

CHAPTER 2

PARADIGMS OF DEVELOPMENT AND THE MESSAGE OF SEXUAL ABSTINENCE.

Development is dynamic in that how it is conceptualised and implemented has changed over time and continues to do so. Many scholars in the field of development use the concept “paradigm shifts” to signify shifts in conceptualisation of development over time. Thus, the concept “paradigm” is used to represent a particular way of conceptualising development. A markedly different way of conceptualising development is represented as a different paradigm. A radical change from one point in time to another in conceptualising development is represented as a paradigm shift.

Some paradigms of development are much more recent than others. A paradigm of development, represented as “the alternative development paradigm” is one of the most recent paradigms in the business of development. The alternative paradigm emerged from a response by scholars and other development practitioners to the modernization development paradigm. The latter persists up to this day, and exists alongside the alternative development paradigm. To appreciate the insights of the alternative development paradigm one should understand the paradigm against the backdrop of the modernization development paradigm. In this chapter I discuss the message of sexual abstinence in relation to discourse of development. In doing this, I firstly discuss the modernisation development paradigm in relation to religion in general, and to the religious message of sexual abstinence as an HIV preventive

intervention strategy. Having discussed this, I then move on to discuss the alternative development paradigm and its critique of the modernisation paradigm. In this discussion I also focus on the paradigm in relation to religion and to the religious message of sexual abstinence as a preventive HIV intervention strategy. Finally, In the light of the insights provided by the alternative development paradigm, I reflect on the possible implications of the alternative development paradigm for understanding the message of sexual advanced within the South Africa evangelical movement in the face of the spread of HIV/AIDS.

2.1. The Modernisation Development Paradigm and the Eclipse of Religion

The modernisation development paradigm is a paradigm that advances the western development path as the ideal development path. This paradigm conceptualises development as transition from a religio-traditional society to an industrial-scientific society (Burger et al 1973). This conceptualisation of development finds its philosophical underpinning in the idea of progress. Porter's (1998: 24) remark succinctly captures the philosophy:

In the eighteenth century, attention became focused, perhaps for the first time ever, on the future rather than the past, and the drive to create a better future generated a belief in progress. The achievements of scientists like Isaac Newton (1642-1727) and philosophers like John Locke (1632-1702) brand new faith in man's right and power to achieve knowledge of himself and the natural world, and encouraged political action in such fields as overseas exploration, technology, manufacturers, social science and legal reform. Philosophies became committed to the ending of religious strife, bigotry, ignorance, prejudice and poverty, and the creation of polite new social environments and lifestyles.

The passage above highlights the emergence of an unprecedented interest in progress. Progress is perceived as something that happens across different historical periods within space. It is transition from a religio-traditional society characterized by “strife, bigotry, ignorance, prejudice and poverty,” to a scientific-industrial society characterized by “overseas exploration, technology, manufacturers, social science and legal reform.” These changes are represented as historical changes occurring within space in history. While celebrating historical change, Richard Price is putting an emphasis to a definite break with the past.

Who at the beginning of this century would have thought that in a few years mankind would acquire the power of subjecting the wills, the dreadful force of lightning, and of flying in acrostic machines... many similar discoveries may remain to be made... and it may not be too extravagant to expect that... the progress of improvement will not cease till it has excluded from the earth most of its worst evils, and restored the paradisiacal state which, according to the mosaic history, preceded the present state (cited in Porter 2001: 24).

From the words of one of the advocates of the idea of progress, Hartley, we see the idea of progress extended to mean change across space:

The dynamo of advancement was the diffusion of knowledge to all ranks and orders of men, to all nations, kindred, tongues, and peoples, a progress which cannot be stopped, but precede ever with an accelerated velocity (cited in Porter 1998: 24).

Fascination with the idea of progress has its roots in the enlightenment movement that begun in the 17th century. Thinkers associated with this movement are collectively referred to as the “enlightenment fathers.”⁴ Hall provides a popular metaphor among the fathers within the movement that expresses the mood this idea generated: “light of reason shining brightly into the dark recesses of ignorance and

⁴ Such thinkers as Kant, Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau are usually cited as the leading lights in the movement, and it to these men among others that the title enlightenment fathers is ascribed.

superstition”(http://madang.ajou.ac.kr).

In the foregoing paragraphs we briefly reflected on the philosophical underpinnings of the modernisation development paradigm. We saw that the paradigm has its philosophical base in the idea of progress and the enlightenment movement. This accounts for a conception of development as transition from a religio-traditional society to a scientific-industrial society. This transition is value loaded since it represents change from one condition to another – from a debased condition to a better condition. The change is represented as taking place within space and across space. Within the modernisation paradigm, development experts position themselves as both the beneficiaries and the harbingers of this change. Beneficiaries in so far as the historical changes take place within their space. Historically, this is the European space associated with the rise of the western civilization. This space places them in a better world relative to the past world of their ancestors.

