

# Biblical Approach to Development: A Theological Reflection from the Perspective of Burkan Pentadic Criticism



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## ABSTRACT

The subject of development has been approached from different academic disciplines mainly from sociological, economic, political and anthropological perspectives. Not much has been written about the subject of development within theological scholarship. The reason is that the church and for that matter, traditional theological scholarship has focused on personal piety and discipleship instead of social responsibility and development. Subsequently many have come to think that the Bible has less to say about development. The main aim of this article is to offer a biblically informed systematic approach to the subject of development. It argues that the Bible provides a useful guide on what it means to develop. Using the method of Burkan Pentadic Criticism to analyse the biblical teaching on the essentials of development, this paper maintains that the Bible and for that matter, the biblical teaching on development, should shape the human understanding, worldview and attitudes about development.

**Keywords:** *Development, Worldview, Bible, stewardship, Pentadic Criticism, shalom.*

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Publication History

Received 9th March, 2022

Accepted 12th April, 2022

Published online 29th April, 2022

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## INTRODUCTION

The issue and subject of development especially in the African context has been a major concern in contemporary times. For that reason, it has been treated within scholarship as a discipline and nationally and internationally as an initiative.<sup>1</sup> Within academic scholarship, the subject of development has been approached from different disciplines mainly from sociological, economic, political and anthropological perspectives. Little attention has been paid to the subject of development within academic theology. For the many years of the church's presence and for that matter Christianity in Africa, there has been an emphasis on individual salvation more than social responsibility. Discipleship and development have often been separated.<sup>2</sup> Many scholars in their attempts to theologise about development have to some extent, taken the path of lamentation and diagnosis about lack of development, especially on the African continent.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars who do not take the "diagnosis" approach do not pay much attention to the general biblical teaching on the subject of

<sup>1</sup> Dennis Tongoi, foreword to *Against All Hope: Hope for Africa* (Phoenix: Disciple Nations Alliance, 2005), 6. He has observed that "Several initiatives are now focusing on the development of Africa - The Africa Union, The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and lately the Commission for Africa led by the government of the United Kingdom."

<sup>2</sup> Tongoi, foreword to *Against All Hope*, 6.

<sup>3</sup> George Kinoti, *Hope for Africa and what the Christian can do* (Nairobi: African Institute of Scientific Research and Development), 99; Tukunboh Adeyemo, *Is Africa Cursed?* (Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive Publishers Limited, 2009).

development. Subsequently many have come to think that the Bible has less to say about development. The main aim of this paper is to offer a biblically informed and thus systematic approach to the subject of development. It, therefore, argues that the Bible provides a useful guide on what it means to develop.

## METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, this article employs Pentadic Criticism to systematically present the Biblical teaching on the subject of development. Developed by Kenneth Burke, Pentadic Criticism is an approach used to analyse how people use language to change beliefs and influence actions.

Burke designed the Pentadic Criticism in his 1945 book, *Grammar of Motives*,<sup>4</sup> to aid in the analysis of persuasive messages and experiences. However, it was not commonly known and used in academic context until two decades after its publication. John Kwasi Fosu has observed that “in contemporary times, diverse scholars such as both rhetorical and literary theorists, philosophers, social scientists and theologians study and apply it.”<sup>5</sup> Like most academic perspectives, pentadic criticism makes use of earlier theories.<sup>6</sup> Burke, in this case, utilized the ideas of dramatic forms and the power of stories in human history from Aristotle’s *Poetics*.<sup>7</sup> Burke acknowledged the centrality of the human story in the formation and maintenance of the community. Aristotle formulated important lexis, giving names to all the parts of narrative structure. To him, therefore, the names for the central elements of a common story are plot, character, spectacle, dialogue, and concept. Burke respectively called these parts by the names: acts, agent, scene, agency and purpose.

Pentadic criticism has, therefore, been used in this paper as a perspective for the findings and reflections on the biblical teaching on development. The significance of applying the pentadic method to study the biblical approach to development lies in the fact that, as observed by King, dramatic Pentad is useful in finding the underlying and absolute truth of a situation. It is also used as a method to discover why people do what they do. A phenomenon or perception is examined for its strategic importance.<sup>8</sup> According to Clarke Rountree III, dramatism is suitable for “explaining what he, she or others, say about his, her or their own past, present, and future actions of the past, present and future actions of others.”<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Burke rightly argues that his five rhetorical components: act, scene, agent, agency and purpose have a universal validity in examining texts and situations<sup>10</sup> for objective understanding.<sup>11</sup> Significantly, having looked at the meaning of development, an attempt is made to situate the study within contemporary theological scholarship through a review of literature. Thereafter, the Burkan Pentadic categories is applied for a biblical presentation of the development.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1945).

