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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
CGE	Centre for Global Ethics
DA	Democratic Alliance
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
FCC	Federal Council of Churches
HTS	Hervormde Theological Studies/Teologiese Studies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMC	International Missionary Conference
NCC	National Council of Churches
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NHKA	Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika/Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCRC	World Council of Reformed Churches
WTO	World Trade Organization

Chapter 1

Introduction

Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified,
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied.

(James Russell Lowell, *The Present Crisis*, 1904:189)

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study is about Jesus' significant representation of the kingdom of God utilizable for mission today, a topic of importance for contemporary Christianity. New Testament Studies explores the correlation between the ancient scripture of antiquity and a responsible contemporary interpretation thereof. This study matters because of the centrality of these scriptures and a legacy of tradition that the Christian faith is built upon. Realizing the secularizing effect of the inevitable development of globalization, the (Christian) religious of the third millennium has to reconsider its assumed position in the world. How can religion still be significant today? How long will our species survive on this planet without a foundation of values and ethics that can sustain a life of justice? The obsolete debates about whether or not mainline religions will survive are not currently the most controversial topic. What does draw attention, and concern, is what will be able to stop everything accepted as unjust, oppressive, and bigotry? It is remarkable that after two millennia of Jesus' life, 'mission in the kingdom of God' considered still of great importance for human life on earth. Indeed, contemporary secularists¹ might not commend religion with the custody of such a fundamental burden of responsibility. Yet, considering the times we live in, a foundation of sustainable values for earth are inescapably important.

¹ This study draws from Charles Taylor's understandings of 'secular' in Smith (2014:20). a.) A more 'classical' definition of the secular, as distinguished from the sacred — the earthly plane of domestic life. Priests tend the sacred; butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers carry out 'secular' work; b.) A more 'modern' definition of the secular as a-religious — neutral, unbiased, 'objective' — as in a 'secular' public square; c.) Taylor's notion of the secular as an age of contested belief, where religious belief is no longer axiomatic. It is possible to imagine not believing in God. A worldview or social imaginary that is able to account for meaning and significance without any appeal to the divine or transcendence.

The Christian faith, for one, believes that these foundational values for the cosmos are to be substantiated with the interpretation of available Scriptures. Interpretation, taken for its word, underscores the reason for the innumerable variety of Christian traditions currently claiming a stake as part of ‘Εἰς μίαν, ἁγίαν, καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν’. The self-bequeathed charge to further these essential beliefs, and established conventions, are threatened when an ever-developing cosmos provokes transformation. The understandable response would be to safeguard and therefore preserve the convention through tactics of survival. Herein lurks the unjustifiable reaction of exclusiveness. For another to partake in the ‘one holy body’, some requirements need to be met before acceptance is possible. Ironically, the tension between (established) convention and (bequeathed) obligation are nullified with (counterproductive) self-preservation that takes priority over covenantal obligation; therefore the need for a foundation that will be concrete enough to sustain an ethos (covenant) while being able to improvise to whatever obstacle (globalization) presents the opportunity for distributive justice.

1.1.1 Why choose a missiological-based theme as (inter-disciplinary) topic?

‘Mission’ or ‘missional’ have been the buzzword and current popular fad for academics and churches to pursue (see § 1.3-1.3.2.4). At this stage, ‘mission sells’. For what reason should it not? Communication and travel opportunities are more commonly accessible than ever before. The appealing possibility of being a global-citizen is intriguing—why not combine it with a ‘good’ virtuous reason?

There are numerous examples of the misuse of the term ‘mission’. It is not this studies’ objective to partake in the popularity of the ‘missional’ movement. Rather, the study aims to depart from contemporary mission by identifying the essential components of a just life that transcends mere ‘moral-obligation’. Mission, understood as scapegoat for a stagnant faith, is not the answer. In addition, mission, understood as the solution for the sake a declining church-culture, is also not a viable option.

Missiology through New Testament research, however, does inform this studies’ hypothesis in that it is the foundation for any human being to build a life of participation on and in the kingdom of God. Therefore, it is important to identify a

concrete clarification of mission that is too often misrepresented because it is misinterpreted. The consequences of self-interested interpretation are strewn over history, and are, church willing, not to be repeated.

1.1.2 The problem to be investigated

If globalization is perceived as an opportunity rather than an obstacle, and contemporary missional practices are not collaborating with incisive action, what should the methodological foundation for an alternative interpretation of Jesus's actions be? Which foundational values, for example from the Social Gospel movement, can be derived for an alternative interpretation to inform the Christian religion? When the 'one holy ecclesia' has to responsibly respond to transformation, the challenge is not identifying the problem, but rather the course of action to be taken, if any. The usual solution would be to customize, or rearrange, some inconsequential practices to temporarily subdue any invasiveness, without threatening to be unsettling towards traditional ethos. This study uses the declining numbers of churchgoers in the world, not to mention religious people, as example of the church's sudden reaction. The impact of a variety of developments in a changing world, currently labelled as 'globalization' (see §1.2-1.2.2.4), confronts the church with direct challenges. The task is to react to the current crisis with informed and sustainable solutions that will not only resonate with humanity, but also remain collaborative with Scriptural values and ethics.

If religions of the world only hope to 'see this time through' without responsive action, the outcome might confirm the fatal journey it is currently experiencing (see § 2.1.1-2.2.2).

1.1.3 Hypothesis

This studies' hypothesis is apportioned into two parts, informing one another.

- If globalization theory and the Social Gospel, containing valuable and constructive characteristics, can be perceived as an opportunity, then it should inform Christianity's missional reaction *in* the world in a justifiable way.
- If Postcolonial Studies can detect elements of oppression and liberation in Roman Palestine, translatable to today, then an existent kingdom of God can

be recognized through which mission can pursue collaborative and participative action.

1.1.4 Literature review and need for this research

There is an extensive amount of literature available on mission, globalization, the Social Gospel movement, postcolonialism, and first century Roman Palestine. This literature is written from both Western (American and European) and Eastern (India and East Asia) perspectives. Their theories are relevant and contextual for their various contexts marked by affluence, on the one hand, and from post-colonization, on the other. Such theories and interpretations of Scripture can no longer be uncritically read and applied to Christianity as a 'one holy body' in the third millennium. There are fortunately more and more scholars emerging with perspectives that delineate earlier assumptions made by Western scholarship. Especially those assumptions that were used to justify oppression, colonization and imperialization are brought to light for the sake of liberation from oppression. Unfortunately, there are only a few who identify globalization with religion, and even less material and books concerning the entwined relationship between missiology, globalization theory, the Social Gospel movement, postcolonialism, and first-century Roman Palestine (referring to all history and scriptural evidence). This study is a contribution to the body of literature that approaches mission from all these factors mentioned. The study is done under the scrutiny of New Testament Studies and proceeds with the view of contributing further research in line with New Testament Studies as a point of departure into the future.

The three-fold aim of this study is:

First, to identify the current complications and opportunities of globalization that challenges missional action (Chapter 1).

Second, to study and identify indispensable characteristics of both the early twentieth century Social Gospel movement, and the more recent Postcolonial Theory (Chapter 2 and 3).

Third, to use the outcome of the first and second aim in collaboration with Richard Horsley's proposed perspective on Jesus' mission in Roman Palestine as the 'renewal of Israel' (Chapter 4).

This study anticipates being a contribution to the timely debate between the Christian church² and its missional action in the perceived cataclysmic time characterized as globalization in the third millennium. In addition, it hopes to be a contribution to interdisciplinary theology in general, and to New Testament Studies in particular. These challenges at the outset of the study might seem ideological, but it shares in Jesus' account of what is important in the present: εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἔλθειν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι (Mk 8:34).

1.2 RECENT DEBATE: THE CRISIS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Today, in the third millennium, the religions of the world, including Christianity, are struggling to discern the practical implications of mission and are looking for a sustainable and functional model of faith in a globalizing world. The question relevant to Christianity is, asked by Borg, in his *Heart of Christianity* (2003): 'What does it mean to love [serve] God?' Most Christian believers today have a basic knowledge of the two essential commandments of Jesus in Matthew 22:36 and Mark 12:28, namely to serve God. More than that, what does it mean to love (serve) God in the context of globalization and the challenges it brings? What does it mean, for individuals, communities, and churches to live, in practice, the greatest commandments? Borg suggests in his *Heart of Christianity* that it is a 'way, a path, a way of life. Practice is about the living of the Christian way. Moreover, 'practice' really should be thought of as plural: practice is about practices, the means by which we live the Christian life' (Borg 2003:187).

[A] major reason that Protestantism has paid little attention to traditional Christian practices goes back to the Reformation, which sharply contrasted 'faith' and 'works.'

² This study explores questions that have application far beyond Protestant Churches, both for other Christian churches and other world religions. However, the focus is here on this studies' tradition, Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa. For that reason, and for simplicity of expression, when the word 'church' is used throughout this study it will refer to the NHKA, unless otherwise indicated.

We are saved by 'faith,' not 'works.' To many Protestants, practices sound like 'works.' But the point of practice is not to earn one's salvation by accumulating merit by 'works.' Rather, practice is about paying attention to God.

(Borg 2003:187)

Borg argues that Christianity is not merely a 'doing' faith or only a set 'being nice' religious values; it is also about taking seriously the primary value of belief which is to 'beloving God' and that our practice – all things 'Christians do individually and together' – is the example of 'paying attention to God' (Borg 2003:187)

They include being part of a Christian community, a church, and taking part in its life together as community. They include worship, Christian formation, collective deeds of hospitality and compassion, and being nourished by Christian community. They include devotional disciplines, especially prayer and spending time with the Bible. And they include loving what God loves through the practice of compassion and justice in the world.

(Borg 2003:188)

Paying attention to God in the third millennium becomes a challenge when the secular³ contemporary world does not leave much room for the sacred, and the profane becomes the accepted norm. This reality is accentuated by the naïve perception of faith groups who aim to convert the cosmos to their chosen religion as universal virtue. James Smith, in his *How (not) to be Secular*, directs this section of the study in a more contemporary direction. He asks:

So what does it look like to bear witness in a secular age? What does it look like to be faithful? To what extent have Christians unwittingly absorbed the tendencies of this world? On the one hand, this raises the question of how to reach exclusive humanists. On the other hand, the question bounces back on the church: To what extent do we "believe" like exclusive humanists?

(Smith 2014:viii)

This draws the church, or any religion for that matter, away from trying to understand the emerging secular communities as a descriptive what, and even less a chronological when, but rather as an analytic how. Smith's book serves as a complementary work to Charles Taylor's monumental *Secular Age*, 'a book that offers a genealogy of the secular and an archaeology of our angst. This is a

³ A situation of fundamental contestability when it comes to belief; a sense that rival stories are always at the door offering a very different account of the world.

commentary on a book that provides a commentary on postmodern culture’ (Smith 2014:ix)

Smith argues for the relevance of being faithful in a secular age. It ‘matters especially for those believers who are trying to not only remain faithful in a secular age but also bear witness to the divine for a secular age’ (Smith 2014:x). Smith exclaims Taylor’s plea to be concerned with the ‘conditions of belief — a shift in the plausibility conditions that make something believable or unbelievable.’

Now in this regard, there has been a titanic change in our western civilization. We have changed not just from a condition where most people lived “naïvely” in a construal (part Christian, part related to “spirits” of pagan origin) as simple reality, to one in which almost no one is capable of this, but all see their option as one among many. We all learn to navigate between two standpoints: an “engaged” one in which we live as best we can the reality our standpoint opens us to; and a “disengaged” one in which we are able to see ourselves as occupying one standpoint among a range of possible ones, with which we have in various ways to coexist.

(Taylor 2007:12)

This Section departed with stating that ‘the religions of the world, including Christianity, are struggling to discern the practical implications of mission and are looking for a sustainable and functional model of faith in a globalizing world’ (see § 1.2). To pursue an answer to this challenge requires an investigation of the core realities of contemporary (Christian) faith. It is not merely answering some practical tasks that arise as symptoms of a more profound reality. The crisis of Christianity is not only cloaked with challenges from secular (agnostic, or atheist communities) divergent groups, but also with Christianity, and other religions, to discern about collaborating their faith *for* a secular age. As mentioned, this study moves away from moralizing and commenting on issues of right and wrong with an unfounded air of superiority. Rather it regards the points made by Smith and Borg as foundational for a Christian point of departure to engage with this world. On the one hand Smith (2014:22) argues that it is the emergence of ‘the secular’ in this sense that makes possible the emergence of an ‘exclusive humanism’ — a radically new option in the marketplace of beliefs, a vision of life in which anything beyond the immanent is eclipsed. He draws from Taylor:

For the first time in history a purely self-sufficient humanism came to be a widely available option. I mean by this a humanism accepting no final goals beyond human

flourishing, nor any allegiance to anything else beyond this flourishing. Of no previous society was this true.

(Taylor 2007:18)

On the other hand, arguing for the sake of Christianity, Borg maintains that *because* we have the example of Jesus' life, we cannot only *believe*, but we should also take practical action accordingly.

The Christian life is as simple and challenging as this: to love God and to love that which God loves. This is the central meaning of faith. Given the premodern meaning of "believe," to believe in God is to belove God. Faith is about believing God and all that God beloves. The Christian life is about believing God and all that God beloves. Faith is our love for God. Faith is the way of the heart.

(Borg 2003:41)

Borg and Taylor's diverse point of views are of dialectical importance to this study. This study, however, does not hide behind the illusion that all of humankind can be (or will be) brought together under an ethic of Christian love. What this study does argue for is the active participation of the faithful *in* the secular world. Therefore the importance of Crossan's proposal:

My proposal is that justice and love are dialectic—like two sides of a coin that can be distinguished but not separated. We think of ourselves as composed of body and soul, or flesh and spirit. When they are separated, we have a physical corpse. Similarly with distributive justice and communal love. Justice is the body of love; love is the soul of justice. Justice is the flesh of love; love is the spirit of justice. When they are separated, we have a moral corpse. Justice without love is brutality. Love without justice is banality.

(Crossan 2007:190)

Now we can ensue such a collaboration of understandings of what Christianity is to do in the third millennium.

1.2.1 The globalized Christian question: The third millennium debate

'Globalization'⁴ is a force, it is here and it is driven by people, and it does have good and bad effects' (Blair 2009). Globalization is multidimensional, including facets such

⁴ This statement is from Blair's lectures given in the fall of 2008 where Miroslav Volf, Tony Blair, and Douglas Rae contributed to a course at Yale, in collaboration with the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, which launched the Faith and Globalization Initiative in the fall of 2008 as a three-year effort (2008-2010) to conduct dialogue as a way of considering the essential issues of globalization. The website that supports this initiative explores a variety of topics and issues – in the classroom, in formal lectures and informal conversation, and through research, speeches, conferences, and the internet (<http://www.coursehero.org/course/faith-and-globalization>).

as economics, politics, cultural phenomena, and religion. Globalization is not, as sometimes negatively viewed⁵, the global *integration* of process or systems, but rather a possible *density* of process and systems⁶. There is a strong development of interdependence in globalization, which might lead to an interdependent global density. Robertson (2000:54) argues that interdependence 'is not the same as integration and that the simultaneously cultural, economic and political global processes of globalization is not reduced to mere economic unification'. However, '[w]hether globalization is leading or will lead to much greater *integration* of the world cannot be answered straightforward, for there presently are strong indications of both greater fragmentation *and* greater global unification' (Robertson 2000:54). What one can observe is the immense pace with which globalization is developing. Thus, the integration and diversity of cultures, economies, inter-territorial boundaries and the global shift of inter-dependence require not mere acceptance of the process but also a means of reacting to it from an ethical, religious point of view.

Theologically, these expanding networks of interdependence, which will be argued for below, raise acute questions. For instance, how must theology religiously and theologically ethically respond to, understand, and guide civilizations' development? Identifying the multidimensional nature of this term *globalization*, one cannot separate theological development from globalization and therefore have to identify the overlapping themes. Miroslav Volf (2009), in the Yale lectures on 'Faith and globalization' defines globalization as follows:

[Globalization] is a planetary process which was historically primarily driven by trade, in learning about and spreading religion, interest in conquest, interest in adventure, in recent centuries, capitalism, a version of trade, a force that drives globalization. This leads to a world of high level interconnectivity, communication, goods flow, but also inter-dependence.

(Volf 2009)

⁵ This is true of Christian voices as well as analysts indifferent to Christianity. See, for example, Litonjua (1999:210) and Hellyer (1999). Hellyer lists the best available bibliography relating to attacks on globalization, understood as the increasing influence of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and all who cooperate with 'multinationals' and 'capitalism'.

⁶ See Held and McGrew (2000:6) for the argument that globalization cannot merely be reduced to 'a purely economic or technological logic ... [which is] profoundly misleading since it ignores the inherent complexity of the forces that shape modern societies and world order'.

Another possible definition of globalization can be found in Anthony Giddens' *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990):

The intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an obverse direction from the very distanced relations that shape them. Local transformation is as much a part of globalization as the lateral extension of social connections across time and place.

(Giddens 1990:64)

Stackhouse (2000:25) goes on to show that the greatest debate of the twentieth-century, regarding globalization, was an anti-mythological, anti-theological view of life that allowed us to explain and finally dispense with religion, or whether religion is necessary to interpret and guide civilization. Civilization, in this sense, also faces challenges, which this study will not squabble over, but will rather depart from relevant factors like global warming (or climate change), ecological ethics and theology, political theology concerned with possible global wars and whether or not the Wall Street capitalist tendency will survive. This study will focus on the factors that help to define the effect of globalization on the contemporary understanding of mission of the church (see § 1.2.2.4). The church's understanding of being a missional community are derived and interpreted from biblical texts. Globalization, however, poses contemporary challenges to the church's mission. There is already a global civilization developing, and this raises questions and pose opportunities for religion⁷.

It would be uncommon and doubtful, writing from a Christian perspective, to suppose that a civilization, locally or globally, can be formed without a particular form of religious self-understanding. As inherently globalizing people of this planet, we need 'a compelling mythology or theology on the one side, and a compelling ethic on the other, [which] are fateful for our civilizations' (Stackhouse 2000:25). People's deep

⁷Because of the free market in which science develops, the current tendency to argue against and question the necessity of a divine figure or intelligent designer has become acceptable. This study will not argue for or against Divinity, but rather depart from the standpoint that people have certain perceptions about their god, regardless of the religion, that influence their decision-making, sense of identity, and moral and ethical structure in which this existence are verbalized in terms of ambition, purpose of life and life hereafter, whether it is a reality or not. For current debates on this topic, see for example the debate between Ken Ham and Bill Ney (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6kgvhG3AKI>.)

seated yearning for some spiritual dimension, for some grounding in current economic processes and the search for identity and being in terms of purpose, are profound and real, and if anything increasing rather than diminishing. That might be true considering Stackhouse's argument from a religious point of view. There are, however, communities that are nurtured without any reference to the divine as locus wherein meaning of significance to life can be found. Smith (2014:26) argues that:

The emergence of the secular is also bound up with the production of a new option — the possibility of exclusive humanism as a viable social imaginary — a way of constructing meaning and significance without any reference to the divine or transcendence. So it wasn't enough for us to stop believing in the gods; we also had to be able to imagine significance within an immanent frame, to imagine modes of meaning that did not depend on transcendence. This is why 'subtraction stories' of the sort offered by secularization theory will always fall short. The secular is not simply a remainder; it is a sum, created by addition, a product of intellectual multiplication.

(Smith 2014:26)

For theologians, globalization involves the universalization of the influence of authorities and regencies as they developed in the West and East, which open promising possibilities for the improvement of the common life while it simultaneously, bear acute dangers. This poses a paradox in globalization for religions. 'The different, but related, religions⁸ of the world existed side by side on a continuum of tolerance, indifference and ignorance' (Turner 2011:231). We had, until recently, a local and sometimes continental rivalry for survival and spreading of religions. Either integration or interdependence, in terms of globalization, will confront religions with the global development. This is the paradox of globalization in that it 'compresses time and space by creating the world as a single place, but it also intensifies the problem of otherness' (Turner 2011:231). In this regard, Borg makes the following statement:

To use an only partially apt analogy ... being Christian (or Muslim or Jewish, and so forth) is a bit like being French (or Korean or Ethiopian, and so forth). Being French involves knowing French as a language, but also much more: there is a cultural ethos, a cultural-linguistic world, involved in being French. So also being Christian means living within the ethos of a Christian cultural-linguistic world.

(Borg 2003:214)

⁸ See § 3.2.5 for an explanation of the ambivalence found in religions and globalization.

It is possible to understand that globalization ‘creates homogeneity and a standardization of both place and culture, thus destroying real difference’ (Reader 2008:26). The argument here is concerned with people’s individuality and distinctive character, traditionally automatically attributed to, because of one’s birthplace. Tony Blair (2009) understands globalization as a movement

that pushes people together, to live together, thrive together, regardless of place of birth’. Therefore, the important factor is *that* we share the status of being human, not what typifies us in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, etc. People are losing identity. People feel threatened by the forces of globalization because the truths people grew up with are being challenged by other religions, or secular, to one’s own.

(Blair Faith Foundation 2009)

In this sense, religion relates to globalization and will either pull you apart or put you together in the sense of being and meaning. People’s yearnings for some spiritual dimension, for some grounding of these economic processes, are profound and real, and if anything, as mentioned, increasing, rather than diminishing according to Blair. To side track the point of locality for a moment, it is important to realize that Blair’s argument, again, is from a religious point of view. Smith points to the growing globalized secular community who relates to meaning (purposeful life *in* contemporary society) dislodged from divine categorization.

What we have, in other words, is the making of a “civil religion,” rooted in a “natural” religion, which can allegedly transcend denominational strife. (Welcome to America!) The ultimate and transcendent are retained but marginalized and made increasingly irrelevant. Our differences about the ultimate fade in comparison to the common project of pursuing the “order of mutual benefit.” What emerges from this is what Taylor describes as “polite society,” a new mode of self-sufficient sociality that becomes an end in itself.

(Smith 2014:54)

What is important, returning to Blair’s argument, is that globalization, as a force, draws people together. When this is understood by religions as a opportunity rather than a confrontation to faith, then boundaries set by religious traditions should be reviewed for the sake of an inclusive, just, resolution for religious and secular communities alike.

This study will work from the assumption that the regional boundaries of earth are being broken down by globalizing factors that will lead to individuals to care and

protect their localities, but also understand the cosmos as a locality. This defines us on earth, a community nestled under exactly this fact; that we are on earth. For instance, look at the Apollo spacecraft's photos of earth: it is a planet, a whole planet with a working and sustainable macrocosm. Volf (2009) says that the 'whole planet itself becomes a locality. People on earth therefore become dis-embedded, de-moored, from particular places'; we encounter the development of 'dis-embedded cosmopolitans'. We will be characterized in a generation or two as citizens of earth by generations born and raised on other planets⁹. According to Stackhouse (2000:25), 'this [globalization process] poses a critical, related question, namely whether the resources of civilization now being generated worldwide will differ from all of human history in that the emergent society will not have, or need, or desire a religious core or a theological ethic to interpret, to repeatedly assess, and to guide it. If such a core is needed, what might it be?'

This study argues that a core of theological ethic can influence the practice of the NHKA and Christianity, not primarily to survive, but to take constructive action in a globalizing world. But it will also have an impact on other faiths, which in turn will have an effect on Christianity.

Again, one cannot disregard the multidimensional character of globalization. Volf (2009) respects this character of globalization and even states that '[a]ll monocausal explanations are suspect'. Faith provides the framework for people in the challenges that globalization poses. Faith, however, should also be concerned with globalization because faith has the potential to grow while respecting equality, justice, environmental sensitivity, and culture identity (homogenizing/differentiating). Then communities, Volf (2009) argues, can 'form stable cultural habits, internalize discipline, and develop character traits that will sustain people in a rapid developing culture.' This will encourage the community to participation *in* the world, rather than withdrawing from it.

⁹ Virgin Galactic gives aspiring civilians the opportunity to fly to space. This is merely a first step for public life, humanity, to share space in different ways. See www.virgingalactic.com/booking/ for your \$250,000 ticket

In a context where capitalism claims to be the only viable option left, the insights from theologians (e.g., Barth and Bonhoeffer) and the gospel narratives about Jesus' life invite us to think and explore alternatives from a different perspective. Instead of acting from the top down (capitalist oppression), we need to take action from the bottom up, as Jesus had done.¹⁰

The author of this study is a Christian; a follower of what he believes is true of Jesus' life, interpreted through available texts. Being Christian, however, is not the prerequisite to be civilized or humane today, but rather being human is. There is hope for the Christian faith to construct a core that not only accommodates, but also accept, the religions of the world in a process of conversion, with the ideal of unity.¹¹ Is there such a source of hope? 'Without such a source of hope the overwhelming evidence of moral impotence in our human condition may only lead to despair' (Ormerod & Clifton 2009:165). Is this an unachievable ideology? In § 1.2-1.2.2.4, this study will look at different perspectives of globalization to form a departing point for the question of the form and intention of Christian mission in the Third Millennium.

1.2.2 Discerning about the actuality of globalization

1.2.2.1 Stackhouse: God and globalization of the common life

Max L. Stackhouse, editor of a four volume series named *God and Globalization*, stakes out three introductory concerns regarding globalization and its concomitant religious concern. He argues that in spite of a widely held view that the future will be increasingly secular, the resurgence of religious vitality has puzzled various secularizers to no end. According to Stackhouse (2000:6), it is 'becoming clear to scholars that religious insights and traditions are a permanent feature of human

¹⁰ See Rieger (2010:1-23) for an explanation on how this 'bottom-up' is an alternative to oppressive globalization.

¹¹ This projection of hope comes from a perspective of Slavoj Žižek, a Slovenian Marxist philosopher, psychoanalyst and cultural critic. In a lecture 'Globalization and the new left,' (Žižek 2013) discusses the Istanbul Taksim Gezi Park Uprising, the situation in Greece, Egypt, Iran and the new authoritarian police state of the United States, the new methods of struggle for the Left, the connection between global capitalism and fundamentalist movements and the new authoritarian capitalism and local traditionalist and culturist movements. See also Pope Benedict XVI in his recent (30 November 2007) encyclical on hope, *Spe Salvi*, n. 7. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-vi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi_en.html.

life,¹² clearly evident in global trends, and the locus at which questions of truth, justice, and holiness take their most intense forms’.

In Volume I of *God and Globalization: Religion and the Powers of the Common Life*, Stackhouse argues that there are a complex variety of powers¹³ and spheres of common life that religion should deal with.¹⁴ He urges for the necessity of a ‘public theological ethic’ that can help discern the values that operate in a socio-cultural ethos. These values order the powers necessary to life that, without ethical guidance, can destroy viable human relationships and community life (Stackhouse 2001:12). He compiles the powers as forces or ‘spiritual energies’ for people living in ancient ‘animistic’, ‘polytheist’, or ‘mystical’ cultures, and for more contemporary humanity ‘even though the ways in which we think about these energies, perhaps even encounter them, have surely changed’ (Stackhouse 2000:31). These powers have an influence on civilizations, though varied, and therefore contribute to globalization, as we know it. By referring to them, we can identify the moral and spiritual dimensions of common life that constitute key aspects of globalization. These are powers identifiable in clusters, namely ‘principalities, authorities, and dominions’ (Stackhouse 2000:37).

Principalities, in regard to globalization¹⁵ can be identified as ‘Mammon (in Aramaic economics), Mars (in Latin Politics), Eros (in Greek Psychology), and the Muses (in Indo-Aryan Communication and/or Media) that will be shaped by an understanding of that which brought them together, a divine like figure (Stackhouse 2000:37). Each of these principalities, Mammon, Mars, Eros, Muses, and Religion will have its own

¹² See Stackhouse (2000:6), referring to the work of Peter Berger. Also see the three volume series of Neville (2001) from the standpoint of the philosophical and historical analysis of cultures. A discerning review of major new studies in anthropology that signal a return of interest in religion after several generations of non-or anti-religious focus can be found in Cladwell (1999:227-232).

¹³ Christian sources, for instance the New Testament, occasionally (hundred times) refer to these powers as ἐξουσία, sometimes linked with official leaders and more often with the symbolic power of the offices and the role they play in common life. They manifest distinctly with an ‘energy’ (δυνάμις). Theologically important here is that when these powers become preoccupied with their own value and declare independence from any transcendental source, they become corrupted and therefore a threat rather than a blessing (Stackhouse 2000:35).

¹⁴ See also Rieger (2010:53-59) who believes that theology is ‘part and parcel of globalization, whether this is acknowledged or not.’

¹⁵ This study goes beyond the customary comfort zones of theology with Stackhouse’s interpretation of globalization. This study does not claim any particular expertise in these areas, but the logic of the work demands that this study engage with the relevant literature on such topics.

functional requirements and development that can be recognized cross-culturally and cross-historically, but always guiding the legitimacy accepted by the culture. Stackhouse (2000:43) argues that no sphere has been able to order any of these principalities, and no civilization has been able to hold the spheres together without a more or less shared religious awareness that offers guidance throughout the social-cultural ethos¹⁶.

Authorities (in Greek ἐξουσία and in Latin *potestātēs*) are powers that are dependent on the 'principalities because they need a base to work from, but they are also in command of areas in life where the principalities have no control' (Stackhouse 2000:46). These authorities are classic professional authorities namely law, education and medicine. Spheres that influence these authorities are science, technology and iconic authorities¹⁷.

The *dominions* (in Greek κυριότητες and in Latin *dominii*) derives from κυριός, that means 'lord', 'master', 'those who exercise sovereignty' over social familial, economic, political, and professional powers. Every culture and continent has its own. Every religion has a history, a development, manifesting 'extraordinary spiritual and moral dignity and gravity' (Stackhouse 2000:51).

It is unlikely that a globalized civilization can develop in creative directions without the basis of principalities, authorities, and dominions. It is, however, important to evaluate which religion can become dominate in such a globalized society, how it does so, and how it treats other traditions. This is difficult because of the nature of the history between religions. Underlying ideologies also show that an indifferent attitude towards unity mostly prevails. Turner (2011:235) also poses the concern that it is difficult 'to imagine how religion might come to play a central role in the creation

¹⁶ See Stackhouse (1972) for the idea of *ethos*.

¹⁷ These iconic authorities are individuals that transcended society's religious identification, justice systems and educational institutions to embody moral qualities that became treasured internationally and formed a new ethos that transcended any enforced ethnocentric value pattern. Key figures are Moses, Jesus, Augustine, Luther, Plato, Aristotle, the Buddha, Mohammed and also Albert Schweitzer, Mahatma Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt, Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama. These authorities also include international figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Aung San Suu Kyi, Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela (Stackhouse 2000:48-49).

of a shared global mythology or cosmology that might unite the great diversity of world cultures’.