The modernisation development experts also felt themselves as harbingers of development in so far as they assumed the responsibility to advance development outside Europe to far flung nations they considered backward. The question the modernisation theorists ask is what patterns are characteristic of transition from a religio-traditional society to an industrial-scientific society. Assumed among these theorists is the inevitable demise of the religio-traditional society in the face of an expanding industrial-scientific society both within space and across space. Inglehart and Baker (2001: 16), argue that this assumption has permeated modern day disciplines such as sociology:

From its inception sociology was committed to the view that religion in the modern world is merely a survival from man's primitive past, and doomed to disappear in an era of science and general enlightenment.

Inglehart and Baker (2001) continue to argue that this assumption can be detected in the works of the leading lights in the social sciences from Auguste Comte to Durkheim. As I highlighted earlier, within the modernisation development paradigm, the assumption of change from the religio-traditional to the industrial-scientific is value loaded. It is not just about change but a "good" change. In contemporary social theory this assumption is generally accepted to represent a major pitfall of the modernisation development paradigm. Within the alternative development paradigm the assumption is primarily critiqued at two levels. First, the assumption is regarded as colonising in so far as it imposes itself on the local space across in the form of a blueprint for development without taking into consideration local plans for development (Pieterse 1998). Second, the assumption is regarded as universalising in so far as it represents change from the local and traditional to the industrial as always ideal despite the changes in context of implementation (Gharabaghi 1994). In the modernisation paradigm the local represents backwardness that require change in the western mould (Pieterse 2000). Thus no value is seen in the local but local labour and raw materials that needs to be refined. Where the locals participate in the pursuit of development, they definitely do not participate as the equals of the "harbingers" of development. Power relations are clearly marked.

I argue that the modernisation values and assumptions pertaining to development are still pervasive in our society. They form an ancestral memory inherited from the

enlightenment fathers. This memory has surfaced in the wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is reflected in the perception that religion is a barrier to “progress” in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This perception is held by a considerable number of intellectuals and activists alike in the field of HIV/AIDS. I argue that, though not said in so many words, the modernist perception of religion as a thing from the primitive past⁵ has influenced the general perception of the message of pre-marital sexual abstinence advanced by Faith Based Organizations. It seems that this perception has influenced, to some extent, the negative reception of evidence that seeks to suggest that the message of sexual abstinence and fidelity as advanced by Faith Based Organizations has contributed in stemming the tide of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in some parts of the world. For example, in 1998, Green, a leading researcher in the impact of message of sexual abstinence and fidelity on youth sexuality wrote an article about the apparent success of what he calls “primary behaviour change” in slowing down HIV transmission in the Dominican Republic. By primary change Green meant change in terms of youth sexuality influenced by a belief in abstinence and fewer partners, as opposed to condom use and STD treatment. The manuscript was turned down by four leading academic journals (Allen 2002: 14). To defend his honour as a reputable academic, Green had to unequivocally declare that his work was not informed by a religious perspective since he was not a religious person (Allen 2002).

Jeff Spieter, chief of the research division in USAID population division who was apparently suspected for flirting with the Republicans with his receptive stance

⁵ As reflected in the passage I quoted earlier from Inglehart and Baker

towards the message of pre-marital sexual abstinence, openly declared his neutral position to allay the suspicions (Allen 2002).

While the foregoing passages I have quoted reflects a reactionary stance towards the message of sexual abstinence advanced by faith based organizations, I also note a tendency to draw from a scientific discourse to challenge the legitimacy of the message of sexual abstinence as a preventive strategy against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. However, with all their scientific background, some of these discourses reflect an ancestral memory of the enlightenment fathers that represents religion as belonging to the primitive past. For example, Paul Kagame's argument against a report that he interprets as upholding sexual abstinence as an ideal preventive mechanism, reflects a scientific discourse influenced by this memory:

... that there is acknowledgement that condoms are effective in preventing the spread of HIV is a relief to those of us on the front line of the war on HIV/AIDS. There is a strong evidence and research to indicate that when used properly, condoms are highly effective barriers to STD transmission. For this report to turn its back on those guidelines and suggest that abstinence is the only method of safe sex that should be practiced ignores human behaviour and common sense. It is tantamount to a death sentence to many sexually active adults and young people (Allen 2002: 14).