<sup>5</sup> Andrew King, “Pentadic Criticism,” in *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action*, ed. Jim A. Kuypers (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), 166; John Kwasi Fosu, *Experiences of Pneumatic Phenomena in Contemporary Ghanaian Christianity as Appropriations of 1. Cor 12 – 14: A Critical Analysis*. Hamburg: Missionshilfe Verlag, 2019, for instance, has successfully applied this method to study 1 Cor 12-14 and the pneumatic phenomena in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity. See also Sonja K. Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Illinois: Waveland Press, 1996), 455-462.

<sup>6</sup> King, “Pentadic Criticism,” 166, Burke took the idea of dramatic form and the power of stories in human history from Aristotle’s *Poetics*. From the great Roman Poet, Horace, Burke took the notion of generative categories, and from the language of scholar and co-author of the *Meaning of Meaning*, Ivor Armstrong, Burke took the idea of the importance of form in art.

<sup>7</sup> According to King, on page of Pentadic Criticism, “Aristotle affirmed the centrality of human story to the formation and maintenance of community. Our stories lie at the root of our identity.”

<sup>8</sup> King, “Pentadic Criticism,” 168.

<sup>9</sup> King, “Pentadic Criticism,” 168-169. Clarke J. Rountree III, “Coming to Terms with Kenneth Burke’s Pentad”, *American Communication Journal* 1, no. 3 (May 1998), accessed March 22, 2018. <http://acjournal.org/-journal/vol1/iss3/burke/rountree.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, iv.

<sup>11</sup> King, “Pentadic Criticism,” 176-177. To King, “By identifying the perspective of a piece of discourse and then looking at it from several other perspectives, we can go far in discovering whether it is wise, or foolish, moderate or extreme, helpful or destructive, self-interested or altruistic.”; See Fosu, *Experiences of Pneumatic Phenomena*, 17-18.

## WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

The concept of “development” has been defined in different ways and from different perspectives. Reem Abuiyada sees development as “building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect.”<sup>12</sup> To him, development has to do with “changing power structures to reduce barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives.”<sup>13</sup> Abuiyada explains further that, “Development should be seen as a progress towards complex goals such as the elimination of poverty, the provision of employment, the reduction of inequality and the guarantee of human rights.”<sup>14</sup>

According to R. Pearson, development involves an improvement in the use of available resources in the sense of qualitative, quantitative or both. In the view of Pearson, the meaning of development is not limited to one particular perspective in the sense of social, political and economic growth. It is rather to be seen as a hybrid concept for many strategies adopted for socio-economic and environmental transformation from current conditions to desired ones.<sup>15</sup> In its simplest usage, following Richard Boateng et al, development can be defined as the “objective of moving to a state relatively better than what previously existed.”<sup>16</sup> It has to do with a “good change.” Since change is a process, this explanation of development seems to connote a process towards a desirable state in society.

## PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THEOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP

This section of the paper surveys some relevant literature on development within theological scholarship.

### *Development as Stewardship of Resources*

Scott Allen and Darrow Miller,<sup>17</sup> answer the questions: “‘What do nations (or communities, or families) need to develop?’ And ‘Where do resources come from to enable them to develop?’”<sup>18</sup> Allen and Miller introduce the reader to the essential and for that matter the available resources needed to be discovered and harnessed for development. They posit that the transformation of needy communities requires resources. However, in their opinion, worldview determines vision for the kind of resources that are available and which ones are most important. As an exploration of the important topic of resources from a biblical perspective, their book orients the minds and hearts of the reader in such a way that their development activities would help others to discover their God-given resources without hindrance.

Among other things, the book is relevant both for the understanding and practice of development not only in the African world but also in the Western context. In the case of the latter, Allen and Miller’s teaching on resources and development serves as a constructive critique on how relief and development are practised. Luis Sena has noted that, development efforts attempt to “reproduce the life perspective of donor nations and agencies that provide the largest share of resources.”<sup>19</sup> In this regard, the values and expectations of the donors influence the practices of implementing development agencies. Sena summarises it better by observing that many a time they determine how aid programmes are designed and implemented, what

<sup>12</sup> Reem Abuiyada, “Traditional Development Theories have failed to Address the Needs of the majority of People at Grassroots Levels with Reference to GAD ones,” *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 9, no. 9 (September 2018): 115. doi:10.30845/ijbss.v9n9. Accessed, March 4, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Abuiyada, “Traditional Development Theories have failed to Address the Needs of the majority of People at Grassroots Levels with Reference to GAD ones,” 115.

