

Department of Religion and Theology

Research Report for 2013 and Plans for 2014

1. Institutional Framework

a) Collaborative research frameworks

The Department of Religion and Theology registered the following three collaborative research frameworks in 2006:

- Moral education and formation towards a human rights culture
- Ecumenical theology and social transformation
- Christian ecological theology

The department also has a long-standing interest in the following field:

- Biblical, theological and contextual hermeneutics and rhetorical theory

Given the interwoven nature of these projects an integrated report is offered here while retaining the former rubrics where appropriate.

b) Ecumenical Studies and Social ethics

In 2010 the department submitted a proposal for a SARCHI chair under the rubric of “Ecumenical Studies and Social Ethics”, incorporating several of the existing projects. This has led to a new initiative, namely a series of think tanks and public conferences on the interface between ecumenical studies and social ethics. The underlying question is how ecclesiology and ethics, spirituality and society, an ecumenical vision and moral transformation, Christianity and culture, faith and science are connected. The interest is elicited by the “and” in these paired concepts. The aim of this project is to identify key areas where this relationship between ecclesiology and ethics requires further reflection in the South African and wider African contexts, to stimulate reflection on these areas and to provide academic leadership in the debate through a series of carefully planned publications. This series of think tanks and public conferences may be listed here and are discussed elsewhere under appropriate rubrics. The progress made thus far is indicated in each case.

1. Guiding visions for the transition to a post-apartheid society (Friday 9 November 2012)
Format: Think tank with a preparatory paper by Christo Lombard on the vision embedded in the National Development Plan with prepared responses from invited participants. A publication on this crucial theme is held in abeyance towards the completion of the project
2. A critical assessment of “reconciliation” as one of the guiding visions during and beyond the transition period in South Africa (26 October 2012)
Format: Think tank with a position paper by Ernst Conradie and prepared responses by invited participants. An edited volume was published in November 2013.
3. Notions and forms of “ecumenicity” in (South) Africa (22 February 2013)
Format: A position paper by Ernst Conradie and prepared responses by invited participants. An edited volume was published in November 2013.
4. The quest for identity within so-called mainline churches in South Africa (24 May 2013)
Format: One day conference with invited speakers, namely John de Gruchy, Stephen Brislin, Thabo Makgoba, MusawenkosiBiyela, Jerry Pillay, Peter Storey and Lindsay Rinqest. An edited volume was submitted for publication in November 2013.
5. Ecumenical engagement in the form of NGO’s and FBO’s as dynamos for social transformation in the Western Cape (2 August 2013)
Format: Think tank with an introductory paper by Charles Amjad-Ali and short statements on the vision embedded in various faith-based organisations. More contributions are being awaited.
6. Religion and moral formation towards responsible citizenship (30 August 2013)
Format: Think tank with a position paper by Charles Amjad-Ali and prepared responses by invited participants. The final version of the position paper has not been received as yet.

7. Recognising current ecclesial reform / deform movements in South Africa (28 March 2014)
Format: Think tank with short papers by up to 9 invited participants. Invitations have been mailed and the programme will be finalized soon.
8. The Pentecostal movement and the Ecumenical movement in Africa (30 May 2014)
Format: One day conference with papers by invited participants. The planning is in progress.
9. African notions of ethical leadership (29 August 2014)
Format: One day think tank with a position paper by Christo Lombard and prepared responses by various invited participants
10. Ecclesiology, Ethics and Ecumenism (31 August – 2 September 2014)
Format: Three day colloquium co-hosted with the Department of Religious Studies (UCT) at Volmoed with four invited international scholars participating.
11. Ecclesiology and ethics: The state of ecumenical theology in Africa (4-6 June 2015)
Format: Three day conference to be hosted at UWC. The date and theme has been finalized and communicated to stakeholders. Further planning will follow during the course of 2014.

c) Desmond Tutu Chair of Ecumenical Theology and Social Transformation in Africa

The vision for the establishment of an endowed Desmond Tutu Chair to support this project was articulated when these projects were registered in May 2006. Given the availability of sufficient funds but an inability to make an appointment against this position since November 2009, the post was restructured as a rotating chair as an interim measure from 1 October 2012 to 30 November 2013. Christo Lombard occupied the chair in October and November 2012 and Charles Amjad-Ali in July and August 2013 in this capacity. Prof Amjad-Ali contributed position papers for two think tanks hosted during that time, namely on “Non-Government Organisations and Faith Based Organisations as dynamos of social transformation” and on “Citizens of Subjects? The role of religion in the formation of responsible citizenship”. He co-taught a postgraduate module on land as a lens to interpret economic inequalities in South Africa.

Christo Lombard was subsequently appointed in the chair for an initial period of 12 months as from 1 July 2013. His responsibilities include to establish and to raise the profile of the chair, to do fundraising towards a fully endowed chair, to ensure that a next incumbent can be in place by July 2015 and to exercise leadership regarding the department’s three year project on “Ecumenical Studies and Social Ethics” with specific reference to the culminating conference on Ecclesiology and Ethics.

d) The envisaged Desmond Tutu Centre for Spirituality and Society

There has been a long-standing interest in discourse on social transformation at the University of the Western – in many departments and across several faculties. In the Faculty of Arts this has been a special interest in the Institute for Social Development and the departments of Philosophy, Religion and Theology and Women and Gender Studies. Although the concept of “social transformation” is necessarily rather amorphous, colleagues in the Department of Anthropology / Sociology have contributed to conceptual clarification alongside the other initiatives that may be covered under this umbrella term. The envisaged Desmond Tutu Centre for Spirituality and Society will seek to consolidate and enhance existing teaching, research and community engagement activities in this field in the following ways:

- Postgraduate modules offered in this field in various departments will be packaged and marketed as a more or less integrated offering (at least within a common timetable) in order to attract students to studies in social transformation.
- Several existing research frameworks and projects will be acknowledged under this umbrella. In terms of the current significant research projects in the faculty this may include a) Transformative Social Policy Programme b) The Earth in God’s economy (ecological theology), c) Ecumenical Studies and Social Ethics and d) Gender Equality.

- The core of the envisaged centre's activities will be to develop partnerships with various non-government organisations, community based organisations and faith-based organisations in civil society that work on specific aspects of social transformation. The aim of these partnerships will be twofold. Firstly, the centre will offer an outlet to scholars and activists employed in such organisations to disseminate their work through research and postgraduate teaching in terms of the existing modules in the curriculum of various departments. It will thus strengthen the academic reflection within such organisations. Secondly, the centre will establish channels of communication with such partners in order to allow final year and postgraduate students to do internships within such organisations (whether voluntary or not) in order to understand developments in the appropriate fields, to gain field experience and to enhance their employability.
- The existing research projects will operate at the cross-section of this two way process. Postgraduate students will be encouraged to do research within collaborative research frameworks that can collectively help to understand processes of social transformation.
- In order to aid this process, the centre will host seminars, workshops and public conferences with inputs from academics and activists in the field.
- The centre will also provide an institutional home for visiting academics working in any one of the fields indicated above.

The Department of Religion and Theology will propose in 2014 that such a Centre be established, also to assist with fundraising efforts towards a Desmond Tutu Chair. This has already been discussed with the senior management of the university. Documentation in this regard will follow.

In terms of infrastructure, the Desmond Tutu Chair (Prof Lombard) may also be appointed as the Director of the proposed Centre. The project on Ecumenical Studies and Social Ethics makes use of a manager (Ms Elizabeth Petersen) to help host the series of think tanks and public conferences. Funds in this regard have been made available by the DVC (with respect to the SARCHI Chair that was proposed in this area in 2010). This manager can provide administrative assistance for such a Centre at least until June 2015.

2. Moral Education towards a Human Rights Culture

The following components have been identified since the larger research framework was established in 2006:

- a) Ethical theory
- b) Responsibility theory
- c) Moral dimensions of worldview theory
- d) Discourse on a human rights culture
- e) The "global ethic" initiative and debate
- f) Moral and religious education in Southern African schools
- g) Violence against women and children; women's issues
- h) HIV/AIDS education
- i) Gender and Homosexuality
- j) The role of religion in society to support moral cohesion
- k) The role of the formation of personhood in community development
- l) Ethical reflection on biotechnology

Progress was made in 2013 on the following aspects while plans are also underway for 2014 in some of these areas. Significant achievements are highlighted in bold. Where significant developments in conceptualising a collaborative project took place in 2013 for the first time, this is included where appropriate.

a) Ethical theory

In moral language a confusing set of concepts is typically used. In modules offered by the department a distinction is made between the role played by visions, virtues, values and obligations while related concepts such as goals, attitudes, principles, rules and moral codes also bear scrutiny.

In one of the think tanks on the interface between ecumenical studies and social ethics, the role of visions in the South African context was placed under the spotlight. It was discussed in relation to the *Diagnostic Report* produced by the National Planning Commission together with its *National Development Plan Vision 2030*.