In Volume II of *God and Globalization: The Spirit of Modern Authorities*, Stackhouse (2001:36) argues that beyond the sets of powers mentioned above that is indispensable to societies, family, economics, politics, cultures, and religion have emerged as another influential set of institutions. He suggests:

Theological understanding of wisdom and truth is the proper, necessary, universal context for teaching and learning; a theological understanding of justice and rights is the proper, necessary, universal context for making and enforcing law; and a theological understanding of suffering and death is the proper, necessary, and universal context for guiding medical care.

(Stackhouse 2001:36)

Three new authorities that need to be noted are that of ‘techné, Gaia, and exemplars of new trans-ethnic, transcultural, transnational, trans-religious moral Hero’ (Stackhouse 2001:31). *Techné* refers to development and sometimes-uncontrollable aspect of technological development. Stackhouse (2001:26) identifies three possibilities to understand technological development:

1. Technology is a practical adjustment to a fallen world, and has no positive significance for salvation, although it can have a negative meaning insofar as we come to love or trust unduly. Exaggerated confidence in technology could plunge the social world and us into nonbeing.
2. Technology can help us restore the pristine state of creation, to repair what was broken in the Fall – our divine-like qualities and a direct communion with God.
3. Technology must indeed be an instrument of God to repair a broken world, less to recover Eden than to approximate the New Jerusalem.¹⁸

(Stackhouse 2001:26-27)

Gaia, referring to the ‘*earth goddess*’, is the brainchild of J. E. Lovelock (1979) who calls the earth system ‘a universal bio-cybernetic system with a trend toward homeostasis.’ This implies to Moltmann that the earth we live *in*, works like a super-organism that functions as a whole, relating to earth as a whole in itself, and that it is therefore alive (see Stackhouse 2001:180-183). The importance this hypothesis has for globalization is that it helps the ‘anthropocentric self-understanding and behaviour

¹⁸ See also Hooykaas (1974) for older but substantially compatible accounts of these assumptions about technology.

of wo/men, and constrains them to fit democratically into the life of the earth as a whole' (Moltmann, in Stackhouse 2001:183). These new authorities are powerful and have a significant influence on traditional religious concepts of morality and secular theories of modernity. To this point in time, through inter-religious studies, all these above-mentioned new authorities have features potentially pertinent to sin and salvation. The question then arises, theologically, in terms of inter-religious development, whether the Christian Messiah, is, can be, and should be, 'Lord over all the powers, principalities, authorities, and regencies in a global civilization?' (Stackhouse 2001:36).

In Volume III of *God and Globalization: Christ and the Dominions of Civilization*, Stackhouse (2002:9) argues against the extensive work done by the British team of scholars, namely David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton.¹⁹ They argue that religion and ethics 'are a mostly benign expression of cultural development that arises at significant points in history but that has no formative, regulative, interpretative, or guiding role in globalization, or in understanding the forces that produces it'. This view is not sufficient due to their vision that is artificially narrowed by their studied exclusion of matters that bear on their topics.

Therefore, Stackhouse and authors in the above-mentioned volume had to go beyond religion onto the organizing principle of different religions. With other religions, apart from Christian faith that exclaims Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, one should remember that followers of Spirit Elders, Lord Buddha, Prophet Mohammed and the Sage Confucius have 'generated distinctive ways of organizing principalities of the common life and, often, the authorities and regencies of complex civilizations into enduring social systems as well' (Stackhouse 2002:18). Naturally, this creates a discussion about the eschatological visions that seek to portray the ultimate normative destiny of humanity and the cosmos. Important for this study is the insight from Stackhouse *et al.* (2002) that these globalizing clusters, principalities, authorities and dominions are shaping the world and the cosmos towards a unity where humanity will have to discern which value system it will fall back on as norm

¹⁹ See their study in Held (*et al.* 1999).

for a sustainable planet. Obviously, it is an incredibly important time for religions to discern about its role in the world history. If religion will further its influence, remains to be seen.

1.2.2.2 Robertson: *Glocalization, church's identity and its mission*

Robertson (1992:173-174) explains the relationship between the global and the local using the term 'glocalization'. This term describes the fact that globalization involves a synthesis between the local and the global, the adaption of pan-local developments to local circumstances. Otherwise labelled as 'indigenization', glocalization emphasizes the diverse ways in which the local and the global intersect and remain mutually dependent.

In this way Robertson (1992:172-173) counters the idea that globalization is primarily about commodification and homogenization of culture, and instead asserts that diversity is a basic aspect of the globalizing process. Robertson's evaluation of globalization understands the concept in largely amoral terms, as neither inherently good nor bad, since sociological processes are framed by the accomplishments and failures of human agents. Robertson's emphasis on the reflexivity of global consciousness (e.g., the fact that we now understand ourselves as citizens of the world) implies that the process of globalization contains potential mechanisms for the development of cultural values capable of facilitating harmony and overcoming conflict (Robertson 1992:1-2). This constitutes the hope mentioned above (see again § 2.1.1). Still, such developments exist concurrently with instances of intractable disputes between nations and tribes arising out of competing global ideologies. In addition, it requires us to rethink notions about cultural specificity and particularity. Turner turns to Robertson's idea to explain this:

A global age does not automatically result in McDonaldization, because there can be equally powerful pressures towards localism and hybridity. The idea of 'glocalization' was invented to describe these mixtures of global culture with local customs and practices, and globalization should not be conceived merely as Westernization; it is important to recognize the growing impact of Asian cultures on globalization processes.

(Turner 2011: 247)

This study does not argue that place is no longer significant in the process of the character development of an individual; certainly, contextual factors have an

influence. This, however, does not suggest a person should be characterized on their context alone, which includes factors like tradition, race, and gender. Reader (2008:32) argues, with this discrepancy in mind, that neither does it appear to be the case that a 'sense of place continues to contribute to the creation of the self and indeed of social relationships in the same way as before'. Reader (2008:118) then asks: 'Is it possible for the local church to be both a 'sticky place' and also a 'slippery space', thus acknowledging the ambiguities and complexities of globalization, and yet retaining a legitimate pastoral role and integrity in belief?'

Rosenau (2003:181, in Reader 2008:32) argues that it is no longer the case for our world's citizens today. Because boundaries are blurred because of transportation and communication, one does not have to be limited to be identified with where one is born:

Increasingly people have to think of themselves in terms of a multiplicity of identities... gone are the days when one could define oneself in terms of a singular geographic space. In large part due to technologies, there has been a 'dissolution of oneself', a fragmenting of interests, values and affiliations such as that the individual has different identities that can vary as widely as the different interests, values and affiliations one might have.

(Rosenau 2003:181)

This urges the church to reconsider what the set-list of requirements is for people to be considered for membership in their unique institutions when (globalized) civilization itself becomes so diverse. Christianity is but one of many religions that faces this challenge.

Interesting here is the remarks of Tony Blair (2009) who recognizes the element of religion in major conflicts in the world, especially his work in Jerusalem relating to the east and west bank's controversy. Religion is not necessarily the only factor, but it has an influence that could solve conflict and bring reconciliation. There are four conditions for faith to support a process of reconciliation, according to the prime minister:

1. Key faith groups must not see reconciliation as being contradicting to their faith (justice/geographical dimension that asks to compromise on essential truths of their religion, which would be very complicated).
2. Forgiveness (of the other) is an important precondition for reconciliation.

3. An exclusive view of your faith has to have an element of sufficient openness for fundamental values that encompass more than the people of your own faith for reconciliation to work.
4. Your faith should be non-exclusive for reconciliation. Step one, for an inclusive understanding, is tolerance, secondly, acceptance of the other, and the last step is respect for the other. One would have a problem/issues with a God who condemns a good, pure person of another faith than yourself, to a hell.

(Blair 2009)

These perspectives of Robertson's 'glocalization', and Blair's reconciliation, are projected on local entities like communities, churches and cultures, but also globally for example between religions, NGO's, NPO's, and countries. Together, Robertson and Blair represent an interpretation of globalization that the world can gain from; a world that is drawing ever nearer to itself as a collective entity. This proposed entity, however, has the ideal of also creating a tolerant and local society that realizes greater humanity as a macrocosm, but reconciles with its immediate community.

1.2.2.3 Scholte: Supraterritorial globalization

Jan Aart Scholte rejects the view that globalization has a long history (as understood by Robertson, Stackhouse, Volf and Rieger²⁰), arguing that the usefulness of the term is its ability to describe the uniqueness of the contemporary nature of global relations that have really 'only dawned with the jet airplane and the computer' (Scholte 2000:19). To explain the phenomena, he begins by criticizing various terms that are often used to describe globalization, arguing that the concept means more than simply 'internationalization', 'liberalization', or 'universalization'. These terms describe centuries-old processes, and add little understanding to the distinctive elements of the contemporary situation. Likewise, he argues that defining globalization in terms of Westernization or Americanization fails to account for the cultural diversity that underlies the contemporary state of global relations (Scholte 2000:45). Instead, Scholte defines globalization as deterritorialization or, conversely, as the growth of 'supraterritorial' relations between people which bring to an end the situation 'where social geography is entirely territorial' (Scholte 2000:46). Scholte is not denying the importance of geographical territory. He argues that globalization

²⁰ Rieger (2010) shows how globalization has been in progress since before the Romans, the Crusades, the Spanish inquisitions, Fascist Germany and the current capitalist form we are experiencing.

creates the conditions in which some social connections are detached from territorial logic.

The free and interconnected nature of global conditions enables people to reside, not only in particular physical location, but in a 'trans-world space' (Scholte 2000:48). There is, ironically, a downside to this perspective in that globalization's pursuit for democratic order is designed to create a friendly political and socio-economic environment for a consumer market economy. Kalu, Vethanayagamony and Chia (2010:29) state that:

The downside of the democratization process in the third-world countries includes the liberalization of media space; the increase in the number of discordant voices in the public space; increase in violence, especially ethnic, religious and political violence; and a chaotic political culture disabling the consolidation that should follow the post-electoral process.

(Kalu *et al.* 2010:29)

This conception of *globality* marks the experience of space-time compression which go beyond the simple shrinking of territorial distance achieved by faster travel, to the point where 'territorial distance is covered in effectively no time, and territorial boundaries present no particular impediment' (Scholte 2000:48). This leaves third-world communities, or communities not considered mature for modern democracy, exposed to these aforementioned challenges.

For one thing, Scholte is correct: a range of trans-world activities creates trans-world social space. Communication technologies, for example, facilitate a wide range of supraterritorial connections through telecommunications (including the internet) and the mass media. Economic social connections operate through global markets, using currency and financial arrangements largely unbounded by territorial constraints. Even physical production is increasingly trans-world, as global factories operate with international production chains. For example, the chances are good that one of the labels on your clothing reads 'Made in China', or 'Assembled in the Philippines'. Global communications and economic connections encourage global organizations, including supraterritorial institutions (e.g., the UN, IMF and the World Bank), multinational corporations, as well as myriad of NGO's and NPO's networks and

coalitions. Supraterritorial relations have also given rise to the awareness of the fact that the world is a single ecological system²¹, and that human activity has created environmental problems that cannot be territorially contained. Should this rise of globalization merely be justified by the hope that these underdeveloped communities and countries will adopt the globalized tendencies with time, regardless of the growth-pains it has to endure – even if this means a time or season of poverty, health and social problems, marginalization and other consequences?

Taken altogether, these global activities give rise to a global consciousness; the need to think globally, conceiving of the world as a single place, using global symbols and participating in global events (Scholte 2000:56). The question again arises about the possibility of a global ethics. The tendency is to acknowledge the fact that a global ethic or a global ethics will be needed. However, not many advances have been made to construct such a global ethics. Reader (2008:123) argues that it will be a complex discussion and will have to be thorough because of the neglected voices being hushed through democracy. He also inquires whether a wider range of people, with different beliefs and other values, will share in a global ethic – the fact that globalization is slowly but surely opening the world to itself makes it a probability.

Having defined globalization, Scholte moves on to a more detailed analysis of trans-world production, governance, and community, and then to policy issues of security, justice, and democracy. In respect to the ethical concerns related to global security, he recognizes that globalization has had important repercussions for military, ecological, economic, and psychological security, both positive and negative. He also argues that the 'considerable negative impacts have not been intrinsic to globalization, but have resulted chiefly from neo-liberal policies' (Scholte 2000:207).

Similarly, he concedes that contemporary globalization has tended to perpetuate and accentuate the inequities that have always framed human societies. He blames global injustice on neo-liberalism rather than globalization, arguing that social

²¹ Lovelock (1979) argues that the concept of Gaia does not imply a re-mystification of the earth. It means understanding our planet as a system of interactions and feedbacks, which strives to create the best possible environmental conditions for life.

inequity only occurs ‘when globalization is managed with policy frameworks that encourage unfair outcomes’ (Scholte 2000:259). Below (see § 3.1-3.3) this study will look into these unfair outcomes by considering the marginalized, in this case the colonized. If the colonized want to survive, they have to adapt, and to adapt means that they transformed and accepted a new way of life under their oppressors. Rieger (2010:30) argues that currently it is much more difficult to spot the underlying power differentials that shape the world. These powers present sharp dualisms and binaries (see Rieger 2003:33, 44). For instance ‘if fifty-thousand people die every day from hunger preventable causes – up from ten thousand in 1983 – are we not witnessing a dualistic situation?’ (Rieger 2010:31). Rieger continues (2010:31) to show how ‘binaries and dualisms do not disappear in postcolonial times; rather, they continue to form the bedrock on which relationships have to be negotiated’.

Scholte’s focus is on trans-world social structures rather than the cultural dimensions of trans-world space. However, since he locates the structural impulse to globalization in rationalist knowledge and capitalist production, he does consider the relationship between globality and knowledge. Arguing that globalization has not weakened the hold of rationalism on social construction, he claims that supraterritorial spaces have accommodated and even encouraged anti-rationalist movements, within which he includes the numerous instances of religious revivals experienced by evangelical churches and Roman Catholicism (Scholte 2000:189). Rieger (2010:49) identifies the efforts of these movements – revolutions and revivals – as mostly a top-down model of globalization where the more ‘civilized ... and developed’ cultures act as the oppressor, whether with good intention or not.

If top-down globalization continues to increase the gap between rich and poor, and if even development politics turns out to be good business for the developers to the detriment of those who are supposed to be “developing”, it is hard to see how the theology of development or the gospel of prosperity, which celebrates the wealthy and the powerful, can make a real difference in the lives of the multitude.

(Rieger 2010:48-49).

The reality for the church is that it will have to engage in its mission to a globalized world in a manner that is more than simply religious; in a way that the social, political, cultural, economic and personal complexities of life in trans-world space are properly addressed.

1.2.2.4 Summary of perspectives

The Christian tradition, over the past centuries, has been successful in identifying the good to be done and the evil to be avoided through its moral teaching and reflection. The reality of globalization, however, urges the church to rethink, reconsider and re-evaluate its (religious) understanding of the role of faith in the face of the pressures of our present world. Globalization, understood as cultivating a certain potential for the world can have both good and bad outcomes. As to the moral evaluation of globalization, it can only be concluded that globalization itself is neither good nor is it evil. Pope John Paul II concludes:

Globalization, a priori, is neither good nor bad. It will be what people make of it. No system is an end in itself, and it is necessary to insist that globalization, like any other system, must be at the service of the human person, it must serve solidarity and the common good.

(John Paul II 2001)

This study will go further than the traditional reinterpretation of the tradition of religious studies that mostly recall and identify elements from the past, which are similar to whatever problem we are facing in the present. Rather, what should be taken into account are the perspectives mentioned above about the reality of globalization. Using all the available tools to reconstruct potential directions of development in the world and focus our knowledge through experience on how Jesus (in contrast to the Roman Emperor and Temple elite) and the Christian faith (read: the followers of Jesus' message), can *globalitize* the cosmos. It is a cosmos wherein followers of Jesus have to live their lives. A cosmos that is the space wherein religion identifies the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of heaven – the kingdom of God and the kingdom of earth – in most religions are the religious symbol where the focus of action wherein hope lies. This Christian biblical symbol of hope requires contextualization within our present context. The articulation can no longer be deconstructed to mere exclusive religious piety. It should contribute to the intent of the mission of the world in God's eyes rather than the intent of our exclusive religious communities that has a self-proclaimed right to presuppose salvation only through them, or their understanding of Jesus. As long as there are different divisions (denominations) in faiths there will



be segregation in the world. As long as Christianity, or any faith for that matter, proclaims exclusive salvation, there will be other religions.

The conflict this study identifies herein is between the secular world and Christianity and between Christianity and Christians. Christian apologetics throughout history are mostly in reaction to challenges directed towards our faith in Jesus as Lord. Because of these challenges, the religious introduced theological and ecclesiastical traditions (mostly implemented by institutions). The present globalized context serves as a potential new opportunity for the mission of the church, and as the foundation from which the church should focus on its present mission in the world.

Rieger (2010:13) shows that sometimes there is conflict among Christians in terms of how the gospel is used to pursue one's own agenda. For instance, where globalization and theology walks hand in hand with German fascism, the Barmen Declaration (1934) – mainly under authorship of Karl Barth – opposed the use of Christianity and religion for the purposes of fascism. 'Its purpose was not to challenge a lack of faith, but to reject the distorted Christian faith that had come to endorse a fascist ideology and the rule of the few over the many, even in the church'²² (Rieger 2010:13, 23).

Religious Christians, followers of Jesus without denominational sentiment or ecclesiastical priorities, are against the examples (e.g., ideological doctrines and institutional exclusivism) set by the institutional church. Even though they believe in Christ, they do not believe the institutional church to be a necessity (or viable forum) to live their faith; they rather form communities of anti-institutional groups. Christians of our day have to respond to the constant harassment of those who live within the narrow bounds of institutionalized Christianity. Most of these traditional believers are so busy defending the answers given by their denomination that they no longer know what the questions are that are being asked by the so-called Y-generation to which they are supposed to answer to. Out of their fear and defensiveness, Christianity accuses today's emerging Christians of abandoning Jesus, an accusation based on

²² For the Barmen Declaration, see www.sacred-texts.com/chr/barmen.html.

their own religious culture. Some interesting data from the Barna Group's²³ poles indicate a very alive, yet sometimes neglected, form of current religious practice, and the necessity of the Christian faith in a contemporary, often secular, society.

In an attempt to reconcile religions²⁴, including Christianity, with current global developments in ethics, Hans Küng made a significant contribution, which has led to the establishment of the Centre for Global Ethics (CGE). The work of the CGE is to coordinate 'the work of thinkers, scholars and activists from around the world, who are working to define, implement and promote policies of responsible global citizenship'²⁵.

This moves away from localized perspectives (for instance between religious groups themselves) to unity, and focuses on the progressive development of a global consciousness that impels all religions to redefine its interaction and intent on earth. Küng and others have worked through the Parliament of the World's Religions to promote the possibility of a global ethics to which all religious cultures could adhere. This has led to the adoption by the Parliament of a joint 'Declaration towards a Global Ethic'.²⁶ The declaration identifies two basic principles, namely no new global order can appear without a global ethic, and secondly, a fundamental demand that every person must be treated humanely.

The Declaration also identifies four irrevocable directives:

1. Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life;
2. Commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order;
3. Commitment to a culture of tolerance and life of truthfulness; and
4. Commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between women and men.

²³ See <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/millennials> for the poles on what millennials regard as important in being religious.

²⁴ Also see § 1.2.2.2, where Tony Blair (2009) proposes four requirements in faith for the goal of reconciliation.

²⁵ The CGE website can be visited at <http://astro.ocis.temple.edu/~dialogue/geth.htm>.

²⁶ The Global Ethic Foundation's website can be visited at http://www.weltethos.org/dat_eng/index3_e.html.

Obviously, this declaration can be viewed as ideological or optimistic. What is significant is the communality of people from a variety of religious traditions and finding agreement on these questions of human flourishing in a globalizing world. Included in this statement of agreement and conflict, one realize the acute problematic of the localized interest of churches. The conflict identified above can find a fruitful resolution in this Declaration when every denomination in every religion become concerned and realize their opportunity to make visible the kingdom of God in all its aspects. As part of its mission, the Church must actively participate in all activities that will help to promote a vision of human flourishing on a global scale, and so further the building of the kingdom of God.

By no means this study argues for an absolute state of uniformity where everything becomes constantly and invariably more identical, or that everyone should theologically think alike. Rather, the diversity of the church, based on the gospel (see Käsemann 1970), could be the foundation wherein the world can form an ethic of conformity, at least in terms of the Golden Rule²⁷ that Jesus lobbied for.

In Jesus' time, Roman Palestine served as an example of a place where the Jesus followers' traditions fundamentally influenced by the centralization of the Roman rule under Julius Caesar. Roman Palestine manifested itself in all spheres of life in first-century Palestine.²⁸ This study will turn to a description of this centralization ('globalization') in § 4.2.1.1, where it will be argued that the interconnectedness of imperial values and culture, the process of enculturation and Hellenization could be seen as first-century globalization. The Jesus movement followers have resisted imperialism and colonization by living insurgent lives mimicking the example of Jesus's example. At the heart of these conflicts was the question of power and its theological justification: was divine power located at the top, with various elites (taking into account that the Roman Empire is represented by client kings such as Herod, Pontius Pilate and the Judean high priests appointed by Roman governors)? Or was divine power at work between the marginal, the exploited people – where the Jesus movement kept escalating? These followers of Jesus lived in a hybrid

²⁷ See § 2.1.2.2 for the implications of the application of the Golden Rule in its social and cultural dimensions.

²⁸ See § 4.2-4.2.2 for how this study understands first century Roman Palestine.

environment divided between their personal faith and the forced enculturation of Rome's clients. What they had in these circumstances was the example of Jesus through his actions and speeches. That was the reality then, yet today the same (but different) reality challenges the faithful. Christianity is supposed to be concerned with reconciliation, the irenics of moral and ethical foundations, rather than adaption to the oppressive capitalism of our day.

Globalization, from a religious point of view as the potential movement in history to unify the world in terms of foundational values, can draw from Blair's (2009) suggestions. The question is 'why would people adapt to a religious alternative', or in other words, 'what does *faith* (religion) bring to *globalization*?'

1. Faith brings a mentality of care and compassion, and a belief that it is our duty and obligation to help those less fortunate than us.
2. It asks the question: What is the purpose of life? The answer is that there is more than the material world, regarding strive for capitalistic lifestyle. Faith, has the idea of giving, you are defined by what you give not what you get.
3. Faith brings a dimension of action. Because of vast infrastructure, namely a support mechanism.
4. Faith brings a strong sense of values that can then take the random process of globalization and shape it, so that its injustices can be remedied and its opportunities can be more fairly distributed.

(Blair 2009)

These views constitute a positive alternative to the dimension of globalization. The discussion originates from the age-old problem of the church (religion) that has to function *in the world*, but not necessarily as a phenomenon *of the world*. Referring to the Christian religion, the impact of globalization (and other factors) has a secularizing effect on Christianity that supposedly lead the religious to move away from institutionalized church, therefore the concern.

Globalization raises the question whether humanity is self-destructive in disregarding the cosmos because of irresponsible scientific management. Humanity should become aware of being part of a whole, sharing the same history and future, participating in a planetary macrocosm and that the effect of unsustainable values can be self-condemning.

What has globalization to do with religion? Moreover, what has the current missional understanding of religions have to do with globalization? This question is relevant regardless of which religion one belongs to. This study's focus is the Christian church in South Africa, the NHKA, and proposes that the South African church, regardless of its realized missional agenda, has to reconsider previous assumptions about a supposed missional imperative. As Beyers (2013) argues, '[t]he question as to the calling of the church is not a practical but a theological issue. The church can easily keep itself busy with activities that seem important for its own survival. However, are these activities really the motivation behind God's call to the church?' Beyers (2013:1) draws from Barth (1961:205) that shows how 'the church is always seen in relationship with God's intention with the community he assembles. This might be the true calling of the church: to be a community that calls others to community'. It is about mission through community, Beyers suggests, not through the church in particular. 'Church' in this case refers specifically to the NHKA.

Globalization is the pacesetter for the next age of church and world. The boundaries of nations and continents are being crossed and re-crossed and the cultures' boundaries we regard as authentic, are fading. Being missional in today's world implies that boundaries are to be reconsidered. Of course the Christian tradition has often been better at answering the question 'what evil should we avoid?' rather than the question what 'what good should we be doing?' 'It is often easier to identify forces of decline than to articulate a vision of human flourishing' (Ormerod & Clifton 2009:163). Globalization does not have to be a barrier for Christian 'practices' such as mission as evangelization; rather, it should become the vessel with the purpose of a becoming the norm for the planet and all human beings.

1.3 CURRENT MISSIONAL REACTION

Current followers of the Christian faith are somewhat reluctant to encourage the use of the whole narrative of the gospel. Selective use of the scriptures supports selective priorities that the church is built upon. As mentioned above, taking cognizance of humanity as a planetary community will help the church to reconsider an ever growing 'global village', but also to be alert to culturism that might withhold the gospel message to those excluded from set boundaries of exclusivist institutional churches. We are served up a dish of fragmented thoughts that are drawn together

by means of a fallen human logic. It is much more relevant to the churches' own ideologies to pinpoint specific texts to manoeuvre the church into a posture of authority – a position of empire – in their communities of faith. This gives a sense of power. It also allows us to interpret the Bible from the viewpoint of a disillusioned sect (see Bentley 2010:8, in Beyers 2013:7) that has strayed far afield from the principles of the New Testament's portrayal of the 'way of Jesus'. Can this be reflected on the NHKA considering its history in postcolonial South Africa?

1.3.1 The missional imperative today

What connects mission to globalization, especially in contemporary Christianity?²⁹

Globalization appears as the contemporary response to the human dilemma at Babel: human families, whose language became mixed or 'confused' (Hebrew *bālal*, Gn 11:9) so that they were dispersed to cover the face of the earth, are now re-gathering and communicating in *cyber-speak*. The forces unleashed by globalization shape the terrain or cultural context of contemporary mission and provide tools, resources, and opportunities for doing mission.

(Kalu *et al.* 2010:33)

According to Kalu (*et al.* 2010:33), there are two caveats in terms of globalization and mission for the Christian church. First, it is that globalization cannot be blamed for all the changes (internal and external) in the world and church today, but can be perceived as an agent of change. Second, the connection between the mission of Christianity (and also other religions) and globalization is ironic because the missionary enterprise 'nursed the seed of globalization' (Kalu *et al.* 2010:33). The developments in globalization, as illustrated in § 1.2.1-1.3.2.4, expand over territorial boundaries and cultural identities, which is also supposedly understood as the mandate for mission. The problem, however, is how this expansion of the movement,³⁰ in terms of religion, in this case specifically Christianity, is

²⁹ Mission, as understood today, is polyvalent (see below in § 1.3-1.3.2.4) in the sense that it takes the form of the sender's interpretation and intention, whether it is consistent with the Christian texts' example or not. Mission, therefore, mostly conveys some sort of secondary gain towards the receiver; the sender is assumed to be the mediator of the message. This study will use the term mission in a general sense by referring to it as evangelization or 'spreading of the Good News' as defined by Gnanapiragasam and Wilfred (1994:45) as the '*raison de etre* of the church'.

³⁰ See Stearns (2010: Ch. 1-2) for the point of view that modern environmental globalization is not necessarily an ancient pattern but rather, apart from cultural, migration, and disease transmission, more recently took its toll owing technological development its due recognition.

represented.³¹ Whether the mission of the church was local or into ‘the unknown’, and whether it was for the purpose of evangelization or not, the problem was with representation. Mission had too many ideologies in every movement, illustrated by different slogans, variable language, discriminative intent, policies, and strategies.

Now, in the third millennium, we have a global conscience made possible by transport and communication that forms a more accessible global identity. Christians start to realize that they actually share the same message and the same gospel, and that Christianity has expanded beyond their own limits constructed by culture and identity would allow. For example, the NHKA struggled until 2013 to conceptualize that they actually belong to a much larger body of Reformed churches³². In short, mission has not ended; on the contrary, this is without doubt a time full of tensions and it demands faith, hope, and love. Tensions in any church rarely initiate immediate action supported by both sides of an argument. In the NHKA, it seems, a polarized climate has bedevilled its progress over the last few decades. Much reflection on the state of the contemporary church frames its situation in terms of a tussle between two groups variously (and unfounded in most cases) named left and right, liberal and conservative, or progressive and traditionalist. These terms have brought with them a cluster of meanings, but in general, the polarization can be identified in the NHKA theology on the one side and NHKA ecclesiology on the other. Clergy, church leaders, and theologians often locate themselves as belonging to one of these poles, and see a significant dimension of the NHKA’s desired future being realized by overcoming the influence of the other pole. On the one side there are people who recognize that the greatest challenge facing the NHKA is one of updating, making it more relevant in this age; the other speak of the challenge in terms of the church returning to the true identity that many of its members abandoned in the late twentieth century.

³¹ This problem can be comprehended since the work of the apostles with the expansion from Palestine to Europe, trade routes to the Far East, the Crusades from Europe to the Middle East, the Protestant evangelization and the European migration in the nineteenth century, to mention only a few examples.

³² The Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa agreed to re-apply for membership at the WCRC after acknowledging the church’s responsibility to its Order Rule 6, stating that the NHKA have to partake in the Christian ecumenical bodies of the world. See http://www.nhka.org/images/stories/Kerklike_dokumente/70ste_AKV/Notule%20van%20die%2070ste%20AKV.pdf for the minuted description of the decision.

This reality and shift to a globalized Christianity has its own challenges for mission in the NHKA considering its immediate community before moving to the global. In this regard, the following challenges can be mentioned:

- The problematic unravelling of exclusivist culture, even towards its own community;
- the Germanization and Americanization influences on mission that do not necessarily resonate with the South African context;
- the culture-distance problem of Christ and modern secular culture seen in the everyday lives of South Africans, especially the youth;
- evangelization of other faiths and inter-religious dialogue as an ideal not as an immediate practical initiative ;
- the voices of neighbouring countries that do not share in the same globalizing developments as South Africa and the needs they have;
- the demand for flexibility and sensitivity to indigenous contexts (essentialist or nativist paradigms) where the NHKA churches are planted;
- the shift from missionary heroism and unilateral transmission to indigenous appropriation and mutual integrity of all cultures surrounding the church building as a central point of religion;
- challenges with ecumenism and denominational identities, not even to mention the intra-religious community;
- relativism in secular communities and Christianity that has no boundaries through faithful guidance; guidance which the NHKA should give; and
- an updated understanding of vitality of diversity of differences, referring to an all-inclusive kingdom of God preached from pulpits.

These challenges and variables exist because Christianity, as a whole, is not living up to diversity of the body of Christ. Here the irony again is that we want to convert the whole world, but faltered because of it.