That the religious message of sexual abstinence cannot convince young people to abstain from pre-marital sex is not only scientifically valid but also common sense to Kagame. It seems that to Kagame, the message of sexual abstinence does not tap into common sense and ignores contemporary, advanced basic human psychology. In short, it is behind times. It is this perception of religion or religious ideas as irrational that I attribute to the ancestral memory. The memory inherited from the enlightenment fathers that ushered in the modern era with its pathos of progress and

freedom from all forms of authority in general and religious authority in particular (Gray 1999). Of course, not all people with this memory would defer to science. Many in the progressive movements would not publish this “irrationality,” even if supported by science. Others would feel chills when such religious strategies are invoked as ingredients in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Their reactions against scientific evidence would not always be qualified by science. David Wilson, a leading USAID consultant from the university of Zimbabwe recalls a reaction from some high profile personnel in public health to the scientifically supported idea of sexual abstinence and fidelity as preventive mechanisms to the spread of HIV/AIDS: “It was considered too moralistic to stress abstinence and fidelity” (Porter 2002: 14).

Thus, though David Wilson defers to science when highlighting the possibility of sexual abstinence and fidelity as preventive mechanisms against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the problem becomes the association of this idea with morality and thus with religion. It is not on scientific grounds that the message is challenged this time, but on its association with religion.

The message of pre-marital sexual abstinence becomes suspect, not because it is inherently flawed, but because of its source, i.e. religion.⁶ In its refusal to yield to the vision of the enlightenment fathers, religion becomes marginalized in discourse of development. Thus, the science espoused by the enlightenment fathers, meant to have long replaced religion, becomes a tool used to annihilate the persisting religion that refuse to give way. This science, however, loses its legitimacy if it fails to advance

⁶ The experiences of Green’s and Wilson are exemplary.

the vision of the enlightenment fathers. A vision of a free developed society, free from the baggage of the past represented by religious beliefs, tradition and local technologies of survival.

The Modernisation paradigm of development is committed to eliminating the legacy of backwardness of the past. I now turn my attention to the other paradigm of development, i.e. the alternative development paradigm.

2.2. The Alternative Development Paradigm

In many circles, disillusionment with the modernisation paradigm of development, led to what is called the “alternative development paradigm.” The modernisation discourse on development has a universalist-colonising ring about it that is essentially problematic in addressing the issue of development. The alternative development paradigm seeks to alter the discourse. The alternative development paradigm sees it as important to engage the universalist-colonising element in the modernisation paradigm. This seems to be the first step towards altering the modernisation discourse on development in a way that does justice to the local situation.

2.2.1. Problematisation of a Universalising Discourse of Development

The alternative development paradigm rejects the universalising element in the modernisation paradigm of development that suggests that there is a clear pattern pertaining to development across space and time. The paradigm identifies a diversity of needs pertaining to development that renders this discourse problematic.

Because of the existence of diverse community needs, there are no universal development patterns. Rather, development should be a dynamic process of adjustment and innovation (Rajesh 2002: 319)

2.2.2. Problematisation of a Colonising Discourse of Development

The alternative development paradigm also problematises the colonising element in the modernisation discourse of development. This is a discourse that imposes western scientific models and advances modern technological resources to address local needs. The alternative development is participatory and seeks to utilise the local and familiar to advance the cause of development. Rajesh (2002: 319), highlights that from the very early stages of its development, the alternative development paradigm exhibited this trait.

This paradigm believed that development can not be delivered from outside, that people can develop themselves and that their own involvement, engagement, and contribution are an essential foundation for sustainable development. People own participation can be enabled through drawing on local knowledge and local resources.

Though the alternative development paradigm critiques mainstream scientific discourse as a universalising grand discourse and emphasises utilisation of the local, it does not necessarily reject science in toto. It sees science and technology as potential tools for development. It emphasizes innovative ways of marrying the local and modern. Pieterse (2000: 175), an alternative development theorist, clarifies this aspect of the paradigm:

Part of the critique of modernism is the critique of science. A leitmotif, also in ecological thinking, is to view science as power. Science here means cartesianism, enlightenment thinking and positivism, an instrument in achieving mastery over nature. For one thing, science has been renewing itself, for example in quantum physics and chaos theory, and undergoing paradigm shifts leading to new science. In addition there are counter trends within science, such as methodological anarchism of Feyerabend and the work of Latour (1993). In social science, positivism is no longer the dominant

temperament; increasingly the received wisdom in social science is constructivism. In economics positivism prevails, but is also under attack. A clear distinction should be made between the critique of science and anti science. Acknowledging the limitations of science, the role of power/knowledge and the uses made of scientific knowledge does not necessarily mean being anti-science. The critique of science is now the defining feature of new social movements.