Events	DRT	Think tank hosted on Guiding visions for the transition to a post-apartheid society on 9 November 2012
Plans	C Lombard	It was agreed that the booklet that was envisaged as an outcome from this think tank is premature given the complexity of the theme. It was decided that this will be held in abeyance until 2015 when a follow-up to this project will be structured.
Plans	M Pillay	Finalise first year text book on responsible decision making

c) Moral dimensions of worldview theory

The notion of “worldviews” is widely used in a variety of disciplines. Amidst the considerable confusion in this regard the underlying problem should be noted, namely that it is in principle impossible to gain a view of the world. It is therefore a matter of social construction. What, then, are the moral dimensions of the social construction of reality and indeed of ultimate reality?

Plans	EM Conradie	Discerning the parameters of the world of worldviews. Revise a paper read in 2012 for publication.
Plans	C Lombard & J Klaasen	Produce first year textbook on moral codes in various religious and secular traditions

e) The “global ethic” initiative and debate:

Thesis	R Davids	“An assessment of recent ethical discourses on globalization: comparing the critique of Joseph Stiglitz on global capital with the ecumenical globalization debates on the Accra Declaration” – Submitted November 2013
Plans	C Lombard	Serves on a planning panel for an inter-faith Conference on “A shared moral vision for the future of South Africa?” (planned for February 2014) – sponsored by Turquoise Harmony Institute.
Teaching	C Lombard	Prof Lombard plans to teach a postgraduate module on globalisation, world religions and a global ethic in 2014.

f) Moral and religious education in South African schools and workplaces

Following up on the two-day international conference of the Inter-religious and Inter-cultural Religious Education (IRE) group, held at UWC in September 2011, the Department was involved in various initiatives in this field:

Project	C Lombard	A bibliographic survey of theories and practices around the role of religion in moral formation: research assistants started drawing up a digital data base, also documenting Prof Lombard’s library (to be continued).
Paper	C Lombard	“Religious and Religion Education in the new Christian private school group, Curro” at a Religion Education Workshop at UCT, September 2012. The paper was submitted but the publication of the intended conference publication still has to be decided upon (Prof A Tayob, UCT)
Thesis	A lita	An assessment of the curriculum and implementation of Religious and Moral Education in Namibia based on a case study in the Oshana Region – PhD research project; Supervisor: C Lombard. Submitted for examination, November 2013
Thesis	L October	Ethics training in the workplace: A case study. Ongoing Masters research project; Supervisor: DG Lawrie
Plans	C Lombard	Edit a volume of essays based on the Conference papers of the IRE Conference held at UWC in September 2012 (to be funded by EFSA): The possibility of doing that via the Journal for Religion & Theology is investigated (various papers ready for publication)
Teaching	C Lombard	Prof Lombard plans to teach a postgraduate module on Professional ethics with a focus on Ethical leadership in 2014

Two research assistants, namely Newton Cloete and Rochelle Davids were employed to compile a bibliography on theories and practices around moral formation. This has produced some eight files with bibliographic entries in this field. This project will continue over December and January 2013 and research assistants should be appointed in 2014.

g) Gendered relationships between intimacy and violence

The Department of Religion and Theology, together with Department of Women and Gender Studies and partners such as the South African Faith and Family Institute (SAFFI), the Centre for Christian Spirituality (CCS) and Inclusive and Affirming Ministries (I AM) hosted a two day public conference at UWC on “Where are the Men?” 6-7 September 2012. This was a multi-media event with participation from UWC students and various NGO. I Am followed up with a seminar in 2013 and a public workshop on campus during October 2013.

Thesis	D Beukes	Integrating Imago Relationship Therapy (IRT) into a Biblical Theological Approach to Marriage Counselling –Masters thesis, Graduated March 2014,Supervisor: C Lombard
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h) HIV/AIDS and education

Several postgraduate students are working in this area.

Thesis	M Damon	The church and AIDS orphans – ongoing structured M.Phil. project (2010-); Supervisor: EM Conradie
Thesis	E Mwansa	Teenage pregnancies and the proportionality of guilt – ongoing PhD project (2012-); Supervisor: MN Pillay
Thesis	D Lambrecht	Church & HIV Aids: Response from Anglican parishes – ongoing PhD project (2011-); Supervisor: MN Pillay

i) Gender and Homosexuality

The following postgraduate student completed a project in this area:

Thesis	N Joaquim	A case study of Homosexuality in the United Methodist Church– Structured M.Phil. thesis submitted in November 2012, graduated in March 2013; Supervisor C Lombard
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j) The role of religion in society to support moral cohesion

There is, of course, a rich tradition of academic reflection on the role of religion in society and more specifically in moral formation. This role is typically explained in functional terms. However, this has become highly contested in the Western world and in Africa alike. What, then, is the role of religion (more specifically ecumenical engagement) in moral formation within the African context?

Local faith communities have traditionally played a crucial role in maintaining the moral fabric of society. This role is recognised in the so-called Böckenförde principle which holds that the moral fibre of modern (Western) societies rely on moral sources that such societies cannot themselves guarantee or sustain. The moral fibre may be explained in generic categories (values, virtues, visions, duties) but the sources of inspiration behind them are particular and cannot be captured through a generic sense of religiosity. They are typically embedded in the archetypes, symbols and belief systems of religious traditions. To sustain such moral sources, the particularity of such traditions therefore has to be taken seriously.

This role of religion in caring for the vulnerable and in dispensing aid is widely recognised as indispensable in Africa, also by international aid organizations. Churches in South Africa have a long and outstanding track record of providing social services around education, health, caring for the deaf, blind, elderly, orphans and the homeless.

This role of local faith communities in maintaining the moral fabric of society may be described in sociological terms (for example in an important study by Robert Putham and

others on “American grace”) and is recognized in secular contexts, sometimes even with a sense of envy. Local faith communities rely on voluntary participation yet attract large numbers of very regular and highly committed adherents. Together, Christian churches form the largest and best supported organization on the African continent. Local faith communities typically (but not always) have trusted leaders who command considerable moral authority (which also leaves room for abusive charismatic leadership). Local faith communities draw on long-standing moral codes and traditions of wisdom that are widely accepted by their adherents. They are carriers of symbols and archetypes that people regard as persuasive and transformative. In contexts of rapid social change such moral communities help to maintain the “moral fabric of society”, that is, some stability in terms of family structures, the cultivation of virtues such as care, and an ethos of respect for others and commitment to distributive and contributive justice.

Local faith communities nevertheless seem ill-equipped to make much of a difference to issues at the local level that are regarded as national priorities and at times resist such agendas imposed from the outside. As a result the reception of ecumenical initiatives in local faith communities is widely regarded as an intractable problem. Moreover, through processes of rapid social change such moral communities become fragmented faster than they are replenished – which bodes ill for the moral fabric of society. Many religious communities in Africa have become trapped in a consumerist culture of greed and even promote such a culture, for example through the “prosperity gospel”. This may offer religious motivation for an upward social mobility but may also undermine the very sources of the moral fibre of society mentioned above. Moreover, trust in religious leadership is undermined by scandalous reports on abusive charismatic leadership, corruption, financial mismanagement and sexual misconduct by religious leaders.

This deep-seated tension between the possibilities of faith communities to maintain the moral fibre of society and their limitations to foster social transformation will be explored in two think tanks and a public conference in the second semester of 2013.

Thesis	M Smith	The notion of citizenship in the writings of Desmond Mphilo Tutu – ongoing MA research project (2012-); Supervisor: EM Conradie
Thesis	R Leanya	The relationship between church and state in Lesotho –M.Th. thesis (2011-); Submitted for examination November 2013, Supervisor: C Lombard,
Thesis	E Baron	The role of the media on the moral discourse on corruption in South Africa – ongoing PhD project (2010-); Supervisor:EM Conradie
Article	J Klaasen	Klaasen, JS 2012. “Open narrative and moral formation” ActaTheologica December 2012.
Event	DRT	Ecumenical engagement in the form of NGO’s and FBO’s as dynamos for social transformation in the Western Cape – think tank hosted at UWC on 2 August 2013
Event	DRT	Religion and moral formation towards responsible citizenship – think tank hosted at UWC on 30 August 2013
Event	DRT	Women and Leadership: Reflections on Gender, Religion and Education. One-day conference hosted at UWC on 16 August 2013
Plans	C Lombard	Edit a volume emerging from the think tank of 2 August 2013 and submit that for publication
Plans	EM Conradie	Edit a volume emerging from the think tank of 30 August 2013 and submit that for publication

k) The role of the formation of personhood in community development

Secular debates on the term development emerged especially since the aftermath of World War II and the introduction of the so-called Bretton Woods institutions (including the World Bank and the IMF) to address the unequal relationships between the First World and the so-called Third World. It is not possible to give an overview of the complex secular debates in this regard. Suffice it to say that many different models of development emerged so that various qualifiers such as “human”, “social”, “sustainable” were added to the term development.