In this study's opinion, globalization should not be the obstacle but the agent of opportunity to depart on a different type of mission. Globalization, with all its challenges, has imbued the context for doing mission. Christianity, and other religions, has the chance, now more than ever, to grow and spread because of the

characteristics and structure of globalization. Every country is accessible; every border can be crossed in one way or another. In addition, printing, scanning, downloading, and spreading of the gospel are more accessible to every human than ever before and become even more accessible every day.

Globalization, as mentioned above, also has side effects, namely power and growth issues. Power issues refer to issues such as gender, social justice, ecology, racism, education, migration, diaspora communities, poverty and wealth disparities, while growth issues relate to new cultural trends, ministerial formation, theological education, missionary structures, and strategies. These issues pose the biggest challenge, in this study's opinion, namely the relevance of Christianity – not in terms of other religions, but in terms of globalizing trends and civilization at the rate it is developing.

Kalu (*et al.* 2010:36) argues that '[a]s missionaries of all hues respond to the untoward social problems of a globalized world, the tendency has been toward instrumentalized managerial models, which may lose a strong theological mooring or attention to the role of the Holy Spirit in mission'. In addition, the church's mission should be 'holistic, by its *being, saying, and doing* as the church stands as representative, foretaste, and witness to the presence of God in communities' (Kalu *et al.* 2010:37).

This study does not argue for a specific form of ecclesiastical model for the NHKA to react to the globalization of earth, but rather wants to focus on the challenge brought before us by the fact *that* mission is and always has been a primary, and essential, foundation of Christianity derived from the message and life of Jesus (see § 4.1-4.3.3). Rather than arguing about being a global church, we should pursue a definition of mission relevant to our current challenges as religious nations, and also, and above all, be true to the words and 'way of Jesus' as the radical foundation of global peace, equality and righteousness. Missional ecclesiology challenges the 'local church to rethink being church in the world through an alternative hermeneutical reading of the Bible and the context it was written in' (Niemandt 2012:8).

Apart from being church, we are followers of Jesus. An estrangement of this foundational truth should not be justified for the sake of maintaining a human structure, for example the institutionalized church. This study does not pursue to justify the origin or legitimacy of the church, but rather exclaim that the intention of Jesus with his supposedly missional message was not to *plant* a church, but rather to be the example of a catalytic believer in community (see § 4.2.1.3). Jesus was an instigator, not a church-planter. He was a peaceful remonstrator with the intent of the rejuvenation an inclusive community.

This is not to deny the importance of centralized institutional structures and authorities. A mission-focused ecclesiology, however, recognizes that the local church, on its own, is not sufficient. This is because the universal gospel cannot be confined only to contextual proclamation, but should serve in its essence all of humanity. This requires the church to relate and mutually submit to other churches (read: denominations). We see this in the alliance between the churches and denominations from across the world in the WCC (2013).³³ The popular passage to exemplify this commission of global inclusiveness is seen in the sending of the followers of Jesus to be ‘καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες ἐν τε ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ [ἐν] πάσῃ τῇ ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ σαμαρεία καὶ ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς’ (Ac 1:8).

This missionary mandate necessitates ecclesiastical (read: communal) relationships and centralized structures, but not for the sake of institution – not only spiritual unity, but concrete ways to in which local churches relate to one another and work together are necessary for the spreading of the gospel. This does not have to be obstacles that deteriorate tradition and the numerous cultures of denominations; rather it recognizes it and appreciates it.

The NHKA, participating in Christian religion, has to look further, as a sense of respect, in appreciating its context’s tradition. We have to adhere to the one thing that actually binds us, not separates us through human interpretation. The time has come for Christian churches and communities to realize that the globalization factors

³³ See the World Council of Churches (WCC), website <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission>, for further reading.

mentioned in § 1.2.1-1.2.2.4 will alienate us from humanity if we do not realize the responsibility we have to the future of this world, not to even mention different religions.

This study argues for a world that exists in the unified and realized eschatological principle of ever developing localized contexts (see Chapter 2). Contexts can be inter-dependent without being imperialistic. Their aim should be to maintain unity through the ongoing pursuance of righteousness, equality and freedom. This is not only for the sake of the survival of this planet, but even more, for the manifestation of the kingdom of God among us. There is a bigger picture, a much larger reality that is continually challenging popular trends and encouraging development. It is not enough to protect 'Judea and Samaria', from these challenges, because there are ends to the earth where people live who Jesus considered part of the kingdom of God³⁴ that circles the sun with us on this planet, whether we are willing to accept it or not.

This study does not argue for institutional unity at this stage, although it is possible ideal for the future. It argues for an idea of missional intent that transcends mere locality of religious dialects.³⁵ A phrase often quoted from Paul's letter to the Corinthian community is the metaphor of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12). This metaphor, used to celebrate the diversity that brings life and colour to the church, enables the message of the gospel to reach radically different communities throughout the world. The question is whether this text is not manipulated and interpreted as the justification of mission to the body (understood as Israel, or more recently, the church) alone. What if this text includes the 'four corners of the earth', and understands this globe as the kingdom of God wherein everyone is included? This goes beyond the particularity of the Christian faith, but also breaks through the limits endorsed by the church and identifies a responsibility to the parts not necessarily healthy (uncivilized): καὶ εἴτε πάσχει ἓν μέλος, συμπάσχει πάντα τὰ μέλη (1 Cor 12:26).

³⁴ See § 4.3-4.3.3 for this study's understanding and use of the concept kingdom of God.

³⁵ See in this regard Rahner's (1966) understanding of this possibility.

Globalization could be an opportunity for the church to broaden its understanding of *whom* Jesus understood as being part of ‘all creation’ or the ‘kingdom of God’. Secular communities today, who do not regard religion as essential to life, have the potential to move religion further and further out to the periphery of a globalized world. When the diversity, mentioned above, is considered as important to pursue through missional collaboration, then *being* Christian is not only understood as believing in God, but also participating because of it. That is supposed to be the heart of Christianity, right? That we should be missional is essential to being the body of Christ—or isn’t it?

How we are missional will be discussed in this study in relation to globalization; the *why* we should do mission is interpreted from the perspective of Jesus’ life, with his understanding of the kingdom of God and the eschatological implications thereof (see § 4.3). This is vital for our understanding of the *how* and *that* of being missional as a diverse Christian body of Christ.

1.3.2 Contemporary mission in recent research

Thus each successive epoch of theology found its own thoughts in Jesus; that was, indeed, the only way to make Him live. But it was not only each epoch that found its reflection in Jesus; each individual created Him in accordance with his own character. There is no historical task that so reveals a man’s true self as the writing of the Life of Jesus.

(Schweitzer [1911] 1922:4)

In what follows a summary is given of the perspectives of a few mission-minded writers and groups that formed the modern theology of mission. This list will not be exhaustive in content, but rather introductory to this study’s hypothesis. The intention is not to draw the outline of a theology of mission – or a missiology – that is relevant and challenging for the faiths, specifically the Christian church, in today’s world. But as we head into the third millennium and consciously experience ourselves for the first time as a developing world church, we can build on the importance and historical significances of great Christian assemblies of the twentieth century. Examples of these assemblies are the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference³⁶, in 1910, the

³⁶ See Stanley (2009) for an extensive interpretation of the importance and significance of this conference.

IMC meeting at Tambaram, India, in 1938, the IMC meeting in Ghana in 1958, the Willingen Conference in Germany, in 1952, the WCC mission conference in San Antonio, in 1989, and the Lausanne gathering, in 1974.

The reality is that the world is not a neatly divided planet with a specific religious centre anymore. In the last century missionary activity was not only active on six continents, but also had its bulk from members on the South American, African and Asian continents. The shift of religiosity is now working towards the North and the West (see Bevans & Schroeder 2004:279), rather than the other way around as understood in Edinburgh in 1910. 'Representatives of the missionary movement today will have to come from the entire world, not just from one part of it, for the whole context of missionary work has changed dramatically and radically' (Kalu *et al.* 2010:5). This history of the missionary shift is important, and serves as the departing point for the argument that follows.

The focus here will be on the *why* churches do mission today with the realities in mind; the focus thus will be on the essential imperative that serves as the 'foundation of mission'.³⁷ *That* the church should be missional is certainly accepted around the world, but on what is this perception based? How, in what time, by whom and with which texts are we to persuade the early church up to 2014 that mission is integral to being *church*? Moreover, if mission is found to be true to scripture, what should the missional intent be? The question, 'Why and how did Jesus live a *missional* life in the Mediterranean world?' will be asked. Based on the answer to this question, it will be asked how Jesus would have been 'missional' today, and on whom he would have focused his mission? What would he have told the NHKA to act on in post-colonial South Africa? What would have been the first things He would have taught the church, and other faiths, to focus on in their missional activity?³⁸

³⁷ See http://www.towards2010.org.uk/int_vision.htm, for the discussion '*Towards 2010: Mission for the 21st Century*'.

³⁸ In § 4.2.1-4.3.3 the questions revolving around Jesus' life and intent will be discussed, recognizing the historical Jesus-research questions relating to what Jesus lived for, and what his missional intention was in the world he lived in. Also see possible questions that serve as framework for historical Jesus-research and hermeneutics in Addendum A.

The foundation for mission, especially since the 1910 Edinburgh Conference, is found in the 'very life and mission of the Trinitarian God'. Regarding the challenges of modern day globalization, missiology is essentially claiming 'that there cannot be just a theology any more: all theology has to be missiological' (Kalu *et al.* 2010:9). This shows that, because of the modern challenges and the reality of globalization in the world and the church, the theology written today for mission needs to draw from the richness of the church's missionary commitment.

There cannot be, for example, a doctrine of God that does not engage seriously in inter-religious dialogue or contextualization; there cannot be an ecclesiology that does not understand the churches essence in relation to commitment to the preaching and witnessing of God's present and coming reign. There cannot be a theology of grace that does not ponder God's mysterious presence outside explicit faith in Christ. There cannot be a theology and spirituality of ministry that does not call church leadership to cultural sensitivity. There cannot be a Christian life that is not committed to justice, to peace making, to Christian unity, to ecological responsibility. A missiology in a world church can only be a theology for a world church; a theology for a world church can only be a missiology in a world church.

(Kalu *et al.* 2010:11)

The focus of missional theology seems to lie with perspectives ('interpretation') regarding the *missio Dei*, understood as exemplarily Trinitarian action, and, secondly, Jesus' deeds and words taken up in the written gospels by the first followers of Jesus. These two focus-points are essential for the *reason* for mission derived from Scriptures, and should be the starting point for any discussions on mission in contemporary reflection on the essence of being missional. Most conclusions are drawn from either missional Trinitarian understanding of God's Being, or the example of Jesus' life in the gospels and interpretations thereof by later writers and Church Fathers.

Throughout history, churches had specific paradigms wherein missions took place and various reasons why mission was relevant to contextual calling and desired outcomes. For example, Thomas (1995:viii-xii) identifies these paradigms³⁹ as mission being the liberating service of the reign of God, as the church-with-others, as mediating salvation, as quest for justice, as evangelism, as contextualization, as ministry by the whole people of God, as interfaith witness, and as action in hope.

³⁹ Bevens and Schroeder (2004:286-395) refers to 'constants in context', or 'models' rather than paradigms serving 'as a kind of framework by which the church identifies itself and around which the gospel message takes shape' (Bevens & Schroeder 2004:72).

What is intriguing is how a specific theology of mission came to believe, and structured itself, around a church's specific understanding of a missional imperative that is integral to them, theology, and being Christian. One can relate to the challenges brought forth through the ages and the reaction of the church to it. Obviously, the 'various *constants* of the church's one mission throughout its history have both shaped and been shaped by the historical-cultural *context* and the corresponding theological thought of particular times and places' (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:73; emphasis in the original). However, what defines and justifies a biblical foundation for mission today? What would be the core of Christian mission in a globalized world, from a postcolonial foundation? In other words, *why* should we do mission with a different intention than that of Jesus, if we are doing so? Obviously, we attempt to live according to what we believe God has planned for us. However, has that plan changed over the last two millenniums? What is the mission of God today, and should it be different from that of Jesus of Nazareth during his time on earth? Alternatively, did we lose perspective because of our own institutionalized agendas? This question forms the starting point to further inquiry.

There is an intriguing jump from initial literary criticism to paradigm formulation and its supposed missional intent and foundation thereof. The hypothesis of this study is that there should be a relation to the biblical foundation of a missional paradigm (model, constant, intention) and its outcomes, and the hermeneutic that it uses to interpret the biblical text and the world.

What is argued here is not that any mission orientated individual, theologian, organization or church take these questions for granted or disregard the interpretation of responsible scripture reading is wrong. It is also not argued that missional paradigms are illegitimate and always have been because of their foundations. This study merely points to the relation between responsible hermeneutics of the text and the outcomes of such a hermeneutic. The different quests in the historical Jesus research were never concerned with disproving faith, or the fact that we believe in Jesus of the gospels, but rather to expose what we do have available for interpretation with a responsible scientific foundation.

Missiological theories that draw presumably legitimate outcomes from a text and implementing it in an authoritative way for Christian mission should at least be able to explain how it came to its conclusions. Is mission merely a conjured up creation of the church to use as a tool for survival in certain times or on certain (uncivilized) people?

1.3.2.1 *Missio Dei*

Hartenstein coined the concept of *missio Dei* (circa 1934), which gained currency after the Willingen conference (1952). Its locus in the history of theology is the dialectical theology of Karl Barth⁴⁰ with its radical emphasis on the *actio Dei*, which precedes all human action and severs missions from any contemporary secular rationale by characterizing missions as participation in the redemptive work of God (see Schwarz 1994: 591-601).⁴¹ 'Thus, missions are fundamentally removed from the sphere of purely human activity, characterized and understood as God's will and act, an inalienable indication of God's revelation' (Hartenstein 1939:6). Schwarz (1994:593) understands mission of the church to 'find the ground of its existence and its limits in God's mission'. Again, how do we discern the will of God? We can only relate to the action God took by sending Jesus to the world (according to Jn 3:16).

David Bosch,⁴² probably known as the foremost Protestant advocate of missiology in South Africa, wrote in a time of oppression and inequality; a time labelled by the world as heretical because of the Apartheid-regime. During times like these, understanding the gospel and missional imperatives, while staying true to the Biblical text, without getting critical reaction from academics, churches, and friends was almost impossible. Bosch wrote in such a time. Bosch builds on Barth's dialectical theology and Hartenstein's *missio Dei*, especially after the Willingen meeting of the IMC in Germany. He summarizes Willingen's message as follows:

The classical doctrine of the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son, sending the Holy Spirit was expanded to include yet another 'movement': Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world....

⁴⁰ Mission for Barth 'began with the Divine sending of God's self in the Holy Trinity. The church can be in mission authentically only in obedience to God as *missio*' (Thomas 1995:104).

⁴¹ See Schwarz *et al.* (1994:593) for examples of how Hartenstein later moved away from Karl Barth's theology.

⁴² For further reading on Bosch's foundation for mission see Bosh (1983, 1991 and 1994).

Willingen's image of mission was mission as participating in the sending of God. Our mission has no life of its own: only in the hands of the sending God can it truly be called mission, not least missionary initiative comes from God alone.

(Bosch 1991:390)

Bosch, especially in the South-African context, paved the way for missional theology by building a foundation for the theology of mission, based on the understanding and interpretation of the *Missio Dei*.

Missio Dei has a long history of interpretations. Interpreted by Bosch (1980:240), the *Missio Dei* 'has its origin in the *fatherly heart of God*.... He is the fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people' (Bosch 1991:392). Bosch here refers to the love (ἀγάπησεν) God has for the world and his mercy (ἔλεος), which manifested itself through Christ and is understood as the Trinitarian action (see also Volf 2006:3-12) as the basis for mission (see 1 Jn 4:9; Rm 8:32; Jn 3:16). 'Jesus often says that the Father has sent him, often adding that it is for the sake of the salvation of the world' (Bosch 1980:240). This is said in the light of the Old Testament, where the church has its roots for inclusivity and universality, particularly in the vision of the prophets. 'Israel's election was never for its own sake, but always so that, in it all nations would receive a blessing (Gn 12:3; Is 45:1, 49:1-6)' as shown by Newbigin (1989:80-88). This God then sends his son to the world through an act of love for the elected nation(s). This reconciliation is seen in the cross as symbol of both judgment and reconciliation, and with this 'Trinitarian understanding of mission, but in such a way that it has an Christological concentration because it is precisely Christology that accentuates God's entrance (his mission) into the world' (Bosch 1980:241). Bosch understands this example of God's love to the world as '[t]he new dimension of God's concern for the world. What is more, it is God's final and definitive concern. Since Christ came we can no longer expect a salvation other than which he inaugurated.... Jesus as missionary is at the same time, the model for our mission (the Incarnation) and its foundation (Bosch 1980:241).

This understanding of Bosch led to a discussion on the church's involvement in mission. Thomas (1995:103) uses excerpts from the IMC Willingen (1952) meeting to show that the 'structure, life, and purpose of the Church ... that mission is woven

into all three and cannot be separated out from any one without destroying it.' The issue here is the involvement of the church, so when God says to the Church 'μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη', Thomas argues, 'He is not giving the Church a commission that is added to their duties; but a commission that belongs to its royal charter (covenant) to be the Church' (Thomas 1995:104). This study does not agree with Thomas because the reference to 'church' is merely a projection, assuming that it existed. Bosh (1991:392) builds on the Dutch theologian Johannes Hoekendijk's understanding of *missio Dei*, namely that God needs no help 'articulating Himself'; but that the church's missionary efforts only gets in the way. 'If anything, the church simply points to what God is doing in world; and that is all' (Bosh 1991:392).

Bevans and Schroeder (2004:290) shows that *missio Dei* mostly evolve around the conversation of the Trinity today, specifically the working of the Trinity in terms of the unity in diversity of the Trinity that 'will be a key for a theology of religious and cultural pluralism that is the mark of postmodern thought and civilization' (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:293). More recently, a shift of interpretation is clear in the thoughts of Indian missiologist, M. Thomas Tangaraj, who begins his theology of mission from the experience of being human:

[T]o be human is to be engaged in a *missio humanitas*, a movement of responsibility, solidarity and mutuality. Such a mission is understood as the image of the *missio Dei*, made concrete both in the *missio Christi* and the *missio ecclesiae*, and transformed by Christian faith into cruciform responsibility, liberative solidarity and eschatological mutuality.

(Bevans & Schroeder 2004:293)

Critique on this point of departure comes from a prominent Orthodox missiologist, Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos, who says that while we can speak of the church in a Christ-centred way, this can only be understood if it is understood in the Trinitarian way:

The one-sidedness of the Western type of Christocentrism was often caused by the restriction of the image of Christ to the so-called 'historical Jesus. But the Christ of the church is the eternal word ... who is ever-present in the church through the Holy Spirit, risen and ascended.

(Yannoulatos 1994:37)

From the discussion above it is clear that the focus on and interpretation of the first focus-point (the *missio Dei* understood as Trinitarian action) reflect on the outcomes

which forms an essential argument for *why* we are supposed to be missional. For Yannoulatos (quoted above), the potential problematic comes to the surface when a specific understanding of the Scriptures is used. Bevans and Schroeder (2004:297) also mentions this focus-point wherein Jesus focuses on the reign of God; the words, images, message that He mediates to the world that is in darkness and can now see the light (Mt 11:25-27; Mk 1:15; Lk 18:18-19; Jn 12:44-45; 14:9; 17:1-8). Also through the Son can the Spirit work understood as a Spirit Christology. This is a Trinitarian understanding, and focus, on the *missio Dei* of the central role of the Spirit in Jesus' mission in Roman Palestine (Mt 3:13-4:1; Lk 3:21-22; 4:1, 16-21). We clearly see how the projection of the Trinitarian image on these texts can justify a 'sending' missional interpretation. An example of this is Newbigin, who writes that the 'Spirit who thus bears witness in the life of the Church to the purpose of the Father is not confined to the limits of the Church. It is the clear teaching of the Acts of the Apostles, as it is the experience of the missionaries, that the Spirit goes, so to speak ahead of the Church' (Newbigin 1978:49). This interpretation of the Trinity foregoes a Trinitarian-inspired *ecclesiology*: 'The church is understood as *communion*; it is a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' (*Lumen Gentium* 4, in Bevans & Schroeder 2004:298).

Jn 20:21, καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, κἀγὼ πέμπω ὑμᾶς, becomes the popular understanding of what we are supposed to follow in the example of Jesus as missional. But did his ὁ πατήρ send him to build a church; is this the *missio Dei*? If not, why does the Christian church keep discerning about ecclesiology? Is it because we are not accustomed to another way? And if yes, is it justified on the grounds of tradition?

Practical missional examples of *missio Dei*, this study argues, is only found in the examples of Jesus's life, not the church. It is about intent, not about institution; intent that can be found in the words and actions of Jesus.

1.3.2.2 Jesus' commission to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη

'The church's mission also has its roots in the ministry and person of Jesus as he preached, served and witnessed to the reign of God and gathered about him a community that assisted him in his work' (Mk1:14-45; 6:7-13; Lk 10:1-20; Küng 1967:75). Bevans and Schroeder (2004:11) argues from the assumption that the church 'has its roots in the post-resurrection faith of the first disciples – they were

called to witness to the Gospel *of* Jesus and the Gospel *about* Jesus'. In this sense Jesus 'is both the evangel and the evangelizer' (Arias 1984:2).

Building on this momentum on Jesus as example, Bevans and Schroeder (2004:11) argues that the first followers held firm the conviction that 'Jesus' universal Lordship as risen Christ, through whom humanity has direct access to God ... was indeed ... the image of the invisible God', and the 'Word made flesh' (quoting Col 1:15, Jn 1:14; see also Ac 2:36; 4:8-12; 8:5,35; 10:34-42; 28:30). Bevans and Schroeder (2004:11) shows that this 'first aspect of the apostolic faith is clearly evident' therein and 'especially clear in Pauline literature (for example Gl 2:15-20; 1 Cor 1:23-24; Rm 5:15-19; 2 Cor 5:19-21; Eph 1:7-10)'

At the same time, the first disciples were convinced that they were called as well to proclaim, to serve and to embody the same gospel of forgiveness, graciousness, generosity, inclusiveness and justice that Jesus had preached, served and witnessed to in his own earthly ministry (the gospel *of* Jesus). This aspect of the first disciples' faith, while not in any way the exclusive focus of Acts, finds in this New Testament a book a particularly clear expression.

(Bevans & Schroeder 2004:12)

The *why* mission exists, keeping the above in mind, is

to proclaim and witness to the *world* 'the depths and the riches' (Rm 11:33) of God's love, and the availability of that love as the Spirit speaks to human hearts as Christ reveals that love through his life of authentic service 'unto the end' (Jn 13:1). And since the communion with God can never be separated from communion with other human beings and with all creation, the sense of a holistic salvation is not lost.

(Bevans & Schroeder 2004:300).

There is, however, a significant development in the term τῆς οἰκουμένης since its first uses in the New Testament. The New Testament scriptures 'find the preeminent meaning of οἰκουμένη in the Hellenistic era, namely 'world', and 'empire' (Oborji 2006:154).

The first disciples were dragged before the courts and accused of inciting the whole *oikoumenē* to revolt. In these passages *oikoumenē* indicates the Roman Empire and its structures, but this concept had a very negative connotation. This becomes clear particularly in the account of the temptation, where Satan shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world (Lk 4:5), and in the book of Revelation where *oikoumenē* indicates Satan's dominion over the whole world (Rv 12:9; 16:14).

(Oborji 2006:154)



This is important to note when applying the term in the positive side of its ambivalent meaning. We regard Jesus' teaching as loving towards 'πάντα τὰ ἔθνη' (Mt 24:14; 28:19) to all human beings, and the day when God will 'judge the world' [*oikoumenē*] in righteousness (Ac 17:31), but it was not always interpreted as such because of the negative connotations to it. This is what is referred to, in a positive sense, as the receivers of the Good News, and salvation. 'Therefore, in the New Testament terminology *oikoumenē* is an ambivalent concept. This is why Hebrews 2:5 speaks of the *oikoumenē* or world to come in subjection to Jesus Christ and compares this with the *oikoumenē* that passes, that is, with this world (Oborji 2006:154).

The term *oikoumenē* further develops through the Patristic Period as including the whole empire of Constantine (Oborji 2006:155), in medieval times to describe the 'universal church' and her claim that she possesses the 'only truth' (Neuner 2000:11 in Oborji 2006:157), and in contemporary times as a call for denominational unity (Oborji 2006:157) interpreted from John 17:21 (ἵνα πάντες ἐν ᾧσιν). Since this interpretation of ἵνα πάντες ἐν ᾧσιν, it was understood as the call of Jesus towards all Christians to live in unity and to be a whole. Schnackenburg (1987:220) regards this call of unity as essential for the Christian faith, an idea that has its roots in the Old Testament especially in the Qumran community, which calls itself *yahad*, 'Union'. More recently, the conversation turned toward collaboration between the different denominations. Catholics, Orthodox believers, and Protestants focus on interdenominational unity and also the dialogue with other faiths (see Oborji 2006:157-79).

This study is of the opinion that the term *oikoumenē* adapted and altered its meaning from the context it was used in over centuries. The question is, is our current squabbles over denominational unity what Jesus referred to when he mentions the ἔθνη, whom God loved so much, τὸν κόσμον, to send Jesus as mediator? If not, regardless of Christian denomination, an impelling alteration of the term is needed to confront all Christian churches; not with the meaning of being one church in unity, but having *oikoumenē* as the primal focus of their ministry to the world, similar to the way of Jesus.

1.3.2.3 Edinburgh 2010 Volume II: Witnessing to Christ Today

We cannot draw the conclusion ... [t]hat only those who respond will be saved. God's revelation is not limited to the explicit human preaching of the good news, but extends beyond it. We must be prepared to be surprised at those whom we will meet in the kingdom of God.

(McGrath 1996:67)

An important contribution made by this conference was the reference to 'experience' as a building block for the foundation of mission. Research highlights a disconnection between those who study mission referred to as missiology, and those who practice or support mission – better identified as missional theorists on the one hand and religious groups on the other. The Edinburgh project understands 'experience' in the first instance as the empirical process by which data was collected. But not all human experience is a valid foundation for mission, only that which resonates with the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are also negative experiences that challenges and informs the foundation of mission. Thus raw theory, derived from religious tradition in or ancient texts are subject to practical application in a specific context. The problem is that over time different Christian traditions had different interpretations, or missiological theories, about mission. With the impact of globalization, and the effects of colonization, some theories are brought into question.

This conference's importance as the third example of *globalized mission* in the contemporary world challenges the focus points of recent missiological, interdenominational and inter-continental dialogue. The more accepted conception of *mission* and what, in their opinion, is the barrier and challenges of the third millennium are discussed with the motive of identifying outcomes that are more specific for mission.

The 'Christian communities in contemporary contexts' study group reformulated the questions suggested for further study and focused on the following themes and key questions:⁴³

⁴³ See the website of Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, www.ocms.ac.uk/regnum, for information on this conference and other work done by the Centre.

1. Poverty, suffering and marginalized communities: How do adjectives of Christian community such as 'discipling', 'healing', 'witnessing', and 'contextual' become lived realities in today's world?
2. Globalization and the reproduction of hierarchies: What is involved in being the church in the cities and mega-cities of today?
3. Christianity and socio-political action: How can the local church be an agent of the kingdom of God and a source of healing and reconciliation?
4. Identity, gender and power: What is the true identity (the 'core DNA') of the church? How does it manifest itself in different denominations and cultures?
5. The interface of migration, diaspora and ethnicity: what are the tensions between homogenous and multi-ethnic churches? How is church life in diaspora communities shaped?
6. HIV/AIDS, church and mission: Does Christian mission bear some responsibility for the spread of the virus? How can mission contribute to the struggle to stop the pandemic? What other forms of ill-health call for particular attention from practitioners of Christian mission?

(Edinburgh 2010:175)

'It is good to remember in this age of globalization that mission societies were among the first global players' (Edinburgh 2010:195). Also important, the study argued, is to remember that because of colonialism, mission had a vessel to 'civilize' the unknown world. 'There is Christian experience in international networking and in crossing boundaries. If Christ's mission is to be fulfilled by the churches, Christians need to be generous and cooperative with each other' (Edinburgh 2010:195). It is assumed here that there are boundaries because of different denominations and institutions. The problem is with justifying these assumptions with examples from the work Jesus did in every culture he met. 'Churches must realize that our mission has been inadequate in the past and so we must work prayerfully, aware of our disparate failings, in the Holy Spirit's strength, to discover together what it is that God wants of us' (Edinburgh 2010:195). This is an extremely dangerous projection. The question is whether we must 'turn back to God' because of where God has sent us to, or because of where we went through our own endeavours. 'Churches which are centred upon Jesus, which make a statement about welcoming strangers, and which live by Jesus' statement by reaching out in relation to others, others that are followers of Jesus or not, will be best placed to fulfil Christ's mission in whatever context they are based, in this twenty-first century as always' (Edinburgh 2010:195).

This study cannot adequately underscore its disapproval with the understanding of *church* as the foundation of mission; rather it relates to church that participates in the kingdom that came near. 'Our key question and challenge is: "How can we work better together for God's purposes? We cannot grasp the fullness of God's plan, and we have tendency to become myopic in our understanding of our Christian identity"' (Edinburgh 2010:195). This study also asks: 'How can churches step outside of some exclusivist traditions to follow the example of Jesus more closely?' As long as there are missional theories based on religious institution's specific intentions it will be tough, if not almost impossible, to contribute as the body of Christ to the contemporary challenges drawn up by the Edinburgh Conference.

1.3.2.4 Deductions drawn from all views

This section answers the first of three aims of this study. To identify the current complications and opportunities of globalization that challenges missional action (see § 1.1.4).

This study's concern with current mission is that it goes out to 'serve' (read: impose upon) a specific purpose, regardless whether it is church, or organization, related. The concern is that the Christian still mediates this 'grace' or 'will' of God and the receivers do not always understand it as such; they rather become intolerant to the message because of the mediation factor. Trust in this 'god-willed message' (especially when propagated by an institution) becomes fallible because of our institutionalized tactics, but also because we label it as 'God's work or will'. How could the receiver or the non-believer grasp such a message when the distrust is essentially in the mediator?

Bevans and Schroeder (2004:284) argue that

we can no longer conceive of mission in terms of church expansion or the salvation of souls; no longer can we conceive of mission as supporting the outreach of colonial powers; no longer can we understand missionary activity as providing the blessings of Western civilization to 'underdeveloped' or 'developing' peoples and cultures; no longer can we conceive of mission as originating from a Christianized North and moving toward a non-Christian, or religiously under-developed South. Mission today, rather, is something much more modest, and at the same time much more exciting –

and, indeed, much more urgent. It is much more modest because we realize that ‘the mission is not our, but God’s’;⁴⁴ it is much more exciting because it is about God’s gracious invitation to humanity to share in the dynamic communion that is at the same time God’s self-giving missionary life; it is more urgent because in a world of globalized poverty, religious violence and new appreciation of local culture and subaltern traditions, the vision and praxis of Jesus of Nazareth can bring new healing and light.