<sup>14</sup> Abuiyada, “Traditional Development Theories,” 119.

<sup>15</sup> Ruth Pearson, “Rethinking Gender Matters in Development” in *Poverty and Development into the 21st Century*, eds. Allen, Tim. & Thomas, Alan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Richard Boateng, Richard Heeks, R. Molla and Robert Hinson, “E-Commerce and Socio-Economic Development: Conceptualizing the Link,” *Internet Research* 18, no. 5 (2008): 562–594.

<sup>17</sup> Scott Allen and Darrow Miller, *The Forest in the Seed: A Biblical Perspective on Resources and Development* (Phoenix: Disciple Nations Alliance, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Allen and Miller, *The Forest in the Seed*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> Luis Sena, foreword to *The Forest in the Seed: A Biblical Perspective on Resources and Development* (Phoenix: Disciple Nations Alliance, 2006), 6-7.

messages are shared directly or indirectly to the poor, how long the programme will last, and which goals should have priority in operation. Foreign aids are in certain circumstances witnessed through legal contracts that normally represent the interests of donor agencies. In this case, charitable assistance is administered by the ideals and values of these agencies.

Allen and Miller, therefore, invite their readers into critical reflections on the topic of resources and development to improve upon the models and practice of development. Following Luis Sena's observation, "any serious approach to foster the wholistic transformation of the poor must learn its way from the wisdom of God as revealed in the Bible."<sup>20</sup>

### ***Worldview and Africa's Development***

In their other thought-provoking book, Darrow L. Miller and Scott Allen<sup>21</sup> examine the situation of poverty in Africa today from a distinctively biblical perspective. To achieve their above-stated purpose, Miller and Allen sought to identify Africa's rich resources to establish the fact that the present predicament of poverty in Africa is not due to a lack of resources. To them, Africa has been greatly blessed with natural resources that make her the wealthiest continent. Africa also has a rich heritage of the Judeo-Christian faith. Africans comprise her greatest wealth. Made in the image of God, Africa possesses vast internal capital in addition to the outstanding potential evident in the recent growth of the church.

Despite these many blessings and wealth, however, Africa remains a poor continent. An examination of the global poverty indices and measurements, reveals that things are improving in other parts of the continent except for Africa. It is in the light of this background that Miller and Allen argue that true hope for Africa's transformative development depends on the rapidly growing African church practising a wholistic ministry and allowing the biblical truth to permeate every aspect of society.

### ***Local Church and Community Development***

Bob Moffitt in his popular book, *If Jesus Were Mayor*, argues that, the local church is of central importance to the wellbeing and development of its community.<sup>22</sup> For the church to realize its strategic role in society, Moffitt has sought to rhetorically answer the question: "If Jesus were Mayor, how would your community change?"<sup>23</sup> To Moffitt, Jesus' plan for the transformation of the community is expressed and demonstrated through the church.<sup>24</sup> Moffitt appears to regard the church to be more equipped and mobilized for the transformation of society even than the government of a nation. At first, Moffitt's statement may appear to be hyperbolic. However, reading and reflecting on the biblical mandate upon the church in the world supports Moffitt's assertion that the "principal and most strategic institution God appointed to carry out His big agenda is the church. We serve the head of the church."<sup>25</sup>

Moffitt's theological perspective on development is very indispensable if the church is to take up its mandate of transforming societies of which Jesus is the chief role model in all aspects of societal development. Having Jesus as the ultimate role model for community development, Moffitt enjoins humans to continuous obedience. To him, "corporate efforts and program[me]s - without the obedience of individual followers of Jesus to live as He taught - will not produce transformation." A real-life story on community development and transformation presented in Moffitt's book testifies to these missional engagements.

<sup>20</sup> Sena, foreword to *The Forest in the Seed*, 7.

<sup>21</sup> Darrow L. Miller and Scott Allen, *Against All Hope: Hope for Africa* (Phoenix: Disciple Nations Alliance, 2005).

<sup>22</sup> Bob Moffitt with Karla Tesch, *If Jesus Were Mayor: How Your Local Church Can Transform Your Community* (Harvest Publishing, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> Moffitt, *If Jesus were Mayor*, 10.

<sup>24</sup> Moffitt, *If Jesus were Mayor*, 161.

<sup>25</sup> Moffitt is of the view that Christians have the ability to think God's thoughts and live by God's design. This places the local church a unique and strategic position from which to impact society. To Moffitt, four reasons the local Church impacts society are: The local church has a wholistic mission; The local church continually equips its people; the local church represents a \ broad spectrum of society; and the local church is designed for life-long involvement with members. See Moffitt, *If Jesus were Mayor*, 179-180.