In the South African context the term development was widely regarded as problematic given the introduction of the term “separate development” in the 1960s. Nevertheless, with the advent of democracy the term gained secular prominence with the introduction of the Reconstruction and Development Programme in 1994, the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002 and, more recently, the National Development Plan (2011). One may observe that, despite the contested nature of such development elsewhere in the world, the reality of economic and social inequalities prompted an intuitive recognition of the need for some or other form of development.

The theme of development has elicited considerable ecumenical interest at least since the world conference on Church and Society held in Geneva (1966). Subsequently the WCC and the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace established a joint exploratory committee on “Society, Development and Peace” (SODEPAX), indicating that human development, based on social justice, self-reliance and economic growth (as the means of promoting the other two), was a major priority for the ecumenical movement. The WCC also established a Commission on the Churches’ Participation in Development (CCPD) in 1970. However, since the 1970s the secular controversies over development have also stimulated debate in ecumenical circles. In the context of liberation theology, feminist theology and later postcolonial theology the very use of the term “development” was challenged since it was regarded as compromised upon the assumption of sustained economic growth and Western prescriptions for “economic development” in the so-called Third World.

In the South African context there has understandably been considerable theological interest in discourse on development, partly because the crucial role of civil society and especially of local churches in development was widely accepted. One may identify various distinct contexts in which theological reflection on development emerged since the 1990s.

- Firstly, various reflections on community development may be found in missiological contributions emerging especially from within reformed churches by the early 1990s.
- Secondly, the Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa under the leadership of Renier Koegelenberg produced a number of edited volumes and booklets following a series of conferences on church and development in the mid-1990s, given the introduction of the RDP.
- Thirdly, the University of KwaZulu-Natal under the leadership of the late Prof Steve de Gruchy established a Theology and Development Programme in the mid-1990s to reflect on issues of social transformation from a Christian theological perspective. After his death in 2010 this project was taken forward by Beverly Haddad and Clint le Bruyns.
- Stellenbosch University has established a number of programmes and research projects on congregational development and community development from around 2005, with contributions by Kallie August and Jurgens Hendricks, amongst others
- Cornerstone Christian College introduced programme components focusing on the role of faith development in personal development and also community development.
- In addition, the complexities of discourse on church and development were explored in a number of publications edited by Ignatius Swart, including *The churches and the development debate: the promise of a fourth generation approach* (2000), *Welfare, Religion and Gender in Post-apartheid South Africa – Constructing a South-North dialogue* (SUN Press, 2010) and *Religion and Social Development in Post-apartheid South Africa* (SUN Press, 2012).

In the corpus of South African theological literature on development one may identify especially two contrasting notions of development, borrowed from especially two international theorists, namely Amartya Sen and David Korten:

Noble Laureate Amartya Sen is widely known for his capabilities approach which focuses on positive freedom, a person’s actual ability to be or do something, rather than on negative freedom (i.e. non-interference or freedom from inhibiting factors – which is typically emphasised in economics debates). Sen sees development as a process of enlarging human choices.

David Korten is well known for identifying four so-called “generations” in dealing with social development. He developed this in publications such as *Getting to the 21st Century:*

Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda (1990), *When Corporations Rule the World* (2001), and *Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World is Possible* (2004). He sees development as a process of planned social change that is designed to promote the wellbeing of communities in a larger social context and then in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development.

John Klaasen has embarked on a long-term research project that will focus on the role of personhood in development. The question is to what extent the influential models of development proposed by Sen and Korten can do justice to the category of personhood. Instead of focusing on development in terms of the expansion of choices, as in Sen's definition, or as a process of social development, as in Korten's definition, the focus will be on the complex process through which people come to accept responsibility for addressing their situations. This question is based on the intuition that personhood may well be crucial for any notion of development, precisely in impoverished contexts. Even where people are made aware of their opportunities and capabilities and where the obstacles thwarting development are removed, that would not necessarily translate into accepting responsibility. There is a gap (widely acknowledged in ethical theory) between knowing what is right and doing what is right. It is here that reflection on the category of personhood, if understood within the context of interpersonal relationships, may be crucial. This may also be where theologians can offer a distinct contribution.

The notion of personhood does not refer to the development of a distinct personality in each person or indeed to the more generic process of personal development (coming to maturity), namely where a person comes to accept role and other responsibilities on the basis of holding together particular values, a sense of priorities, needs, interests and claims to attention. In each of these instances the focus is on the development of a particular identity that distinguishes an individual human being from others or a particular community from other communities. A theory of personal development (including faith development) would then abstract from particular constructions of identity in order to identify generic features.

The assumption is that one of the crucial factors that enable a person to develop such personal integrity and thus to accept responsibility is an understanding of what being a human being entails. In this study the category of personhood will be used to describe such an understanding of being human. This would include at least a notion of human distinctiveness, of being related to others, of human dignity, respect for the otherness of others and a sense of a common humanity (ubuntu). In each case the distinctive contribution that Christian theology can make to an understanding of personhood will be considered. On this basis the crucial question for an adequate notion of development may be revisited: Moreover, question is therefore not only what such a notion of personhood entails but also how individuals, families and communities come to an understanding of such a notion of personhood.

In order to address this dual question four subsidiary questions would have to be addressed:

- How is the category of personhood addressed in secular theories of development, with specific reference to the contributions of Amartya Sen and David Korten?
- How is the category of personhood addressed in various theological discourses on development, including ecumenical discourse globally, in Africa and in South Africa, but also in wider theological schools (with or without reference to development), including liberation, feminist and ecological theologies with specific reference to current discourse in these schools in the (South) African context.
- How is the category of personhood to be understood? This will require a constructive contribution and may be developed with conversation partners such as the Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas (the author of *Being as Communion*), Desmond Tutu's ubuntu theology and renowned African philosophers such as John Mbiti and others.
- Finally, in order to make this relevant for discourse on development in local communities and faith communities alike, the question needs to be explored how individuals and communities come to an understanding of such a notion of personhood. This will require an engagement with theories of faith development but also on moral formation.

Thesis	M Meyer	The capability approach to education and development –ongoing MA research project (2010-); Supervisor: DG Lawrie; Submitted for examination November 2013
Paper	J Klaasen	The interplay between theology and development”Paper read at the national conference of the South African Missiological Society at the University of Stellenbosch in March 2013.
Plans	J Klaasen	Embark on the foundational phase of this project

I) Ethical reflection on biotechnology

With the development and continued developing of medical technology, treatments become available without the time to reflect ethically on them. Given how fast things change in medical technology, it is important to constantly reflect anew. Ethical reflection, however, seems to be lagging far behind biotechnological developments. Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) and Human Genetic Manipulation (GM) is fast becoming an everyday reality, although few Christian bioethical studies have been done on the impact that this could have on the larger populace, especially the local population in South Africa, where only a small percentage would be able to access these possible treatments.

Thesis	M Kotze	“A Christian Bioethical Perspective on Pre-Implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) and Genetic Manipulation (GM).” Ph.D Dissertation accepted at Stellenbosch University in November 2013.
Paper	M Kotze	“Human Dignity, Human Rights and Human Enhancement: Human Genetic Manipulation in the South African Context with its Inequalities”. Paper read at the TSSA in June 2013, UWC.
Article	M Kotze	“Beyond Verhey: Reading and using the Bible in Christian bioethics” <i>JTSA</i> 147 (November): 90-104.

3. Ecumenical Theology

The following components have been identified since the larger research framework was established in 2006:

- a) Mapping Systematic Theology in Africa
- b) Bibliographic research on Systematic Theology and Ethics in African theology
- c) The development of a series of textbooks in Systematic Theology for use in (Southern) Africa
- d) Conferences in the field of African Christian theology
- e) African perspectives on “Ecclesiology and ethics”
- f) Reconciliation Processes in Theological Perspective
- g) Ecumenical theological education in the African context
- h) The quest for denominational identity in South Africa
- i) Ecumenical discourse on the “God of Life”

Progress was made in 2013 in the following areas while plans for 2014 are also indicated. Significant achievements are highlighted in bold. Where significant developments in conceptualising a collaborative project took place in 2013 for the first time, this is included where appropriate.

a) Mapping Systematic Theology in Africa

The following postgraduate projects are currently registered in this area:

Essay	EM Conradie	“A distinctly South African way of doing theology? In conversation with Steve de Gruchy”. In: Cochrane, JR et al (eds): <i>Living on the Edge: Essays in Honour of Steve de Gruchy Activist and Theologian</i> , 17-29. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.
Mono-graph	RO Agyarko	Agyarko, RO 2013. <i>Idolatry or Inculturation? Christian participation in Akan libation rituals</i>. Wellington: Bible Media.
Thesis	J Fischer	The relationship between the Church and the Reign of God in the

		Reconstruction Theology of JNK Mugambi: A critical analysis – ongoing Ph.D. research project (2009-); Supervisor: EM Conradie; Submitted for examination November 2013
Thesis	M Jambulosi	Evangelisation and unity in 20 th century Ecumenism: A comparative study of the roles of <i>Missio Dei</i> and unity in the Lausanne Movement and the World Council of Churches – ongoing Ph.D. research project (2010-); Supervisor: HSA Engdahl
Thesis	XSakuba	Notions of culture in African Christian theologies – Ph.D. thesis (2005-), Supervisor: EM Conradie, Graduated September 2013
Plans	H Engdahl	Complete book project: African Theology Ancient and Modern – the Theologies of Origen and (John) Mbiti

c) The development of a series of textbooks in Systematic Theology for use in (Southern) Africa

The Dutch Reformed Church appointed a task team to offer a contemporary exposition of the Apostle's Creed. This task team incorporated several experts from the Uniting Reformed Church, including Ernst Conradie and Christo Lombard who both play a leading role in the completion of the project. A major document (without reference to the members of the task team) served at the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, 6-10 October 2013.