Thus the critique advanced by alternative development is not a simplistic one. In science and technology, products of modernism, alternative developments see potential instruments of development. However, it also admits the potential destruction that these can have on development. Alternative development is committed to reversing these ills. Thus, the alternative development paradigm is motivated by a strong sense of justice.

2.2.3. In Pursuit of Justice

By emphasising the local and familiar and seeking to place these at par with the modern, the alternative development paradigm seeks to bring justice to the harm that is caused by the modernisation development paradigm. It seeks to reverse the negative effects caused by lack of sensitivity to local needs, subordination of local ideas and under utilisation of local resources. Ho-Wong's (1995: 333) remark reflects this aspect of the paradigm:

... the growth oriented western model has been responsible for the over development of the few and the underdevelopment of the many. It is often recognized that such failures are related to bureaucratic inertia, insensitivity to the needs of village people, ignorance of indigenous technology and culture and the lack of grassroots participation in the implementation and planning of development projects... the principal task of alternative development lies in humanizing the system that has alienated the majority.

Thus, the alternative development paradigm seeks to offer a more ethically correct model of development to the modernisation development models.

Alternative development means, ideally, the satisfaction of diverse community needs, an equitable distribution of resources, an economic balance, local autonomy, the active promotion of cultural needs, and the elimination of injustice and marginalisation. Therefore, development becomes a process for the enrichment of human lives and an enterprise to advance the human condition (Ho-Wong 1995: 333).

In short, from the foregoing discussion we learn that the alternative development paradigm is critical of the patronising tendencies accompanying modernisation development. It is critical of these discourses for their patronising attitudes towards local ways. The alternative development paradigm advances ways of working with the local people that seek to eliminate such tendencies. It categorically states that development practitioners from without should shed away patronising tendencies and be willing to work side by side with local people as their equals in projects of development. Development experts should be as much willing to learn from the local people as they are willing to help. They should be willing to learn how local people perceive development. They should be willing to learn about the local religio-traditional ideas of and attitudes towards development. They should be willing to learn how ideas and technologies of development affect local people and their ways (Macleay 1992).

In their application of method, the developers should be careful not to trample on local ways in the name of science. Modernisation development has done much damage to the cause of development in the name of progress and science. In the name of progress and science, the modernisation paradigm has done much to shift focus away from local knowledges and resources that could be used to advance the cause of development. Thus, science, as important as it is, should be applied with a high

degree of caution and sensitivity since its mere application does not necessarily guarantee positive results

2.2.4. Alternative Development and the Message of Sexual Abstinence

In this paper, in the tradition of the alternative development paradigm that localises development discourse, I treat the message of sexual abstinence, advanced by the evangelical Christian FBOs as a locally based discourse that might have implications for development because of its potential as a preventive mechanism against the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In many Faith Based Organizations the message of sexual abstinence has a strong religious ring about it. God, religious tradition and sacred texts are usually invoked to give justification to the message. In the face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, sexual abstinence is increasingly receiving attention as a potential preventive device against HIV infection. Science is also invoked at times to give legitimacy to sexual abstinence as a possible preventive device against HIV infection.⁷ However, many HIV/AIDS activists feel that the message is a waste of time and resources that should be spent on advancing the condom message (Allen 2002). The ground for such a feeling is the assumption that young people, across the board, have sex, and no amount of preaching can make a difference (Allen 2002). This is cast, for the most part, as the universal truth pertaining to young people. This truth should be accepted by faith-based organizations advancing sexual abstinence outside marriage, and the sooner they accept the truth the better. Though the alternative development paradigm has a bias for the marginalised, it fails to engage negative perceptions about religion. Even those scholars that argue that HIV/AIDS

⁷ The two cases of Green and Wilson exemplifies this trend

prevention intervention should be context specific, the context they refer to remains socio-cultural and economic, never religious. Against this backdrop, it is understandable why the message of sexual abstinence is not considered as an option for them, as they explore ways to engage processes involved in the construction of identities that influence people's response to HIV prevention intervention. Thus though the cultural, social, political as well as the economic phenomena have been given substantial attention by the alternative development paradigm, the religious phenomenon has yet to be explored within this paradigm. The major voices in the field of HIV/AIDS remain dismissive of the potential impact of sexual abstinence in the fight against HIV/AIDS. At times, the very insistence of FBOs on sexual abstinence is blamed for the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in South Africa.

However, research conducted in the area of HIV infection and youth sexuality in South Africa demonstrates that the situation is much more complex. It highlights a multiplicity of factors converging to render the condom message ineffective. Space in this research report does not permit discussion of all these factors. However, among these factors I note a particular construction of male sexuality that renders the condom message ineffective in curbing the spread of HIV in South Africa. In the following chapter I give a brief review of the literature highlighting the construction of this sexuality.