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**JUDGING THE LEVEL OF TRUE DEVELOPMENT AMONG THE IMPOVERISHED  
YOUTH IN THE PARISH OF ST JOHN, BARBADOS, FROM 2014 – 2019: THE  
PASTORAL MISSION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ITS SOCIAL TEACHING  
ON INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.**

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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores the application of the Catholic social teaching on Integral Human Development in the Caribbean island of Barbados. The social teaching is implemented through the Reading Programme instituted in the Parish of St. John to address the poverty within the community. Its purpose is to assess the integral nature of the development of each person and of the whole person as a viable model and template for national social integration and development. This is contrasted with the traditional approach taken by the Government, which focuses on limited aspects of human social development. This study analyses and assesses the Reading Programme, in view of *Populorum Progressio*, Paul VI's 1967 encyclical On the Development of Peoples, which develops the theme of Integral Human Development (IHD). The thesis recommends the inclusion of the IHD concept in national social programmes as a meaningful contribution to the development of each person and of the whole person, towards the alleviation of poverty.

Keywords: Integral Human Development; Populorum Progressio; Reading Programme; Authentic Development

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of Integral Human Development (IHD) has, for over 50 years, been the bedrock of the Catholic Church's social teaching, guiding its thinking in the area of service to the most vulnerable. Defined as "the centerpiece [sic] of the [Catholic Church's] mission", IHD "centers [sic] on the idea that the dignity of the human person is expressed in work and economic activity—but also in cultural richness, artistic creativity, religious belonging and spiritual practice. Most profoundly, human dignity is expressed in our relationships with and obligations to, family, community and all of humanity, around the globe" (Keough).

Barbados has benefited from the Church's various social services, including the St. Vincent De Paul Society, the HUB - People Helping People (in partnership with the European Union) (*Stewardship* 27) and other forms of care and feeding ministries to help alleviate poverty. The Church has also worked in tandem with international partners, among them, Food for the Poor (FFTP) and Universal Foods of Trinidad and Tobago, the Barbados Christian Council, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), which has provided grants, counselling, legal and financial advice, feeding programmes and assistance in job search.

While the Salvation Army is visible on the island and well known for its poverty alleviation outreach, it is the Catholic Church's policy of Integral Human Development, which places emphasis on the development of the human person in all dimensions of maturation, to bring about their flourishing. In 2014, therefore, the Church through the ecclesial Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary (OLOR) implemented the pastoral Reading Programme in the Parish of St. John, Barbados, to address the issue of human development among the youth.

While the youth in Barbados are seen as important members of society and are given many opportunities by the government, such opportunities are limited to aspects as the provision of school meals, uniforms for schoolchildren, free textbooks and transportation. These programmes set out to fix the education and technical training systems and the vocational education aspect of development, but fail to give a comprehensive form of development. This thesis proposes that if the Catholic social teaching on Integral Human Development were to be adopted by the Barbados Government, for the continuing transformation of the youth, it could function as a template and the cornerstone of its human developmental programmes, enhancing national social development.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research first focuses on Integral Human Development and a review of relevant literature to illustrate the path the Catholic Church has created for the development of peoples. IHD as delivered through the Reading Programme in the Parish of St. John's, Barbados will then be discussed. This district is considered to have the highest poverty rate among all parishes within the island of Barbados.

The Programme is then presented in the context of a historical overview of the Parish of St. John and the reasons for such levels and cycles of poverty, which result in oppression of its residents. Considering the theology of Integral Human Development, this analysis will employ the qualitative method to illustrate the historical and current state of affairs within the parish. Interviews were conducted with the children, who attended this programme, from its inception on September 20, 2014 to 2019. This research is limited in the first instance to the recipients of the Reading Programme as the litmus test of its applicability and success. While the programme assists approximately 30 children and youth (*Stewardship* 34), this research is limited to the assessment of 10 children, between the ages of 11 and 19, who were available to be interviewed. These children live in family settings with a minimal level of moral guidance and education. Each of the participants interviewed were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities and confidentiality.

Interviews with the parents of the beneficiaries of the Reading Programme while desirable were not practical for a variety of reasons, namely their lack of participation in church programmes and their reluctance to be interviewed given their lack of trust that they would not be judged as a result of their life circumstances.

A critical analysis of the findings of the Reading Programme is then presented. This chapter illustrates the developmental processes and outcomes of the programme throughout its existence. Recommendations will then be made for improvements to the existing Reading Programme and for the adoption of IHD by the civil society in its approach to human development, to ensure a more effective implementation of the concept of Integral Human Development. In the end, this thesis will seek to determine how the Reading Programme, viewed through the lens of IHD, has aided the transformation of impoverished youth in the Parish of St John, Barbados, from 2014 – 2019.

## **CHAPTER ONE: The Catholic Social Teaching on Integral Human Development**

### **1.1 The Origin of the Concept of Integral Human Development**

Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, argued that the political community's (the State) existence was for the purpose of allowing the people to live well. By this he meant that the State was responsible for ensuring that the people were properly developed, in order to move from a state of being licentious to a state of being virtuous (Aristotle 92), which he considered was the way a person found happiness (257). This would ensure the continued authentic development for the society. For Aristotle, the development of the person was imperative in order to bring about virtue and order in a society (92). Therefore, the development of peoples remains one of the essential elements for any governing body in a society. This process of development is known as human development and has been defined as "a process of enlarging people's choices" (Ranis et al. 1). This includes leading a long and healthy life, being educated and enjoying a decent standard of living.