Report	EM Conradie & C Lombard	AlgemeneSinode, NederduitseGereformeerdeKerk 2013. <i>Die ApostolieseGeloofsbelydenis: 'n EietydseUitleg. OngepubliseerdeVerslag van die Sinode.</i>
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d) Conferences in the field of African Christian theology

The theme of the next major conference is "Ecclesiology and Ethics: The State of Ecumenical Theology in Africa" and is planned for 3-5 June 2015. See details below.

e) African perspectives on "Ecclesiology and ethics"

The core question posed in the project on ecumenical theology in Africa as a whole is related to an understanding of the nature and forms of ecumenicity in Africa. This is shaped by tensions between ecumenical discourse on Faith and Order and on Life and Work, also captured under the tension between "ecclesiology" and "ethics".

Thesis	W Engelbrecht	The ecumenical movement and the People's Church ongoing M.Th. research project (2009-); Supervisor: C Lombard
Thesis	T Sakupapa	"Ecclesiology and Ethics: An analysis of the history of the All Africa Conference of Churches" PhD thesis (2013-). Supervisor: EM Conradie
Event	DRT	Think tank on "Notions and forms of Ecumenicity in Africa" hosted on 22 Feb 2013
Paper	EM Conradie	"Notions and forms of ecumenicity: Some South African perspectives" – Position paper read at the above mentioned think tank
Edited volume	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM (ed) 2013. <i>South African Perspectives on Notions and forms of ecumenicity</i> . Stellenbosch: SUN Press. 184pp.
Essay	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM 2013. Notions and forms of ecumenicity: Some South African perspectives. In Conradie, EM (ed): <i>South African Perspectives on Notions and forms of ecumenicity</i> , 13-76. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.
Essay	HSA Engdahl	Engdahl, HSA 2013. Prerequisites for ecumenism in (South) Africa. In Conradie, EM (ed): <i>South African Perspectives on Notions and forms of ecumenicity</i> , 88-92. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.
Essay	C Lombard	Lombard, C 2013. Ecumenical anecdotes illustrating various forms of "ecumenicity". In Conradie, EM (ed): <i>South African Perspectives on Notions and forms of ecumenicity</i> , 101-146. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.
Essay	T Sakupapa	Sakupapa, T 2013. Local ecumenism in the Zambian context. In Conradie, EM (ed): <i>South African Perspectives on Notions and forms of ecumenicity</i> , 156-166. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.
Essay	E Arrison	Arrison, E 2013. Ecumenicity and Kairos Theology. In Conradie, EM (ed): <i>South African Perspectives on Notions and forms of ecumenicity</i> ,

		77-80. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.
Teaching	EM Conradie	Prof Conradie taught a postgraduate module on Ecumenical Theology in Africa in 2013.
Plans	DRT	Host think tank on “Ecclesial Reform / Deform movements, 28 March 2014
Plans	C Lombard	Plan towards a major three day international conference on “Ecclesiology and Ethics: The State of Ecumenical Theology in Africa”, 3-5 June 2015

f) Reconciliation Processes in a Theological Perspective

“Reconciliation” may be regarded as one of the operational concepts employed to express a vision for social transformation in South Africa towards 2030. A think tank hosted at UWC on 26 October 2012 focused on this theme. A few postgraduate projects also fall in this area:

Events	DRT	“Reconciliation: A conceptual analysis of and theological reflection on one of the guiding visions for a post-apartheid society”, think tank hosted by the Department of Religion and Theology at UWC, 26 October 2012
Edited volume	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM (ed) 2013. <i>Reconciliation as a Guiding Vision for South Africa?</i> Stellenbosch: SUN Press.
Essay	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM 2013. Reconciliation as one Guiding Vision for South Africa? Conceptual Analysis and Theological Reflection. In Conradie, EM (ed): <i>Reconciliation as a Guiding Vision for South Africa?</i>, 11-82. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.
Essay	D Solomons	Solomons, DJ 2013. A theology of reconciliation: The search for conceptual clarity. In Conradie, EM (ed): <i>Reconciliation as a Guiding Vision for South Africa?</i>, 98-102. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.
Thesis	D Solomons	Reconciliation as a controversial symbol: An analysis of a theological discourse in South Africa between 1968 and 2010 – ongoing Ph.D. research project; Supervisors: EAJG van der Borgh & EM Conradie
Thesis	L Kobe	The relationship between remorse and offering forgiveness: Selected case studies from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission – ongoing MA research project (2012-); Supervisor: EM Conradie
Thesis	E Arrison	The Relevance of the Taizé Community’s Theology of Reconciliation for the Post-apartheid South African Church and Society” – ongoing structured M.A project (2009-); Supervisor JW de Gruchy

h) The quest for denominational identity in South Africa

A number of postgraduate projects fall more or less within this area. This was one of the focus areas for 2013 with the department hosting a public conference on this theme:

Essay	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM 2013. The ambiguity of Johan Heyns: Sitting at Bavinck’s left or right hand?” In: Vosloo, R &Plaatjes-Van Huffel, MA (eds): <i>The Reformed churches in South Africa and the struggle for justice: Remembering 1960-1990.</i> Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 251-266.
Essay	C Lombard	Lombard, C 2013. Willie Jonker’s gentle promptings for justice. In: Vosloo, R &Plaatjes-Van Huffel, MA (eds): <i>The Reformed churches in South Africa and the struggle</i>, 280-292.
Event	DRT	Hosted a one-day conference on “The Quest for mainline churches in South Africa”, 24 May 2013
Thesis	K Kondolo	The ministry of music: A case study on the United Church of Zambia and the New Jerusalem Church – ongoing PhD research project (2012-); Supervisor: EM Conradie
Thesis	A Potgieter	The Material Dimension of Religion: A case study of selected neo-Pentecostal Churches in Woodstock, Cape Town – ongoing structured M Phil research project (2012-); Supervisor: EM Conradie; Graduated September 2013
Thesis	D Abrahams	The problem of hegemonic rule by ecclesial hierarchies. How a study in the early Martin Luther and Leonardo Boff can reveal the implicit danger and ways to overcome it” – completed M.Th. thesis (2008-); Supervisor: H Engdahl, Graduated September 2013
Thesis	K Brooks	Deliverance from a Pentecostal perspective – ongoing M.Phil research

		project (2011-); Supervisor: EM Conradie
Thesis	G Harold	Harold, Godfrey 2014. Evangelical discourse on God's response to suffering: A critical assessment of Gregory Boyd's open theism. Ph.D. thesis. University of the Western Cape. Submitted for publication in February 2013
Plans	EM Conradie & J Klaasen	Edit volume on "The Quest for mainline churches in South Africa" (submitted for publication November 2013)
Plans	DRT	Host one-day conference on "The Ecumenical movement and the Pentecostal movement", 30 May 2014
Teaching	EM Conradie	Ernst Conradie plans to teach a postgraduate module on Pneumatology and Pentecostalism in 2014

i) Ecumenical discourse on the "God of Life"

Ernst Conradie was invited as guest editor of the international journal *The Ecumenical Review* to gather together a set of articles on the theme of "God of life" with a view to the Assembly of the World Council of Churches on the theme "God of life, lead us to justice and peace" held in Busan, Korea, 30 October – 8 November 2013.