### ***Wholistic Christian Development***

A well-written book, that has the African continent in mind is the book, *Your Kingdom Come: A Book on wholistic Development*, written by Sulaiman Z. Jakonda.<sup>26</sup> Jakonda sought to address the divergent view of development that has ruined the historical church of its maximum impact. To him, the church and Christians, in general, have had divergent views on their role in the socio-political, economic and ecological situation of their societies. On the one hand are those who believe that the ministry of the church is solely to snatch the souls of the people from the perishing world to heaven. On the other hand, some think that the main role of the church is to transform the social and economic structures.

The former school of thought are those who are more concerned about the personal salvation of the soul and think less about the body that holds the soul. They maintain that salvation is personal and individualistic rather than being a way of serving the community. The other extreme is the secularised Christians who tend to pay less attention to personal sins and believe that society will change if only restructured socially and economically and politically. The place for personal salvation, justification and regeneration is less talked about. The biblical teaching on life after death, resurrection and the second coming are not believed. From this perspective, heaven is here and now and so people make their own heaven. This latter perspective regards development as an end in itself or simply a means of making life on this planet better and has nothing to with eternal life.<sup>27</sup>

Jakonda's main concern in the book and for that matter, his perspective on development is its wholistic nature. To him, wholistic development is concerned with both personal salvation and regeneration of the soul as well as a transformation of those who are saved into the kingdom community. To him, therefore, the community is involved in the transformation and restoration of the kingdom of God in the world. Here, Christianity is complete or wholistic only when personal salvation leads to societal services (Matt. 5:13-16). The book, therefore, provides a practical guide to churches, Christian groups and developmental organisations on the rationale and ways to participate in wholistic development.

### ***Colonialism and Africa's Development***

Miller and Allen seem to have watered down the adverse effect of Africa's colonial past on its current predicament of under-development. However, Walter Rodney has painstakingly examined and thus attributed Africa's underdevelopment to its colonial past with particular attention to Africa being a victim of the slave trade. In the light of this perspective, Rodney posits that "development means a capacity for self-sustaining growth. It means that an economy must register advances which in turn will promote further progress. The loss of industry and skill in Africa was extremely small if we measure it from the viewpoint of modern scientific achievements or even by standards of England in the late eighteenth century."<sup>28</sup> However, Rodney explains that to be held back at one level implies that it is difficult to move further.

Rodney argues further that "when a person was forced to leave school after only two years of primary school education, it is no reflection on him that he is academically and intellectually less developed than someone who had the opportunity to be schooled right through to university level. What Africa experienced in the early centuries of trade was precisely a loss of development opportunity, and this is of the greatest importance."<sup>29</sup> One will agree more with Rodney that the effect of the slave trade is common in Africa. The slave trade advanced Europe and America to the detriment of Africa. The slave trade helped to structure global power. It has divided the world into the poor and wealthy countries, the Third and First Worlds, and the exploiter and exploited nations. Since this perspective on development has more to do with remembering the past predicament aimed to some extent at the healing of memories, it is worth observing that it is more important to be in tune with the God of progress who continues to recreate the world (Isa. 43:18). Whereas

<sup>26</sup> Suleiman Z. Jakonda, *Your Kingdom Come: A Book on Wholistic Christian Development* (Jos: Rurcon, 2001).

<sup>27</sup> Jakonda, *Your Kingdom Come*, 2.

<sup>28</sup> Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London/New York: Verso, 1973), 117-118.

<sup>29</sup> Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 119.

looking back can bring some form of emotional healing, looking forward releases creativity and thus bring about transformational development. The reason for the inclusion of this perspective on development in this review stems from the fact that many historical events were (mis)informed by the biblical understanding and for that matter interpretation at the time. Hence the need to theologically reflect on human history especially as it relates to development.

## **A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BURKAN PENTADIC CRITICISM**

This section of the study gives a systematic biblical approach to development. Accordingly, an attempt is made to present what the Bible has to say on the subject of development from the perspective of Burkan Pentadic Criticism. It, therefore, employs the categories of act, scene, agent, agency and purpose. The use of Pentadic Criticism in this aspect of the paper, therefore, serves as a creative effort to systematically summarize the biblical teaching on the subject. In this light, this section summarises *what* the Bible teaches about the meaning of development, *where* development is to take place, *who* the agents involved are, *how* development is to be done, and *for what* purpose they are to be carried out.

### ***Act: The Biblical Meaning and Scope of Development***

By applying the Pentadic Criticism, one of the five elements that Burke established is *act*. The *act* is connected with dramatic action and answers the questions: *What is the action? What is being done? What is going on?* It has to do with a discourse that highlights the primacy of action.<sup>30</sup> Used in this context, the *act* answers the question of what it means to develop and what the scope of development is.