On the other hand, the Catholic Church promotes the development of all areas of the human person in addition to the basic aspects of human development. This approach to development is known as Integral Human Development (IHD), which promotes not only the good of a person, but of all persons. It is considered a vocation, by Grassl, to which all personal, social and political activity must be directed (1). IHD moves away from the reductionist approach to development and promotes the development of not only the health, education and material wellbeing of the individual, but also the spiritual, moral, physical and social dimensions of development of the human person.

A historical background which led to the unfolding of the IHD concept begins properly in the period shortly after World War II. The post-colonial independent nations (PCINs) were in

need of aid and support to develop their countries (Keleher 21). International investments, loans and interventions were granted to many of these PCINs to help generate and sustain the country's Gross National Product (GNP). The idea behind this action was to decrease the economic poverty of those PCINs and improve the economic wellbeing of the poor. While, many of these PCINs reached their targeted GNP growth rate by the expected time period, Keleher found the lives of the majority of the poor in those countries went unchanged (22). Furthermore, within the 1980s and 90s, the majority of these PCINs stopped meeting their GNP growth rate targets. This led to the failure of many of these international aid and development programmes, as they failed to improve the lives of the people within those nations. Some of these PCINs struggled to repay their mounting foreign debts and were led to sacrifice State social and economic redistribution programmes (22).

Following these problematic schemes which focused on economic growth at the cost of a forgotten poor, Goulet made the observation that authentic development consisted of more than economic growth and required that people become *more human*. He felt that society's development was about not how much more a person had, but by being *enabled to be more*. For Goulet, considered the "father" of development ethics, "[the] main criterion of development is not increased production or material well being but qualitative human enrichment" (qtd. in Keleher 22). It is with little surprise that Goulet's mentor Joseph Lebret, a French economist and social planner, and a Dominican priest was identified by Paul VI as one of the principal investigators of the very influential 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (Keleher 20).

### **1.2 Populorum Progressio: The Concept of Integral Human Development**

In *Populorum Progressio* Paul VI introduced the concept of IHD as a social teaching. He placed the social question of authentic development in its worldwide context and gave an insight

into what he believed were the sources of war (par. 3). In the encyclical Paul VI defined what the authentic development of the human person entailed. The Pope made it clear that the development of peoples was a worldwide challenge and should not be limited to industrialisation and economic development, but that genuine progress should consist in an economic order which is designed for the welfare of the human person (par. 86). This kind of development could not be restricted to economic growth alone for a society, but should foster development of each individual and the entire individual, both the personal and social levels of human existence (see Appendix B). He claimed that neither economics nor development should be separated from human realities. The human person as a whole is what matters most and the economics and development of a society should facilitate the authentic development of the human person within each society (Paul VI; par. 14).

Lori Keleher, in her article, “Toward an Integral Human Development Ethics”, considered the two concepts “Development Ethics” and “Integral Human Development” and established that there was common ground. Though, as she claimed, the theory and practice of development ethics was largely a secular field, it could “benefit greatly from work done in integral human development” (1), as IHD was not simply economic development, but also development of the whole person, including, but not limited to the social, political, creative, spiritual dimension of every person.

Ludovic Bertina, in his article, “The Catholic Doctrine of ‘Integral Human Development’ and its Influence on the International Development Community”, interrogated the uniqueness of the concept of IHD and examined how it influenced the theoretical framework of the international community on development (2). He noted, in Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), the support of the institutions of the Catholic Church for the development of

nations, particularly where industrialism and technological innovation were concerned. This would have contributed to a sense of wellbeing and the ideals of prosperity in these developing nations. But, in the 1960s Bertina felt a shift in the pontifical discourse on the social teachings of the Church, “in response to the phenomenon of globalisation and the many concomitant crises” which were taking place during that period (2). He found the pontiffs consciously adjusted the social teachings of the Church, from the original concern with working class issues, to focus more on notions of development. Paul VI’s *Populorum Progressio*, according to Bertina, laid the first foundations of a purely religious conception of development, which gradually distanced itself from the theories of development for purely economic and technological prosperity (2).

Another document which has driven the conversation surrounding integral human development at the start of this decade is *Caritas in Veritate* (2009). In that encyclical, Benedict XVI affirmed that charity in truth, to which Jesus bore witness, “is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity” (par. 5). He highlighted IHD themes from Paul VI’s *Populorum Progressio*, though with more focus on the centrality of love in relation to truth (O'Brien and Shannon 396). He made the point that practising charity in truth helps people to understand that adhering to the values of Christianity, is essential for building a good society and for true integral human development (Benedict XVI; par. 8). This, he claimed, is the hope for progress “from less human conditions to those which are more human” (par. 12).