Journal	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM (ed) 2013. Ecumenical and Ecological Perspectives on the "God of Life". <i>The Ecumenical Review</i> 65:1, 1-2, 3-165.
Article	RO Agyarko	Agyarko, RO 2013. God of life: Rethinking the Akan Christian concept of God in the light of the ecological crisis. <i>The Ecumenical Review</i> 65:1,145-159.
Article	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM 2013. The God of Life: A counter-intuitive confession. <i>The Ecumenical Review</i> 65:1, 3-16.
Article	H Engdahl	Engdahl, H & Göransson, A 2013. "Ecumenical Space on the Way to the WCC Assembly in Busan - Expanded for whom?" <i>Ecumenical Review</i> , July 2013.
Participation	Various	Ernst Conradie, Rochelle Davids and Teddy Sakupapa attended the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, South Korea

4. Christian ecological theology

This large collaborative project from the beginning included several subsidiary projects.

- a) Ecological theology: A bibliographic survey
- b) Hope for the earth: Ecology, eschatology and cosmology (completed)
- c) The crown of creation? Anthropology, ecology and eschatology (completed)
- d) The earth and God's work of creation and redemption (2006-2012+)
- e) Theological reflections on a culture of consumerism
- f) Ecological hermeneutics
- g) The Christian Faith and the Earth project (2007-2013)
- h) The church and climate change
- i) Ecological concerns related to a theology of place
- j) Ecology and mission
- k) Pneumatology and ecology
- l) Ecology and liturgy
- m) Redeeming Sin: Hamartology, ecology and social analysis
- n) Ecclesiology and ecology
- o) Other contributions

Progress was made in 2013 in the following areas related to this research framework while plans for 2014 are also indicated. Significant developments are highlighted in bold. Where significant developments in conceptualising a collaborative project took place in 2013 for the first time, this is included where appropriate.

a) Ecological theology: A bibliographic survey

Ernst Conradie participated in and co-hosted together with Prof Heather Eaton (St Pauls, Ottawa) and Prof Whitney Bauman, (Florida) a colloquium on "Christian Theology and the

Earth” in San Francisco in November 2011. The colloquium was attended by some 15 leading figures in the field mainly from Canada, the USA and South Africa. A set of articles emerging from this significant colloquium was published in the journal *Theology* in 2013.

Ernst Conradie was also invited to offer an assessment of the state of the debate in Christian ecotheology on two occasions, namely the annual Günter Wittenberg Lecture hosted at UKZN, and an ecumenical seminar of ecotheology held at Bossey Institute in Geneva.

Essay	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM (ed) 2013. The journey of doing Christian ecotheology: A collective mapping of the terrain. <i>Theology</i> 116, 4-17.
Journal	EM Conradie	Bauman, W, Conradie, EM & Eaton, H (eds) 2013. The journey of doing ecotheology. <i>Theology</i> 116, 1-3, 4-44.
Paper	EM Conradie	“Contemporary Challenges to Christian Ecotheology: Some Reflections on the State of the Debate after Five Decades”: the Günter Wittenberg public lecture, University of KwaZulu-Natal, April 2013, also presented at a workshop on “Eco-theology – Caring for creation today and building a sustainable world for tomorrow”, Ecumenical Institute Bossey, 13-17 May 2013.
Article	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM 2013. Contemporary Challenges to Christian Ecotheology: Some Reflections on the State of the Debate after Five Decades. <i>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</i> 147, 105-122.
Essay	EM Conradie	Submitted an essay on “Approaches to Religion and the Environment in Africa” publication in a volume edited by Elias Bongmba on <i>Religion in Africa</i> to be published by Routledge.

d) The Earth in God’s economy: Reflections on the narrative of God’s work on earth

This was the major focus of the project from 2007 to 2013. The underlying problem is how justice can be done in Christian discourse to both God’s work of creation and salvation. A failure to do so may have grave consequences for a Christian ethos, praxis and spirituality. This is captured in phrases such as “human dignity”, “women’s emancipation”, “black liberation”, “cultural authenticity”. The project yielded three major edited volumes published in 2011 and 2012 (included here to indicate the context), a substantial monograph in 2013, while another monograph is currently in the making.

Edited volume	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM (ed) 2011. <i>Creation and Salvation, Volume 1: A Mosaic of Essays on Selected Classic Christian Theologians.</i> Studies in Religion and the Environment, Vol. 5. Berlin: LIT Verlag.
Edited volume	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM (ed) 2011. <i>Creation and Salvation: Dialogue on Abraham Kuyper’s Legacy for Contemporary Ecotheology.</i> Leiden: Brill Publishers. 288 pp.
Edited volume	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM (ed) 2012. <i>Creation and Salvation: Volume 2: A Companion on Recent Theological Movements.</i> Studies in Religion and the Environment, Vol. 6. Berlin: LIT Verlag.
Monograph	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM 2013. <i>Saving the Earth? The legacy of reformed views on “re-creation”.</i> Studies in Religion and the Environment Vol. 8. Berlin: LIT Verlag.
Article	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM 2013. Only a fully Trinitarian theology will do, but where can that be found? <i>Ned GerefTeologiese Tydskrif</i> 54:1&2, 1-9.
Article	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM 2013. A semiotic notion of transcendence. <i>Studia Historiae Ecclesiae</i> 39 (Supplement), 39-54.
Paper	EM Conradie	“What on Earth did God create? Overtures to an ecumenical theology of creation”. Workshop presented at the Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Busan, 30 October – 8 November 2013
Plans	C Lombard	Prepare earlier PhD thesis on “Adama, Thora en dogma: die samehang van aardselewe, skrif en dogma in die teologie van A.A. van Ruler” for publication in the series Studies in Ethics and Theology
Plans	EM Conradie	Complete monograph entitled “The Earth in God’s economy: Creation, salvation and consummation in ecological perspective”

g) The Christian Faith and the Earth project

In 2012 much of the work in this project centred around the hosting of the international Christian Faith and the Earth conference at the Sustainability Institute near Lynedoch, 6-10 August 2012.

In 2013 the work focused on the preparation of an edited volume emerging from this conference. The process has almost been completed with only the final proofreading and the index still to be completed. It will include an introduction and 11 essays by leading scholars in the field.

The project itself has already given birth to three smaller projects, namely on “Redeeming Sin” (based at UWC), “Ecclesiology and ecology” (based in Brisbane), and on “Pneumatology and ecology”. These are included separately.

Plans	EM Conradie	Complete editing process for an edited volume entitled <i>Christian Faith and the earth: Current paths and emerging horizons</i> (London: T&T Clark, 2014, forthcoming)
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Newton Cloete was employed as a research assistant to help with the completion of this project.

j) Ecology and mission

Plans	EM Conradie	Ernst Conradie to contribute an essay on Marturia and ecology for an edited volume on ecclesiology and ecology (see below)
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l) Ecology and liturgy

Andre du Plooy registered a masters project related to liturgy and cosmology under the supervision of Hans Engdahl. Ernst Conradie makes regular contributions to ecclesial publications in this area. The department also hosted the annual meeting of the Theological Society of South Africa on the theme of “Land, Liturgy and Life”. Several of the papers at this conference focused on ecological issues.

Thesis	AJ du Plooy	Liturgy and cosmology: A Study of the Anglican Liturgy of 1989 from the perspective of Gordon W. Lathrop’s Liturgical Cosmology – ongoing MTh research project (2011-); Supervisor: H Engdahl
Publications	EM Conradie	Handelinge 1:6-14. In: Orsmond, E & Botha, JG (reds): <i>Preekstudies met liturgiesevoorstellegebaseer op die Leesrooster 2013/2014</i> , 171-174 Stellenbosch: BUVTON.
Plans	EM Conradie	Make similar contributions for the Leesrooster in 2014
Conference	DRT	The department hosted the annual meeting of the Theological Society of South Africa on the theme of “Land, Liturgy and Life”.
Paper	EM Conradie	“Land, Liturgy & Life: Overture to the comma and the & in a very small dogmatics”: Plenary Paper read at the annual meeting of the Theological Society of South Africa on “Land, Liturgy and Life”, UWC, 19-21 June 2013
Article	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM 2013. Land, liturgy & life: Overture to the “comma” and the “and” in a very small dogmatics. <i>Scriptura</i> , 112, 1-17.

m) Redeeming Sin: Hamartology, Ecology and Social analysis

Ernst Conradie, ManitzaKotze and Newton Cloete have conceptualised a next major collaborative project. Collaborators elsewhere in South Africa and further afield have been identified and contacted. An outline of the project (which has not been registered yet) follows below.

The title of this project is deliberately dialectical. Traditionally, the Christian gospel has been understood as a message of salvation from sin and more specifically as one of the forgiveness of sins. However, the category of sin has become so widely discredited and ridiculed, even amongst adherents to the Christian faith, that it seems that the category itself is in need of redemption if it is not to be discarded completely. This project is based on the intuition that such a discarding of the category of sin might be disastrous for Christian communities, for the wider societies in which they are embedded and, speaking ecologically, indeed for the whole earth.