One of the biblical terms that brings out the idea of development is the Greek ἀποκάλυψις (revelation). To reveal something in the biblical context is to uncover, unveil, lay bare or disclose. God is portrayed in the Bible as the one who reveals. Development in the light of Scripture could therefore be defined as the advanced awareness of human potentials and life improvement, according to God's plan, through appropriate stewardship of material and spiritual resources. The command to be "fruitful and multiply" as recorded in Genesis 1:28 is to be regarded as a development mandate that was worldwide in scope and at the same time having a direct application to humans' immediate surroundings. Placing the human in the garden of Eden "to till it and to keep it" implies that humans have active roles in development. One is therefore inclined to regard Eden as the first place where a development project occurred.

The divine mandate given to humans suggests that development ought to be wholistic in its scope. Humans were required to develop the land without separating from God in relationship. Wholistic development in this sense can be defined as the transformation of a people to what God intends them to be.<sup>31</sup> To Jakonda, it has to do with a seamless combination of preaching, teaching and healing in every area of brokenness because of the Fall.

The understanding of the wholistic nature of development has some implications for the church's ministry. The notion of wholistic development informs the church to embark on the total ministry of preaching, teaching and healing. This can be related to spiritual, mental and physical aspects of development. These parts are in essence separate, yet they are attached because they contribute to the whole in terms of glorifying God and advancing God's Kingdom. The followers of Christ are called to be "ministers of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18-20). In this regard, they are to minister to the person's whole being: spiritual, physical, social, and mental. In other words, the idea of wholistic ministry implies that Christians ensure the continuous relationship with God, others and with creation.

<sup>30</sup> Fosu, *Experiences of Pneumatic Phenomena*, 147; King, "Pentadic Criticism," 169; Burke, *Drama of Motives*, 227-274. These sources provide a detailed discussion of the *act*.

<sup>31</sup> Jakonda, *Your Kingdom Come*, 2-3.

### ***Scene: Transforming Creation by Mobilizing Resources for Development***

Burke identifies the *scene* to be the dramatic term for the context of the *act*. It examines the environment or the influencing power of circumstances.<sup>32</sup> The book of Genesis gives a compact and yet very comprehensive account of the creation of the universe by God.<sup>33</sup> From the account in Genesis 1, it is clear that God created a perfect world and was pleased with it. The world was created from void, nothingness, formlessness, emptiness, dissoluteness and darkness to light and the fullness of life and the creator ensured orderliness. This phenomenon is theologically known as *ex-nihilo*. God transformed the chaotic condition into orderliness - to bring about life and declared that it was *good*. This *goodness* in Hebrew thought has a broader meaning which goes beyond the ethical to the aesthetic as well.<sup>34</sup> This goodness implies that the world was suited for the purpose for which it was created. From this understanding, it is only God who creates out of nothing or formlessness, or from a chaotic mess to something tangible.

Although there have been diverse perspectives on the interpretation of the phenomenon of creation as recorded in Genesis 1-2, it could be argued that symbolically, the creation account invites humans to reconsider the worth and value of resources creation possesses that were described by the creator as good. In this light, the believer is called upon to play the important role of harnessing these resources in creation for development. Contrary to the traditional interpretation that promoted the exploitation of the ecology,<sup>35</sup> the creation story orients the minds of humans to partner with God to ensure continuous order, procreation and sustainability of the elements in the environment.

### ***Agent: The Divine and Human Agent of Development***

Another important element in Burke's pentadic theory is an *agent*. It is used to identify the person or persons who perform an action.<sup>36</sup> In this light, the Bible identifies God and humans as agents for development. To begin, the framework of the creation account in Genesis 1 pictures God (creator) who "goes to work and labour until the evening." The master designer thus rests after accomplishing the task and afterward appreciates the completed work. The writer of Hebrews designates God as the builder of all things (Heb. 3:4).

As a great "developer," God gives the continuous development commission to humans created in God's image (Gen. 1:26). According to Wayne Grudem: "*the fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God.*"<sup>37</sup> The idea of the *image of God* is that God intends to make a creature similar to Godself. The Hebrew term for *image* (*tselem*) and that of *likeness* (*demut*) describe something similar but not identical to the thing it represents or as an *image* of.<sup>38</sup> The image of God in humans gave them the characteristics of personality, intellect and the ability to reason, to relate to each other through all the senses of feeling, hearing, seeing and speaking. These are characteristics that are uniquely God's but imparted to humans. Thus, humans are moral beings, with intelligence, perception, capability, and capacity to continue the work of creation for self-development. It is human, therefore, to be involved in development activities because that is part of God's nature.