### **1.3 A Global Issue with Regional and Local Pertinence**

According to Benedict XVI, the goal of any social and economic policy is “to make a commitment to securing authentic integral human development inspired by the values of charity in truth” (par. 67). The end result of this programme or policy should be a state of personal

wellbeing in the context of just and peaceful relationships and a thriving environment. Therefore, IHD was the process by which a person achieved this wellbeing and common good. This process of development entailed a long-term dynamic programme, based on human dignity and right relations with God, self, others and all of creation (Grassl 1), in order to develop the multiple dimensions of human wellbeing. IHD, therefore, amounted to making the intellectual and spiritual wellbeing of the human person, fundamental to human dignity and the common good.

Since *Populorum Progressio*, IHD has become crucial in the proclamation of the Gospel within the Catholic Church. The Church is no longer satisfied with only teaching its doctrines and catechesis, which are primarily centred on the spiritual development of its members. The Church sees as imperative to its mission, the generating of awareness that God's intent for all human beings was to fully develop every dimension of the human person (Dickson 31). This means that proficiency in formal education and being economically successful is not sufficient for considering someone well developed.

Although the Catholic Church views as its primary mission, the bringing of all human beings to this fullness of development, it recognises that not all human beings have the necessary opportunities for such development, though it remains their personal responsibility to achieve this fullness of development. It is the Church's belief that all societies should provide the necessary institutions of development in order to afford all people the opportunity to achieve this fullness of development — "If I got the man right, the world would be right" (Kelly 7).

Many governments in developing nations, including those in the Caribbean region, contribute heavily to the financial support of their citizens; but they tend to focus on the educational, economic and technological aspects of development. Other areas—the physical, emotional, moral and spiritual dimensions of development—do not receive an adequate level of

attention. This approach to human development represents a reductionist approach, as it reduces development of the human person to only areas of health, education and material wellbeing (Ranis et al. 9). Many citizens in such societies remain undeveloped and unable to attain what is their given right, which is human flourishing. This lack of a comprehensive approach to human development is a global social challenge.

Within the Caribbean region, Barbados falls into this category. In many areas of the country, programmes are created and maintained by the government for the purpose of developing the person, but not from an integral point of view. These programmes are employed with the hope that by developing, certain aspects of the individual within the society, an ordered society would emerge. But, there is an absence of a programme that takes into consideration the moral, spiritual and physical aspects of development. Thus, in many cases, the individual finds him or her not reaching his /her full flourishing. Integral human development finds its expression in the Catholic Church in Barbados through the Reading Programme which will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO: The Reading Programme**

### **2.1 The Origin, Nature and Application of the Reading Programme in the Parish of St.**

#### **John**

The Reading Programme, which was launched on 20 September 2014, assists 30 young people within the Parish of St. John with their reading and schoolwork assignments. It helps Catholics as well as non-Catholics—all the time working within a Catholic environment and framework of development.

The programme had its genesis in an idea of a few of the parishioners, to start a library in the church so the children in the area could learn and practice how to read. But this idea evolved into a wider discussion about the possibility of reviving a summer camp for the children in the parish during the months of July - August. They saw this as a way to reach their target audience (the children) for launching a remedial reading programme. Spearheading the initiative to bring this programme to fruition was a married couple Alesia Persaud and Feroze Rafikh (Uncle Dave), who worked closely with the parish deacon Steven Joseph and his wife Joyann Joseph and parish priest Fr. Clement Paul.

In the period under review, the Reading Programme became an important part of the parish's outreach and instrumental in providing means of engaging the community. Though it retained its original mission of teaching remedial reading to the children of the community, it also served to assist the children with their homework assignments and offered interactive sessions to aid the children with their 11+ examinations, while providing support for the growth and guidance of the older ones (*Stewardship* 34). Children fell into one of three groups—pre 11+ students, 11+ students and secondary school students. Sessions took place on Saturdays from 2pm - 4pm and on Wednesdays after school for students preparing for the 11+ exam. Two

professional teachers, along with other members of the parish church volunteered their time and skills in assisting these students in their 11+ preparations, with the use of specific software donated by a company known as Aries Technology.

In addition to academic assistance, the Reading Programme gave children in the secondary school category, the opportunity to work with a clinical psychologist to build positive behaviours as they matured and progressed through their teenage life (*Stewardship* 34). The programme also allowed some of the secondary school students the opportunity to further their education and development through scholarships from various charitable organisations, including the HUB.

Outside of the academic area of development, the programme also allowed for volunteers to train some of the students in music and in art. Musicians from the church choir and a local artist conducted afternoon sessions on Saturdays for the students.

As an extension to the programme, Camp of Colours – a one-week camp, in which about 35 children participated annually, took place in the holiday period, July - August (*Stewardship* 35). The camp, which ran from 9am - 3pm each day, provided breakfast and lunch to each participant. During the camp, the students were taken on tours to places of interest including the museum St. Nicholas Abby and Nature Fun Ranch, where they were taught the care of animals, gardening, horseback riding and archery (*Stewardship* 35). Each year, generous donors came to the support of the camp, including the Maria Holder Trust and corporate Barbados.