The project follows from the observation that forms of social analysis, diagnostic reports, psychological analyses and even environmental impact assessments express assumptions about what has gone wrong in the world in which we live. The encompassing thesis is that such analyses may be sharpened by theological discourse on sin in which an assessment is provided on the *ultimate* nature of the problem. If God may be regarded as the ultimate “mystery of the world” (Eberhard Jüngel) and if God-talk is practised in an arcane and doxological way to express a last word beyond which words dry up, then the category of sin may function in a similar way as a penultimate assessment, following in-depth diagnosis, of the nature of the predicament, the malaise of society, the deepest roots of environmental destruction. For the sake of such diagnostic conversations it might therefore be best to regard sin as an ultimate category, the last and not the first word that may be used to capture the underlying problem, one that is only appropriate if it could radicalise any other analysis. Inversely, such conversations with other disciplines may help Christian communities to rediscover its own message in order to portray a Christian confession of sin as good news for the whole earth.

The “sunny side of sin”: A Christian confession of sin as good news for the whole earth

In a delightful essay the Dutch theologian Arnold van Ruler explored what may be called the “sunny side of sin”. Building on his insights, the following aspects of the sunny side of sin may be identified and radicalised:

- At best, Christian discourse on sin has insisted that sin can only be known by knowing God and not merely on the basis of social analysis. This implies that the depth of the problem only becomes evident once one has already been confronted with the solution, namely the forgiveness of sin (Karl Barth). According to the Christian confession, it is a problem that can be and indeed has been resolved in Jesus Christ.
- “Open confession is good for the soul.” This is a psychological truth that is radicalised in pastoral discourse. In fact, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer maintained in *Life together*, open confession is good for building families and communities since the false need for pretence, to hide one’s guilt from others, may then be discarded. Practising this discipline has a radically equalising significance: members of Christian communities recognise themselves to be nothing but a community of forgiven sinners.
- This simple insight may yield far-reaching implications for international discourse on climate change – which have stalled due to mutual accusations and the protection of own interests. While nation states can at best acknowledge some guilt (they cannot confess sin), it would be possible for Christian churches to confess their historical association with countries with a high carbon footprint. If Christians perhaps did not legitimise the destructive use of fossil fuels they evidently did not do enough to recognise and address the looming climate catastrophe. Could such a discipline of confession guilt (and not only faith) break the deadlock of climate negotiations?
- A Christian confession of guilt may also have profound implications for inter-religious dialogue and for multi-faith collaboration on social issues. This may also be understood in the light of climate change. The countries with high levels of historic carbon emissions were traditionally also countries with a strong Christian presence while that does not apply to those countries where climate change will have a severe impact. One striking case is Bangladesh. Such a confession would offer a stark contrast with the crusades and religious wars of the past and indeed with current religious tensions. Indeed, this may be deemed to be good news for the whole earth.
- From a theological perspective one may add that the category of sin suggests that the underlying problem is not as serious as it might have been otherwise. If the problem is related to the human will, it is one that can be and indeed has been resolved. If the problem is related to human nature (with our genes), then it is a problem that cannot be resolved short of genetic engineering. Then the best we can collectively hope for is to muster the forces of goodness against the forces of evil in the hope that the former will triumph. If the problem is nature itself, then only an escape from nature would do – ironically a route followed in many forms of religious escapism, for which at least some (dominant) forms of Christianity have been rightly criticised. If the problem lies with Godself, with a God who is capricious, arbitrary, disinterested or evil-minded, then only some form of solution to the intractable theodicy problem would do.
- At a more technical level Christian discourse on sin has developed a highly differentiated and quite sophisticated set of categories to describe the malaise of human societies. These categories may be helpful for forms of social analysis and for identifying the root causes of ecological destruction. As suggested above, an articulation of what has gone wrong at an ultimate level may sharpen the diagnosis in a variety of other disciplines. This suggests possibilities for inter-disciplinary conversation with disciplines such as economics, sociology, psychology, environmental studies, not to forget, philosophy, literature and the arts.

Obstacles thwarting a retrieval of Christian categories of sin

Any attempt to retrieve the Christian category of sin would face almost insurmountable obstacles. It is necessary to identify and describe these obstacles briefly:

- The widespread cultural resistance and ridicule against the category of sin has already been mentioned. This is epitomised by justifiable suspicions that sin is related primarily to human sexuality. The ridicule is expressed in the annual government budget where taxes on the use of alcohol and tobacco (but alas not yet fossil fuels) are described as “sin tax”. Discourse on sin is thus also trivialised. As a result, the analysis of the malaise of the human condition often becomes shallow, purely Pelagian and liberal.
- Due to such cultural resistance against language about sin, it has become largely privatised. Accordingly, where it is still used, sin would describe the predispositions, attitudes, desires and actions of individuals. It therefore comes as no surprise that sin is primarily associated with sexuality. The relevance of the category of sin for social analysis is thus obscured unless it can be demonstrated that “the private is the public”. The emphasis is then on sin as (individual) guilt and not on sin as a power that has become deeply embedded in society. In contextual, liberation, feminist, ecological and postcolonial theologies, the impact of structures of domination (in the name of difference) is recognised through categories such as structural violence or the spiral of violence. However, such discourse is not always deeply rooted in or enriched by more traditional theological reflection on sin.
- Reconstructions of the history of (human) evolution makes it virtually impossible to make sense of a primordial “fall” of humanity in any historic sense of the word. There has never been a “paradise on earth” where killing was not present. The biblical narratives on Adam and Eve may have mythical significance but has little scientific relevance for reconstructing early human history beyond the metaphoric use of the term “mitochondrial Eve”. It therefore seems that it may well be necessary to “drop the fall”.
- An even harder set of problems is related to the biological and genetic roots of moral awareness and moral codes. Studies on animal ethology suggest remarkable behavioural continuities between humans and other animals. Moreover, such behaviour is characterised both by violence and by cooperation. This applies at an inter-species level (killing for food is in the interest of both the hunter and the hunted) and at an intra-species level (where moral codes amongst non-human species can be reconstructed). This poses a significant problem for traditional positions on the ultimate contingency, i.e. the non-necessary nature of human sin (*posse non peccare*). If “sin” was necessary from the very beginning of human evolution, then the underlying problem is rooted in biological conditions.
- The classic theological questions regarding sin remain unresolved. What is sin (e.g. desire, pride, killing or alienation)? Where does sin come from? What is the causal relation between sin and evil (the demonic)? And between sin and sickness? How serious is sin really? How is knowledge of sin possible? Can sin be overcome from within or only through grace? How is an understanding of the nature of sin correlated with an understanding of the nature of salvation?
- In addition to these classic problems, the universality sin has become highly contested. The Lutheran emphasis that sinners are “beggars”, that sin cannot be graded, and that all have sinned before God, is widely appreciated for its recognition of human equality. However, in contemporary theological discourse the distinction between perpetrators and their victims has gained prevalence. If sin has social consequences, the category of “being sinned against” is required in order to confront violence against women, torture, oppression and dictatorship. The category of victims would then include the non-human victims of environmental destruction. For the sake of justice the distinction between victim and perpetrator should therefore not be blurred. In situations of long-standing conflict an acceptance of the rough equality of guilt may prove to be liberating, but in the context of apartheid South Africa that would deny the legacy of imperialism, colonialism and apartheid. Can one speak of the “proportionality of guilt” in order to address this tension between the universality and the particularity of guilt?
- What is the relationship between sin as guilt and sin as power? There has been a tendency in the past to emphasise sin as guilt, while many recent theologies have emphasised sin as power, i.e. the way in which evil has become deeply embedded in social structures, leading to structural violence. On this basis human beings, or at least those marginalised by such social structures, have been regarded as the “innocent” victims of forces beyond their control.

Hamartology, ecology and social analysis

The proposed collaborative research project will seek to address the obstacles thwarting a retrieval of the category of sin in order to portray a Christian confession of sin as indeed “good news for the whole earth”. This suggests a twofold agenda: to address these obstacles through theological reflection (including a retrieval of classic texts on sin) and to engage in multi-disciplinary conversation to assess the possible contribution that Christian discourse on sin can make to social analysis.

This would be a multi-faceted undertaking with more than one point of departure. The following aspects may be brought into play in this regard (in no necessary order):

- Theological reflections on the diagnostic report produced by the National Planning Commission in South Africa;
- A survey of and multi-disciplinary conversations with forms of social analysis in a variety of disciplines;
- A retrieval of the biblical roots of Christian discourse on sin;
- A retrieval of some classic theological expositions of sin (e.g. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Barth, Bonhoeffer, Niebuhr, Tillich, Berkouwer, Van Ruler) with the assumption that these are products of former attempts to offer a final word on the malaise of society in a given context;
- A survey of contemporary contributions to hamartology (Gestrich, Peters, Plantinga, etc);
- A survey of implicit or explicit notions of sin in the context of liberation, feminist, African, postcolonial and ecologies theologies;
- Multi-faith discussions on the malaise of society, with specific reference to African traditional religion, Judaism and Islam.