As agents of development, the traditional and modern pictures of the world need to be encountered by the biblical worldview. In simple terms, a worldview describes how people think, see and understand the world. It relates to mindset.<sup>39</sup> Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton amply define worldviews as "perceptual

<sup>32</sup> Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, 12, 77, 84.

<sup>33</sup> The author of Genesis assumes that the reader knows God as a creator (Genesis 1:1-2).

<sup>34</sup> William A. Dyrness, *Let the Earth Rejoice: A Biblical Theology of Holistic Mission* (Wetchester: Crossway Books, 1983), 22.

<sup>35</sup> Some humans have taken advantage of the dominion mandate to be exploiting the environment. J. O. Y. Mante, *African Theological and Philosophical Roots of our Ecological Crisis* (Accra: SonLife Press, 2004); Nisbert Taisekwa Taringa, *Towards an African-Christian Environmental Ethic* (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2014), 71.

<sup>36</sup> Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, 171-175.

<sup>37</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Nottingham: IVP, 2007), 442.

<sup>38</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 442-443.

<sup>39</sup> Allen and Miller, *Forest in the Seed*, 7.

frameworks.”<sup>40</sup> To them, worldviews are “ways of seeing the world. Everyone has a worldview (even though many people do not consciously think about their worldview). A worldview is never merely a vision of life, but it is also a vision *for* life. Our worldview determines our values. It helps us interpret the world around us.”<sup>41</sup> It sorts out what is important and what is not, what is of highest value from what is least.<sup>42</sup> The Bible’s worldview will often be experienced by people, including Christians, as a paradigm shift because it challenges them to change many beliefs and practices (Rom.12:1-2). The Bible calls Christians into a different world and so enjoins them to see differently in the light of scripture.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Agency: Appropriate Stewardship Attitudes and the Motive of Love for Development***

Fosu has observed that a further important guiding element describing the means that the agent uses to perform the act is an agency. It has to do with the method, the device, the technique or the institution used to do something.<sup>44</sup> It may represent a technology in a technologically oriented context or a system in a bureaucratic sense.<sup>45</sup> Used in this context of development, it relates to attitudes needed for development. As agents of development, humans are called upon to put up certain essential attitudes necessary for development. The Bible uses the term stewardship. Stewardship is to be seen as the right metaphor to describe human’s role most responsively if they are to play their pivotal roles for development. The term *stewardship* in the Bible, according to T. A. Kantonen, implies more than trusteeship and responsibility. It connotes the idea of partnership.<sup>46</sup>

The Old Testament depicts a steward as one who is in charge of a house (Gen. 43:19; 44:4; Isa. 22:15). Humans received a partnership responsibility in the creation account. The Lord assigned the position of a steward over all of creation (Gen. 1:26-28). All creation belongs to God and humankind was put in charge of the material world. Thus, humans were given rulership over creation which is to be understood as responsible and accountable roles. Humankind is to be God’s faithful stewards in following God’s purposes and the use of things.<sup>47</sup>

In the New Testament, several words are translated as ‘steward’ (or “manager” or “guardian”). One of such words is ἐπιτρόπος (Matt. 20:8; Gal. 4:2). This word connotes the person to whose care or honour one has been entrusted. Simply put, a guardian. Another word is οἰκονόμος (Lk. 16:2-3; 1 Cor. 4:1-2), meaning a manager, a superintendent which comes from the words οἶκος (house) and νόμος (law, rule). Οἰκονόμος refers to the relationship with the home and that of the relationship to an owner, for whom one’s responsibility is performed. This describes the duty of delegated responsibility, as in the parable of the labourers and of

<sup>40</sup> Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton, *Transforming Vision*, as cited in Jay Van Groningen, *The Theology of Development, A Biblical Understanding of Christian Mission and Community Development*. (CRWRC, 2005), 13.

<sup>41</sup> John Kwasi Fosu and Mary Fosu, *Dynamics of Christian Education: Ghanaian Perspective* (Hamburg: Missionhilfe Verlag, 2021), 109.

<sup>42</sup> Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1984).

<sup>43</sup> Groningen, *The Theology of Development*, 14, has convincingly argued that worldviews need to be encountered by the biblical worldview for development. To him, in “some cultures, for instance people believe illness is caused by evil spirits or curses or magic. They behave accordingly by seeking the protection of witch doctors and by offering gifts to the gods. But when such people discover that sickness is caused by bacteria and viruses, their whole concept of sickness changes and so does their behaviour. Prevention now consists not of magic but sanitation, clean drinking water, and safer health practices.” John Kwasi Fosu, *Theology of Development: Understanding Christian Mission of Community Development* (Kumasi: Glocal Publications, 2022), 47.