According to Alesia Persaud, the vision for the future of the Reading Programme is to extend its reach to all youth in the Parish of St. John. Many in the community have dropped out of primary school and high school and have no academic accomplishments, limiting to a great extent the opportunities for gainful employment. Alesia claims the aim of the programme is to

ensure the youth develop a skill to support themselves and, by extension, their families. She envisions further development of the Programme to accommodate the growing needs of the young people within the parish. A specific option would be to offer short vocational and academic courses to allow these young men and women the opportunity to grow and develop their skills and intellect, to make a meaningful contribution to society.

## **2.2 The Historical Background of The Parish of St. John and the Challenges it Faces.**

Barbados, one of the most densely populated countries in the Caribbean (Nichols 9), has a population of about 277,821 with an average of 622 persons per square kilometre. St. John is one of 11 parishes which serve as administrative units in this former British colony (Nichols 9). Initially, Barbados' economy was based on agriculture and sugar production in particular; it has now become very dependent on services in the tourism and international finance sectors (Squires 4). St. John is on the north-east of Barbados and has a population of 8,963 persons (Brinkhoff). Accessible from Bridgetown, via steep winding hills, St. John is situated between the parishes of St. Philip and St. Joseph. The parish boasts many historical tourist attractions, including Codrington College, built in 1743 making it the oldest Anglican theological college in the Western Hemisphere and many exquisite beaches with hotels, among them, Bath Beach, Lemon Arbor and Martins Bay. It is estimated that the poverty rating in St. John, however, is among one of the highest of all the parishes of Barbados. While in the other 10 parishes, many tend to migrate in and out of poverty, better known as transient poverty, as a result of the economic shocks which the country experienced in 2001 and again in 2008/2009 (*Barbados Overview* 15); many of the citizens in St. John remain chronically poor.

While "Barbados has been able to achieve a 'very high human development' status," according to the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme

[UNDP] (qtd. in *Barbados Overview ...*), there are many challenges in this particular parish with respect when it comes to improving the quality of educational output. These challenges are predominantly among the poor, who tend to be associated with a larger household size with more children 15 years and under, overcrowding, low human capital, low paying jobs and unemployment and absent fathers. Although universal secondary level education exists in the country, only a few of the children from this parish are able to take advantage of such opportunities because of the economic situation of most families (*Barbados Overview* 95). Some of the most poor have few material assets with insecure tenure of property. This is largely due to intergenerational poverty. Within Barbados, “it was estimated that 8.7 percent of all households ... lived below the poverty line”. But, while, according to the Country Assessment, poverty rates averaged at 4.4 per cent in St. James, it was about 13.9 per cent in St. John (58), where some are destitute, that is, they own nothing and are unable to eat regularly (54).

This level of poverty does not allow for children to grow and develop properly, but instead allows for an environment where children are abused. “Slavery”, prostitution, pornography and other illicit and hazardous activities (Dunn 46) can easily get a footing. Incest is ‘slavery’, since the child, who most times is a girl, is considered the legal “property” of the abuser. She is forced to obey due to financial dependence on the abuser, who in most cases is a male relative (Dunn 47).

This culture comes from the historical ideology, common in many Caribbean islands: children are regarded as the property of their parents and have no rights as individuals. They are, therefore, subjected to the will of their parents or guardians. The situation is worsened when other family members become involved or included in the abusive activity and the abused are silenced by fear and economic dependence on the abuser (Dunn 47).

One mother, in one of the interviews, declared she felt powerless to intervene or report the abuser for fear of the repercussions. Others did not see incest as a problem, because it was what they were accustomed to since childhood. Many of these abusive activities tend to be motivated by financial dependency, often on the need for financial support for a child. In the report “Barbados the Situation of Children in the Worst Forms of Child Labour in a tourism economy: A Rapid Assessment”, Leith L. Dunn states there is evidence of activities suggestive of the worst forms of child labour among poor families. “Among the main causes for children to be working and involved in the worst forms of child labour were: poverty and children wanting to contribute to their family’s income; poor morals and values; inadequate public awareness of children’s rights, poor parenting; the absence of parents or caregivers; and family crises including domestic violence (Dunn 14).” Many of these children tend to drop out of school at the secondary level, to attain some form of occupation, in order to financially survive, before completing their education. Economic power tends to be a heavy motivator to drop out of school for many, as they seek independence, or to assist their struggling families. For many of these families, there is an acceptance of the lifestyle and values associated with illicit activities that lure some children to drop out of school and succumb to child labour (Dunn 55).

Other reasons why many children drop out of school include: dissatisfaction with the school system, poor values (wants vs needs), inadequate awareness of children’s rights, poor parenting, absence of parents or caregivers and family breakups. This would also include domestic violence (Dunn 54). As a result of these issues within the families of the children under review, poverty would more than likely increase among the children who dropped out of school, stagnating the development of the human person within the community, with adverse repercussions for the nation.

### **CHAPTER THREE: Findings and Recommendations**

#### **3.1 A Review of the Family Background and Demographics of the Parish of St. John's**

##### **Reading Programme Participants**

**Table 1.**

<b>Number of Interviewees</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Absent Father</b>	<b>Low Paying Job</b>	<b>Unemployed parents</b>	<b>Household Size</b>
10	11-19	8	10	4	2-8

For this study, research results were categorized according to (a) family background and demographics<sup>1</sup> and (b) the benefit of the programme to the individuals<sup>2</sup>. Under the rubric of “family background and demographics” the interviews focused on the size of the household, child’s religion, family structure, parent’s occupation, religion and amenities. This gave knowledge of the children who attended the programme and lived in the parish community. Many of the students related that they lived in large and extended households, which included grandparents or guardians.