(Bevans & Schroeder 2004:284-285)

Therefore, how does this study propose how the church should do mission then?

What would be the practical suggestion and intent that the church should consider when going ‘out into the world’?

Mission is about preaching, serving and witnessing to the work of God in our world; it is about living and working as partners with God in the patient yet unwearied work of inviting and persuading women and men to enter into relationship with their world, with one another and with God self. Mission is dialogue. It takes people where they are; it is open to their traditions and culture and experience; it recognizes the validity of their own religious existence and the integrity of their own religious ends. But it is *prophetic dialogue* because it calls people beyond; it calls people to conversion; it calls people to deeper and fuller truth that can only be found in communion with dialogue’s Trinitarian ground. Mission today will be done in what David Bosch calls ‘bold humility’,⁴⁵ modelled after mission in Christ’s way of humility and self-emptying and bold proclamation of God’s ‘already’ and ‘not yet’ reign.

(Bevans & Schroeder 2004:284-285)

A possible misunderstanding by the secular communities regarding Christian faith can be in the difference between the example of Jesus’s life portrayed in the Gospels, and contemporary Christianity. One can imagine the contrasts found by native South Africans, for example the Khoi San and Zulus, in the bible when they were able to read it for themselves after witnessing two hundred years of violent colonialism and oppression from all sides. When these terms become entangled, one can easily presume that contemporary Christianity still exhibits the same values and intentions of the first followers of Jesus and Jesus’s example in itself. That assumption is not true when looking at the thousands of ‘Christian’ denominations claiming the virtues derived from the virtues of Jesus of Nazareth. Walls (1996:6), for example, refers to Christianity’s ‘missionary vision’ maintained through the ages despite ‘wild profusion of varying statements of these differing groups’ as they responded to different contexts. There is in Christianity an ‘essential continuity’ by

⁴⁴ Newbigin (1978:78) quotes the final statement of the IMC’s Ghana Assembly of 1957 to 1958. The actual quotation is: ‘The Christian world mission is Christ’s, not ours’ as cited by Thomas (1995:113-114).

⁴⁵ This formulation is taken from Bosch (1991:489).

which it remains itself as it transforms itself in missionary outreach. Bevans and Schroeder (2004:33) quotes the above from Walls but then, almost obviously, confirms what Walls says by arguing that the '*church* is missionary by its very nature; it continues as church as it continues Jesus' mission of preaching, serving and witnessing to God's already-inaugurated yet still-to-be-consummated reign, growing and changing and being transformed in the process.' This might be true for being church, but not for being Christian, or labelling contemporary Christianity by limiting it to the church. Rather, the limit or perimeter (read: potential frontier) should be to a 'people of every nation'. In other words, secularism should untangle these terms to relate to Jesus's actual intention, rather than to spurn the movement initiated by Jesus because of contemporary Christianity's fabricated portrayal thereof.

Kirk (2006:212) describes the influence of the church in the public sphere as problematic to society. It is because of the possibility that church can 'claim the right and duty to impose its views on the public policy, or that the church is seeking once again to recover a certain status within the life of the state.' He explains this by referring to churches that is built on church-state laws. Now that secular tendencies dislodged church-state relations, surviving churches finds it hard to 'exist as a body which professes a minority creed'. He goes on to show that institutionalized churches, especially those with self-proclaimed authority as exclusivist who finds 'it painful to admit that the kind of influence they once had, has disappeared forever and they now live as aliens in a strange land' (Kirk 2006:212).

These remaining denominations of the Christian faith only impose its authority on its immediate community, or members. Members then, ironically, recognize themselves as the superior authority, while actually representing only a fraction of humanity. The problem is with the misuse of authoritative tradition that alienates those outside of the set boundaries of the institution. Most of the time, such a 'superior community of members' would still preach 'go to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη'. Ironically, the hearers of such a message conform to the expectation of the tradition, and must behave accordingly to be associated with it. Something of the initial intention of Jesus and his followers has been lost to tradition. The church should then ask whether the kingdom of God has limits made by the institution. Alternatively, could this be the reason that those

excluded from the in-group are so reluctant to participate by adhering to the requirements of the institution?

This is not a plea for the church to dissolve and neglect centuries of history, but to be able to part from it by realizing that identity and purpose, community and worship, justice and service was the essential elements Jesus of Nazareth reminded us of and confronts us with justice that catechizes equity through love.

Such Christian action could be in the form of mission, but not for the sake of the church or for the sake of its survival. The relativistic nature of undisciplined (read: non-ethical) cultural formations of our day do not necessarily have reference to divine set of virtues and ethics. They might not even relate to a deity for acquiring meaning and purpose to their lives. When the church uses mission for the sake of participation and collaboration in the perceived kingdom of God, then it should do so to exclaim the value of justice and freedom found and tested against the claims of the way of Jesus. As long as the church does not dissociate (without neglecting Gospel truth) itself from moralizing society as a self-acknowledged superior authority, communities, and other religions, will distance themselves from it.

Secular groups, to spread distrust in the church's claims of supreme authority, use post-modern logic as an instrument for validating truth. Such logic could lead to distrust. A simple example is that of some exclusivist traditions that are somewhat ungrounded (not relating to Jesus' laws of obedience and neighbourly love). I conclude with referring to the Edinburgh Conference again: 'How do adjectives of Christian community such as 'discipling', 'healing', 'witnessing', and 'contextual' become lived examples in today's world?' That is where mission needs to focus. That should be the intended outcome, not a goal of religious survival.

There might be something communally distributed in mission, globalization and the gospel that might harmonize some of the questions and concerns thereof. We therefore turn to the Social Gospel.

Chapter 2

The Social Gospel

We have a Social Gospel. We need a systematic theology large enough to match it and vital enough to back it ... a theology to make it effective; but theology needs the Social Gospel to vitalize it.

(Rauschenbusch 1945:1)

Belief in the Kingdom of God now takes a new lease of life. It no longer looks for its coming, self-determent as an eschatological cosmic event, but regards it as something ethical and spiritual, not bound up with the last things, but to be realized with the cooperation of men...Mankind today must either realize the Kingdom of God or perish. The very tragedy of our present situation compels us to devote ourselves in faith to its realization.

(Schweitzer 1950)

Globalization, as multidimensional as it is, and mission, as diversely interpreted as it is, is interrelated in the third millennium. These two aspects go hand in hand from a religious point of view and raise some legitimate concerns. The connection is not only historical (where examples can be viewed as destructive and exploitive), but also important in terms of the potential for future contributions to a planetary civilization. The need for a basis from where values – derived from Jesus' way – can be constituted with good intent by the religious; values integral for instigating faithfulness to God's unvarying intention with our macrocosm. Such a basis for the NHKA to proceed from into the world has to have a foundation of interest towards the social sphere.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the critics' dismissive opinions⁴⁶ of the Social Gospel movement condemned the potential of the movement to a mere era of liberation theology in

⁴⁶ Diane Yeager (1990:4), in examining Charles Howard Hopkins' (1940) historiography, is of the opinion that the Social Gospel was dominated by a negative theological assumption, namely that the Social Gospel was best understood as 'not as a theologically original endeavor but as a kind of gerrymandering of theological boundaries under the pressure of various external cultural differences'. This assessment implicates that the movement is fated to die when the cultural situation to which it had adapted itself ceased to exist.

North American history⁴⁷. The movement proved more resilient than the critics thought it would be. More recent theologians gave sufficient attention to the Social Gospel as movement enabling us to begin asking whether the rumours of its demise had been greatly exaggerated, or not (White & Hopkins 1976:xi). Carl Deger (1950:347) has summed up the Social Gospel movement in this way: 'The acceptance of the Social Gospel stepped outside the churches to intersect the political, social, and economic forces of changing America'. The Social Gospel movement proved to infiltrate more than only theology in North America.

Even though there are an increasing number of scholars engaging in new research on the movement, our knowledge of the Social Gospel is still in its infancy. This study will work with the relevant recent writings on the Social Gospel concerning its history and origin.

What we know, or thought we knew, about the movement might not be so transparent. We therefore need a new comprehensive history of the movement. The Social Gospel fathers⁴⁸ had some initial intentions with the Social Gospel. These intentions, when studied more closely, may be less polemically distorted than what the neo-orthodox critics assumed it to be:

What was so clear to so many in 1940 is less clear in 1990. Political theologies flourish, efforts to define a faithful Christian social philosophy abound. It seems likely that a full-scale critical history of the Social Gospel constructed today might offer an analysis rather different from that of Hopkins, setting these preachers, teachers and activists in the contexts of the several kingdom theology which have characterized theology in this century. From this perspective, a movement, which seemed to be the last muscular twitching of an already moribund theological liberalism, might be rehabilitated.

(Yeager 1990:5)

The still useful, and sometimes neglected, foundational structures and voices of the Social Gospel movement can be retrieved. It is, however, suggested by Lindsey (1997:232) that if there is any contemporary attempt to appraise the Social Gospel theology and discover its significance for Christianity today must do more than

⁴⁷ John Bennett (1975:105) observes that political-, liberation- and the Social Gospel theology have many points in common; for instance all three find their thematic focus in the biblical symbol of the kingdom of God (see § 2.1.1-2.2.2).

⁴⁸ The fathers of the Social Gospel are usually cited as Walter Rauschenbusch, Washington Gladden, Shailer Mathews and Josiah Strong, all active in 1890-1945.

analyze its roots in the liberal theology of the nineteenth century: 'it must also recognize its affinities with political and liberation theology. Therein lies its importance' (Lindsey 1997:232).

According to Lindsey, the kingdom theology of Shailer Mathews is in the political and liberation theologies, an important current that runs through twentieth-century Christian theology. The important turning point is in the eschatological turn as a critique of liberal theology's collapse of faith into culture. 'In this respect, it anticipates the very critique that would be pressed by dialectical theologians against the Social Gospel' (Lindsey 1997:232). But, in its attempt to discover some basis for seeing the *eschaton* as proleptically affecting history, while adopting a stance of eschatological realism, Matthews' kingdom theology also avoids what may have been dialectical theology's diversion from the mainstream of twentieth-century theological reflection, insofar this theology did not adequately deal with the relationship between eschatology and history.

Christianity, to be sure, has exhibited social dimensions throughout its history, but in the Social Gospel was an indigenous movement growing within the matrix of American Protestantism. 'Interacting with the changing realities and problems of an increasingly urbanized nation, the Social Gospel viewed itself as a crusade for justice and righteousness in all areas of the common life' (White & Hopkins 1976:xii). The movement, according to White & Hopkins (1976:xvi), 'coalesced more around action than belief' and that persons and organizations 'were drawn together because of pressing social needs'; therefore the importance of post colonialism critique to use an nativist essentialist optic to view the intrinsic intent of the movement. Such an optic clearly explain the intention the movement had in its time. Understanding the nativist/essential intent of the people informs this study in a practical way, namely to consider the Social Gospel as foundational for approaching mission in the third millennium. There was need, and a movement of people came together to take action. This action has direct relevance for Christian religion and social life in today's world.



2.1.1 History

As mentioned in § 2.1, it is important to reconstruct the history of the Social Gospel to interpret the context in which it evolved, as well as the criticisms and interpretations it received. From its starting point in history, the Social Gospel was not, and is not, a movement with the intension of spiritual devotion alone.

Rauschenbusch (1945:2) explains that the Social Gospel is ‘built on the conviction that the Social Gospel is a permanent addition to our spiritual outlook and that its arrival constitutes a stage in the development of the Christian religion’. With the turn of the nineteenth-century, it was clear that there was a turn in the social sphere regard the understanding the church had about the religious crisis wherein it found itself. The Social Gospel was part of the ministry of churches and accepted in various denominations as ‘not simply a prudent adjustment of church methods to changed [social] conditions but has a religious compulsion behind it’ (Rauschenbusch 1945:3). Rauschenbusch continues by saying that it has taken the ‘place of conventional religion in the lives of many outside the church and constitutes the moral power in the propaganda of Socialism.’ According to Rauschenbusch ‘we need not waste words to prove the Social Gospel is being preached’, it has become *orthodox*’ (emphasis added, 1945:3).

Dorn (1967:303) is of the opinion that the Social Gospel movement was ‘essentially an urban movement’. The exponents of the movement were men, like the fathers of the Social Gospel, but also the masses born in rural communities that saw how urbanization posed problems for churches and public social Christian life. These new challenges included industrialism, poverty, immigration and the rapid growth of cities that paralyzed urban government and public order that slowly broke down to a so-called ‘flower of civilization’ – but were often instead ‘the smut of civilization’ (Dorn 1967:303). The problems in the late nineteenth-century, viewed from a dispirited middle class white male’s perspective, was the misrule seen in the

corrupt alliances among politicians and between politicians and public-service corporations; the intellectual and moral debasement of the urban population by immigration from rural areas and abroad, indiscriminate charity, and the exodus of the churches and the established classes; manipulation by state legislatures; partnership and the orientation of urban to national parties; and the disease fostered by ward politics.

(Gladden 1897:184)

Gladden pictures late nineteenth-century corporations and government as a bunch of 'creatures in their offices'. A year later he preached specifically against three groups that profited from the weakness of the municipal governments: 'Political spoils men, public service corporations, and the *vicious classes* namely the saloonkeepers, gamblers, and their allies' (Gladden 1899; emphasis in the original). It is clear that the background from which the Social Gospel movement started also had context specific problems, for example, the difference in urbanization between a small settlement like North Adams and a cosmopolitan city like New York at the time. Each nuance of the context in Northern America had an influence on the Social Gospel writers, and one should understand why these writers wrote against *the smut of civilization*. The geographical boundaries of the movement are currently being redrawn to include the forgotten voices of the movement. 'Long forgotten reform movements – race, women, and anti-imperialism, for example – can now be seen alongside better-known and admittedly more vigorous efforts in the industrial arena' (White & Hopkins 1976: xii).

The Social Gospel arose in an era when North Americans lighted their dwellings with candles or kerosene lamps and commuted by horse drawn carriages. Later in the Social Gospel movements' time, the dawn of the twentieth century with widespread electrification, the automobile, the airplane, and mechanization of agriculture, altered the life for most North Americans. There were many important technological developments of that period. The public sphere changed at a rapid pace. This reality urged the churches and the public to either adapt or stagnate in its traditional form.

The writers of the Social Gospel were in the centre of these developments. They used the cannon, sabre, and rifle and later with weapons that relegates the technology of the Civil War to a military museum, to fight the war. The carnage of these battles were to such an extent that 'theological reflection on the morality of war moved at a sharp disjuncture from all previous moral teaching about war and peace' (Lindsey 1997:36).

The social movement's fathers thus wrote from their own complex backgrounds and interests. Confronted by the new challenges of urbanization, they all had to adapt and survive in what Gladden (1909:91) called 'a mighty monster, with portentous

energy'. Rauschenbusch discovered, during his first clerical appointment, that Hell's Kitchen was not a safe place, and Josiah Strong remarked that '[t]he City is the nerve centre of civilization. It is also the storm centre' (Strong 1885:128).

This study will focus on Washington Gladden (February 11, 1836 - July 2, 1918), Shailer Mathews (May 26, 1863 - October 23, 1941), and Walter Rauschenbusch (October 4, 1861-July 25, 1918). What will follow is a cursory introduction to the origin and history of the Social Gospel and focus on their theology of the Social Gospel relevant to this study (see § 2.1.2 - 2.2.2).

It is interesting to note how assured the Social Gospel writers were to their cause, and how the Social Gospel gave structure to it. The question is whether this is merely a dated movement as some suggest, or is it possible to identify, through interpretation, a Social Gospel in Jesus' life and words. If the answer were yes, it would maybe change the tone of disapproval towards the Social Gospel.

Gladden, some would claim, is the father of the Social Gospel movement. Gladden featured as an important figure in American religion in the period between the Civil War and World War I. Two ever-present themes in Gladden's theology over the years were liberal theology and the Social Gospel. 'In both areas Gladden was a pioneer if not a profound or original thinker' (Dorn 1967: vii). Gladden showed considerable zeal throughout his ministry to the Congregationalist cause. He preached and propagated the virtues best in a summery address before the Central Ohio Congregational Conference (Ohio State Journal Oct, 1891). The theological development of Gladden falls into two principal categories: Firstly he moved away from the 'tenets of the Calvinism that prevailed in the evangelical churches in his youth' and 'secondly, he attempted to adjust his thought to modern biblical criticism and evolutionary science' (Dorn 1967:141). Gladden, in his development as theologian, reformulated what he regarded as cardinal elements of Christianity in terms of what was acceptable to the modern mind. Through his speculative theology, he was influenced by the Romantic Movement and considered intuition to be as valid

a source of truth as reason, and rarely took interest in purely logical discussion. Naturally, his liberal tendencies brought unrest in his time.⁴⁹

Gladden defended his thoughts against themes such as ‘second probation’, ‘eternal sin’, ‘evolution’, and ‘universal salvation’ as interpreted by the church. This sparked an era in Gladden’s time where the authority of the Bible was contested, its infallibility redefined, and the use of the Bible in the church reconsidered. Gladden believed that he could propagate the findings of biblical criticism without diminishing respect for the Bible. ‘Indeed, he was sure that these findings made the Bible more remarkable than ever’ (Dorn 1967:163). Significantly, Gladden’s career spanned this period of rapid change. A child of orthodoxy, he had been a theological pioneer in the decades after the Civil War, and he lived to enjoy many years of liberalism’s supremacy. Gladden saw liberalism as:

[t]he idea of the supremacy of God; the idea that God’s method of creation is evolution; the idea that nature in all its deepest meaning is supernatural; the idea of the constant presence of God in our lives; the idea of the universal divine fatherhood and of universal human Brotherhood.

(Gladden 1913:6)

This assertion reflects the social dimension of liberal theology as foundation for the Social Gospel. Reflecting on this era of liberal theology, Kenneth Cauthen comments that Evangelical liberals

stood squarely within the Christian tradition and accepted as normative for their thinking what they understood to be the essence of historical Christianity. These men had a deep consciousness of their continuity with the main line of Christian orthodoxy and felt that they were preserving its essential features in terms that were suitable to the modern world.

(Cauthen 1962:28)

Gladden concluded that those who ‘loved God and their neighbour were saved from sin, regardless of their creeds’ (Gladden 1913:83). ‘Gladden judged men by their works, not by their creeds, and theology was, for him, always the handmaiden of religion’ (Dorn 1967:181).

⁴⁹ Below we will see how the system reacts to, or resist, such liberating thoughts. The underlying problem in this statement is whether the system, or any system for that fact, is inherently corrupt in the sense that it is not founded in the ways of Jesus’ way of living; therefore the rigorous reaction and hostility as defensive mechanism.

This background of Gladden sets the stage for his introduction to the Social Gospel, which he saw as inseparable from and reciprocal to liberal theology. Jacob H. Dorn concludes in his work on Gladden⁵⁰ that:

[h]e [Gladden] interpreted theology and biblical criticism to laymen, the values of Christianity to social reformers, the needs of humanity to the churches, and Americans to themselves. He sought, moreover, to interpret individuals, classes, and nations, to each other ... but his good sense and ability to grasp the common interests of divergent groups generally enabled him, according to friendly observers, to gain broad hearing on theological and social questions.

(Dorn 1967:446)

Later, by Walter Rauschenbusch (1912:9) and Shailer Mathews (1936:48), Gladden was revered as 'one of the veterans who made it easier for us [later Social Gospellers] of the next generation to see our way and get a hearing', and that Gladden, with others, are credited for the 'awakening of interest in the social message⁵¹ of Christianity'. 'As pastor, author, prophet of the social justice, man of poetic insight, civic leader, and churchman, Dr. Gladden made a contribution not only to his congregations' (Fry & Kurz 2003:9), but 'to his wider parish, the American people' (Rhodes 1910:46).

Shailer Mathews, throughout his career, was intrigued with the phenomenon of social change;⁵² both at the practical level of church involvement in social reform, and at an academic level of theological reflection on the implications of change in Christian doctrine. Mathew's distinctive contribution to modern North American theology, the theology of social process, addresses the period of rapid social transition in which he lived. According to Lindsey (1997:36), the term social process implies 'that interchange of mutual effect between church and society which is, for Mathews, the matrix within which Christians theological reflection must always take shape.' Mathews wrote with a sharp defensive tendency and characterized himself as a modernist, distinguishing himself from reductionist liberalism and cultural Protestantism. He wrote extensively on the applicability of the gospel to society and engaged with the emerging eschatological schools in German theology such as the

⁵⁰ See Gladden (*Calendar Verses*; 1918) for his views of unity of *all nations* as neighbors.

⁵¹ Again, is this merely a dated religious invention intended to liberalize society from society itself, or an example of the re-emergence of the (Social) Gospel of Jesus, in contemporary terms?

⁵² Can we say this of a young Jesus who lived in Galilee?

works of Johann Weiss. Lindsey (1997:69) is of opinion that when reading the whole corpus of Mathew's work, one finds the importance of Mathews' contribution in the following: 'Mathews' theology is a virtual compendium of North American Theology from the late nineteenth century through to the middle of the twentieth century'. He became actively involved in the Social Gospel movement in the early 1890s. This involvement started with Mathews' expertise in sociology, which he combined with his New Testament appointment in Chicago.⁵³ This also was the starting point for his insights in his Social Gospel foundational study, especially on New Testament eschatology and the kingdom of God.

Walter Rauschenbusch, probably the most well-known exponent of the Social Gospel, played an important role as the centralized figure in the development of the movement. Rauschenbusch, interested in social reform within his own Second German Baptist denomination, was 'rocketed into national prominence with the publication of *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, 1907' (Hudson 1987:3).

Rauschenbusch had a strong sense of personal calling to do welfare and missionary work.⁵⁴ He also had a passion for political liberty (Smucker 1994:22).

Rauschenbusch's early years as theologian was within a strong bond between his friends Nathaniel Schmidt and Leighton Williams, later called the 'Brotherhood of the Kingdom'. The brotherhood was sectarian for the fact that each member was to 'exemplify obedience to the ethics of Jesus in his personal life' and to 'propagate the thought of Jesus to the limits of his ability in private conversation, by correspondence, and through pulpit, platform and press' (Sharpe 1942:122).

Hudson comments that it is not certain exactly from which sources these three drew beyond Scripture, but it is clear that they made much of their common memory of '*Augustine's Confessions*, *The Imitation of Christ*, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Richard Baxter's *The Saints' Rest*, and Phillip Doddridge's *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*' (Hudson 1987:17). Rauschenbusch shared in a deep devotional foundation for practical Christian beliefs, and was critical on the evangelists

⁵³ In Mathew's (1893), letters to E. D. Burton the discussion on the interdisciplinary chair Mathews was negotiating for can be followed.

⁵⁴ Rauschenbusch did volunteer for service in the foreign mission field, but was forced to abandon this possibility for medical reasons (Meyer 1912:265).

(sometimes contemptuous) of his time; they 'used methods that seem calculated to produce skin-deep changes. Things have simmered down to signing a card, shaking hands, or being introduced to the evangelist' (Rauschenbusch 1945:97). The fire in Rauschenbusch to act on the mess of the environment he found himself in was fuelled by acts of injustice in the community he lived in. His argument was that the *proselyting* of Christians substituted *disciplining*. Disciplining produces a real change for the better in the inward character, while proselyting only leaves the person as found. For evangelism to be effective, Rauschenbusch argued, it must do two things: It must *appeal to motives* which powerfully seize people, and it must uphold a moral standard so *high above their actual lives* that it will smite them with conviction of sin.

Rauschenbusch influenced two great awakenings in America. First, the creative *καίρὸς* responding to urban industrialism as the major thrust of his work (roughly 1890-1920), and secondly, the continuing and forceful impact of Rauschenbusch as discovered by Martin Luther King Jr. during his seminary years at Crozier Theological School in Chester, Pennsylvania (1948-1951) and in subsequent years prior to his assassination in 1968. No other pioneer of social Christianity could equal this dual participation in two awakenings. From these assertions, Rauschenbusch discovered the world of socialism, from which constructive statements of his own followed.

Rauschenbusch's introduction to the Social Gospel in *Theology for the Social Gospel* (1918) was foundational, and is integral to the movement. He wrote in the midst of the wars, the social upheaval labelled *socialism*, and he died as a devoted, deeply religious follower of Jesus of Nazareth. This study will consciously focus on Rauschenbusch's Social Gospel theology to show the parallel (see § 2.1.1; 2.1.4-2.1.4.1) it has with the social implications it brought for its readers then and now.

The Social Gospel pioneers did not emerge without criticism. The reigning and uncontested view of the Social Gospel was that of Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr, later edited by Diane Yeager. In an essay in 1988, Niebuhr insists that:

[t]he phrase 'mind of Jesus in the Social Gospel' seems to make the assumption that the Social Gospel is a simple thing. As a matter of fact it is extremely varied. There is a vast difference between the Social Gospels, let us say of Rauschenbusch and

Peabody, an even greater difference between Shailer Mathews and Harry Ward ... There are at least three distinct schools here: one practically identifies the Christian gospel with Utopian socialism or Utopian communism; another interprets it in liberal fashion and believes in the education of Christ-like personalities active in social affairs; while the third school, represented by an individual, finds values in the gospel which transcend both socialism and liberalism, social programs and personal ideals, but discovers in it no powers adequate for the control of social life, though it contains elements which are necessary to human existence. Within this group of modern social gospel representatives, there are further differences of opinion about the use of coercion in social change, about the meaning of religion, and about the role of the church.

(Niebuhr & Yeager 1988:115)

The founders of the Social Gospel did not mature under the exact same circumstances. This obviously begs for criticism in terms of the legitimacy of the Social Gospel. The binding factor between all of them, however, is the strong conviction that social concern is an immediate priority. Can we not also identify this in Jesus' urgency of calling for the concern of the people around Him?

H. Richard Niebuhr writes about his dissatisfaction with the sociological currents that had dominated his own earlier work.

Though the sociological approach helped to explain why the religious stream flowed in these particular channels it did not account for the stream itself; while it seemed relevant enough for the institutionalized churches it did not explain the Christian movement which produced these churches; while it accounted for the diversity in American religion it did not explain the unity which our faith possesses despite its variety; while it could deal with the religion which was dependent on culture it left unexplained the faith which is independent, which is aggressive rather than passive, and which moulds culture instead of being moulded by it.

(Niebuhr 1959:ix-x)

It is because of this insistence of Niebuhr that critics later were able to make far-reaching generalizations about the phenomenon called the *Social Gospel*. A few scholars, however, did research on the movement of the Social Gospel to redefine the foundational period of the movement (see Funk 1976:4; Wilder 1954:24-32; Niebuhr 1988:115; Hooft 1928:169-186; Carter 1971:31).

Conventionally, critics have accused Social Gospel theologians of largely ignoring African-Americans and women's aspirations to justice, equality, and desegregation in the late nineteenth century. Social Gospel writers were also being accused of being bourgeois reformers whose vision of the shortcomings of North America society was superficial, and who's 'prescriptions for social reform were moralizing rather than

structural, revisionary rather than radical' (Dombrowski 1936:20). The charges of being 'tone-deaf to appeals for racial and gender justice' is not without some foundation, since the fathers of the Social Gospel were white Protestant men of middle-class background and professional standing that sometimes 'reflected the interests and prejudices of their cultural backgrounds' (Lindsey 1997:5). Observers of the growth of the Social Gospel have pointed out that the movement coalesced more around action than belief. Recently, however, several writings show how the 'neglected voices' of the Social Gospel are being retrieved and that even though the writings are biased, the call is to reconsider these writings. From these reflections, some interesting counter points are made. This, however, is not the focus of this study.⁵⁵

It seems that the connection between early sociology and the Social Gospel forms interrelated aspects of a single cultural phenomenon. Most sociologists in the United States colleges had theological training, and the connections between sociology and the Social Gospel is therefore understandable. As Vidich and Lyman (1985:179) noted, a central prerequisite for joining the department at Small's Chicago school was that one had to possess a 'Christian spirit of uplift'. This sentiment was seen in the echoes of Marx's popular statement that philosophers have sought to understand the world; the point, however, is to change it. In this regards, Small (1903:119) stated that '[s]cience is sterile unless it contributes at last to knowledge that is worth doing ... that will also be its test'. These foundations also echo the Darwinist philosophies of evolution, but do not accept it as a theory.

Small and War saw the pragmatist orientation of sociological theory as dovetailing with the evolutionary perspective that predominated in both natural and social sciences in this period.... [F]or them society is a continuously evolving organism whose evolution is spurred by ideals that serve as end points toward which the growth of social structures is to be directed.

(Vidich & Lyman 1985:23)

Thus, from an evolutionary standpoint, the task of social reformers is as follows, 'They are to observe the tendency of social evolution in order to discover indications of the ends to which social evolution is pointing; and they are to apply to that process

⁵⁵ See Lindsey (1997:236-237) for a discussion on the positive and negative aspects of the Social Gospel.

ideals that are intelligent in that they respect this tendency' (Lindsey 1997:74). Small (1889), in an address at the 60th American Institute of Instruction, responded by saying that '[c]onstructive social change is accomplished *only* when the ideals proposed as the *telos* of a society's growth accord with the potentials of the evolving society, when they safeguard the integrity of the process in that they are within the range of concrete capacities of a given society at a given moment' (emphasis in the original).

The challenge for the Social Gospel writers was the practicality of Christianity in the social reform process. The pragmatic orientation of North American evangelical Christocentrism sought to establish how to implement the social teachings of Jesus in a social order. The utilitarian preoccupation of the Social Gospel caused the movement to couple the ideas of Jesus with the idealistic reformist impulses emerging in late nineteenth-century America.

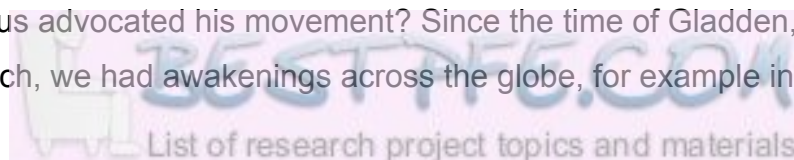
It is important to note that the criticism on the Social Gospel movement were directed from a product of theological liberalism known as the New Theology. However, one cannot put the Social Gospel into the same line of thought as liberalism, for not all liberals were Social Gospellers, and not all Social Gospellers were liberal.

The theology of Rauschenbusch was rooted in evangelical piety. As we will see, 'evangelical' and 'liberal' were sometimes combined.... Liberalism was attacked in the thirties, but even these critics distinguished between liberalism and the Social Gospel.