<sup>44</sup> Fosu, *Experiences of Pneumatic Phenomena*, 151.

<sup>45</sup> Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, 275-278. See also, King, “Pentadic Criticism,” 170.

<sup>46</sup> T. A. Kantonen, *A Theology for Christian Stewardship* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), 4. T. A. Kantonen has also identified that *Haushalterschaft* in German has the economic connotation of the οἰκοδομαί of classical Greek and *Treuhanderschaft* which can be translated as *trusteeship*. He goes on to state that, each of these words expresses some important aspects of stewardship but not its full significance.

<sup>47</sup> It is worth observing that this responsibility of stewardship has often been misinterpreted. Many have taken advantage of the dominion mandate to be exploiting the environment. Mante, *African Theological and Philosophical Roots of our Ecological Crisis*; Taringa, *Towards an African-Christian Environmental Ethic*, 71.

the unjust steward (Matt. 20:1-16). If God's discourse on development is to be practicalized and result-oriented, then humans as agents of development should have the right attitudes needed for development. For that reason, developing appropriate stewardship attitudes to time, the environment, work and maintenance culture is worthwhile for development.<sup>48</sup>

Another important aspect of the *agency* for development has to do with its motive. If development is to be wholistic and thus crosses borders created by sin and human weakness, then the motive for development ought to be love. In this case, God's all-inclusive love for humanity especially as exemplified by Jesus should be our motivation. Groningen has observed that Jesus reaffirmed this message several times in his ministry. It is obvious from the example of Jesus that the way of the kingdom that pictures development is not the way of war and violence. It is not about fighting fire with fire. To Groningen, "it is the way of love: love for enemies, love for strangers, love that resists violence, love that expresses itself in servanthood, love that is willing to suffer and even die for the other."<sup>49</sup> The love of Jesus was deep to the extent that he was willing to give up his life for others, including the very people who crucified him. To this, Jesus prayed: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing" (Lk. 23:34).

Jesus demonstrated love, especially to those who were often in need of love. Lepers who were excluded from the community were healed so they could be welcomed. Jesus embraced the marginalized in society such as the woman caught in adultery, prostitutes, and tax collectors. Children who were thought to be simply a nuisance were blessed, and Jesus said that people needed to become like children to be received into the kingdom (Mk 10:15). Jesus loved these people not because they deserved it but by grace. Jesus' love for them gave them a renewed sense of dignity and freedom. At the same time, Jesus rejected those people such as the Pharisees, who thought they could keep God's love by their own efforts and take advantage of that to describe others as enemies. When development is done out of love, there would be peace in the world. Corruption, exploitation, racism, witchcraft, envy and jealousy that undermine total development would be dealt with.

### ***Purpose: The Goal of Development is Shalom***

The last dramatic element of Burkan Pentadic Criticism answers the question: *what is the purpose*. Fosu has noted that the *purpose* describes the justification for the action, the overall aim of which lies in the value of objectives, goals, and courses of action.<sup>50</sup> In this light, the biblical concept of shalom, which is defined in terms of harmonious relationships with God, humanity and creation, constitutes the goal of development.

The concept of shalom in the Old Testament has a deeper meaning. It does not merely refer to peace in terms of the absence of strife. Rather, its meaning includes "wholeness, without injury, undivided well-being, a satisfactory condition, bodily health, and all that salvation means in its Old Testament usage."<sup>51</sup> The Strong's Dictionary describes shalom as completeness, wholeness, safety, soundness, tranquillity, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony; the absence of agitation or discord. Shalom occurs about 350 times in the Old Testament and implies that God is delighted in the shalom of his servants. This shalom is only possible if there is a three-way relation of a person or community to God, with each other and with the

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<sup>48</sup> John Kwasi Fosu, *Principles of Stewardship and Wealth Creation* (Kumasi: Shalom Press, 2015), 9-13. Refer for detailed reflections on stewardship of time, work, environment and money especially as they relate to development. Maintenance culture has to do with the art of bringing back the operating condition of an asset into normal functioning at a minimal cost capable of enhancing the life span of the item; O. A. Bamgboye, "Capacity Building As a Strategy for Sustainable Infrastructures Maintenance Culture," Paper presented at National Engineering Conference, Nigerian Society of Engineers, Gateway Abeokuta, Nigeria, December (2006) as cited in Kalu Ebi Uma, Paul Obidike and Veronica A. Ihezukwu. "Maintenance Culture and Sustainable Economic Development in Nigeria: Issues, Problems And Prospects." *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management* II, no. 11(2014): 5. <http://ijecm.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2014/11/21146.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> Groningen, *The Theology of Development*, 72.

