country is evidenced by the use of “pula’ (rain) as a national symbol. Pula in Botswana, is used in different national symbols among them; the currency, one of the strongest in Africa, the national flag – represented by the colour blue which symbolises peace and water; engraved in the coat of arms – and as a sign of life for all citizens through industry, agriculture and natural resources. While appreciating the efforts of the government of Botswana in addressing the water situation, this study pursued the way in which the UCCSA-Botswana could theologically contribute to the water crisis in the country.

The key research question of the study; “What should the theological response of the UCCSA be to the water crisis in Botswana” has motivated the realization that the church has a theological obligation to make a sound theological response to the current water crisis that faces Botswana. With its objectives of showing the local scenario of the water crisis and the position that the church can take to respond, the study used the UCCSA social teaching as its theological framework

6.3 Summary of chapters

In seeking to address the key research question of this study alluded to above, chapter one introduced the study by providing the background and overview of the global environmental crisis with its historical overview. Also, the chapter articulated the motivation towards this study by outlining the reasons that led to the choosing of this topic for research. Chapter one further provides an introduction of Botswana as well as showing the significance of rain in Botswana for Botswana. In chapter two, we focused on a broader overview of the global water crisis. Among the key global water crisis issues that we discussed were; water privatization, urbanization, population growth, water and sanitation as well as damming of the rivers. Among the reasons to focus on the global water crisis in this chapter was to learn the approaches used to address key issues of concern, locally and globally.

In chapter three the focus is on the status and impact of the water crisis in Botswana. In order to achieve this focus, the chapter firstly introduced Botswana covering geographical and environmental features and their significance to the country. With this background to Botswana, the chapter discussed key features of the water scarcity in Botswana and showing the impact of such water scarcity on Botswana and their livelihood.

Chapter four of this study consists of the key component to the research, the UCCSA social teaching. In this chapter, we first addressed an overview of congregationalism in Southern Africa that subsequently led towards the formation of the UCCSA in October 1967. In this chapter we also provided an introduction to Reverend Joseph Wing, the first Secretary of the UCCSA. Also, we provided an overview of the Church and Society Department of the UCCSA. The chapter appreciates the fact that since its formation, the apartheid policies in South Africa affected neighbouring countries especially the constituent countries of the UCCSA whose meetings often sought to engage with the South African Government. The chapter shows that, from the minutes and reports of the UCCSA stored in archives lay five key theological themes from which the social teaching of the church is grounded. Upon this social teaching, the theological response of the church to the water crisis in Botswana has been articulated by this study.

In chapter five, we discussed ways through which the church could respond using its social teaching broadened by the oikos theology. Two sets of responses are discussed in this chapter being; The Theological response; under this response the chapter proposed the development of a Theology of Pula. Secondly, the chapter established five practical ways that the church can consider as theological responses informed by its social teaching and the theology of Pula.

Therefore, informed by the results of this study as seen in both chapter four and five, I would argue that the church has a theological obligation to respond to the water crisis in Botswana. The social teaching of the church that this study has been able to discover from the reports of the Church and Society Department reports in the archives of the church, is an important theological tool that would guide how the church engages and responds to social issues such as in the case of the water crisis and meagre rainfalls in Botswana. The contextual theology of Pula raises more theological themes with regard to the current water situation in Botswana such as the economy, the ecology and the communal living. Out of the theology of Pula, the church will meet what was stated by the UCCSA at its Assembly that congregationalism should provide an alternative way of living with scarce water resources. For this reason, I am of the view that the study has achieved its objectives in showing that there is a water crisis in Botswana and the UCCSA has not been engaged in any effort to make a theological response; The church has a social teaching that could be used to respond to this situation; and the social teaching of the UCCSA has been used to articulate a theological response to the water crisis in Botswana.

7 Conclusion

The water crisis is a serious issue that threatens the interdependence existing between humankind and the biosphere. The faith of the church is that water is a gift to humanity from God. The church as a household of God should find itself as divinely mandated to protect natural resources such as water, which are being over-consumed and abused. The church as a social institution has the privilege of many voluntary followers whom it can engage to articulate the message interrelationship between ecology and economic progress for humankind.

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