(White & Hopkins 1976: xvii)

It is not possible to describe an exact chronology of the origin of the Social Gospel, because its origins are many and varied, ranging from Evangelism to Liberalism and spawned by crusades such as Christian Socialism and Abolitionism. Between the two World Wars, the Social Gospellers quietly stilled to the background and had to face an array of challenges and new questions that emerged from the realities of war. These questions demanded attention and further critical evaluation.

Did the founding fathers of the Social Gospel imitate faithful witness through action similar to how Jesus advocated his movement? Since the time of Gladden, Mathews, and Rauschenbusch, we had awakenings across the globe, for example in the



persons of M. L. King, Jr., Gandhi and Mandela. This begs the question whether the Social Gospel only was a historical movement within an American tradition, or does it emerge with renewed vigour in every turbulent context? For instance the current crisis the Christian Church faces globally in its understanding of itself, its missional imperative, and its prerogative to follow Jesus's example of being faithful?

2.1.2 Shailer Matthews

2.1.2.1 Social teachings of Jesus: Sociological exegetical procedure

There is but one way to the apprehension of the teachings of Jesus, whether religious or social, and that is the patient study of the gospels with the aid of all modern critical and exegetical methods...Here, as in all scientific processes, the aim of the investigator must be the discovery of what is, not the substantiation of some notion as to what ought to be.

(Mathews 1897:8)

In the time of Mathews and other Social Gospellers, American sociology got its form. The pickle they had was to lay the foundation in theology for sociology. An adequate foundation for Christian sociology would seek in the gospels warrant for the ethical idealism presupposed by the sociology of sociologist and Social Gospellers such as Small.⁵⁶ He stated that the importance of Jesus' message 'does not lie in a blueprint for structures, but of presenting us with the moral attitude a *man* ought to take up when creating structures or performing tasks' (1913:73). If society is an organism evolving in response to idealistic impulses, then 'the social teaching of Jesus must be found at the base to be commensurate with a set of ideals – those on which both Christian reformers and other social reformers can readily agree' (Lindsey 1997:80). These were foundational concerns for Mathews in the 1890's while developing a sociological and biblical foundation for this sociology, mostly because of his complaints of the vagueness of the term 'Christian Sociology'. He reacted against S. Holbrook and J. Sewall in 1894 about the exegetical basis of Christian sociology. He noted disapprovingly that Holbrook's approach to the social teachings of the gospels was systematic, rather than exegetical. Mathews argued that the 'first question to be asked by Christian sociologists is: What does Jesus *mean* by the term kingdom of

⁵⁶ See his *General Sociology*, in which Small (1905:303) spells out the link between superficial sociological theory and political application.

God⁵⁷, Father in heaven, brother, neighbour?’ (Mathews 1894:450). This is merely an example of Mathews’ intent to lay stress on the need for exegetical precision in any attempt to determine the social teaching of Jesus.

The Social Gospel point he made here comes from a commentary on 2 Kings 25:1-12: If the church wishes to avert revolution, the church must make common cause with the reform movement.

We today are confronted with many of the same questions that confronted and conquered Judah. The social condition of our people will sooner or later bring revolution or readjustment. Our one hope lies in Christ’s teachings... The one great lesson of the Captivity of Judah is this: the fearless application of Christianity to living questions is the duty of both clergy and laymen, and the hope of the state.

(Mathews 1891:237)

Mathews’ study of Jesus’ social teaching was thus a sharply focused critical response to studies that (as he judged) misrepresent the exegetical and sociological foundations of Christian sociology. His definition of Christian sociology he believed as valid was the following.

Christian sociology should mean *sociology of Christ*; that is, the social philosophy and teachings of the historical person Jesus Christ. In this positive sense the term is both legitimate and capable of an at least tentatively scientific content.

(Mathews 1897:3)

If one considers the infant state of critical exegetical studies in America in the time in which he was writing, it is remarkable to see Mathews’ view of literary criticism. ‘*Firstly*, a point of departure in his exegetical procedure is that exegetes must collate all gospel texts that treat a given topic; then they must weigh text against text’ in order to arrive at a nuanced synthetic statement of Jesus’ teaching on the given topic (Lindsey 1997:94; emphasis in the original). ‘*Secondly*, possible literary changes occurred to one or more processes of translation’ (Mathews 1897:10; emphasis in the or). This is not to even ‘mention the fact that the gospels are written at least a generation after his death (Mathews 1897:13). *Third*, that when interpreting the supposed *ipsissima verba* of Jesus, the ‘distorted applications often made of Jesus’

⁵⁷ In § 4.3-4.3.3 a more extensive discussion will be given of the term ‘kingdom of God (see also Crossan 2007:97-142).

economic sayings are due to an incomplete collection of data to be found in the gospels' (Mathews 1897:142; emphasis in the or); the Gospels incorporate an editorial improvisation 'of the utmost value' to the student of Jesus' teaching. Relating to the latter is the problem of topics not addressed by Jesus in the gospels, for instance slavery. Mathews (1897:15) warned that the Christian social reformer must not attempt to read into Jesus' teaching what is not there. Jesus' silence is 'significant of a distinct element in what we venture to call his social philosophy'. To vocalize this silence is 'to make exposition presuppose, if not dangerously resemble, imposition (Mathews 1897:15).

Mathews (1897:4) was of the opinion that 'a *new man* and not a *new society* has been the objective point of most preaching. If sometimes the theologian has been forced into a belief in the solidarity of the race, it has really been that he might have a major premise on which to base his restricted conclusion as to the fate of the individual'. He criticized the church that placed emphasis on the individual and who has overlooked the essential sociability of human nature, and unconsciously has 'developed exegetical presumptions that have biased interpretation' (Mathews 1897:3). They has affected not merely the conception of the position of the church in the world, but they has also narrowed Christian truth to a field in which Jesus never meant it to remain, and to which the early Christians did not limit it. Therefore, Mathews insisted that the exegete 'who seeks to go beyond mere quotation must situate a given text within its context, and must pay attention to the milieu of thought in which the Gospel text came into being', and the gospels must serve as starting point (Lindsey 1997:95).

2.1.2.2 Mathews' kingdom of God: A biblical foundation

But we are not left to a conjecture or a *priori* argument. Jesus himself has chosen as his term for the highest good (or at least for one of the prerequisites of its attainment) one that in itself suggests social relations – the kingdom of God. No other term, unless it be Son of Man, is so characteristic of Jesus; none is more certainly his. Early Christianity, it is true, soon displaced it with the more concrete term 'church,' and later Christianity has not hesitated to confound the two; but with Jesus there was neither the substitution nor the confusion. Throughout the gospel sources whether of the synoptic or the Johannine cycle, the usage is constant. The kingdom is the goal of effort, the reward of persecution, and the abode of blessedness.

(Mathews 1897:42)

Mathews focused a considerable part of his attention to this topic in his foundation for the theology of the Social Gospel. Like Ritschl and Johannes Weiss, Mathews used the kingdom topic as organizing principle for the theological attempt to wed Christianity with the social movement. Most sociologists agreed with Mathews that Jesus' fundamental proclamation was the coming of the kingdom which began with his ministry, continue to grow through the activity of his followers, and 'will be brought into its fullness when the entire world has acceded to the ideals of Jesus' (Lindsey 1997:97).⁵⁸

The opening quote of this section translates Mathews' interpretation that the kingdom of God as a social relation and that the term is central to Jesus' understanding of himself, his mission, and characteristic of him being relation with God. Mathews' primal quest was to answer 'what was Jesus intention with the term kingdom of God?' To determine what Jesus understood under the term 'kingdom of God' leads into a critical assessment of the political, subjective-ethical, and eschatological (see § 2.1.2.3) interpretations of the term 'kingdom'. Mathews dismissed the subjective-ethical view of the kingdom as flatly political (Lindsey 1997:99):

Indeed, there is but one saying of Jesus that in any way lends support to the view that he thought of the kingdom as a subjective state of the individual, and even that can hardly be used as a basis upon which to build an individualistic system of self-culture.

(Mathews 1897:46)

Mathews was against any form of philosophical misapprehension like that of, for example, Kaftan (1894:377-379) who maintained that the 'kingdom is the rational idea of the chief good,' which must not be identified with the 'universal moral society, which is being developed in the world.' Mathews held his own by saying that this (the above mentioned misapprehension) 'is not the thought of Jesus.... [W]ith him the kingdom was not a subjective but a concrete, objective reality'. Mathews went on to say that the kingdom of God is an objective reality that can be 'expected and enjoyed if not here and now, at any rate in another world and age (Mathews 1897:49).

⁵⁸ Note the inclusive tone and tense used. The focus in this Section is on the contribution of Mathews.

Mathews held a social definition of the kingdom of God.

Jesus thought of the kingdom as a concrete reality rather than an idea, and second, that this reality was not to be left as an unattainable ideal, but was to be progressively realized, perhaps evolved...By the kingdom of God Jesus meant an ideal (though progressively approximated) social order in which the relation of men to God is that of sons, and (therefore) to each other, that of brothers.

(Mathews 1897:56)

This study promulgates a revolutionist stance as an essentialist structure (see § 3.3), which relates to Mathews who understood something of the ideological sustainability of the message of Jesus. In turn, he related this to his own time's reference to progressivism and democracy. Mathews followed this social definition up with an exegetical defence.

The point of departure for any interpretation of the term must be the historical expectation of the Jews in the days of Jesus. What that expectation was is now pretty accurately known. If all necessary allowance is made, on the one hand for the materialistic hopes of the masses, and on the other for the completed eschatology of the later Jewish writers, it will appear that the kingdom which was awaited was a new and divine Israelites State, of which the Messiah, as the representative of God, was to be the head; all Jews, the members; and all peoples, the subjects. Palestine was to be the seat of its capital; the righteousness of the Jew, the qualification of membership.

(Mathews 1897:56)

Especially note the theme of *renewal of Israel* understood by Mathews' interpretation of the eschatological, and immediate turn of events that the followers of Jesus, specifically the Judeans⁵⁹, expected.

Mathews concluded this chapter in his *Social Teachings of Jesus* with an eschatological interpretation of the kingdom of God. First, he argued, Judeans expected, according to inter-testament literature, nothing less than the reestablishment of the Judean kingdom through divine intervention (Mathews 1897:55). Second, Jesus built on this messianic hope of the people and universalized it by making membership in the kingdom dependent not on birth, but on decision (Mathews 1897:58). Third, the Judean messianic expectation on which

⁵⁹ This study only uses the term 'Jew' or 'Jewish' when quoting an author directly in this document. This study draws from Horsley's view that the reference made to '(early) Christianity' and '[T]he construct 'Judaism' is similarly anachronistic' (Horsley 2014:4).

Jesus built was 'a hope for a new society, the kingdom Jesus proclaimed was in itself a new social order' (Mathews 1897:59). Lastly, this new social reality

was to stand in relation to the present order [as Mathews understood the gospel term 'world'] as the ideal stands in relation to the actual. As an ideal order, the kingdom is to grow slowly but apace with the actual order, through conversion of individuals to the ideals enunciated by Jesus in his preaching. When the final growth of the kingdom will have been attained, the kingdom of this world will have become the kingdom of the Christ.

(Lindsey 1997:103).

Mathews also maintained, against Weiss and Schweitzer, that Protestantism will have lost all significance for the modern world, when 'Jesus Christ becomes a well-intended neurasthenic and his ethics a call to impossible ideals born of a mistaken expectation of the speedy end of the world' (Mathews 1917:18). According to Mathews (Mathews 1897:73), 'the kingdom is thought of by Jesus as present as well as future, and ... its history, an evolution'. This understanding of hopeful expectation of Mathews calls for the description of his eschatological reasoning.

2.1.2.3 Mathews' eschatological realism

Although his work on the Social Gospel has attracted similar attention to Rauschenbusch's ([1914] 1945) work, Mathews, in his 1936 autobiography, noted why he revised his earlier book *Social Teachings of Jesus*. He argued in his 1936 book, *New Faith for Old*, which the concept of eschatology used in *Social Teachings of Jesus* (1897) represented 'what might be called a transition view of the kingdom of God as a social order to be reached progressively.' Mathews was dissatisfied with the book's treatment of the kingdom and had begun to search for an alternative biblical foundation for the Social Gospel theology.

However, in his search for a Social Gospel foundation that could incorporate the turn to eschatology taking place in contemporary exegesis, a constant mitigating factor was Mathew's concern that, by endorsing the eschatological idea of the kingdom, the Social Gospel would divest itself of any basis on which to construct a Christian social ethic. The eschatological interpretation of the New Testament appeared to present the Social Gospel with a quandary: in order to compel theological assent, the Social Gospel must ground itself in accurate exegesis; yet if it conceded that Jesus and his followers did await the immediate coming of the kingdom, on what biblical basis could they construct a social ethic?

(Lindsey 1997:127)

Through 1894-1905, Mathews formulated his Social Gospel exegesis and sought to satisfy the demands of both historical criticism and ethical idealism. He did, however, as a supporter of Jesus that proclaimed an eschatological kingdom, remained a critic of the *consistent eschatological* school because this school reduced the ethical content of Jesus' kingdom proclamation to an *ad interim* ethic, and so robbed Christian faith of its social ethical import.⁶⁰

Mathews identified two predominant types of messianic expectation (see § 2.1.2.2): 'from the masses, a hope for a deliverer who would initiate a social revolution; and among the Pharisees, a hope for a final cataclysmic intervention of God in history which was conveyed through the medium of apocalyptic literature' (Mathews 1902:35).

Mathews' theological thought concluded in *Messianic hope in the New Testament* (1905), by reconsidering the meaning of the kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching, which attest to his move to eschatological realism:

Any strict definition of the kingdom of God as used by Jesus must be eschatological. With Jesus as with his contemporaries the kingdom was yet to come. Its appearance would be the result of no social evolution, but sudden, as the gift of God; men could not hasten its coming; they could only prepare for membership in it.

(Mathews 1905:82)

Mathews insisted, especially against a tendency of ahistorical liberalism, that eschatology is fundamental to the gospel, and that all doctrinal reflection after the New Testament proceeds from eschatology (as Käsemann). This eschatology, according to Mathews, has two fundamental meanings: firstly, the belief that the 'good men must survive death' and secondly, 'that God is bound to come to the assistance of those who trust him' (Mathews 1905:121). In Mathews' view the first belief expresses the individual content of eschatology, and the second expresses eschatology's social content; the hope for a society in which righteousness will be supreme (Mathews 1905:122). These hopes constitute the permanent content of

⁶⁰ See Moltmann (1967:16) for his understanding of the hope we find in eschatology, which is 'forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present.'

New Testament eschatology for Christian faith – ‘a content that is ethical, rather than ethnic’ (Mathews 1905:125).

For Mathews (1905:89-92) the ‘synoptic narratives of Jesus’ baptism depicts Jesus’ breakthrough to messianic self-consciousness.’ When Jesus began his ministry after his baptism and temptation, why did Jesus proclaim the imminence of the eschatological kingdom and accept the identification of himself as the eschatological Christ? (Mathews 1905:96-100). He did so, Mathews urges, because the baptismal event enabled Jesus to experience the eschatological concepts he sought to convey. Thus,

[e]schatology in his teaching is essentially a recognition of immortality. The centre of his teaching is not the kingdom of God, with its mingled ethnic and political connotation; it is eternal life – the life, which, because it is like God’s, persists across death into the joy of divine life. He could reach it because he possessed it.

(Mathews 1905:123)

In making this observation, Mathews appears to have two objectives. The first is to ground his interpretation of eschatology in the life of Jesus. If Jesus himself can be shown to have understood the kingdom as the Johannine literature understands it (i.e., as eternal life), then ‘Social Gospel theology can validly make the eschatological turn, while “translating” eschatology into terms meaningful to the contemporary believer, just as John “translates” the synoptic’s eschatology’ (Lindsey 1997:154). This intent lies behind a subsequent assertion in Mathews (1905:131), namely that the ‘hope for eternal life finds its fulfilment in the historical Jesus, since the fundamental needs and hope expressed by the eschatological expectation have actually been met in the life of Jesus’. Second, Mathews intends to focus on the historical Jesus to counter the tendency of theologians such as Johann Weiss to ‘divert attention from the historical Jesus to the Christ of faith, and, in doing so, to remove Jesus’ ethical teachings from the historical realm’ (Lindsey 1997:155).

Mathews clearly contests any formulation that Jesus’ life and teachings was ‘intended to be sources of mystery to the world’, which, in such a case ‘the Gospel would be far enough from good news’ (Mathews 1905:131). In *Christianity and the Social Process* (1934), for example, he noted that it ‘is no more difficult to talk about an unknown God who has been revealed apart from humanity in his Word, than it is

to argue about decrees issued by God before there was any universe and to describe a heaven which lies beyond the stars' (Mathews 1934:2). It is important for Mathews to show how 'Social Gospel theology has biblical warrant in Pauline and Johannine literature for disengaging eschatology from its cultural framework and diverting attention from the kingdom to the qualities of life demanded by citizenship in the kingdom' (Mathews 1905:167). This became a central theme for Mathews in the rest of his writings: Christianity is simultaneously political and nonspecific; 'It may have political effects, it cannot have a political program' (Mathews 1905:315). What makes a government 'Christian', then, is not a particular polity, but whether it develops institutions 'that embody the spirit and are regulated by the principles of Jesus' (Mathews 1905:315). In a nutshell, Mathews proposes the following type of social process interpretation:

Formally, therefore, the church was a group of messianists awaiting a kingdom that never came and indifferent to all customs of society except those that were evil; essentially the church was a group of men and women endeavouring to let the new religious and ethical life that had come to them from God through accepting Jesus as Christ express itself in social relations and the life He lived. Jesus was greater than the men who interpreted him, even when they interpreted him correct, and it is he and his work, and the life with God he revealed, that formed the strength of historical Christianity. The new life must be expressed in temporary vocabularies and concepts, but they could not restrain it. It conquered them by the mighty systems of an Augustine, an Origen, a Justin, even of a Paul. And thus inevitably, because it was the social expression of a life, the church became the parent of a Christian civilization; the Christian women of a Greco-Roman civilization became the Christian women of a Christian civilization; the Christian family of the first century grew into the Christian family of today; the Christian fraternity, loyal to an imperial tyranny, became the champion of a Christian democracy that, with all its revolutionary power, even as yet has not come to its own in either politics or economics.

(Mathews 1905:315)

Mathews' social process systems thus has an 'inbuilt critical norm that precludes the absolution of any culture or cultural development' (Lindsey 1997:173). Lindsey is of the opinion that for Mathews 'Christian reformism must seek to implement a variety of programmatic departures as social structures evolve to the absolute spiritual goal of social evolution' (Lindsey 1997:173).

Did evolutionary theories of Mathews' time influence him, or did he truly align himself with the intention Jesus had for all ethnicities in the Mediterranean of the first century? Mathews, however, realized the urgency in acquiring the most probable

understanding of the intention Jesus had with his time on earth. Did the Social Gospel, at its foundation, portray the ideological values Jesus lived and preached?

2.1.3 Washington Gladden

2.1.3.1 Liberal Theology and the Social Gospel

Gladden's theological career is one that was in continuous development. First, he was part of a movement away from Calvinism that prevailed in some Evangelical churches. Second, he attempted to adjust his thought to modern biblical criticism and evolutionary science and aimed to reformulate what he regarded as the cardinal elements of Christian theology in terms that were acceptable for the modern mind. He worked with the other founders of the Social Gospel during his time, and in a certain sense was literally a father to them because he came from a generation that paved the way for Mathews and Rauschenbusch (see § 2.1). In any study of Gladden's life, two themes become clear, namely liberal theology and the Social Gospel. Although these two topics are inseparable, the focus will be on each as individual themes integrated in the foundation Gladden lay down.

In American Protestantism, during the time of Gladden, both liberal theology and Social Gospel triumphed as movements. This was also recognized in Rauschenbusch's appeal for the Social Gospel that firmly stood in the church, from the pulpit and from outside the church.

From Gladden's preaching the main elements of Calvinism was absent: total depravity, original sin, predestination, and substitutionary atonement. He defended the progressives in *The Independent*⁶¹ against those who insisted that they subscribe literally to the Calvinistic creeds. In later years, 1891-1899, Gladden supported and propagated modern biblical criticism in the Presbyterian Church. Gladden was 'one of the first preachers in America to employ the critical method' (Fry & Kurz 2003:36). Specifically on the biblical criticism of fallibility (historical and scientific errors), Gladden argued that the findings of this criticism made the Bible more remarkable than ever, without diminishing respect for it.

⁶¹ *The Independent* was a weekly magazine published in New York City between 1848 and 1928. It was founded in order to promote Congregationalism and also was an important voice in support of abolitionism and women's suffrage.

For Gladden, when the Bible research is done properly – with recognition of its errors, understanding of its setting, and unforced construction of its words – the Bible would yield vital religious truths. This, inter alia, led to his understanding of evolution against the reserved Protestant theologians. Gladden, however saw the dangers scientific criticism brought. He persisted that evolution without God would be a barren theory and was afraid of an alliance between atheism and evolution. He criticized scientists who dismissed Christianity because of what he considered an anti-supernaturalist bias. They failed to realize the power of free personalities to supervene fixed law and achieve their own intelligent purposes, which was the essential postulate of supernaturalism (Gladden 1899:46-50).

These foundational liberal theological aspects of Gladden's thought are stated here to show that he belonged to the category of evangelical liberalism that revealed a preoccupation with adjusting Christianity to modern conditions (i.e., an interest in continuity); for Gladden forms and language change, but not the facts of existence. He illustrated his conviction that the Church must 'keep firm hold of the facts' behind changing formularies with the idea of original sin. The church could no longer believe, as it once did, that God had imputed Adam's guilt to the human race, but it knew that man did inherit a 'diseased moral nature – a tendency to sin'. The truth that was for long misunderstood was the 'solidarity of moral history'; man's propensity to sin because the first man had sinned (Gladden 1894). Similarly, Gladden saw moral evolution in the Church's successive theories of atonement, culminating in the view 'that Christ "bore our sins", in fellowship with us, not in substitution for us', a view that took into account the teachings of the New Testament and yet avoided modern ethical objections to the idea of judicial transfer of guilt or merit (Gladden 1899:192).

Gladden did not categorize Jesus with founders of religions. He was neither uncritical nor doctrinaire in his allegiance with liberalism. With liberal theologies' major features, as he interpreted them, he was heartily in accord: its ethical quality; its emphasis on the unity of the human and the divine, the sacred and the secular; and its belief in man's 'immediate access to the source of all truth and life' (Gladden 1907).

In a sermon given on 11 December 1892, he argued that liberals, obliged to construct a new theology for themselves, theorized to much instead of preaching a practical religion: 'What ordinary human beings want most is not the philosophy of religion, but religion itself.... This was, after all, the heart of Gladdens liberalism.... [H]e judged men by their works, not by their creeds, and theology was, for him, always the handmaiden of religion' (Dorn 1967:180).

Early twentieth century fundamentalism was the conservative reaction to the above-mentioned liberal theology. Reaction against liberal theology was inherently also an attack on the Social Gospel because of their construed theology. Fundamentalism appealed for a return to the 'simple Gospel', and to an individualistic pietism uncorrupted by either humanistic theology or organized Christian social reform. Liberal theology focused on the social orientation of Old Testament prophets, especially their pronounced emphases on justice, social purity, and righteousness. The message of Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount, likewise, took on social significance. Liberal theology's cardinal doctrines, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, were inherently social, and this 'fatherhood of God and his Divine Presence, is in all life' (Gladden 1913:36). American Protestants could no longer consider their vertical relations with God complete without practicing brotherhood in their horizontal relations with other men. Liberalism had no monopoly on either of these features – emphasis on the social applications of the teachings of Jesus and the prophets and the necessity of right relations with God issuing in the right relations with men. A third feature of theological liberalism that contributed to the ideology of the Social Gospel was the incorporation of the evolution theory that naturally led to a doctrine of progress that presupposed the melioration of both the social organism and its environment.

Gladden understood this progress' initiation not as the reconstruction of the social order of his time, but rather the reform of the clusters of the social dimension. Social problems did condition the nature and direction of reform, but 'reform itself rested on an ideology compounded on personal pragmatism, philosophical idealism, romanticism, and the American faith in democratic institution' (Dorn 1967:185).

Regarding this influence of liberal theology on Gladden's thought, he maintained that all mankind is under the kinship of God, including everyone, regardless of their religion. Gladden rejected any limitations on the fatherhood of God and emphasized brotherhood rather than the alienation between God and man.⁶² Our God, who sent his Son, is thus the maker of all the cosmos, therefore the maker of all mankind and the religion that they believe (Gladden 1913:173).

The doctrine of universal fatherhood of God optimized Gladden's optimism concerning human nature. It meant to him 'that goodness, the most glorious and perfect goodness', is in the deepest sense of the word, natural to humans. Since evil was not natural, but 'a false, an artificial self, which has usurped ... power', it could be vanquished by 'the restoration of clear thinking' and the comprehension by man of his real identity (Gladden 1895:24). Gladden (1913:7) also assumed that, since humanity was in fact a brotherhood, ideal social relations would correspond to ideal family relations. 'If [humanity] could learn subordination to their Father's will and consideration for each other, social order, peace and common welfare would ensue' (Dorn 1967:189). This included, according to Gladden, problems such as 'taxation, monopoly, labour relations, poverty, and crime' (Gladden 1897:904). 'The whole social organism as far as it is affected by divine influence was included in the Kingdom of God' (Gladden 1894:84). If mankind would put it itself 'under the benign sway of the King of love', government, education, the arts, philanthropy, industry and commerce would be transformed by the law of love for one's neighbour.

2.1.3.2 Equality: The Golden rule and the nations

Gladden's analysis in the late nineteenth century of industrial society grew increasingly more realistic. He found that the problem of the lack of church attendance is in the working classes of his time. He argued that even though workers criticized the church, they praised Jesus and few considered themselves opponents of religion. Gladden found that this break in trust between the church and the masses of workers was because of some expectations of attendance; for example, specific styles of fashionable clothing (which would glorify God) that they, or their

⁶² Buckham (1919:255-256) contends that, in stressing kinship rather than alienation between God and man, Gladden and most of the Social Gospellers, with notable exception of Walter Rauschenbusch, adopted an idea common to Greek but not to Latin theology.

children, did not necessarily possess. Interestingly enough, these unwritten expectations had the support and funds of the business class. For instance, the working class feared the church because of their dress, which made them feel uncomfortable in church services. They did not possess the same clothes their 'bosses' had and that brought division, in fact, some alienation. We find this today, a century later, still a challenge. More fundamentally, the working class felt alienated by the association of their employers with the church they attended. The business class ruled and attended church. The working classes could not identify with this. This was a challenge for Gladden, who assumed an all-inclusive kingdom.

This challenge is still manifest today in the working masses' opinion of the church. Gladden argued that this trend could be reversed if the church demonstrated that it was not on the side of capital, by endorsing unionism, industrial arbitration, and profit sharing (Gladden 1908:147).

During this time, the country was hacked by strikes all over America, especially in the mines and fuel companies. The result of this was that Gladden started to preach against strikes on the one hand, but also for those who were striking on the other. Gladden's dilemma was that he understood the social-economic-religious context of both the people groups active in the dispute. The same two groups, divergent and oppressors sat in church. Gladden had to preach for both sides, as Christians. Gladden's willingness to enlist the state in the establishment of 'economic justice grew out of his realization that without a radical conversion of humanity to the social ideal, economic justice would not right itself' (Dorn 1967:230). According to Gladden (1889), the social justice that Christ ordained, and which his kingdom organically expressed, would not allow the 'vast accumulations and consolidations and encrustations of privilege and power, by which the sphere of effort is circumscribed and individual growth is impeded.' Therefore, both sides of the strike had to identify with the underlying factors that unite them. For example, characteristics portrayed through Christian virtues, regardless of their secular responsibilities. These were the principle elements preached by Gladden for the sake of all the members in the congregation and outside.

Gladden made some distinctive contributions that he felt his congregation could follow and thus contribute to American religion. These were, as stated in the *Ohio State Journal*, October 29, 1891):

- The message that salvation is a matter of character;
- the principle of equality in the Christian brotherhood, exemplified in a democratic polity;
- the ideal of the church as a body for all people, regardless of wealth or class;
- the promotion of education and popular intelligence; and
- the furtherance of liberty, equal rights, public order and improvement, political purity, and general progress.

Gladden gave frequent and prolonged attention to economic problems because he believed that the Christian message had social-economic as well as personal implications. This study relates to Gladden who exploited the socially stratified communities. It also draws from Gladden's example of steadfastness in gospel examples and not to modify the Gospel so that both sides are content. This implies that Gladden did not support partiality, even though the social sphere of his time justified constituencies to implement acts of labour, power, and war. The golden rule for Gladden was universal and non-negotiable. Can we derive this from Jesus's life and speeches, when interpreting the gospels?

2.1.4 Walter Rauschenbusch

2.1.4.1 Social Gospel: A permanent addition to Christian religion

At the time Rauschenbusch⁶³ wrote, some conservative institutions of religion either had a religious crisis (because of the Social Gospel) or experienced a 'fresh joy and power, a distinct enlargement of mind' (Rauschenbusch 1945:3) from the Social Gospel movement. Rauschenbusch lived in an era that was ripe for revolution and new ideas to be born. A simple outline by C. Howard Hopkins helps to show the parallel development of Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel:

⁶³ This Section is based on Rauschenbusch's *A theology for the Social Gospel* ([1914] 1945), a work that can be seen as the building foundation of the theology of the Social Gospel.

Rauschenbusch		Christian social ethics	
1	Childhood and education up to gymnasium (1861-1879)	1	Birth of social Christianity (1865-1880)
2	Youth (1879-1886)	2	The Youthful movement (1880-1890)
3	New York pastorate (1886-1897)	3	The Social Gospel comes of age (1880-1890)
4	Rochester teaching and intensive social-ethics leadership (1897-1918)	4	Maturity and recognition (1900-1918)

One can see the similar effects of our own time regarding the changing climate of Christian religion in the globalized world. This re-venant crisis can be traced across the history of Christianity, but the most recent to our own time is that of Rauschenbusch, merely a century ago.

The social movement is the most important ethical and spiritual movement in the modern world, and the Social Gospel is the response of the Christian consciousness to it...It seeks to put the democratic spirit, which the Church inherited from Jesus and the prophets, once more in control of the institutions and teachings of the Church.

(Rauschenbusch 1945:5)

Rauschenbusch explains that the Social Gospel sought to bring humanity to repentance for their collective sins. For very long the focus was the individual's sin and salvation, but the social aspect of life asks men to reconsider and embrace the 'faith of the old prophets who believed in the salvation of the nations' (Rauschenbusch 1945:5).