<sup>50</sup> Fosu, *Experiences of Pneumatic Phenomena*, 152.

<sup>51</sup> Arthur F. Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 130; Jakonda, *Your Kingdom Come*, 51.

environment.<sup>52</sup> This is presented as the ideal order in creation.<sup>53</sup> Shalom also emphasises the fact that justice is not only for the poor, the weak and the marginalized (Isa. 11:4), but includes nature (environment) and the non-human.<sup>54</sup>

Shalom connotes physical and material wellness. In Genesis 29:6, Jacob inquires about the shalom of Laban. Joseph is told to check on the shalom of his brothers (Gen. 37:14). Further, Moses and Jethro ask about each other's shalom in Exodus 18:7. In Numbers 6:26, Aaron's blessings reveal shalom in the sense of abundance and prosperity. From these instances, the Hebrew word shalom is usually translated as "being well." Shalom describes harmonious social relationships. Isaiah 9:1-7; 11:1-9 picture a situation of shalom that looks forward to the coming Messiah. Shalom is used in the sense of the outcome of relationships marked by justice and righteousness (Isa. 32:16-17). In Psalm 35:27, shalom pairs with righteousness. Moreover, shalom is concerned with outstanding personal character and so seeking shalom is contrasted with doing evil (Psa. 34:14). Also, in Psalm 37:35-38, the person of shalom is juxtaposed with the wicked person.<sup>55</sup> Traditionally, development has been looked at as an improvement in infrastructure, technology and economics devoid of meeting the needs of humanity. The idea of *shalom*, therefore, presents a paradigm shift in pursuing development agendas.<sup>56</sup>

## RECOMMENDATION

In the light of this study, it is recommended that theology of development become an essential part of the curriculum of theological education in Africa. Next, for the church in Africa to take up its wholistic mandate of discipling and developing the nations, it is recommended that the biblical approach to development especially as it relates to stewardship of resources be taught in local churches, especially in Africa. Relatedly, the paper invites theologians and for that matter Christians to rediscover the biblical teaching on development. Readers of this paper who are students, pastors, development workers, government officials, politicians, lecturers and all in influential positions are called upon to embrace the biblical ideals and perspectives on development. Most importantly, since development is about God, who continues to create and sustain the world, responding to the call to have a relationship with God could be the starting point. For, God invites humans, as God's image-bearers to partner in this enterprise of making the world a better place. By relating the ideals in this paper to the global development agenda, it is suggested that students and researchers will further the discourse on development by giving theological reflections on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the biblical discourse on development. Development has been discussed as a desirable change toward what God intends it to be. Having situated the subject of development within theological scholarship, it has become clear that development is not an avoidable option for churches and Christians who wish to have a relationship with God and at the same time, become relevant to God's people and creation. Using the Burkan Pentadic Criticism to study the biblical approach to development, it has been observed that the Bible explicitly and implicitly provides essentials for development. This has an implication for discipleship especially in Africa. Making disciples does not only involve converting people to Christ but it entails incarnating and enabling them to meet their social, spiritual and physical needs. The biblical

<sup>52</sup> Jakonda, *Your Kingdom Come*, 51.

<sup>53</sup> Tim Cooper, *Green Christianity: Caring for the Whole Creation* (Great Britain: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, 1990), 11. Cooper has well pointed out that the *shalom* in its more accurate description refers to a state of right relationships between people and their God, each other and the environment.

<sup>54</sup> Isaiah 11:6-9.

<sup>55</sup> Groningen, *Theology of Development*, 45-46.

<sup>56</sup> From the perspective of *shalom* as a goal of holistic development, the move of the United Nations to develop Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are human centred and oriented serve as a move towards the right order. THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development (un.org). Accessed, March 8, 2022.

approach to development, therefore, challenges the Christian believer to become the salt and light of their societies.

An important aspect of development that has been discussed in this paper is the worldview of Africans. It has been argued that wholistic development is brought about when the biblical truth continuously encounters these worldviews. It has been observed that shalom, which is defined in terms of harmonious relationships with God, humanity and creation, constitutes the goal of development. Traditionally, development has been conceptualized as an improvement in infrastructure, technology and economics devoid of meeting the needs of humanity. The idea of shalom, therefore, presents a paradigm shift in pursuing development agendas. This paper thus represents the perspective that resources are not enough for development to take place without the appropriate stewardship attitudes to time, environment, work and maintenance culture.

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