One interview was conducted with a group, comprising current participants and graduates of the programme, between the ages of 12 and 17<sup>3</sup>. None of these participants were Catholic, although one recalled being christened. To a great extent these young people seemed unfamiliar with the Catholic Church and its teachings; they had many questions about the faith. Most of the children lived with one parent; the other, if known was living in another parish. Some were unaware of their parents’ occupations while others talked about their parents’ low-income, self-employment jobs, making local soaps or cakes for sale. Meals seemed limited to basic staples of

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix D

<sup>3</sup> John, Eve, Simon, Leah, Hanna (See Appendix C)

rice and flour dumplings, eggs and breadfruit from the backyard. Several children reported health issues that affected both their school attendance and aspirations for the future. One individual indicated he was interested in sports but felt that his asthma would hinder him from having a career along these lines.

While the children reported that the programme helped them to attain the necessary standard to pass the 11+ exams and secure placement in the top secondary schools, some at the post-primary level felt the programme did not meet their needs. The facilitators tended to focus on the younger children and often the older ones were left with little to do. This approach hastened their departure from the programme and influenced their dropping out from school. The children said they benefited from the moral teachings presented via the reading programme, however, they admitted their attendance was not consistent, as some of the topics were not of any interest to them. Interestingly, they expressed a desire to learn more about the Catholic faith and be mentored by adults both in faith formation and academic pursuits.

Two other children, a brother and sister<sup>4</sup>, who both lived in the same home with their parents, were interviewed. Peter was 15 and Martha 19; both were baptised Catholics awaiting confirmation. Peter still attended the Reading Programme, while Martha graduated and was gainfully employed as a clerk at one of the businesses in the city. The mother was the breadwinner, since their father had suffered an accident which injured his back a few years ago, leaving him unable to work. Although their mother was a private chef with a reasonable income, both children lamented that the family was limited financially. Martha's salary contributed to the family income, while Peter helped himself by washing cars and doing house chores at various

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<sup>4</sup> Peter and Martha (See Appendix C)

homes within the parish. The household was also supported by an older sister who lived adjacent to them in St. John.

Both children have high aspirations. Peter wanted to pursue a career in music and Martha a career in “radio” and “feature writing”. Peter is no longer attending the academic part of the programme, but attends guitar lessons as part of the programme. Although Martha is no longer participating in classes, she still participates by assisting with the younger children in the programme. Martha cites the Reading Programme as instrumental in the acquisition of a scholarship to the Barbados Community College. Through the merits of the programme and the efforts of the local parish church, she was able to attend the Antilles Episcopal Conference Youth Assembly in Martinique in July and the Caribbean School for Catholic Communications in Trinidad the following month in 2018.

Peter reported a marked academic improvement after beginning the programme during the second year of high school, which has allowed him to make good progress there. Both children said the programme inspired them to become Catholic and to participate willingly in the life of the Church. While both children were appreciative of the facilitators’ efforts to improve and adjust the programme, more and more, in their estimation the programme failed to cater to the older students or those who had completed their CXC examinations.

Another graduate of the Reading Programme, 17-year-old Sarah lived with her mother and 18-year-old sister and had never met her father or the extended members of her family. Sarah also indicated she had a brother, who lived on his own, but that she was unaware of whether or not he was employed. She lamented having no male figure in her life which had affected her ability to socialise with others. Her mother had a low-income job of plucking and gutting chickens and depended on welfare grants, which are supplemented by donations from the

parish church. Still, Sarah reported that funds from these sources were insufficient to meet their needs as they could not afford to go shopping. Although her family lived in their own home, they had no electricity, but “borrowed from the next-door neighbour”. They recently had received a water connection from the authority having previously sourced water from a nearby standpipe.

Having attended the programme for over six years, Sarah was interested in acquiring further skills and expressed a desire to become a chef. At the time of our interview, a “Skills Training Programme”<sup>5</sup> was available in another parish on the northern end of the island, but some distance away from where she resided on the eastern side. She said she had benefited from the Programme as she believed it helped her “to become better” and “it helps young people to be in a better position in life”. She said the programme helped her to deal with the lack of a male figure in her life and as a result she was able to interact with others more easily.

Mary, 18, a high school dropout and her two sisters lived with their 89-year-old great grandmother. Although the sisters lived next door to their aunts who became their guardians, Mary had to look after many of her younger siblings and relatives. Mary’s mother, 37, resided with her grandmother because medication given to her during childbirth to stem bleeding resulted in her suffering with seizures and becoming comatose. As a result of the coma, she was unable to care for herself for the past 14 years. Mary reported not having a good relationship with her father. Although he no longer beat her, the emotional and mental abuse had continued. She said she believed her father was physically abused by his mother and his father was an alcoholic.

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<sup>5</sup>The Skills Training Programme is a modular, competency-based training programme committed to providing training to young Barbadians that equips them with employable and marketable job skills in a variety of occupational trades. (*Barbados Vocational Training Board*).