Newton Cloete made significant progress with a Masters thesis in this area and has submitted it for publication.

Thesis	NMCloete	Hamartology and Ecology: A critical assessment of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's view on the nature of sin – ongoing MTh research project (2011-); supervisor: EM Conradie, Submitted for examination, November 2013
Plans	EM Conradie	Register new project entitled "Redeeming Sin: Hamartology, ecology and social analysis"
Plans	NM Cloete	Commence with a project in which the understanding of the nature of sin in documents emerging from Faith and Order and from Church and Society will be compared with each other
Plans	M Kotze	Can the human vulnerability towards sin be "corrected" through biotechnology? Postdoctoral project

n) Ecclesiology and ecology

This is a subsidiary project that emerged from the Christian Faith and the Earth project. After some considerable debate on the way forward an edited volume is now envisaged that will offer Protestant contributions on the theme, approach from a missiological perspective. The volume will include an introduction, chapters on ecology and leitourgia, kerygma, diakonia, koinonia, marturia, on the distinctive nature of the church and reflections from other confessional traditions. Most of the work in this regard will be done in 2014.

Some planning notes indicate the nature of the envisaged volume:

1. The volume will investigate the relationship between ecology and ecclesiology from within a missiological orientation. We still need to get consensus on an appropriate title. Provisionally I suggest "The distinctive place of the church in God's household: Protestant perspectives on Ecology, Missiology and Ecclesiology". Something shorter and more catchy may be better.
2. The volume will be structured in terms of five widely recognised dimensions of Christian witness, namely worship (leitourgia), proclamation (kerygma), service (diakonia), fellowship (koinonia) and witness itself (marturia), followed by reflections on the distinctive nature of the church (ekkllesia).
3. The volume will offer mainly Protestant perspectives on the theme. In order to invite an ecumenical spirit, the volume will also include perspectives / responses from other confessional traditions. After some initial hopes to invite a full diversity of confessional traditions and geographic contexts it seems much easier to make progress with a more limited scope.
4. The volume will be produced in a collaborative spirit and way. Each of the main authors will gather together a team of co-authors to make inputs to the chapter and to bring in other perspectives. All the authors may also make inputs to any of the other chapters and offer suggestions of people who may be able to make inputs. The main author retains the responsibility for the coherence and depth of the chapter. This has implications for the schedule (see below)
5. We now have the following team of authors together. Only the main authors are indicated.
 - Introduction – Clive Ayre & Ernst Conradie
 - Leitourgia – Charles Fensham with Sarah Travis

- Kerygma – Robert Agyarko
 - Diakonia – Clive Ayre
 - Koinonia – Kuzipa Nalwamba
 - Marturia – Ernst Conradie
 - Ecclesia – David Field
6. Most of the main authors come from either a reformed or a Methodist background. Robert Agyarko is Pentecostal but has been involved in the International Reformed Theological Institute. There is certainly a southern orientation given that most of the authors come originally from the south in geographic terms (South Africa, Australia, Zambia, Ghana – admittedly north of the equator), albeit that Charles and David live in Canada and Switzerland respectively.
7. The main focus of each chapter will include the following:
- Leitourgia: ecological perspectives on worship/liturgy, prayer, the sacraments, spirituality
 - Kerygma: ecological reflections on the ministry of the word (the relationship between word and deed, word and image, word and sacrament) and prophetic witness
 - Diakonia: Ecological perspectives on service in the form of environmental projects (but excluding eco-congregations), vocations (ministry in society) and issues of personal lifestyle (i.e. how Christians live and work)
 - Koinonia: Ecological perspectives on the church as an alternative and ecological community / communion, implications for governance, fellowship (also touching on sacraments), the formation of eco-congregations
 - Marturia: Abstracting from these perspectives by reflecting on the situatedness of these forms of witness and the distinctive place of the church itself in God's mission and in God's economy, indicating the relatedness of witness and suffering
 - Ecclesia: How do ecological sensitivities help us to reinterpret the very nature of the church in terms of its sociological and theological / spiritual dimensions? What does the church bring that other ecological communities do not necessarily bring? Here the four characteristics of the church may be brought into play.
8. The thematic content of each chapter will have to be developed in collaboration with other authors. This is important and necessary given the notion of missiological dimensions. All the other dimensions are present in any one of them. In the writing process we will need to allow for mutually critical interaction. This means that draft chapters need to be circulated for comment to all the other authors (not only to the editors). This is also necessary in order to remind one another of themes, literature and perspectives that need to be brought into play.
9. In each of these chapters there needs to be a critical and a constructive element. There has to be a recognition that on each aspect the church and Christian witness have been subjected to an ecological critique from the outside and from the inside. This is suggested in the following structure for each chapter (e.g. marturia) – which need not be adhered to rigorously:
- What on earth is marturia?
 - An ecological critique of Christian mission
 - Marturia: A Christian response to ecological destruction
 - Challenges for the road ahead

Plans	EM Conradie	Co-edit (with Clive Ayre) a volume provisionally entitled "The distinctive place of the church in God's household: Protestant perspectives on Ecology, Missiology and Ecclesiology"
Plans	RO Agyarko	Write contribution to this volume on ecology and kerygma
Plans	EM Conradie	Write contribution to this volume on ecology and marturia

o) Other contributions

Article	EM Conradie	"In die netwerk van die omgewing" Article submitted for publication in <i>Verbum et Ecclesia</i> (forthcoming).
Essay	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM 2013. Darwin's ambiguous gift to reformed theology: The

		problem of natural suffering and Calvin's meditation on future life. In Van der Belt, H (ed): <i>Restoration through redemption: John Calvin revisited. Studies in Reformed theology</i> 23, 95-112. Leiden: Brill.
Essay	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM 2013. Sustainability in African Theological Education. In: Phiri, IO & Werner, D (eds): <i>African Handbook on Theological Education</i> , 707-713. Oxford: Regnum Books.
Essay	EM Conradie	Conradie, EM 2013. On Jesus Christ as Mediator of creation. <i>Ned GerefTeologieseTydskrif</i> 54 (Supplement 5), 105-116.

5. Biblical, theological and contextual hermeneutics / rhetorical theory

This is not a registered research framework, but covers the research done in the fields of Biblical Studies and Hermeneutics. Both the main contributors focus on the rhetoric of biblical texts, Miranda Pillay using the socio-rhetorical approach of Vernon Robbins and Douglas Lawrie the rhetorical theory of Kenneth Burke. Dr Pillay works mainly in the areas of Luke-Acts and disease, bodily integrity and stigma, the work in the latter area being relevant to her interest in the problem of AIDS. Prof Lawrie works mainly on biblical narratives and the wisdom literature. He is a member of the newly formed working group on wisdom literature, a subgroup of the Old Testament Society of South Africa. He is also often involved in conferences and colloquia connected to the research focus on human dignity at the Theological Faculty of Stellenbosch University and has delivered and published several papers connected to this theme.

At post-graduate level, this area is covered in the modules TST731 and TST831 (Old Testament Studies), TST732 and TST832 (Old Testament Exegesis), TST733 and TST833 (New Testament Studies), TST734 and TST834 (New Testament Exegesis), and TST735 and TST835 (Biblical Hermeneutics). Several of these are on offer every year.

Two further activities in the area of Biblical Studies deserve mention:

- Pillay, Lawrie and also Conradie annually contribute two or more sermon studies with exegetical notes on the texts prescribed in the Common Lectionary. These appear in *Preekstudies met Liturgiese Voorstelle Gebaseer op die Leesrooster*, published at Stellenbosch by Communitas.
- For some time Lawrie participated in the new Afrikaans translation of the Bible, of which the first printed version (Psalms and New Testament only) is to appear this year. He was the main translator and exegete for the books of Judges and 1 Kings.