For Rauschenbusch, 'theology is not superior to the gospel, but it exists to aid the preaching of salvation and to make the essential facts of Christianity so simple and clear that all who preach the gospel ... can draw on its stores and deliver a complete and unclouded Christian message' (Rauschenbusch 1945:7). His urge to lay a foundation for the practicability of the Christian message was in deep conversation with the ever changing realities of the developing world. He argued that theology must connect the changes of the world with the fundamentals of our faith and make them Christian tasks and problems. This does not ask Christianity to become like the world, or to water down the gospel so that it can adjust to the globalized world. It asks from theology to explain the gospel more practically, so that the religious do not

have to become like the world for the world, but to be followers of Jesus' gospel in the world, for the world; like Jesus did. In the *Festschrift* for Reinhold Niebuhr, John A. Hutchison noted:

It is the enduring achievement of the Social Gospel to have recaptured the social nature of the Christian and to have expressed it in new and challenging terms. In such a climate of opinion [individualism and other-worldliness] the Social Gospel reasserted and reclaimed the social nature of Christian religion. This must be regarded as [an] important religious as well as social achievement. Socially it had the force of challenging if not breaking the close alliance between Protestantism and the American business class.

(Smucker 1994:140)

Rauschenbusch (1945:7) admitted that this was one of the most 'difficult tasks ever laid on the intellect of religious leaders, but if we seek to keep Christian doctrine unchanged, we shall ensure its abandonment'. These challenges are not only those of the third millennium. The crisis the institutional church faces today is not a revelation, surprise, or from recent origin or discovery. The crisis is revenant. The *Christian* crisis began the moment the first followers saw it fit to come out of hiding after Jesus' death and formed a community of believers as they thought best.

Rauschenbusch pleaded for a theology large enough 'to contain the Social Gospel, and alive and productive enough not to hamper it' (Rauschenbusch 1945:9). These sentiments came from his understanding that the church (institutionalized Christianity as such) found itself between two voices: First, the call from the 'living Christ amid living men today' and the second from 'the voice of past ages embodies in theology' (Rauschenbusch 1945:8).

For Rauschenbusch the problem was the inability of the traditional institutionalized church to translate the gospel to audiences outside the church. These audiences, Rauschenbusch argued, will 'listen with absorbed interest to religious thought when it is linked with their own social problems' (Rauschenbusch 1945:17).

In the introductory chapters of *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, Rauschenbusch aimed to win over the conservative readers for some of the topics that followed later in the book. He showed that the concepts and fundamental theory underlying the Social Gospel were neither alien nor new to theology. It did not incorporate elements

of syncretistic formations; neither did it try to establish alien elements as part of it.

Rauschenbusch (1945:26) argued that:

[t]he body of ideas which we call the Social Gospel is not the product of a fad or temporary interest; it is not an alien importation or a novel invention; it is the revival of the most ancient and authentic gospel, and the scientific unfolding of essential elements of Christian doctrine which have remained undeveloped all too long; the rise of the Social Gospel is not a matter of choice but of destiny; the digestion of its ideas will exert a quickening and reconstructive influence on every part of theology.

(Rauschenbusch 1945:26)

His argument, mostly sparked by the reality of the kingdom of God in the social dimension of the Christian faith, came from his rejection of Christianity as the sum total of individual decisions. He affirmed the corporate emphasis of the Old Testament prophets, noting that they 'conceived of their people as a gigantic personality which sinned as one and ought to repent as one (Rauschenbusch 1907:9). The New Testament sets forth the coming of the kingdom, something far greater than a loose association of individuals. Smucker (1994:7) shows how Rauschenbusch saw this collective reality as 'nothing less than the thrust of God's will into the totality of human life. Therefore, in his most theologically mature book *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, Rauschenbusch viewed the Social Gospel as the collective person of God's creation, participating practically in the whole as individuals.

The Social Gospel, according to Rauschenbusch (1945:42), above all things, is practical.

It needs religious ideas, which will release energy for heroic opposition against organized evil and for the building of a righteous social life. It would find entire satisfaction in the attitude of Jesus and the prophets who dealt with sin as a present force and did not find it necessary to indoctrinate men on its first origin. It would have no motive to be interested in a doctrine, which diverts attention from the active factors of sin, which can be influenced, and concentrates attention on a past event, which no effort of ours can influence.

(Rauschenbusch 1945:42)

A Theology for the Social Gospel, Rauschenbusch's last book before his death, reads more systematically – even traditional – because of Rauschenbusch's attempt to explain the foundation of the theology for the Social Gospel more thoroughly; it is the flagship formulation of theology of the Social Gospel doctrine and theology.

Rauschenbusch asked questions that confronted traditional beliefs in an attempt to enlighten historical presuppositions made by literary critics. He showed how the Social Gospel is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. He showed how the influences on Jesus' message (today understood as Orthodox and Catholic dogma) were influenced by Greek thought, the Hellenization of Christianity: 'in other words, that alien influences streamed into the religion of Jesus Christ and created a theology which he never taught nor intended'. He questioned how 'Jesus would respond to the symbol of Chalcedon or the Athanasian Creed if they had been read to Him?' (Rauschenbusch 1945:23-26).

Rauschenbusch argued that the doctrine of the 'Kingdom of God was left undeveloped by individualistic theology and finally mislaid by it completely'. Apart from chapters on eschatology in previous theology, the term is scarcely found.

Now, as soon as the Social Gospel began once more to be preached in our own time, the doctrine of the Kingdom was immediately loved and proclaimed afresh, and the ethical principles of Jesus are once more taught without reservation as the only alternative for the greedy ethics of capitalism and militarism. These antipathies and affinities are a strong proof that the Social Gospel is neither alien nor novel, but is a revival of the earliest doctrines of Christianity, of its radical ethical spirit, and of its revolutionary consciousness.

(Rauschenbusch 1945:23-26)

For Rauschenbusch the doctrine of the kingdom of God *is* the Social Gospel. He compiled an incomplete list of how the term kingdom of God affected 'the conception of Christianity, the life of the Church, the progress of humanity, and the structure of humanity ... and how the loss of the doctrine of the kingdom of God has inflicted on systematic theology' (Rauschenbusch 1945:131):

1. The distinctive ethical principles of Jesus were the direct outgrowths of his conception of the Kingdom of God. When the latter disappeared from theology, the former disappeared from ethics.
2. The Church is primarily a fellowship for worship; the Kingdom is a fellowship of righteousness. When the latter was neglected in theology, the ethical force of Christianity was weakened; when the former was emphasized in theology, the importance of worship was exaggerated.
3. When the Kingdom ceased to be the dominating religious reality, the Church moved up into the position of the supreme good. To promote the power of the Church and its control over all rival political forces was equivalent to promoting the supreme ends of Christianity. This increased the arrogance of churchmen and took the moral check off their policies.
4. The Kingdom ideal is the test and corrective of the influence of the Church. When the Kingdom ideal disappeared, the conscience of the Church was muffled. It

- became possible for the missionary expansion of Christianity to halt for centuries without creating any sense of shortcoming. It became possible for the most unjust social conditions to fasten themselves on Christian nations without awakening any consciousness that the purpose of Christ was being defied and beaten back.
5. The Kingdom ideal contains the revolutionary force of Christianity. When this ideal faded out of the systematic thought of the Church, it became a conservative social influence and increased the weight of the other stationary forces in society.
 6. Reversely, the movements for democracy and social justice were left without a religious backing for lack of the Kingdom idea. The Kingdom of God as the fellowship of righteousness would be advanced by the abolition of industrial slavery and the disappearance of the slums of civilization; the Church would only indirectly gain through such social changes.
 7. Secular life is belittled as compared with church life. Services rendered to the Church get a higher religious rating than services rendered to the community. Thus the religious value is taken out of the activities of the common man and the prophetic services to society. Wherever the Kingdom of God is a living reality in Christian thought, any advance of social righteousness is seen as a part of redemption and arouses inward joy and the triumphant sense of salvation.
 8. When the doctrine of the Kingdom of God is lacking in theology, the salvation of the individual is seen in its relation to the Church and to the future life, but not in its relation to the task of saving the social order.
 9. Finally, theology has been deprived of the inspiration of great ideas contained in the idea of the Kingdom and in labour for it. The Kingdom of God breeds prophets; the Church breeds priests and theologians. The Church runs to tradition and dogma; the Kingdom of God rejoices in forecasts and boundless horizons. The Kingdom of God is to theology what outdoor colour and light are to art.

(Rauschenbusch 1945:131-139)

Rauschenbusch then made a few brief propositions on behalf of the Social Gospel for a new theological formulation of the doctrine of the Kingdom:

- The Kingdom of God is divine in its origin, progress and consummation.
- The Kingdom of God, therefore, is not merely ethical, but has a rightful place in theology.
- The Kingdom of God contains the teleology of the Christian religion. It translates theology from the static to the dynamic.
- Since God is in it, the Kingdom of God is always both present and future. Like God it is in all tenses, eternal in the midst of time. It is the energy of God realizing itself in human life.
- It is for us to see the Kingdom of God as always coming, always pressing in on the present, always big with possibility, and always inviting immediate action.
- The Kingdom is for each of us the supreme task and the supreme gift of God. By accepting it as a task, we experience it as a gift.
- Even before Christ, men of God saw the Kingdom of God as the great end to which all divine leadings were pointing.
- Within the Christian religion the idea of the Kingdom gets its distinctive interpretation from Christ,
- (a) Jesus emancipated the idea of the Kingdom from previous nationalistic limitations and from the debasement of lower religious tendencies, and made it worldwide and spiritual, (b) He made the purpose of salvation essential in it. (c) He

- imposed his own mind, his personality, his love and holy will on the idea of the Kingdom, (d) He not only foretold it but initiated it by his life and work.
- The Kingdom of God is humanity organized according to the will of God. Interpreting it through the consciousness of Jesus we may affirm these convictions about the ethical relations within the Kingdom: (a) Since Christ revealed the divine worth of life and personality, and since his salvation seeks the restoration and fulfilment of even the least, it follows that the Kingdom of God, at every stage of human development, tends toward a social order which will best guarantee to all personalities their freest and highest development. (b) Since love is the supreme law of Christ, the Kingdom of God implies a progressive reign of love in human affairs. We can see its advance wherever the free will of love supersedes the use of force and legal coercion as a regulative of the social order. (c) The highest expression of love is the free surrender of what is truly our own, life, property, and rights. No social group or Organization can claim to be clearly within the Kingdom of God, which drains others for its own ease, and resists the effort to abate this fundamental evil. (d) The reign of love tends toward the progressive unity of mankind, but with the maintenance of individual liberty and the opportunity of nations to work out their own national peculiarities and ideals.
 - Since the Kingdom is the supreme end of God, it must be the purpose for which the Church exists. For the Church to see itself apart from the Kingdom, and to find its aims in itself, is the same sin of selfish detachment as when an individual selfishly separates himself from the common good. The Church has the power to save in so far as the Kingdom of God is present in it. If the Church is not living for the Kingdom, its institutions are part of the 'world.'
 - Since the Kingdom is the supreme end, all problems of personal salvation must be reconsidered from the point of view of the Kingdom.
 - If the Kingdom of God was the guiding idea and chief end of Jesus – as we now know it was – we may be sure that every step in his life, including his death, was related to that aim and its realization, and when the idea of the Kingdom of God takes its due place in theology, the work of Christ will have to be interpreted afresh.
 - The Kingdom of God is not confined within the limits of the Church and its activities. It embraces the whole of human life.

(Rauschenbusch 1945:139-146)

The problem, however, was to explain this doctrine while keeping in mind the realities and implications of sin. Of fundamental importance for Rauschenbusch was the reality and implications of sin. He devoted sixteen chapters to a discussion of sin and evil. For Rauschenbusch, the centrality of 'sin was vitiated both by the new theology's attempt to explain away sin in terms of the environment and the old theology's inability to recognize sin when confronted with it in society' (White & Hopkins 1976:252).

Rauschenbusch's reaction to urban-industrial capitalism negates the highly individualistic character of it. Because of this, he focused on the social element of the

gospels.⁶⁴ He deployed his theory from a variety of materials and influences, as mentioned above. This term kingdom of God became the integrating centre for his position. Smucker (1994:143) notes that Rauschenbusch's 'prophetic critique of the economic order ... helped to break the union between Christianity and bourgeois values [and] brought perspectives back to an individualistic Protestantism and at the same time helped to restore social concern as a permanent aspect of the Church's witness'.

2.2 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE THEORIES

2.2.1 Revisiting Social Gospel footprints (1930-1980)

The value of history is said to lie in its explanation of how things came to be as they are. Usually we can understand what is only when we know how it came to be what it is. One of the most influential factors in modern civilization is Christianity.

(McCown 1929:vii)

McCown's interpretation of current events is relevant. Christianity, however, is not an influential factor any more than fluctuating economies are today. What is partially true is the fact that history can help us speculate on what is important for today. There are other factors and spheres (see § 1.2.2.1) that have substantially replaced not only Christianity, but also religion as the central moral-spiritual force that guides, integrates, and regulates society (Stackhouse 2000:45). The question is, will the Social Gospel emerge again, and if not in its initial form, in what form in our time?

The Social Gospel, in its decline between the wars, did not become extinct. Paul Carter accounts for the factors that infused the weakening of the movement:

The Social Gospel ... continued to live and flourish in America after the First World War. But between the generation of the muckrakers and the generation of the Red-baiters a great gulf lies in American history, and no movement which linked such disparate generations could have carried over that gulf unchanged. For while the older Social Gospel had been in harmony with its secular milieu, Progressivism, the newer Social Gospel, was in the deepest disharmony with its setting, "normalcy". And it is a stubborn fact that even the most wholehearted opposition to a social environment necessitates some adaption to it.

(Carter 1929:31)

⁶⁴ See Smucker's (1994:10) study on Rauschenbusch, where he argues that Rauschenbusch's chronological theological developments were influenced by pietism, sectarianism, liberalism and transformationism.

Carter shows that the Social Gospel declined because of the relativizing of its ethic due to the World War and the prohibition, and because of the theological critique of the American version of neo-orthodoxy. Hooft (1928:29) argues that in the after war-period the interest of American Christianity shifted from industrial to international and interracial problems.’

The Social Gospel was critically questioned, toughened, and made more sophisticated, especially after the attacks of the Niebuhr brothers.⁶⁵ Niebuhr’s recurring basic complaint was ‘a lack of realism about sin and society’ (White & Hopkins 1976:260). The Social Gospel also went astray in ‘being too optimistic in its strategy to transferring the “spirit of love” or the “law of Christ” from the individual to the social sphere’ (White & Hopkins 1976:260). Niebuhr (1932:74) writes that the ‘demand of religious moralists that nations subject themselves to “the law of Christ” is an unrealistic demand, and the hope to do so is a sentimental one’. Niebuhr argued further that the church, because of humanity’s ignorance and selfishness, had ‘failed to teach the law of love adequately because it allowed the simplicities of the Gospel to be overlaid by a layer of meaningless theological jargon’ (Niebuhr 1932:74). In his *Attack upon the Social Gospel*, Niebuhr identified the outcome of the Social Gospel’s intention with the transformation of society through unions, schools and political parties. The tendency of ‘self-salvation’ where social salvation ‘could be something men could accomplish for themselves if only they adopted the right social ideal, found adequate motivation for achieving it and accepted the correct technical means’ (Niebuhr 1936:177). The issue, for Niebuhr, was not essentially in the social versus individualistic salvation, but rather, in our day, the social equivalent of the Evangelical strategy’ (Niebuhr 1936:179). One can see that this criticism moulded the suspicion towards the Social Gospel in theological research.

The earliest Social Gospellers, including Rauschenbusch, accused repeatedly of an optimism that missed the tragic sense of life, especially in the social arena. This, however, was not entirely true for the Social Gospellers, but rather for later liberals that interpreted Social Gospel theology. One can understand this when looking at

⁶⁵ R. Niebuhr (1936) wrote a critically balanced paper, *Attack upon the Social Gospel*, which forced Social Gospellers, Evangelical Liberals and Evangelical Moderns to revisit their assumptions and formulation of the theology of the Social Gospel.

Rauschenbusch's copious attention to understanding sin in *A Theology for the Social Gospel*. Meyer, speaking on the breadth of Rauschenbusch's understanding of sin, comments: 'So far as the nature of human nature was concerned, Rauschenbusch again had exhibited a realization that liberals were to be accused of universally of having lacked' (Meyer 1960:130).

The Social Gospel took its setback, and after the World Wars, new tendencies, because of the War, emerged. On several occasions, the Social Gospel resurfaced. Noted examples by White and Hopkins are a junior Senator of South Dakota, Viet Nam, with his vision of social justice rooted in the Social Gospel, George McGovern's dissertation on the Ludlow-strike and massacre (in Colorado) and most notably, Martin Luther King.

The Social Gospel that emerged in this period structured the thoughts of King. King used the writings of Rauschenbusch, which influenced his thoughts on social concern as theological base from which to act on social issues regardless of the *status quo* that demanded inaction about the ruling systems of his time.

The Social Gospel helped King to explain his deep disappointment in the generally tolerated and accepted injustice of the time, as well as the passiveness of Christian believers that were content with inaction rather than confrontation. He wrote from the Birmingham jail.

I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride to freedom is not the White Citizen's Councillor or the Klux Klux Klanner but the white moderate who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says 'I agree with you in the goal that you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action;' who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a 'more convenient season'.

(King 1963:78)

The seventies stand as another extension where the Social Gospel re-emerged. This was the result of a gathering in Chicago where *The Chicago Declaration* was written. The movement was concerned with social justice and verbalized their social

concern. The Evangelicals for Social Action's declaration was taken up and received a positive reaction in October 1974.⁶⁶

Finally, the Social Gospel also had an ongoing influence on the World Council of Churches (WCC). This influence started more indirectly with great energy in structures and bodies such as the Federal Council of Churches that gave way to the National Council of Churches. Ecumenical bodies and conferences also came together; like the 1925 Stockholm conference that, for example, discussed current social concerns and represented their own countries and church's social concerns. The World Council of Churches later absorbed these bodies.

In a much wider theological trend, Barthianism had a big influence because of Barth's on going radical criticisms of capitalism and the philosophy behind institutions of economic individualism. In all these issues and discussions on social justice, social concern, and social awakenings, one can see the Social Gospel as still alive and well, as versed by Barth:

The Church is witness of the fact that the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost. And this implies that – casting all false impartiality aside – the Church must concentrate first on the lower levels of human society. The poor, the socially and economically weak and threatened, will always be the object of its primary and particular concern, and it will always insist on the State's special responsibility for these weaker members of society. That it will bestow its love on them, within the framework of its own task (as part of its service), is one thing and the most important; but it must not concentrate on this and neglect the other thing to which it is committed by its political responsibility: the effort to achieve a fashioning of the law such as will make it impossible for 'equality before the law' to become a cloak under which strong and weak, independent and dependent, rich and poor, employers and employees, in fact receive different treatment at its hands; the weak being unduly restricted, the strong unduly protected. The church must stand for justice in the political sphere.

(Barth 1954:36)

This study does not attempt to negate the recurring fight for social justice over the last century. It will ask, however, what are we taught from previous theologies of social concern in terms of the globalized Christian crisis, the challenge of the

⁶⁶ Other examples of where the Social Gospel re-emerged in forms of social concern are, *inter alia*, in the work of Gustavo Gutierrez' (liberation theology), Black Theology in America, Moltmann (theology of hope, Metz (political theology) and in the work of the socialist Karl Barth's commitment to social justice.

missional responsibility of Christians, and the interpretation of the Social Gospel of Jesus in today's Third Millennium?

2.2.2 A theology for the Social Gospel of the Third Millennium

Christians are called to engage in both evangelism and social action. We are commissioned to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth. Simultaneously, we are commanded to struggle to realize God's will for peace, justice and freedom throughout society.

(World Council of Churches, Fifth Assembly, 1975)

As mentioned above, the diverse history of the Social Gospel's theological foundation and the influence it had on writers and organizations are anything but simple. Therefore, a structure that will serve as foundation for this study's hypothesis will be put together. The second aim of this study (see § 1.1.4) was to study and identify indispensable characteristics of the early twentieth century Social Gospel movement. Elements of the Social Gospel are informative to churches today that struggle to identify possible modes of action *in* their communities and bearing witness *for* a secular environment.

Our world today is situational and theologically different from the past, even the immediate past. However, we are called to take action. We are responsible for the effects of our actions, in history and the present. The ideal of living in the kingdom of God is ever in our grasp, and now is the ideal time to start doing what we believe in and hope for this world.

The important aspects discussed in this Chapter thus far⁶⁷ should be interpreted with reference to our reality today. The Social Gospel, as been described above, does not show real signs of re-emerging and is most of the times not to even be mentioned or acknowledged among theologians today. This study is confident that the ideas of the first Social Gospellers will re-emerge. Therefore, the challenge lies in constructing the most essential principles and salient aspects of the movement that can be relevant for today. In § 4.3, the focus will be on the intention of Jesus when he

⁶⁷ The argument to follow draws from John Coleman Bennet (1975), as well as Hooff's (1928) criticism on the theology of the Social Gospel.

proclaimed the kingdom of God, and § 5.1.3 it will be indicated how the Social Gospel of Jesus influenced his immediate listeners. In the conclusion of this section, the focus will be on the underlying theology of the Social Gospel proposed by the Social Gospellers and their critics.

Hooft (1928:169) is of the opinion that discussions on the 'value and meaning of the Social Gospel' have become 'unfruitful or confused,' mostly because the focus of these discussions tend to focus on secondary issues. According to Hooft (1928:169), European scholars considered the 'the conception of the Kingdom of God as the most central tenet of the movement', and American scholars discussed in detail the movement's emphasis, the pros and cons of the movement, and the 'question of the relationship of Christianity and the church to social life'. Neither of these two foci, even though they contribute to understanding the theology of the Social Gospel, can satisfy a full understanding of the Social Gospel. In the place of these two foci, Hooft proposes that the essential tenet of the Social Gospel is the '*doctrine de Deo*', the Social Gospel's conception of God. Before more is said on this proposal of Hooft, we first turn to the first two named foci.

The hope to establish the kingdom of God on earth was the dream of a conflict-free society where all citizens would voluntarily cooperate for the good of the nation. The idealism of this kingdom theology in McCown (1929:355),⁶⁸ where he states that the ideal of Jesus' life on earth, the kingdom, was 'not individualistic, it is also not social, it may properly be called universal humanism'. This ideal, he continues, is 'a simple life, rejoicing in the good things of the world, and in happy companionship with ones fellows, without envy, enmity, greed, censoriousness, or struggle, for precedence and power' (McCown 1929:355). This ideal, according to McCown, is implied in the kingdom of God Jesus proclaimed wherein we are already partaking to continually manifest itself more and deeper in a world that currently articulates mostly the opposite. Josiah Strong believes there are three laws of the kingdom, namely that of 'service, sacrifice, and love' (Strong 1910:37). This interpreted as a social obligation in understanding the kingdom as righteousness, love, and faith.

⁶⁸ McCown, a professor in New Testament literature at the Pacific School of Religion, was an ardent supporter of the Social Gospel and was 'convinced that Jesus had a Social Gospel, a message of social salvation, and that it is still a gospel for modern civilization' (McCown 1929:378).

Rauschenbusch's contribution, as we saw, was 'to socialize and institutionalize the concepts of spiritual regeneration and of the Kingdom of God', and that man's 'salvation was impossible as long as that system (capitalist system) remained structurally untouched' (Carter 1954:14). To what extent the Social Gospellers believed the system had to be socialized is not clear, but what they did agree on was 'that capitalism constituted a formidable obstacle in the Kingdom of God on earth' (Carter 1954:14). Rauschenbusch contributed extensively to the understanding of the Kingdom of God (see § 2.1.4.1): 'If the Kingdom of God was the guiding idea and chief end of Jesus – as we now know it is – we may be sure that every step in his life, including his death, was related to that aim and its realization' (Rauschenbusch 1945:146). In the same vein, Mathews was also of the opinion that the 'kingdom is the goal of effort, the reward of persecution, and the abode of blessedness' (Mathews 1897:42).

It was with the approaching fulfilment of this undefined expectation of an actual, concrete, though divine, political society, that Jesus began his preaching. He took the hope as he found it. He never needed to define it. He had simply to correct and elevate the immanent idea. The Christian kingdom is the Jewish kingdom, but transfigured and made universal by the clarifications of Jesus. Membership in it is no longer to be a matter of birth. The 'children of the kingdom' were to know that the despised Gentile might enter in before them. Thus it is that, although Jesus sometimes refers especially to the dominion of God in his kingdom, he generally keeps prominent the social conception.

(Mathews 1897:57-58)

Gladden (1894:84) interpreted humanity as a 'brotherhood under the Fatherhood of God' and '[t]he whole social organism so far as it is affected by divine influence was included in the Kingdom of God'. On 21 July 1909, Frank Mason North delivered an address in New York on 'The city and the kingdom', in which he stated that '[t]he City is here, the very heart of the divine strategy, the key of the mighty campaign.... By winning the cities for Jesus, Christians could hasten the coming of the kingdom because', he concluded, 'in the City of God is the Kingdom of Heaven' (North 1910:293-318). The leaders of the movement believed that the Social Gospel was the solution for the wellbeing and freedom of all peoples in their journey towards a Christianized society. This, for them, was where the kingdom of God manifested. Life in God had continuity, and 'heaven and earth, are to be part of the same realm'. The Social Gospel was concerned about a 'progressive social incarnation of God' in the kingdom of God, the kingdom of earth (Rauschenbusch 1917:131).

The second foundational tenet of Social Gospel theology, namely the question of the relationship of Christianity and the church to social life, has a few factors. The following contributions of the Social Gospel influenced the Christian Church over the last century in supportive manner with the goal of reaching the ideal.

First, Martin Luther King conceded that the strikes in Birmingham in favour of equality, desegregation, and justice were unfortunate. Also said that he 'is sure that none of you [the addressed] would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with the effects and does not grapple with the underlying causes ... and that the city's white power left the Negro community with no alternative' (King 1963:79).

Bennett (1975:289), on the other hand, is of the opinion that the Social Gospel's 'chief emphasis ... had been on economic justice. I think that it is fair to speak of its considerable success in terms of its objectives, even though the deeper causes of economic injustice remained little changed'.

Dr King pleaded for the resolve of the problem's core and immediate action from the church. Bennett shows that the deeper social concerns stayed unchanged by the Social Gospel's action taken by the church. Both plead for the resolution of the radical (essential), but both frustrated by the ineffective practicality of the work done in the name of Jesus. This is troubling.

According to Fishburn (1981:92), the actual outcome of the Social Gospel's action was one full of contradiction:

While championing the rights of the worker, they reinforced middle-class confidence in the right to success and prosperity. While stirring the social conscience of the church, they discouraged church members from charitable activity on behalf of the poor. While establishing public reputations as political and social liberals, they proposed very limited forms of legislation to remedy social ills. While taking a public stand against the doctrine of natural selection, they were instrumental in the crystallization of a world-view dependent on psychology and social philosophy of Social Darwinism.

(Fishburn 1981:92)

Susan Curtis is of opinion that the effects of the impractical social movement called the Social Gospel are the main reason for the consumerism of our day. After the war

the intertwining of culture and religion became clear. Protestant churches in the Social Gospel tradition 'increasingly relied on the standards of business, entertainment, and the state to evaluate their religious efforts' (Curtis 1991:277). This shows that when the church did not comply with secular standards of expertise, efficiency and entertainment, the public do not care to respond. The church needs to step into the world and participate in the world; when this happens, the Social Gospel can be the vehicle for or carrier of religion. This is somewhat ungrounded in terms of theology and more reactive to the developing post-war America. Nevertheless, there also lies truth in it. The actions the church take has effects, therefore the need for attentive care when 'going to work' in the kingdom of God.

A third profound contribution the Social Gospel made was that it emphasized the belief that God (the Christian God, Father of Jesus) 'identified with the poor, the deprived, the neglected, the oppressed groups in society' and 'that Christian love required a concern to transform social and political structures in the interest of social justice' (Bennett 1975:290). This concern for social justice 'has grown in strength and in the radical nature of its economic and political implications since the period of the Social Gospel' (Bennett 1975:290). The action the church took after the war was mostly in reaction to the fast growing idea of democracy. The kingdom of God accepted by the church transformed into a democracy of the state. 'The interaction between religion and democracy was seen as 'two aspects of one and the same life, a life in God' (Gorrell 1988:292). The church started to articulate itself, with the goal of conformity, in terms of this expectation of the emerging social order. Clearly, the church's contribution to democracy of the future was creating the values that it constituted.

'If the aim of Christianity is the establishment of the kingdom of God, or the democracy of God, on earth, there can be no question but that religious leaders should be vitally interested in these significant social endeavours' (Annual Survey of Progress 1918:93-106).

Rauschenbusch (1945:145) exclaimed: 'Since the Kingdom is the supreme end of God, it must be the purpose for which the Church exists'. By this time, the Social Gospellers faced a multitude of challenges. Their intention was for the church, and

thus Christianity, to take action. We see this in their theology, in the church's attitude towards social concern, and from the expectation of the changing social order. In this regard, Mathews (1905:315) believed '[t]hat Christianity is simultaneously political and nonspecific; it may have political effects, it cannot have a political program'. The vision the Gospellers shared was true to their belief that the kingdom of God should manifest more clearly and visibly on earth through the church; a belief that was revolutionized due to the new social order. In 1920, in a world dominated by conflicting ideas and movements, Bishop McDowell asserted that:

[t]he church must hold a steady course toward universal democracy based on the right; a course that will save the world from the excesses of fanaticism, the unbridled sway of greed, the tyranny of the few or the tyranny of the many. Today, as always, the church is for order, steadiness, fairness, and law; and today the church must speak that steady word to which the world will listen.

(McDowell 1920:167)

Curtis (1991), in *A Consuming Faith*, pinpoints this as the time when American Christianity grabbed onto the factors that led the church to propagate a faith of consumerism. This was not the initial intention the Social Gospel fathers had in mind, but was the effect and reality of the church's actions.

These three concluding remarks about the foundational themes in Social Gospel theology does not convince Hooft (1928:169) that the Social Gospel had any theological structure. His 'elaborate analyses' of the conception of God is summarized below.

Keeping the above mentioned history, theologians, perspectives, and outcomes in mind, we now turn to Hooft's analysis. He first states that there are two main attitudes toward the conception of God throughout history in which any person should first align oneself. According to Hooft, in the first general conception of God, conceived of as

- Creator: Whose act of creation does not exhaust his Being, who remains absolutely free, not limited or conditioned by his creation
- God is Personal: It is his Will, not a principal, or law of rational or moral character that sets man's norm for life.
- God takes the initiative, not man.
- Faith, is then, man's free gift from God.