Mary was employed at a supermarket and enjoyed working there, but said she was tired of the job. She had all the basic needs at home: running water, electricity, cable and wifi since her brother also worked and rendered financial assistance. Her mother's aunts are self-employed as seamstresses, so they made the school uniforms for her siblings. Mary reported that occasionally times were hard but normally food was not a problem.

Mary attended the Reading Programme from its inception in 2014. It proved beneficial for her since she was able to get help with mathematics. She planned to study bar and restaurant services at the "Skills Training Programme" since she did well at Food and Nutrition in school and the training offered paid job attachments, with the potential for permanent employment. The programme has also allowed Mary to control her aggression as she struggled with depression, which she explains seeing "that something needs to be done and you haven't the power to do it".

James, a 15-year old non-Catholic, described living with one parent (mother) and three siblings<sup>6</sup>. He indicated that although his mother was the only parent in the house, there were instances when her boyfriend would visit and spend time with the family. His mother was in her 40s and unemployed but managed the household from the support of the child's father, a 50-year-old gardener. Her income was supplemented by welfare cheques due to her from the estate of the deceased father of one of her other children, as well as from contributions from the mother's current boyfriend. James was unaware of his mother or father's religious background, but, his mother imparted social values to him. They lived in their own dwelling, which each family member helped design and construct. The home contained the amenities of running water, electricity, and members had the use of cell phones.

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<sup>6</sup> James (See Appendix C).

James, a secondary school student, attended the programme's vacation camp for the first time in 2019, and has aspirations of becoming a soldier, fuelled by a desire to protect and serve. The family does not attend church and he has no affiliation with any religion. He was largely unaware of what the Reading Programme entailed, in terms of the academic sessions and the moral development it could offer, but did indicate some interest in learning more about it and participating in future events.

### **3.2 Recommendations for a More Effective Human Development of the Impoverished Youth.**

The findings of this research into the pastoral programme sponsored by the Catholic Church in the Parish of St. John revealed that the "principle of the centrality of the human person, as the subject primarily responsible for development," was preserved (Benedict XVI 31). The Reading Programme, which was initially conceptualized for the children in the community to teach them how to read, evolved into a curriculum for remedial sessions in English and mathematics and in preparing the children for examinations.

The facilitators were able to connect with the children to a greater degree because of the small numbers of participants in the classes. This made it easier for them to connect with the children and to recognise the areas that needed attention. According to one of the facilitators, the children who were unable to keep up with the work load and who might have felt awkward among their peers were worked with separately to ensure each child had the opportunity to make progress.

The programme also looked to establish relationships with the parents, many of whom at first showed little or no interest in the programme, but later ensured their children attended the classes devotedly. The facilitators were aware that many children came from single parent

homes, and suffered from various domestic issues and were hampered by poverty. From my observations, the facilitators are very sensitive to the needs of the children and are seeking to be a bridge between child and parent.

Although they did not conduct any formal teaching on morals and virtues, because of time constraints, the facilitators believe their example has left a mark on the children and helped to equip them to influence their peers in positive ways.

The facilitators see tangible growth and development in the lives of the participants, many of whom successfully write their examinations and enter high school, year after year, showing their ability to rise beyond their struggles and make the best use of the programme. And, for those who are not successful in their exams, the doors of the Reading Programme remain open.

Clearly, the Reading Programme has been of profound value to the children and their families in the Parish of St. John and the structure and content of the programme has enabled the principles of Integral Human Development to be applied, even though the facilitators may not have studied the concept.

But, there is room for the programme to grow and for the work of Integral Human Development to be pursued in a conscious manner. While the programme served the academic needs of the younger children, the older participants believed that after a certain age or stage within the programme, the facilitators did not consider their needs. Many of these children, especially the older ones deal with emotional and psychological distress, caused by the severity of their poverty and wounded family upbringing. The felt lack of attentiveness would seem to have driven some participants to leave the programme. The reality is that the Reading

Programme may not be equipped to do more. The issues, as expressed by the older participants, suggest the need for specialized professional help.

One consideration which could potentially make the Reading programme more effective would be to revise its curriculum to allow for a more integrated approach to development, enlightened by the Church's social teaching on IHD, which would cater to the needs of every dimension of the child and of every child in the programme. An assessment of the curriculum could be carried out to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of what is being taught to the children. This would grant the opportunity to further evolve and improve upon some of the existing activities, projects or programmes in the Reading Programme.

A second consideration would be the job placement aspect of the Reading Programme. Graduates could be recruited to teach and guide the younger children in some of their schoolwork and activities. As graduates they would have a vested interest in its success. This would promote a sense of responsibility and ownership for the programme in their community, which would bring an end to the intergenerational poverty within the parish.

A third consideration to the programme was taking into account the existing brokenness, social challenges and complexity of family life among the children, it would be incumbent on the facilitators of the Reading Programme to implement a more dedicated mentorship element, in addition to the work being done by the clinical physiologist. This mentorship aspect could also include spiritual direction, not for religious conversion, but for the purpose of developing the spiritual dimension of each individual. The implementation of pastoral psychotherapy should be considered for the family of the children who wish to seek therapeutic assistance. Group counselling would also aid in the building and repair of families, helping members to adopt

greater coping strategies in the parish and to become contributing members of society, the objective of human development.