Thesis	N Joshua	"Socio-rhetorical interpretation of Romans 8:18-30" MPhil thesis (2013-)
Essay	R Cloete	"Re-thinking Masculinity in the 21st Century: A Socio-Rhetorical reading of Luke 7:36-50". Completed Honours research essay
Article	Adu-Gyamfi, Yaw	Adu-Gyamfi, Yaw 2013. Prevention of Civil War in Joshua 22: Guidelines for African Ethnic Groups. <i>Old Testament Essays</i> 26/2 (2013): 247-2.
Article	Adu-Gyamfi, Yaw	Adu-Gyamfi, Yaw 2013. The Live Goat Ritual in Leviticus 16. <i>Scriptura</i> 112, 1-10.
Article	M Pillay	Pillay, MN 2013. The Gospel of Matthew: Good News for Jews, Gentiles, Men, Women? <i>Word and Worship</i> .
Article	M Pillay	Pillay, MN 2013. Luke 4:39-9:51: Towards Healing and Repenting of the Historic Patriarchy of the Christian Faith. Published online by "Continuing Indaba: Journeys of Conversation to Strengthen Relationships for Mission" http://continuingindaba.com/2013/09/18/towards-healing-and-repenting-of-the-historic-patriarchy-of-the-christian-faith/ , posted 18 September 2013
Article	D Lawrie	Lawrie, D 2013. Old Ideas: Wisdom, Virtue and Moral Formation. <i>Scriptura</i> 112, 34-39.
Article	D Lawrie	Lawrie, D 2013. Rhetorical Persuasion and the Uncertainty of Hope. <i>NGTT</i> .
Paper	D Lawrie	"Land as Property and Land as Productive in the Bible." Plenary Paper read at the annual meeting of the Theological Society of South Africa on "Land, Liturgy and Life", UWC, 19-21 June 2013.
Paper	D Lawrie	"Outrageous Terror and Trying Texts: Restoring Human Dignity in Judges 19-21." Paper read at the conference "Restorative Readings: The Old Testament, Ethics and Human Dignity", Stellenbosch, 12-13 September 2013 (to be published in a collection by Wipf & Stock).
Paper	D Lawrie	"2 Kings 5: Sacred Soil or Subtle Satire?." Paper read at the postgraduate

		seminar, Faculty of Theology, University of Stellenbosch, 2 October 2013 (to be edited for publication).
Plans	M Pillay	Re-reading Revelations 18: Towards a Gynocentric Vision. Paper presented at SBL, November 2012 – to be finalised for publication
Plans	M Pillay	Complete commentary and notes on 1 Peter for the international “Justice Bible” project
Plans	M Pillay	A socio-rhetorical reading of Luke 10:25-37: A resource healing in an AIDS era? Finalise article for publication

6. Individual Research Plans

Research Plans for 2014: WTW Cloete

I am continuing my research on the Hebrew poetry of the Old Testament with a focus on the concept of parallelism and its use in the study and interpretation of the poetic/versified texts of the Old Testament.

Research Plans for 2014: EM Conradie

My research plans for 2014 include the following (only writing and editorial contributions). The first four are more or less in order of priority while the others follow a time line:

- Complete a monograph to be entitled “The Earth in God’s Economy: Creation, Salvation and Consummation in Ecological Perspective” by June 2014. Various chapters have been presented at conferences and seminars. A full draft of the manuscript has been completed and is now being tested and developed in terms of further reading.
- I hope to conceptualise and start work on a the project on “Sin and the Suffering of God’s Creatures” by June 2014
- Complete the editing of a volume entitled “Christian Faith and the Earth: Current Paths and Emerging Horizons”.
- “Ecclesiology and Ecology”: Contribute to and help edit this envisaged volume together with Clive Ayre.
- “The Quest for identity in so-called mainline churches in South Africa”: Complete the editing process of this volume with John Klaasen
- “Religion and moral formation towards responsible citizenship” Edit contributions emerging from the think tank hosted in August 2013
- Write an essay on the integration of theological curricula for a volume edited by Marilyn Naidoo (January 2014)
- Write a paper for a colloquium to be held at Lund University on the legacy of Gustav Aulén
- Write paper on a theology of the senses for the conference of the European Society for the Study of Science and Theology (May 2014)
- Write a plenary paper for the conference of Association for the Study of Religion in Africa (July 2014).

Research Plans for 2014: Hans Engdahl

- African Theology Ancient and Modern – A Study of Origen and (John) Mbiti, monograph in draft form by 1 July 2014
- “Close Reading and Contrast Reading in Theology. Ecclesiology as Intermediary of Secular Science and Theology”, chapter to be published in a book on 'Uppsala ecclesiology' (S. E. Brodd editor), during 2014
- “Deconstructing Aulén’s Christus Victor: inconsistencies regarding soteriology and creation theology”, to be presented at the Lund Colloquium, 28 – 29 April, 2014

Research Plans for 2014: J Klaasen

My research plan for 2014 is part of my long term research plan. My research interest lies with the role of personhood in development. The question that elicits my interest is to what extent the influential models of development proposed by Sen and Korten can do justice to the category of personhood. Instead of focusing on development in terms of the expansion of choices, as in Sen’s definition, or as

a process of social development, as in Korten's definition, I am interested in the complex process through which people come to accept responsibility for addressing their situations.

The crucial question for an adequate notion of development may be revisited: Moreover, the question is therefore not only what such a notion of personhood entails but also how individuals, families and communities come to an understanding of such a notion of personhood.

In 2014 the following subsidiary questions will be addressed:

- How is the category of personhood addressed in secular theories of development, with specific reference to the contributions of Amartya Sen and David Korten?
- How is the category of personhood addressed in various theological discourses on development, including ecumenical discourse globally, in Africa and in South Africa, but also in wider theological schools (with or without reference to development), including liberation, feminist and ecological theologies with specific reference to current discourse in these schools in the (South) African context.

I will first explore the primary and secondary literature on Sen and Korten with the view to write an article on the way in which the category of personhood is recognised and understood by these authors. It is envisaged that this task may take up most of the period of study leave.

I also hope to start to address the same underlying question on the recognition and understanding of the category of personhood with respect to ecumenical discourse on development, with specific reference to publications of the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Council of Churches.

I plan to offer papers on Sen's and Korten's understanding of the category of personhood at the annual meetings of the Practical Theology Society of South Africa and the South African Missiological Society in 2014. The papers will subsequently be submitted for publication in accredited journals.

The results of my ongoing work on this project may also be disseminated through a public conference on "ethical leadership", to be hosted by the Department of Religion and Theology at UWC, planned for 29 August 2014.

Research Plans for 2014: DG Lawrie

- Write an article on social class and scribal culture in the wisdom literature for the Wisdom Literature Working Group (tentative title "Is There a Class in this Text?").
- Write an article offering a new solution to the translation problem in 1 Kings 18: 21 (compare Zephaniah 1: 9).
- Edit the articles "2 Kings 5: Sacred Soil or Subtle Satire" and "Who Appointed You to Judge over Us?" for publication.
- Edit existing notes "Introduction to the World of the Old Testament" for publication as a text book for first-year students.
- Complete the work on a selection of essays to be published under the title *Lines of Communication*. Some of the essays have been written and require editing, but two more still have to be written.
- If time permits, I intend to work further on the book *Theology as Aesthetics*.

Research Plans for 2014: C Lombard

During the first semester of 2014 the texts of the *readers* will be finalised (to be published in the Departmental Series: Studies in Religion and Theology):

- A reader for the module ETH 121, paper 2: *The Moral Codes of the World's Religions*. [A reader for the module ETH 121, paper 1: *Religion, Worldviews and Ethics* is also being planned for publication in 2014. This will be a collaborative effort.]
- A basic reader for the module ETH 212: *Moral discourse on Human Rights and Civil Society* is being discussed with the lecturers who have also taught this module (ready for the first semester 2014)

Work is continuing on two major publications:

- Publication of a monograph on the theology of Albert Arnold van Ruler (1908-1970) – in Afrikaans (in the Departmental Series *Studies in Religion and Theology* - an update and publication of my dissertation on Van Ruler's theology).
- Publication of the papers delivered at the IRE Conference on Moral Formation and Ethics at School (September 2011, at UWC and Stellenbosch). It is now considered as a special Journal

edition.

- Work will continue on two publications to be edited for the “Ecclesiology and Ethics” programme, with a focus on Ecumenical theology and Social Transformation:
Edit a volume emerging from the think tank of 2 August 2013 and submit that for publication: *Ecumenical engagement in the form of NGO’s and FBO’s as dynamos for social transformation in the Western Cape*
Edit a volume on *Guiding visions for the transition to a post-apartheid society* (based on meeting of Friday 9 November 2012), providing the leading article.
- Prepare a paper for the Lund conference in April 2014 on Aulen’s theories of reconciliation.

Research Plans for 2014: MN Pillay

1. Papers

I plan to continue my research which in broad terms may be described as “Theo-ethical Perspectives on Gender Justice Issues – informed by feminist biblical hermeneutics” which will be the focus on papers to be presented at:

- The Departmental Think Tank on *Current ecclesial reform / deform movements in South Africa (28 March 2014)*;
- The Annual Stellenbosch-UWC Circle Conference on *Gender and Human Flourishing (8 May 2014)*;
- The 25th anniversary of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians will be celebrated on 9 May 2014 with the focus-theme “Sankofa – looking backwards and looking forward”.

2. Publications

- I am working on writing an "Introduction, Comments and Reflection Questions for 1 Peter" in *God's Justice: The Holy Bible* – for publication by *Biblica*.
- Plan to co-publish conference proceeding of two-day back-to-back conference to be held 8-9 May 2014.

3. Class readers

- I shall continue to work on class readers for Ethics 111: Paper 1 and TST 111: Paper 2