- He is totally other, who is not only more than human but as far removed from human as Holiness from sin.
- Only through Christ the gulf between divine and human reality is bridged.
- Man's sin obscures his final authority supposed to be found through rational and ethical life.

(Hooft 1928:170)

The second doctrine of the conception of God, Hooft argues, is more of philosophical than theological origin:

- The universe and God is one, with God as its essence.
- God strengthens these forces that are already given in human life rather to reveal his Will continuously to man.
- Revelation is universal. Divine and human reality stand in continuous relationship with each other.
- Sin is not opposition to God, rather a defect of moral sense, or a lack of moral equipment.

(Hooft 1928:171)

Hooft (1928:171) argues that it 'is upon this choice that the whole structure of Christian thought depends'. He states that if his historical analysis is correct, then the choice is finally between choosing between 'God's revelation in the prophets and Christ and in certain elements of Christian tradition on the one hand and the Stoic philosophy, other elements in Christian tradition and particularly modern idealistic or intellectualistic philosophy, on the other' (1928:171).

Understandably, Hooft is concerned with the core theological assumptions of the Social Gospels from which to take action. This study is of opinion that the Social Gospellers perceived God's revelation through Jesus' example as the indication that God's love for earth transcends mere perception of human initiative and the boundaries thereof. God's love for all the nations should be taken literally. This is the reason for the inclusive nature of the Social Gospel and the concern for the liberation of the marginal and the oppressed. In § 4.1-4.3.3, the argument will focus on how the oppressive elite minority rules over the oppressed majority. The Social Gospel recognizes this misuse of power and exclusivist tradition. The Social Gospel regards God's kingdom as a kingdom for everyone to share in.

Hooft (1928:174) had a theological problem with this. According to him, the Social Gospel's theology had developed to a point 'where a completely ethical, human and immanent conception of God is reached, and where the typically biblical elements of

God becomes subordinated'. The moralization and humanization of the doctrine of God thus led to the idea of pure immanence (Hooft 1928:179). Fishburn shows that the Social Gospellers gave 'concrete content to the theological concepts of fatherhood and brotherhood that was just like the content of their family ideal' and resulted in 'an uncritical identification of God with man,⁶⁹ history, and the natural process, which led to an easy optimism concerning the kingdom of God and American manifest destiny' (Fishburn 1981:171). In this regard, Fosdick remarks:

Wherever you look at the underlying presuppositions of men's thinking about God today, you find, not the old dualism against which the ancient church has so long and fierce a conflict but a gladly recognized affinity between God and man. In our theology, no longer is the divine and the human like oil and water that cannot mix; rather, all the best in us is God in us.

(Fosdick 1981:266-67)

The ideal of a 'personal Jesus' started to emerge. This is mainly because the Social Gospellers believed God was personally present in Jesus of Nazareth who lived in history as the representation of God's image on earth. Fishburn (1981:151) answers this concern of Hooft. He explains how the Social Gospellers understood that the 'advent of Jesus demonstrated that man-God had the potential dimension of a perfect 'filial relationship' between men', and that the 'spirit of Jesus' was a social principle because 'Jesus represented the general principles of love and brotherhood among *all* men which were essential to democracy and social order' (Fishburn 1981:152; emphasis in the original; see also Rauschenbusch 1916:73 in § 4.3.3).

Gladden (1897:159), in the same tone as Fishburn, says: 'Our ideals do not mock us; they are the invitation of the Power not ourselves which is able to do us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think'. Hooft's (1928:176) understanding of this statement is that according to the Social Gospel theology man's and God's 'moral ideas and essence are the same thing then there is no fundamental distinction between service to God and service to man'.

Rauschenbusch (1945:48), on the other hand, argued: 'We love and serve God

⁶⁹ Theologians from Augustine to the present have pointed out the distinction between the nature of God and the limits of thought and language to express the nature of God. Paul Tillich (1957:61-65) distinguished between a religious symbol and an 'exchangeable metaphor'. The Social Gospel is an 'exchangeable metaphor' in that it drains theological language and thought of the power to transcend the concrete.

when we love and serve our fellows, whom He loves and in whom He lives'. For the Christian expresses love for God through love for the neighbour. To conceive of love only as personal relations between two individuals was inadequate for Rauschenbusch. Fishburn (1981:153) states that Rauschenbusch 'conceived of the social power of love radiating from the sense of social solidarity to a national consciousness', and that in the future 'love would extend to an international and interracial consciousness that would represent a new historical stage in the progress of civilization'.

The critics of the Social Gospel are rightly concerned with an over-simplifying of the filial relationship between humans and God. This study, however, regard this criticism because of the lack of understanding of the Social Gospellers.

Rauschenbusch and Gladden clearly do not underestimate the difference between the mind of God and of humanity, but regard the responsibility of acting upon that relationship as non-negotiable for everyone. This might be the underlying difference in interpretation of Jesus's life on earth between the critics and the Social Gospellers. Institutional structures are not the only defining and authoritative voice in taking action according to the example of the gospel message.

Moltmann (in Stackhouse 2001:175) writes that it is not

separate individual parts of creation that reflect God's wisdom and triune vitality; it is the community of creation as a whole. In the high-priestly prayer in Jn. 17:21, Jesus prays that 'ἵνα πάντες ἐν ὧσιν, καθὼς σύ, πάτερ, ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐν σοί, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ὧσιν, ἵνα ὁ κόσμος πιστεύῃ ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας'. This is the foundational theological saying for the ecumenical movement, and it can become the foundational theological saying for the ecological movement as well.

(Stackhouse 2001:176)

Hooft (1928:177) is also of the opinion that it is difficult to distinguish the Social Gospel's theology from a pure positivistic position. For example, when looking at the following statement of Rauschenbusch (1945:18): 'It is clear that our Christianity is most Christian when religion and ethics are viewed as inseparable elements of the same single-minded and whole hearted life, in which the consciousness of God and the consciousness of humanity blend completely'. Gladden explained the nature of the mental conversion connoted by the Social Gospel desire to assimilate all people

to 'the spirit of Jesus'. This was a conversion of attitude and not necessarily an entwining of spirit that will blend human nature and divine nature as one:

They (un-churched, new converts) must highly resolve that henceforth the law of the mind, and not the law of members, shall rule in their lives, that by God's grace they will become the men and women they ought to be. They went down by surrendering, they must go up by fighting. They must call on Him who has kindled this desire in their hearts to help them in realizing it. And they must put themselves in an environment that will feed and stimulate the better elements of their lives instead of the baser ones.

(Gladden 1899:239)

'The idea of a democratic God indicates very clearly that the direction of thought of the Social Gospel is towards pantheism' (Hooft 1928:178). Again, a very legitimate concern, but not entirely justified because of his lack of understanding of the intention the Social Gospelers had. The Social Gospel's intention is to have the same values that they interpret from the gospel as core values in the public sphere, without just jumping to conclusions.

Hooft (1928:181) acknowledges the Social Gospel movement to some credit:

They are aware of the exceedingly great moral dangers inherent in modern capitalism, industrialism, and economic imperialism. They are deeply troubled in their conscience about the lack of ethical standards in social life and about the flagrant injustice of the social order. There is something truly prophetic in their indignation and it is to their lasting credit that they have spoken so fearlessly and frankly about these issues, which most Christians complacently ignore. But the very intensity of their moral pathos, their impatience with reality as they see it, has led them astray. For instead of accepting the tension between the real and the ideal, between the existing social order and the Kingdom of God, they anticipated the ideal by concluding that it was already potentially given in the real.

(Hooft 1928:181)

'The kingdom came near today' does not mean that there is no difference between a realized kingdom of God and our reality; it just shows how the space that we perceive as controlled by humans (the church) has an element of a very real and present God, revealed to us through Jesus.

'This means that God is no longer the reality, distinct from the opposite of humanity, so that the final choice is between God and man, but rather a reality on the same level as humanity, so that the final choice is between different elements of human

life' (Hooft 1928:182). Here is one of the first mentions of the relativism of a secular society. Understandably, Hooft was concerned with his time's theological developments.

He goes on to say that the 'road forward to a more Christian social order does not lead away from the essential truths of Christian theism, but rather back to them'. The need is for 'a Christian message contained in the Bible itself – one which recognizes the existing duality between God and man – between the kingdom of God and the world ... one that that is finally united because of God's infinite grace and love' (Hooft 1928:185). The Social Gospellers would agree completely with this; the difference, again, is merely in the interpretation with whom the authority of action lays. With the church and state alone or through the ideal that every person has the ability to reach out to God and that (personal) revelation should lead to a public life that accentuates the values found in the gospel. This is not moralism; the Social Gospellers understood this as the imperative: 'οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον' (Jn 3:16) is inclusive love.

Hooft sees this in the apparent action taken by people influenced by the Social Gospel (for the correct reasons). 'The great assets of the most articulate American Christianity today are those which we find in the Social Gospel: its missionary zeal, its sense of responsibility for all of life, its challenge to those who are satisfied with things as they are, its moral courage' (Hooft 1928:186).

Still, after recognizing the above, Hooft still argues that '[t]he Social Gospel does not do justice to essential elements of Christian truth and therefore does not produce a firmly rooted and abided type of Christian life' (Hooft 1928:186). Fishburn concludes this debate by affirming Hooft's argument as follow:

The theology of Rauschenbusch was a philosophy that functioned on the basis of individual moral autonomy. It appeared to attend to public matters yet was concerned primarily with individual morality. The social consciousness that Rauschenbusch intended to vitalize with Christian 'spirit' never materialized because the content of his social philosophy was so similar to the already established ideals of the middle class. In adjusting the message to the regeneration of the social order, Rauschenbusch came out of the struggle with 'a crippled formulation' of truth.

(Fishburn 1981:175)

Brueggemann (2008:227-228) shows that the religious and political-economic challenges are both spiritual and politically economic at the same time, never only one, or the other. This does not have to be a pitfall in terms of the intention the Social Gospellers had regarding community. The institutional church does not have the ability to condemn and govern society as much in the future as it did in the past. Instead, the church should re-evaluate how to be supportive about public life where its members live.

This Chapter concludes with Borg (2003:199-201), who argues that to love God automatically means to participate in the passion that God has for humanity, not for the church. 'The practice of compassion and justice is important both within the internal life of the church and in the world beyond the community of the church' (Borg 2003:201). There is a very definite appeal to live outside the church according to the same values you respect in the church. That is what the Social Gospel appeals to; it is not a morality-based, watered-down understanding of the gospel, but the implementation thereof. In referring to Vida Scudder and bishop Dom Helder Camara, Borg states the following:

Beyond the church, the practice of compassion means both charity and justice. The distinction between the two is important. About a hundred years ago, a Christian activist and author named Vida Scudder listed three ways that Christians can respond to a growing awareness of human suffering: direct philanthropy, social reform, and social transformation. Direct philanthropy means giving directly to those who are suffering, social reform means creating and supporting organizations for their care, and social transformation is about justice – changing society so that the structures do not privilege some and cause suffering for others. The first two are about charity and the third is about justice. All three are important. Charity is always good and will always be necessary, but historically Christians have been long on the first two and short on the third. One reason is that charity never offends; a passion for justice often does. To paraphrase Roman Catholic bishop Dom Helder Camara from Brazil: 'When I gave food to the poor, they called me a saint; when I asked why there were so many poor, they called me a communist.' Charity means helping the victims. Justice asks, 'Why are there so many victims?' and then seeks to change the causes of victimization, that is, the way the system is structured. Justice is not about Caesar increasing his charitable giving or Pilate increasing his tithe. Justice is about social transformation. Taking the political vision of the Bible seriously means the practice of social transformation.

(Borg 2003:201)

This is the difference between the criticism of the Social Gospellers and the intention of the Social Gospel. We are called to be political (in Borg's terms), but that does not

mean we have to become politicians or activists. We are called to be concerned about the salvation of humanity, which does not mean the church will lose its credibility through pluralism (do not read: pantheism). In fact, is the church not less credible because of its lack of willingness to converse with other religions, denominations, and the secular? *Because* we live from the affirmation of God's concern for the whole world through the example of Jesus' life, can and should we not live as a community? According to Borg, we should be political 'in the broad sense of being aware of the impact of systems on people's lives and of God's passion for those who are disadvantaged and victimized by systems' (Borg 2003:201).

The Social Gospel advocated in the nineteenth century has elements in its theology that does not assume the church exclusive starting point for action in faith. It has a concern with the marginal, subjugated by the systems of our time such as neo-imperialism, the effect of oppressive globalism and the exclusivist nature of religions.

Does the church not confess a God that loves the world?

Does the church not confess a Jesus who was concerned with living the values of his faith rather than being isolated by some misrepresented religious traditions?

Does the church not confess a Jesus who sent his followers to live in community?

Does the church still hold on to the perceived authority of restraining such a Social Gospel?

Then why are there still exclusivist traditions when the Kingdom has come near for everyone to partake in?

Chapter 3

Methodology: Postcolonial hermeneutics

In the previous chapters, the focus was on the current debate regarding globalization and missional reaction and the potential in the Social Gospel. In this chapter, the focus is on the intention of Jesus' message interpreted from a postcolonial view.

Postcolonial theory here is applicable because of its relevance to numerous countries in the world and the value it can add to understand imperialized (colonized) first-century Palestine. *Jesus's message* is used because we can discover similarities, albeit indirectly, between our modern context of globalization (driven by a neo-imperialistic force) and the influence of a context of imperialism in first-century Palestine. Jesus's speeches and actions were foundational to the actions of his immediate followers, before and after his crucifixion. This relationship between the relevance of the South African context, institutional mission (§ 1.3) and postcolonialism (§ 3.1) is based on postcolonialism's hermeneutic of suspicion that questions theories such as imperialism, neo-imperialism, and globalization (§ 1.2-1.2.2.4).

Postcolonial theory is a means of defiance by which any exploitative and discriminative practices, regardless of time and space, are challenged. It expresses equality between different peoples (native and alien), oppression of developing countries and their cultures, ecology, classification of women and social injustice. Linked to this, the broad socio-cultural context of the texts of the New Testament include the omnipresent, inescapable and overwhelmingly socio-political reality of Empire, the ever present imperialism and colonialism in the Mediterranean of the first century CE (Segovia 1998:56).

Without trying to transpose presuppositions onto the reader, the author of this study has the need to explain why this study and line of argument is a model that proves extremely appealing to him personally.

Bono, the rock-band leader of U2, famously said: 'We can be the generation that no longer accepts that an accident of latitude determines whether a child lives or dies.'

But will we be that generation?’ I acknowledge the fact that I have a specific social location and agenda: I was born and raised in a time of the translocation of political power in South Africa, a world of neo-colonized oppressed. During the period that the oppressed struggled for liberation from the margins, I was raised between the colonizers. This insight, inter alia, has brought me to the point where I now am devoted to the struggle for liberation and decolonization for the sake of both the oppressed and the oppressor. In this regard, I have to be transparent as interpreter of my own ideology. In contemporary South Africa the roles of oppressor and oppressed have changed over the course of the last century and is at this point changing again. The native and the alien have its own influence on the generation born after oppression (the so-called ‘free-born’) that are implicated with a history where s/he has to identify with being both oppressor and oppressed. Whether politically, culturally, or economically, I have found that both can draw from social memory, and both can return the favour of oppression. Therefore, for the sake of both ends of the ignominy it is necessary to consider the matrix of diverse traditions when attempting to describe an ‘authentic’ or ‘nativist’ identity sustainable for the sake of equality, instead of further oppression. This appeal includes an outcry to the NHKA to reintroduce our theology as liberated and inclusive to our immediate communities and the world.

3.1 POSTCOLONIAL THEORY: POINTS OF DEPARTURE

This study does not indulge in the thought of bringing a resolution to ongoing debates surrounding the profitability or pointlessness of postcolonialism.⁷⁰ Up to date the findings reveal an area of studies that is not only highly diverse, but also highly conflicted. An example of critique on the hermeneutical approach is that of Mishra and Hodge (2006:288) on Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin’s *The Empire Writes Back* (1991), that argues for a more specific distinction between the ‘postcolonialism of settler and non-settler and within these there is a need to see greater continuities between the colonial and the post-colonial.’ Given such a broad spectrum of opinion and the intensity of debate, a number of fundamental decisions regarding what is

⁷⁰ For introductions to and the history of postcolonialism, see Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989) and Young (2001).

understood by postcolonial criticism is necessary, as well as an estimation of criticism directed at the approach when applied to biblical criticism.

This study attempts to align current postcolonial studies with the line of thought used as structure for the hypothesis that postcolonial criticism can interpret biblical texts (see § 3.1.1.2). With first-century Palestine as focal point, certain former fixed boundaries around the oppressor and the marginalized can be resolved through postcolonial criticism. Postcolonial critics have characteristically worked to break down formerly fixed boundaries between text and context in order to show the continuities between patterns of representation of subject peoples and the material practices of (neo-) colonial power. Postcolonialism, however, is also associated with diaspora, transnational migration and internationalism. It does not necessarily imply *anti*-colonialism that took the form (for example since the Boer War in South Africa and onwards) of 'national internationalism' and 'a revolutionary mixture of the indigenous and the cosmopolitan, a complex constellation of situated local knowledge's combined with radical, universal political principles' (Young 2001:2). Also important is to understand the effect colonialism had on the behaviour of people groups, native, or alien. In terms of land dispute, colonialism rids the one or the other group's land as native 'owner' of a territory. Yet, and just as important, colonialism amplifies inclusive and exclusive behaviour about subjects like religion, tradition and philosophy. This study argues that characteristics of postcolonialism had an impact on the behaviour of the first followers of Jesus with regards to their missional imperative by either being exclusivist Mosaic-faith followers or inclusive followers of Jesus' gospel.

Sugirtharajah (2006:16) explains: 'The greatest single aim of postcolonial biblical criticism is to situate colonialism at the centre of the Bible and biblical interpretation.' This aim is a result of the unwillingness to explain the impact imperialism had on shaping biblical scholarship. 'What postcolonial biblical criticism does is to focus on the whole issue of expansion, domination, and imperialism as central focus in defining both the biblical narratives and biblical interpretation (Sugirtharajah 2006:17). Concerning a postcolonial hermeneutic, Van Aarde states:

Postcolonial hermeneutics is concerned with linguistic, cultural and geographical transfer. Within the framework of biblical studies it explores strategies of interpreting texts from the situation of previously colonized people who are accommodated in a new liberated context, but find themselves both included and excluded. Biblical texts are historically considered to be both the products of people who were subjected to the exploitation of Middle-Eastern and Greco-Roman super powers and interpreted today in the third world by people who also were subjects of modern colonial powers. Postcolonial studies represent a postmodern epistemology, which implies a deconstructive approach to hermeneutics.

(Van Aarde 2004:1105)

The use of the terms globalization, colonization, and imperialization (as interchangeable) depends on one's point of departure. In this study the imperialistic characteristics of globalization, the Social Gospel, and the examples of colonization and neo-colonization, whether recent or ancient, draws upon a positivistic understanding of development. The ideal is to liberate the marginal from neo-imperial domination. It follows the demise of old colonization if viewed from a capitalistic intention.

Sugirtharajah (2004:22) understands globalization's effect specifically as colonization on the 'grassroots' level. Earlier it was indicated how Stackhouse argues that the governing powers/spheres/authorities has the power to give structure to globalization, referring mostly to the globalization of the 'elite' (see § 1.2.2.1). The focus of Sugirtharajah is somewhat different, in that he talks about the effect globalization has on local oppressed people. 'It is here where postcolonialism can play a positive role in exposing the exploitive policies of donor countries and organizations which force the "under-developed" (not not-developing – PJ) nations to adopt measures which would make them conducive to the investments of multinational corporations' (Sugirtharajah 2004:22). Clearly, the focus is on the colonized, the oppressed, and the masses.

When regarding postcolonialism as an implementable tool, it is important to define this study's interpretation of this term. Within the model of postcolonial studies, terminology itself proves quite varied and thus problematic. When this study refers to *postcolonial*, the following quote from Fernando F. Segovia describes its use:

[As an] ideological reflection on the discourse and practice of imperialism and colonialism from the vantage point of a situation where imperialism and colonialism

have come – by and large though by no means altogether so – to a formal end but remain very much at work in practice, as neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism.

(Segovia 1998:51)

This mode of postcolonial criticism falls under a resistance/recuperative model (see § 3.2) that aims to end Western ideological interpretations of texts.

Postcolonialism⁷¹ has enabled scholars to redefine the community, among others, of the Mediterranean world under Roman and Roman client rule. It has brought to the fore some of the often neglected and, in some cases, unrecognized aspects of well-known texts. Positively, what postcolonial criticism does is to prevent interpretation from becoming too nativist or nationalistic. It helps the modern reader of ancient texts to understand the compulsion of some ancient writers influenced by their own heritage who self-consciously interpret everything as ‘Jew’, ‘slave’, or ‘Roman’. It also enables scholars to recognize the extent to which the Roman culture and knowledge were involved in and contributed to continuing forms of deprivation, exploitation, and colonization.

Important in this regard is to remember that the biblical literature we have available was written in complex and diverse societies. This study does not assume that postcolonial criticism is a meta-narrative to interpret the text through possible models, but that context-sensitive analysis is necessary. For example, context-sensitive analysis will question the modern reader’s assumption that the marginal (whose voices we want to identify) were sufficiently able to write and communicate through more than oral spreading of the message of Jesus. Contrary to popular assumption, not everyone was literate. Jesus was not followed by academics with tablets (in the modern sense) or voice recorders used later to write down Jesus’s exact words. Postcolonialism helps us to revisit similar assumptions.

Postcolonialism has its usefulness specifically in its capacity to detect oppression, expose misrepresentation, to promote a fairer world rather than in its sophistry and precision, as well as its erudite qualities as a critical tool. This point of departure also instigates the question of agency in the theory. Where do the forms of resistance to

⁷¹ For a discussion of the term see Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989, 1995).

colonialism (forms encapsulated in the terms ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity) actually occur? Is it in the consciousness of the individual colonized subject, whether the first century Judean, the invaded middle-East Muslim, or the underdeveloped South African Koi-San? Alternatively, is it in the requital, erosive exchange between colonizers and colonized seen throughout history? Finally, Segovia (1998:64) regards the position of the postcolonial criticism model within cultural studies as 'profoundly ideological, for it looks upon the political experience of imperialism and colonialism as central of the task of criticism at all levels of enquiry' and therefore 'it is an optic, not the optic, in full engagement with a host of other models and optics.'

3.1.1 Postcolonialism as hermeneutical mode of interpretation

The task of mapping the field of postcolonial biblical criticism is complex because of its recent conjunction with Biblical studies.⁷² It seems that postcolonial biblical criticism 'emerge from liberation hermeneutics, extra-biblical Postcolonial studies, or even historical biblical criticism, or from all three sources' (Moore & Segovia 2005:6). These major lines of reference are suggested by Moore and Segovia (2005:11) in defining the field.

1. The force of the term: A social reading is favoured; the postcolonial as conscientization of the geopolitical problematic regardless of the actual historical and political conditions.
2. The nomenclature to be adopted: A spatial understanding is preferred; imperialism referring to the centre and colonialism as pointing to the periphery.
3. The terrain to be surveyed: A balanced view is advanced; analysis of both cultural production and material matrix.
4. The referential boundaries of colonial-imperial relationship: A broad understanding is preferred; analysis in the periphery not only in terms of the centre but also in its own terms.
5. The nature of the colonial-imperial contact: A multifarious mode of encounter is favoured; acknowledging and theorizing similarities and differences within (between centre and periphery in any such formation) and among (between centres and peripheries in different formations) imperial-colonial structures.

⁷²See Said (1978), Spivak (1985) and Bhabha (1994) for a discussion of the recent conjunction between postcolonialism as mode of interpretation in Biblical studies.

In terms of the scope of postcolonial criticism, Moore and Segovia (2005:11) single out two issues that are essential to any determination of range in the field: 'A sense of proper comparative application and a sense of proper underlying frameworks.' The model of criticism can address at 'one and the same time the various interrelated and interdependent dimensions of the criticism: the analysis of texts – the world of antiquity; the analysis of texts – the world of modernity; the analysis of readers of texts and producers of texts – the world of postmodernity' (Segovia 1998:64).

Thus, from the point of view of disciplinary parameters, the application of the postcolonial angle of vision to biblical criticism emerges as entirely warranted. It is a method that results in a properly grounded and properly informed postcolonial biblical criticism.

3.1.2 Exponents of postcolonial hermeneutics: Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah and Richard A. Horsley

Sugirtharajah and Horsley are both advocates of postcolonial hermeneutics applied to specific contexts. Sugirtharajah focuses from an Eastern point of view on colonies that emerged under British rule. Horsley, an American, are concerned specifically with first century Palestine under Roman and Temple-State rule. Sugirtharajah holds strong that postcolonialism has a multiplicity of meanings, depending on the location.

It is seen as an oppositional reading practice, and as a way of critiquing the totalizing forms of Eurocentric thinking and of reshaping dominant meanings. It is a mental attitude rather than a method, more a subversive stance towards the dominant knowledge than a school of thought. It is not about periodization. It is a reading posture. It is a critical enterprise aimed at unmasking the link between idea and power, which lies behind Western theories and learning. It is a discursive resistance to imperialism, imperial ideologies, imperial attitudes, and their continued incarnations in such wide-ranging fields as politics, economics, history, and theological and biblical studies.

(Sugirtharajah 1998:93)

In the process of decolonization, the colonizer and the imperialized are inevitably locked together. In the case of the former, it means examining their collusion with the empire and imperialism, and reassessing a Western ethnocentrism, passed off as universalism. In the case of the latter, it means reviewing internal colonization, virulent forms of nationalism and excessive nativism (Sugirtharajah 1998:94).

In explaining this remark, Sugirtharajah refers to the work of Edward Said, who proposes a *contrapuntal reading*. This reading strategy reads a specific topic with two or more independent writers in parallel with each other. For example, the reader is simultaneously aware of a metropolitan based text and a peripheral text written by the exploiter and the exploited. Robert Young also shows how Ashis Nandy (1983) draws on the 'argument of Gandhi that colonialism produced a cultural and psychological pathology in both colonizing and colonized societies as well as in individuals; for this reason liberation had to begin in the minds of the colonizing and the colonized alike' (Young 2001:340). This opens up, as initiated by Nandy in *Intimate enemy*, new possibilities for thinking about the individual experience under colonialism and the range of possible forms of resistance to it. Sugirtharajah (1998:95) is of opinion that by 'linking such works to each other, and juxtaposing neglected texts with the mainstream, we can highlight gaps, absences and imbalances'. This could also answer why a specific group, in this case the colonized, would be open to the colonizer or would protect itself from it. Secondly, defining the individual and communal experience could translate why a community is inclusive, or exclusive, specifically in terms of religion (see κοινωνία and the kingdom of God §4.3.2.1).

Two things collude at this point of this study about the preceding chapters. First, the effect contextual biblical interpretation through bias exegesis had on mission while being engaged in times of colonization, and therefore its importance in postcolonial readings (see Missional discourses today in § 1.3-1.3.2.4). Secondly, how figures in the current postcolonial, and globalized world plays a significant role as icons through example. Their examples result in liberation, revolution, or renewal (see Globalization and the Social Gospel in § 1.2-1.2.2.4 and 2.1-2.2.2). We now turn to Sugirtharajah and Horsley in an attempt to show this collusion mentioned above.

The first aspect, mentioned above, is summarized in Sugirtharajah (1998:95-107) in their contributions to volumes edited by Sugirtharajah (1998:152-175; 2006:69-77). As seen above, Sugirtharajah (1998:93) argues for postcolonialism as 'a process of cultural and discursive emancipation from all dominant structures whether they be

political, linguistic or ideological'.⁷³ Sugirtharajah (1998:91-107) sets out to illustrate how the collusion between colonialism and exegesis can be seen in the two well-known mission-narratives in Matthew 28:19 and Paul's missionary tours in Acts 13-14; 15:40-18:22 and 18:22-21:16. His line of thought in this illustration is to demonstrate 'how the Matthean missional verse and the Pauline missionary-journey pattern was fabricated at the time of Western colonial expansion with the busy involvement of Western mercantile companies ... and to elucidate the latter' (Sugirtharajah 1998:91). He uses the following examples to undergird his argument:

1. Western Imperialism used the Matthean verse and Luke's account of Paul's missionary to institutionalize the missionary obligation; it was thus from the 'west that the superstitious and ignorant natives received the essential verities of God's message' (Sugirtharajah 1998:91).
2. Before the eighteenth century, Matthew's *command* 'μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη'⁷⁴ was an unfashionable, under-exegeted and often absent text. It was William Carey (1761-1834), the Baptist missionary pioneer, who reactivated Matthew's command as a missionary command for the modern period (Boer 1961:17). The earlier missionaries seem to have appealed to and sought endorsement from other texts. Examples of this approach are Robert de Nobili (1577-1656), who used the Pauline axiom 'to the Jews I have become a Jew' (Neil 1934:56), and Frederick Swartz (1726-1798) who used Matthew 11:25 ('come unto me all ye who labour and are heavy laden, I will give you rest'; Page 1921:56). David Bosh (1991:340) indicates that, in the Patristic period, John 3:16 was mostly used, whereas the medieval Roman Catholic missionary impulse was informed by Luke 14:23. The Reformers used Romans 1:16-17 as text, and Westerners who saw their task as rescuing peoples in distant lands who were in darkness (in need of help) used Acts 16:9. Pre-millennialists mandated their work in the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:14; and the Social Gospellers used the Johannine saying in John 10:10 (ἐγὼ ἦλθον ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχωσιν καὶ περισσὸν ἔχωσιν).⁷⁵

⁷³ According to Samuels (2007:17), Sugirtharajah is the chief proponent of the resistance/recuperative model (see § 3.2).

⁷⁴ See Bosch (2006:88), Brueggemann (2008:229) and Van Aarde (2006:114) for their point of view that the common verb 'πορευθέντες' should not necessarily be understood as a command in Matthew 28:19, but that the importance must lie in the imperative form of verb 'μαθητεύσατε'.

⁷⁵ See Bosch (1991:339-340) for further examples of the missional history and use of missionary texts.

3. Sugirtharajah (1998:98) cites Carey (1961:8) to show how the Reformers might have failed to inspire mission. This also an indication of the hermeneutical mood of the time:

There seems also to be an opinion existing in the minds of some, that because the apostles were extraordinary officers and have no proper successors, and because many things which were right for them to do would be utterly unwarranted for us, therefore it may not be immediately binding on us to execute the commission, though it was upon them.