The participants of the programme, in recognition of the benefits they have derived, but with the experience of the obstacles faced, cited the need for a more structured approach to fund raising to offset the costs of facilitating such a programme. The socio-economic context, the issues that confront the Reading Programme and the potential benefit to society require meaningful dialogue between the government and the social partners and citizens on the current issues and problems facing these children. Meaningful financial assistance should be requested for the work of the programme (Squires 15). The promotion and re-cultivation of the spirit of voluntarism and self-help among individuals, families and communities would be another way to address the financial constraints, thereby fostering a more effective Reading Programme.

## CONCLUSION

While the Reading Programme has been applied in only one parish in the Diocese of Bridgetown, its inroads and success stories among the impoverished youth of the parish, merit consideration for pilot projects and eventual implementation throughout the Catholic Diocese in the first instance. From this study, three key areas emerged that suggest a path to authentic development.

First, since Catholics comprise just 4.2% of the Barbados population and the population is 95% Christian, the possibility exists for further collaboration with other Christian faiths to introduce and extend the reach of the programme. The principles of IHD find common ground in basic tenets of all Christian denominations. The Barbadian society stands to gain, therefore, from the role ecumenism can play in the ongoing work of human development. What has started as a local programme in one parish has the potential to become the template for development throughout the Christian community.

Second, the Reading Programme has had a great impact on the lives of several children within the Parish of St. John. It has evolved from its original mandate to teach children how to read, to providing opportunities for other areas of study and to further the development of the participants. For the founders, motivation for this programme came from a desire to care for members of the community with little knowledge of the Church's teaching on IHD. This programme has the potential for improvement, and with the addition of an adequate understanding of IHD by the facilitators, would allow for it to serve a greater and wider society.

Finally, several people within the secular society working in the field of human development in Barbados may not have studied Integral Human Development and thus be able to fully appreciate the contribution that IHD has made to the development of peoples. In the same

vein, many Catholics may avoid the human development literature as they assume it contains incomplete theories that lack the divine and spiritual aspect of development (Keleher 30). Yet, these two traditions (human development and IHD) have a lot to offer one another.

IHD holds that development that enables us to be more human must be integral in two ways. On the one hand, it is about the development of the whole person (spiritual, political, creative, financial, social and moral) and not just the narrowly understood economic development. This approach to development is reflected in the methods of those who speak of human development, recognising poverty as a lack of opportunities to be and to do things required for human flourishing (Keleher 30). On the other hand, IHD promotes the development of every person, in that it does not consider the development of only certain people, but both rich and poor, fortunate and less fortunate (Keleher 31). IHD recommends that the poor are lifted out of their poverty, but also that the poor and rich stand together in a relationship of solidarity as members of the human family. With this understanding of development, both the individual and the society become more human.

If IHD were to be adopted by the Barbados Government, for the continuing transformation of the youth, it could function as a template and the cornerstone of its human development programmes, while enhancing national social development. At a minimum, the government and secular organisations could work together with the religious community in addressing poverty. The solution may not reside in any one approach but rather in the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders. The tenets of the Catholic social teaching on Integral Human Development provide a starting point for meaningful and true development among the impoverished youth in the Parish of St John, Barbados and by extension, the nation.

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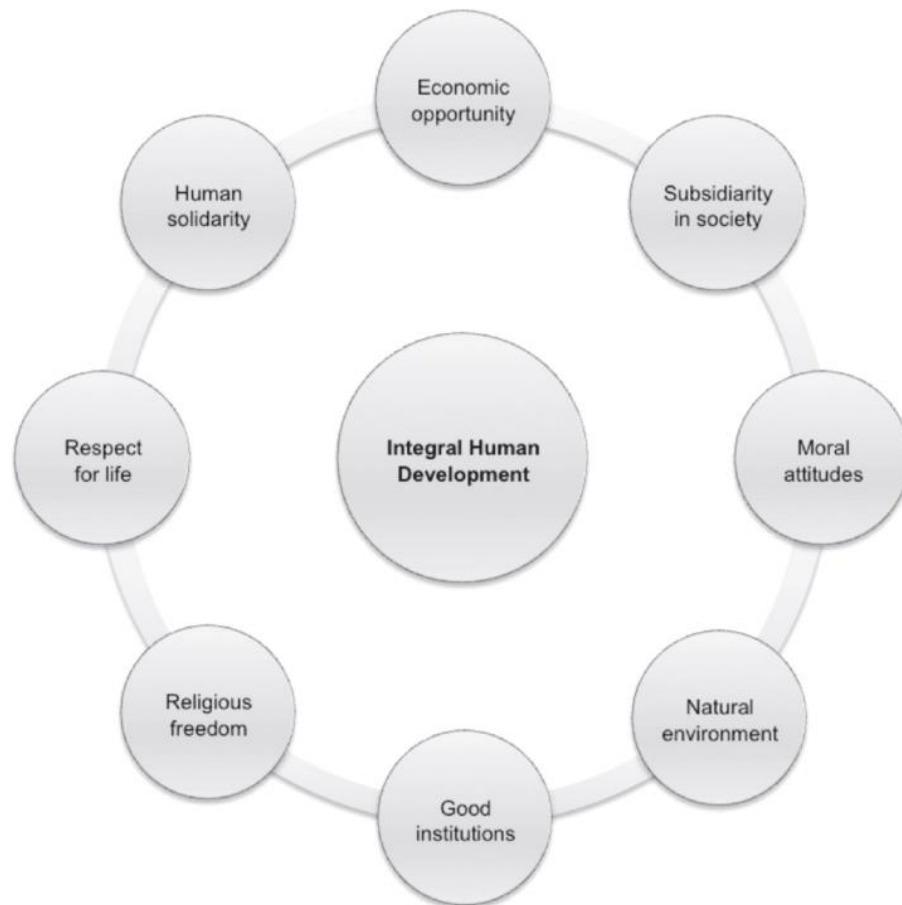
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**APPENDIX A**

**Questionnaire Sample**

1. Name and age?
2. Who are your parents?
3. What are your parent's jobs?
4. Who do you live with -describe your family?
5. What school do you attend and what level?
6. How long have you attended the Reading Programme?
7. What is the benefit of the Reading Programme to you?
8. What do you think is needed to improve the Reading Programme?

**APPENDIX B**



**Factors Fostering IHD (Grassl 9)**

**APPENDIX C****Table 2: Family Background and Demographics**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Household Size</b>	<b>Child's Religion</b>	<b>Family Structure</b>	<b>Parents Occupation</b>	<b>Parents' Religion</b>	<b>Amenities</b>
<b>Peter</b>	15	4	Catholic	Lives with both parents	Mother: private chef Father: unemployed	Non-Catholic	Live in their own home
<b>Martha</b>	19	4	Catholic	Lives with her parents and siblings	Mother owns a catering business Father injured and unable to work	Unknown	Basic amenities
<b>Sarah</b>	17	3	Catholic	Lives with mother and sister No father figure in her life	Mother works in a pluck and gut shop. Receives welfare benefits Church donations	Unknown	Own home. Borrows electricity from a neighbour. Running water
<b>Mary</b>	18	2	Non-Catholic	Lives with maternal great grandmother. Abusive father. History of alcoholism, drug abuse and violence	Mother has seizures and cannot care for herself	No one attends church	Basic needs at home: running water, electricity, cable and Wi-Fi
<b>James</b>	15	5	Non-Catholic	Lives with his mother	Mother unemployed	Unknown	Live in their own

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Household Size</b>	<b>Child's Religion</b>	<b>Family Structure</b>	<b>Parents Occupation</b>	<b>Parents' Religion</b>	<b>Amenities</b>
					Financial support: child's father, social welfare, boyfriend		home, have running water, electricity and cell phones
<b>John</b>	17	8	Unknown	Does not live with father	Mother makes local soap for sale  Welfare and church donations	Unknown	Basic water and electricity
<b>Eve</b>	14	8	Unknown	Lives with mother	Welfare and church donations	Unknown	Basic water and electricity
<b>Simon</b>	12	8	Unknown	Lives with mother	Welfare and church donations	Unknown	Basic water and electricity
<b>Leah</b>	14	8	Unknown	Lives with mother	Welfare and church donations	Unknown	Basic water and electricity
<b>Hanna</b>	11	8	Unknown	Lives with mother	Welfare and church donations	Unknown	Basic water and electricity

**APPENDIX D****Table 3: The Parish of St. John's Reading Programme Participants' Review**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of years in Reading Programme</b>	<b>Rating of Reading Programme</b>	<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Child's occupation</b>
<b>Peter</b>	15	6	Helped him get out of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Form	Bar and restaurant services skills training.	Washes cars/household chores
<b>Martha</b>	19	From inception in 2014	Helped teach the younger students. Programme helped with studies. Obtained a scholarship to the Community College. Travel and study opportunities regionally	Bachelors in Media and Journalism	Not stated
<b>Sarah</b>	17	5-6	Young people in a better position in life. Socialises better.	To sign up for skills training	Not stated
<b>Mary</b>	18	From inception	Helped with her maths	Dropped out of high school	Washed/ cooked for her siblings
<b>James</b>	15		Attended the Camp of Colours	Wants to become a soldier Secondary school	Not stated
<b>John</b>	17	Inception	Moral teachings. Wanted to be mentored and learn more of the catholic faith	Secondary school	Not stated
<b>Eve</b>	14	Not stated	Moral teachings. Wanted to be mentored and learn more of the catholic faith	Attends secondary school	Not stated

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of years in Reading Programme</b>	<b>Rating of Reading Programme</b>	<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Child's occupation</b>
<b>Simon</b>	12	Not stated	Moral teachings. Wanted to be mentored and learn more of the catholic faith	Likes running but never explored being a professional athlete	Not stated
<b>Leah</b>	14	From inception	Better people with values  Attendance not consistent	Secondary school	Not stated
<b>Hanna</b>	11	Not stated	Moral teachings. Wanted to be mentored and learn more of the catholic faith	Secondary school	Not stated