(Carey 1961:8)

Boer (1961:19) shows how Calvin and Luther held similar views on local (church-communities) rather than missional service (towards unfamiliar, 'strange' people), and that 'missionary preaching was a privilege of the apostles' (Sugirtharajah 1998:99). The importance of Sugirtharajah's example of lost missionary zeal is found in a specific hermeneutic and exegesis, answering to specific contextual needs. The canonical texts were interpreted to suit either the church or the trading companies like the East India Company and the Dutch East India Company. These were the times of colonization by Anglican England. The interpretation of Acts 16:9, for example, encouraged, and justified the 'civilizing' of distant peoples. In some way the colonizers thought of 'civilizing' the barbarians as a gift, and that these colonized communities were actually in debt to their 'saviours'. Ironically, these Bible bearing people brought not only Acts 16:9, but the whole Bible to these people. The Bible, when read holistically, begs inclusivity, distributive justice and describes a God that loves everyone. Unfortunately, only fragments of this text was interpreted and used for reasons other than evangelizing the uncivilized. Sugirtharajah (1998:107) concludes by stating:

From a postcolonial perspective it would be difficult to sustain the missionary import of the Matthean and Lukan texts, which were made to serve the political and commercial interests in the West.... It invites a reorientation in both our missiological assumptions and our exegetical conclusions. At a time when there are widespread virulent forms of religious fanaticism, a discourse with an intense missionary thrust and proselytizing tendencies will not only add confusion to an already bewildering situation, but will be difficult to sustain.

(Sugirtharajah 1998:107)

Moving closer to the first-century Mediterranean world through the lens of a postcolonial foundation, Sugirtharajah (1998:108-110) is of the opinion that 'New Testament scholars [with a Eurocentric bias] ... assert that anything theologically

worthwhile can only be supplied by Greco-Judean traditions.’ Sugirtharajah also opines that the Buddhist writings, rather than exclusive Greco-Judean interpretation, demonstrate textual and conceptual affinities between Buddhist⁷⁶ writings and the gospel. Samuels (2007:20) brings to our attention that Sugirtharajah, while ‘engaging quite rightly in the discursive (commentarial) strategies of William Carey and others in colonial India ... speaks little of the discursive strategies and missionary enterprises ... within India.’ What is important to note here is not whether the claims of a Buddhist influence are valid or not. Rather, it is important to acknowledge Sugirtharajah’s (1998:110) plea to take cognizance of the ‘hybridized and eclectic nature of religious stories’. The discourse, critiqued by Sugirtharajah as having a Eurocentric bias, has changed from ‘let us civilize (read Christianize) the benighted natives’ to globalizing forces that has a new lexicon that concerns the universal *ethics* of human rights. The words spoken today, when listening to those on the moral high ground, such as truth, responsibility and guilt fades away to make way for a more progressive language such as ‘success, efficiency, performance, and profit’ (Sugirtharajah 1998:112). It is not so much the modern linguistic symbols that interest this study; rather the effect a changing globalizing world has on the religious and the writings that emerge from it.

Postcolonial criticism, from this perspective, becomes the foundation to analyse the colonizing tendencies to which the colonized may have fallen victim. Said (1985:25) warned long ago of the ‘dangers and temptations ... to formerly colonized peoples ... of employing this structure upon themselves or upon others.’ With this in mind, Sugirtharajah (1998:113) is of the opinion that postcolonial hermeneutics has to be a ‘pragmatic engagement, an engagement in which praxis is not an extra option or a subsidiary enterprise taken on in the aftermath of judicious deconstruction and reconstruction of the texts.’ It is important that postcolonialism ensure that the yearnings of the poor take precedence over the influence of the affluent; that the emancipation of the subjugated has primacy over the freedom of the powerful; and that the participation of the marginalized takes priority over the perpetuation of the system which systematically excludes them.

⁷⁶ See Amore (1978:178) arguing for the possibility that Mark and Matthew drew on a source(s) that were in effect first-century versions of Buddhist sayings.

This sounds peculiarly familiar when compared with the sayings of Jesus in the gospels. Are the gospels a mere reflection of the oppressed that deliberately used popular catchphrases and buzzwords as a form of posture and power play against the oppressors of the first century Mediterranean world? Otherwise, are the scripture materials we have available today merely a collection lacking responsible interpretation by the elite who wrote the gospels?

Richard Horsley, writing from a biblical studies perspective, regards the influence of postcolonial criticism as a step closer to unravelling and revealing possible oppressive systems. 'The prevailing politico-economic and cultural relations in the modern world make it possible to discern, often for the very first time, the concrete ways in which the various layers in biblical literature are the products of the very emergence of (struggle for) domination and authority.' It is ironic, Horsley opines, that when one looks at the history of biblical translation that the missionary schools that wrote and translated the Bible for the 'natives' had a very anti-colonial nature to it (e.g., the sixteenth century English translation of the Bible).

As ancient authority figures assumed the authority to overwrite the various traditions into a version that authorized their own authority, so modern colonized readers are assuming the authority to unearth previously submerged biblical voices and histories that undermine the self-authorization of ancient authorities as well as their authoritarian modern colonial beneficiaries.

(Horsley 1998:153)

Horsley's observation and focus is key to postcolonial criticism as foundation for biblical studies. His plea is to use postcolonial criticism as a foundation to emancipate previously submerged biblical stories and histories, and warns against failing to take into account the 'imperial situation in and over against which those stories emerged' (Horsley 1998:154).⁷⁷

The above discussion of Sugirtharajah and Horsley's understanding of postcolonial criticism paves the way for a few concluding remarks, and also for reintroducing earlier remarks made in this study for the sake of clarity. Both Sugirtharajah and Horsley reinforce the idea that there is a definite relevance for postcolonial criticism of biblical texts. Both propose a creative synthesis of different aspects of different

⁷⁷ See § 4.2.1.1 where Horsley's understanding of the first century Roman Palestine is explained.

contexts; Sugirtharajah with colonialism from an Oriental perspective and Horsley with the effect of imperialism on first-century Palestine. Their perspectives warn the postcolonial critic against merely reproducing the oppressors' methods (phrases, practices, style, culture) because of their supposed authoritative position, and also alerts the postcolonial critic not to neglect the background against which biblical texts were produced.

Taken into account the hostile commentaries on postcolonial critics (see, e.g., Parry 1994:5-24), mostly complaining about postcolonial criticism's abstractedness and lack of historical and material grounding, this study also identifies the urgency to contest the legacies of imperialism and the urgency to question the validity of the oppressive effects in globalization.

3.1.3 Postcolonial critique and globalization theory

'Postcolonial studies and globalization theory are not monolithic or homogeneous academic fields' (Krishnaswamy 2008:2).⁷⁸ The relevance of both these two concepts can be found in a more recent connectedness, for example its 'vocabulary of de-territorialisation, migrancy, difference, hybridity, and cosmopolitanism, and the use of certain cultural productions designated as postcolonial as evidence and exemplars of globalization' (Krishnaswamy 2008:3). Postcolonization and globalization contributes to the debate on what a *different* kind of globalization or planetary (idea of earth as a single organism) could be realized.

Young explains the relevancy and impact postcolonial critique have in the globalizing time-sphere we live in:

Postcolonial cultural critique integrates its Marxism with the politics of international rights, in doing so focusing on the central problematic for Marxism as a political philosophy, namely how socialism can be developed in a popular rather than coercive form. Human rights including people's rights should be recognized as an area of activism, which supplements and supports the basic presuppositions and objectives of Marxist political theory and its commitment to human justice.

(Young 2001:7)

⁷⁸ Some attempts to rethink the *postcolonial* in relation to the *global* can be found in Ahmad (1992), Grewel and Kaplan (1994), Lowe and Lloyd (1997), Jameson and Miyoshi (1998), During (1998; 2000) and Sarkar (2002).

Postcolonial studies, when used in relation with globalization theories, can be seen as the critical discourse that deconstructs globalization. Globalization has an element of modernity to it, for example, the processes (principalities, authorities, and dominions) discussed by Stackhouse in § 1.2.2.1. These processes, or modernizations, are viewed as positivistic by globalization theories in the sense of reconstructing a segregated world. In line with, but against such an ideology, postcolonial criticism questions the effect globalization has on the very oppressed postcolonial or marginal; it argues from the 'bottom up' theory of globalization.

In their *Postcolonial studies*, Seth, Gandhi and Dutton (1998:10) introduces the volume with the following description of postcolonial studies:

Postcolonialism is what we employ to excavate the marginal, the magical, the erotic and the everyday... "our" postcolonialism offers a new promiscuity which not only heads down-market, but... breaks through the cordon that separates the anthropological-based cultural studies practiced in relation to non-Western societies from the popular culture schools that focus on the popular in the West.

(Seth *et al.* 1998:10)

Eastern and Western influences and powers are working against each other. Those in the East argue that most of theological literature and democratically systems are from the West. Postcolonial criticism questions the influences on communities, on tradition, and on the scriptures. Barnor Hesse (2002:162; emphasis in the original) shows how postcolonialism 'is the articulatory space created mainly through *epistemological decentering* of the West' and that it 'constitutively resists the re-centering of the West, facilitating an interrogation of global postcoloniality.' Part of this attempt to de-centre the West is also to resist globalizations uncontrollable development.

Spivak (2003) and Gilroy (2005: xv) ask whether it would help to 'to rethink postcolonial in terms of "planetary" rather than globalism?' This is the connection between postcolonial criticism (regarding globalization as a neo imperialistic form of colonization) and the contribution to a sustainable foundation for an (potential) alternative form of globalization. What they share, apart from their differences, is a strong antagonism towards one of modernity's prime manifestations, the nation state. This connection is two-fold. First, the nation state might be repressive, but it

can also offer protection against imperialism, a concern of postcolonial studies.⁷⁹ Second, the weaker nation states that cannot finance capital are being remade to suit the interests of the more powerful.⁸⁰

Note, at this point, the legitimate concern for nation-states that uses examples of terror (for example ‘war on terror’) to increase repressive powers in a nationalist way. This example reminds one of a similar context two millennia ago in first-century Palestine.

The above introduction of connection between the two theories poses two questions: First, ‘Is globalization simply a continuation of the West’s (neo-) imperialistic project, or is it really altering the balance of world power?’ The massive militarization of the United States and the growing simmering global dissatisfaction with American unilateralism could have the potential to thwart impartiality, but, of course, might also be bad news in the sense that before it happens the cost in human lives could well be catastrophic.

Second: ‘What, if any, are the subjects and sites of impartiality?’ Whether globalization is moving forward and whether postcolonial critique has a relevance to it is no longer the question, rather, the kind of globalization we experience in the third millennium is of importance. The effect it takes on the world as a whole and on local contexts has serious effects.

Sen (2002:1-14) argues that one cannot rebut the charge that the global system is unfair by showing that even the poor gain something from global contacts and are not necessarily made poorer. The crucial issue is not whether the poor are getting poorer or richer or whether they are better off than they would have been, had they excluded themselves from globalized interactions. Rather, Sen emphasizes, the

⁷⁹ See Connolly (2002) for a description of a possible nation-state agreement.

⁸⁰ An example of this coercion can be seen in the rewriting of Indian patent rights to comply with or merely replicate the USA/international law to be in accord with the specifications of the WTO (see editorial in *Economic and Weekly*, 2 April 2005).

distribution of globalization's benefits is vital.⁸¹ Krishnaswamy (2008:16) adds to this by arguing that 'the distribution of opportunities to shape the terms and conditions of globalization' is vital. Postcolonial and globalization studies can contribute extensively to how a *different kind of globalization*, or planetary understanding, should look like and how it can be brought about. This, however, is not the primary goal of this study. This would require open dialogue and persistent attempts to make the possibilities of a decolonized planetary a reality.

Interestingly enough is how globalization theory so carefully dissociates the process of globalization from national identifications, ethnocentric attitudes, forcible inclusion, or the discourse of civilizational superiority, because unless it does so, the continuities between its purportedly new and liberate panorama and older exploitive arrangements would be obvious and uncomfortable. This is true of the NHKA on some occasions. In other words, the very interest of postcolonial criticism, playing cultural differences off against one another in the name of acquiring material advantages, becomes the very strategy for profit making that rely on the dissemination of local values in the guise of global ones, used by globalization.⁸² Capitalism now thrives under the banners of 'development' or 'market', claiming to have moved past colonialism and imperialism, but in reality links globalization theory and postcolonialism in a perverse way. The irony, however, is in the fact that the localities of the world takes shares in globalization in a popularly-willed fashion, while, in spite of themselves, are in opposition to the effects thereof.

Arjun Appadurai provides a possible solution to this problem in an interview with John C. Hawley on June 21 2004, when the 'National Commission on Terrorist attacks upon the United States' (the 9/11 commission) held public hearings. Ambassadors of postcolonialism formulated their visions not just as 'freedom *from* certain kinds of oppressions (external), but also freedom *to* – from a vision of equality, a vision of justice...' (Krishnaswamy 2008:290; emphasis in the original).

⁸¹ Sen (2002:1-14) draws an interesting comparison: 'By analogy, to argue that particularly unequal and sexist family arrangement is unfair, one does not have to show that women would have done comparatively better had there been no families at all, but only that the sharing of the benefits is seriously unequal in that particular arrangement. The issue remains, irrespective of the familial arrangement, how fairly benefits associated with these respective arrangements are distributed.'

⁸² A good example of this strategy is Coca Cola that uses the phrase 'Think global, act local'.

This, according to Appadurai, is a challenge, especially when it comes to a nation like the United States of America. His suggestion is that, in terms of globalization and postcolonialism, (potential) neo-imperial powers such as the USA, China, and Russia/Ukraine, and more local ruling governments such as the ANC, DA, EFF, should more 'fully understand its special power and the limitations on that power' (Krishnaswamy 2008:290).

The reality for imperial powers today, as we have seen with the 9/11 example, is that countries are vulnerable to attacks (read powers). But also that the decision they make on how to implement authority, whether it is to safeguard its people (national security), or to win more power (globalization as imperialization), has a direct effect on those in the margins. This is where the colonizing circle starts and ends. Two millennia ago, Rome implemented authority, not with 'war on terror' or for the sake of 'national security', but through oppression and colonization, and it had a world-changing effect on the Mediterranean context because of their imperialization.

3.2 METHOD

3.2.1 Postcolonial Hermeneutics applied

Preliminary understandings and responsible journeys into fuller understanding leave room for renegotiation, reshaping and correction in the light of subsequent wrestling with the parts and the whole.

(Thiselton 2009:15)

Hermeneutics, according to Thiselton (2009:16), operates within the dialectic between particular cases (technical reasoning or *techné*) and a *sensus communis* (the classic Greco-Roman term is *φρόνησις*); the latter that provides 'a provisional coherence within the context of human history, human language, and human life.'

What has postcolonialism to do with these last mentioned coherences? Postcolonial theory is not an established set method governed by programmatic procedures, nor does it have a solid theoretical foundation accompanied by standard principles and assumptions.⁸³ The inquiry by postcolonialism was sparked by the postcolonial age of the nineteenth and twentieth century. What specifically informs this study is the

⁸³ See Moore and Segovia (2005) for an outline of postcolonial criticism and theory.

rise of globalization, mainly from the United States, that disrupts a great number of economies. Therefore, postcolonial criticism matters ‘for many minority peoples who have traditionally been found in a context of marginality. Postcolonialism is a way to speak about that marginality’ (Lozada 2011:532). ‘Where Liberation⁸⁴ Hermeneutics has a restrictive notion of the poor, Postcolonial hermeneutics has a wider plurality of focus’ (Thiselton 2009:275). Thiselton refers to Sugirtharajah that argues that Liberation Hermeneutics is much more ‘Christocentric than postcolonial hermeneutics ... [and] has a more hospitable approach to other religions with supposedly common elements.’

The New Testament, specifically the gospels composed during a time of colonization and Postcolonization, shows signs of imperialistic colonial features that are identifiable in these texts. Lozada (2011:236) shows how postcolonialism ‘draws attention to these markers and borrows them to begin to nuance and challenge particular readings of the text.’ This study, by use of its method, wants to show how these previous, sometimes orientaling interpretations of the text, can be questioned, and that some accepted views have become problematic for Christianity and the Church (see § 4.3.2.1).

Social scientific criticism engages the cultural world of the text. It regards the paradigm of the social world as a relevant and foundational point of departure. It engages with the social world of the text (particularly its socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural worlds) and the use of texts as medium (signifier). Emphasis is placed on codes and principles (for example honour/shame, purity/impurity) that shape the socio-cultural aspects of such communication. The text is the perceived form of an ideological point of view, and not merely a socio-historical text with embedded social codes. Lozada (2011:238) summarizes social-scientific criticism as a method that approaches the text as an ‘Other’, but an ‘Other’ constructed ‘in the image of the dominant culture.... [T]here is very little attention to the world that is silenced or colonized within the socio-economic and cultural worlds of the text.’ He uses the analogy of an anthropologist that walks into a village and

⁸⁴ See Schubeck (1999-2008) for a description of the uprising of and opposition to Liberation Theology.

describing its culture as if, assuming, she or he is invisible and has no role in the new identity of the village.

According to Lozada (2011:239), one can engage the text through the paradigm of ideological criticism as a construct:

That is, the reconstruction of history behind the text and the reconstruction of the story world of the text are both constructions. Even the reader who engages the text is a construction. With these guiding assumptions, the meaning of the text is a product of exchange between the text and the reader, both components demanding a radical contextualization. In other words, all texts/interpreters are ideological (race, patriarchy, class, and colonialism) and intertwined with politics.

(Lozada 2011:239)

This is really not a method (historical-, literary- or social-scientific criticism), but rather an approach, a model, to engage with the imperialism in the text, behind the text, and in front of the text (i.e., the world of the reader). The challenge is to focus on the question of postcolonial criticism, namely, how the colonial has been constructed by the text and by history of interpretation.

The tools employed vary, ranging from feminism, contextual liberation hermeneutics, ideological criticism, and postcolonialism. The interpreter does not remain neutral; in fact the interpreter's social location is outlined explicitly and implicitly. With regard to context, the ideological studies approach engages the contemporary world with all its sexism/patriarchy, racism, classism, or heterosexism.

Lozada (2011:239)

Ideologically, this study included, the interpreter is committed to liberation and decolonization, or de-imperializing – the latter especially relevant to this study. As repeatedly indicated, this study is concerned with the effects of globalization and how the church (the religious Christian) plots them in this era of 'development'. Understanding the politics and theory of globalization is essential to understanding the potential outcomes for the religious community of this planet. This method is not ground breaking. The field of postcolonial biblical criticism is young, but offers a meaningful approach to biblical studies. In the third millennium, it is especially important to have a model of interpretation to identify values and ethics for humanity to consider as foundational structures to live by. More context specific, for example for some South African churches, is the realization that self-assessment and re-evaluation through the postcolonial theory can bring liberation from institution born traditions that implies exclusive and unjustifiable limits to their missional character.

This might produce ground breaking apprehensions for some churches concerning their oblivious state of mind towards those understood as ‘pagan’ or ‘uncivilized’.

This study uses a variety of methodological approaches from the field of hermeneutics. Although socio-historical critical methods are used to investigate the context of the text (see Thiselton 1980), their failure in exploring configurations of the identities of the subalterns are recognized (see above Lozada 2011:238). Socio-political methods will be used to interpret the Roman political and cultural influence in Jesus’ Mediterranean context with reference to the work of Richard Horsley (1985; 1988; 1993; 1994; 1995; 2001; 2003; and 2004). The study resonates with Gottwald and Horsley (1993: xix), in which they indicate that the domination of empires over the course of history had an important influence. The influence was on Palestinian communities, but specifically ‘the social dimension [that] was included in the transcendent theological dimension, indeed that Jesus’ preaching and practice of the ‘kingdom of God’ meant renewal of Israel.’⁸⁵ Horsley (1993:406)⁸⁶ shows how, because of structural-functionalist social sciences that have been influential in American scholarship, outcomes have been based on the assumption ‘of a stable social system that undergoes certain tensions and adjustments while it is maintained basically intact’. The problem with this approach, according to Horsley (1993:406), is that the ‘colonial and imperial situation, however, requires by its very structure of dynamics tensions and conflicted relationships, a more historically conscious and dialectical approach.’ An ideological critical approach can subjectively interpret this context without losing a sense of community (with all the influences on it) through abstracted interpretations, rather to be ‘in line, but not of’ the realities of their turbulent context. This refers to social reality in the widest sense, not only the religious and spiritual history, but also how it integrates into the political and social history.

Postcolonial hermeneutics, which this study underscores, are concerned with the native theological expressions and struggles of the people (Rayan 1976:182). It is concerned with the loopholes, or silences, of information that are available in ancient

⁸⁵ See § 4.2.1.1 for Horsley’s description of the first-century Mediterranean context of Israel.

⁸⁶ Horsley draws mostly from his *Jesus and the spiral of violence* (1987) to inform the essay in Gottwald and Horsley (1993).

texts that can articulate the voices of the oppressed and marginalized. Whenever a community are taken over and their culture became inferior because oppression, major changes occurred. Van Aarde (2004:1115), however, shows that even though we interpret as responsible as possible, 'some aspects of the original culture cannot be retrieved because translation is never a neutral form of symmetrical intercultural communication ... the colonized person is the one being transformed, and thus the passive party.'

Van Aarde (2004:1107) also shows, referring to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1998:192-193), that the postcolonial approach as representative of postmodern epistemology implies a deconstructive approach to hermeneutics. Van Aarde is of opinion that postcolonial hermeneutic should be regarded as a product of postmodern epistemology.

3.2.2 Postmodern epistemology

Postmodern epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge. Epistemology is the investigation of what distinguishes justified belief from opinion. Formulating epistemology then is the postmodern critique that drives research aiming to question (supposedly) foundational truths. In combination, research and truth are tested for viability through epistemology. Adam (1995:22) opines that the 'postmodern reader recognizes that the rules of interpretations are provisional guides, rather than commandments carved in clay tablets'. Postmodern criticism can therefore be understood as 'anti-foundational, anti-totalizing, and demystifying' although the interpreter does not necessarily implement all of the above.

The norm on which truth is verified can vary and should be considered as the starting point as an example of the above introduction to postmodern epistemology. Kwok Pui Lan (in Gottwald and Horsley 1993:21) clearly identifies between Eastern and Western interpretation in the philosophical tradition. He regards the East as 'not primarily interested in metaphysical or epistemological questions', and more 'concerned with the moral and ethical visions for a good society.' The manifestation of the message of the Bible, seen in the lives of Christian believers in the world, and not the truth claim that the Bible is the word of God, is what the Chinese regard as

meaningful. Kwok Pui Lan compares the probing questions of the Chinese people with similar ones from Katie G. Cannon, an African American ethicist:

Where was the Church and the Christian believer when Black women and Black men, Black boys and Black girls were being raped, sexually abused, lynched, assassinated, castrated and physically oppressed? What kind of Christianity allowed white Christians to deny basic human rights and simple dignity to Blacks, these same rights which had been given to others without question?

(Cannon n.d.: 9)

For Kwok Pui Lan the politics of truth is not fought on an epistemological level. He speaks for the marginalized. He says that the 'poor wo/men, and other marginalized people, are asking whether the Bible can be of help in the global struggle for liberation'; not whether the 'Bible contains metaphysical or revelational truth' (Lan 1993:21). In other words, truth as interpreted, implemented, and defended by the culture of white males with clerical power, is not necessarily universally accepted and relevant. Postmodern epistemology addresses this process of truth and interpretation.

Ideology, paradoxically, is never a shared absolute truth of subjects involved, sometimes referred to as the 'flip-side'. The flip-side is found in the ideology of one side of interpreters (the manipulation of the text for own purposes), and the expectation from the 'Other' of the interpreter of the same coin, but with manifestations of truth that is worlds apart; therefore the need for continuous self-reflection. The interpreter has to identify and consider prejudices when viewing the world through a variety of hermeneutical lenses. David Lockhead (in Gottwald & Horsley 1993:131) suggests that an ideological reading of the Bible should not be manipulated to serve own contextual needs, but 'that the world is *known* only from the unique perspective of the knower' (emphasis in the original). What is understood reflects not only the reality which is understood, but also the perspective from which it is understood.'

Punt (2010:4) cites Roland:

This is where postmodern epistemology is required to analyze the ideologies that serve as prejudices, at first, and then to responsibly translate the message to the contemporary world. The association of postcolonial biblical criticism with ideology criticism comprises two elements in particular: first, the inevitable link between the ideological nature of texts with vested interests related to social formations and second,

the importance given to socio-political context and the interpreter's stance within it. Ideological criticism is not only intent on exposing overt self-interests and unconcealed support for certain factions, but also the covert backing and self-justification afforded to the dominant in society. "It involves laying bare the contradictions in society and the habit which the dominant groups have of neutralizing their potential for resistance and change, for example by co-opting some of the ideas into the dominant ideology".

(Rowland 2006:657)

The interpreter of hearer of a message understands and interprets the message according to personal experience and perspective.

First, one's way of experiencing reality prompts an 'ideological suspicion'; second, an individual applies the 'ideological suspicion' to the whole ideological superstructure (referring to our biblical interpretation and hermeneutics); third, a new way of experiencing theological reality arises which leads to an 'exegetical suspicion' that a prevailing interpretation of the Bible *has not taken important pieces of data into account*; and fourth, the interpretation of Scripture proceeds in new ways allowing the exegete to incorporate the new elements into her or his ideological superstructure.

(Martin 1993:496; emphasis in the original)

Biblical literature does not present to the reader a formulated, ready-to-use, postmodern ideology to use as instrument with which we can determine what is right and wrong. In fact, we can always only interpret what the ideal of life is as understood by writers two millennia ago. There is, however, a message from the writer to the reader, whether hidden, coded, or overlooked. Adam (1995:73) concludes his introduction to postmodern Biblical criticism by saying that our 'interpretations are not authoritative sentences that close the book on interpretive questions but are ventures in persuasion, in seduction.' It is from interpretations that we can learn, and postmodern epistemology informs us. In this study specifically, it informs postcolonial hermeneutics as optic, but cannot be considered viable without explaining how this optic approaches the text and its world.

3.2.3 Hermeneutic of suspicion

The obvious starting point here would be to quote Ricoeur's work in biblical studies, even though his career at Strasbourg kicked off with phenomenology that initially revised Husserl's phenomenology in the direction of Heidegger's existentialism,⁸⁷

⁸⁷ According to McLean (2012:227), Ricoeur understood the goal of hermeneutics to be that of creating a world *in front of the text*, a world that open up possibilities of being. See Macquarrie and Robinson ([1927] 1962:45-83, 274) for a discussion on how Ricoeur developed his theory on the basis of *Division Two* of Heidegger.

although he also wrote well beyond Heideggerian phenomenology. Ricoeur is best known for his work on the hermeneutics of suspicion in biblical studies. He famously argued that 'a hermeneutics for the restoration of meaning must be counterbalanced by a hermeneutics of the suspicion⁸⁸ of meaning' (McLean 2012:227).

This study draws from the three mappings of the person (three ontologies, namely teleological, eschatological and Freud's ontology of desire⁸⁹) of Ricoeur (see Ricoeur 1974:263) 'in order to be brought into interaction with each other, as different ways of interpreting the text' (McLean 2012:234). If the interpreter does not regard these concentrically aligned circles of mappings necessary, a downward spiral of interpretation through irresponsible hermeneutics will be the result.

The problem, in a nutshell, as argued by Gourgouris (2010:167), is that the very notion of critique, in this case interpretation, requires a privileged standpoint, however it is conceived, from which interpretation is made. The strong paradigm relativism of the postmodernists has nullified such a standpoint. This study might be regarded as ideological, and therefore the need to counterbalance any derived conclusion. This is ironic; regarding that this study's critique is mainly against totalizing, oppressive and imperialistic systems. Postcolonial critique engages with these totalizing powers that oppress the majority to submission.

Postcolonial hermeneutics operates with a more explicit hermeneutic of suspicion and stresses the role of the marginalized in reading text out of its own situation (Sugirtharajah 2006). It seems logical that an active agent of postcolonialism would choose to use a hermeneutic of suspicion as method. According to Lyon (in Lundin 1997:110), the necessary task performed by a hermeneutics of suspicion includes the 'dethroning of Western rationality, the debunking of democratic progress through social engineering, the dismantling of male privilege, and the decolonization of the Third World.' This is where Ricoeur's ontology of understanding 'opens up opportunities for liberation from the self-delusion and the falsehoods that stem from

⁸⁸ McLean here draws from Ricoeur ([1965] 1970).

⁸⁹ See Freud (1939) for his ideas on the sphere of human culture and his articulation of the *ego*, *id*, and *superego*.

the adherence to any single theorization of the biblical interpreter' (McLean 2012:236).

Lyon (in Lundin 1997:110) does, however, warn of the risk in creating a space where a hermeneutic of retrieval can operate alongside a hermeneutic of suspicion, allowing us to speak to real concerns of people in their daily lives, irrevocably bound up with global conditions. In such an attempt, dialogue might be scorned and sidelined. The bigger risk, however, is that a Christian perspective in the debate would disappear by default. When approaching the text, and context, an ideological optic has to be open to what the context presents, not merely what the interpreter aims to draw from it. This brings the voices of the marginal to the front, which is the specific aim of postcolonial hermeneutics. The challenge is to make these marginal voices count and for them to be heard where it matters, so that liberative and distributive justice can follow. Dialogue is therefore of utmost importance for the sake of both oppressor's and oppressed interpretation of self-understanding.

A theme Ricoeur proposes, namely open dialogue, is important for allowing a creative tension to continue between the respective horizons of Gadamer and Habermas' hermeneutical models.

Gadamer argued that when one engages in an *open* dialogue with a text, the central hermeneutical question is who am I and who are you? By implication when seeking such self-understanding, one must in principle be open to having critiqued one's own false consciousness and self-alienation from the world. Thus, in the final analysis the ultimate goal of biblical interpretation, and of Ricoeur's first three themes [Distanciation from the text, Structural analysis, Critique of Ideology] is *self-understanding and understanding one's neighbour, as mediated by the 'matter of the text,' in the light of the horizon of one's tradition.*

(Ricoeur 1981:94, in McLean 2012:245; emphasis in the original)

For the biblical interpreter the goal should always be to have a foundation of hope, based on a foundational hermeneutics of hope when approaching the text. There has to be openness to the possibility of revelatory power from within the text. According to McLean (2012:246), 'Ricoeur anticipated that a combined hermeneutics of understanding *and* critique has the potential to usher in a new reign of God's Truth.' In Spivak's *Can the Subaltern speak?* (1985), Spivak investigates ideologies underlying biblical texts and contemporary cultures to show how the muted voices of

the marginalized are suppressed, but still has an influence in the role and impact in shaping the gospel.⁹⁰ A hermeneutic of suspicion focuses on the Subaltern and their voices to understand the limits of inclusivity and exclusivity of communities, especially exploited groups, wherein (post-) colonialism is a reality.

3.2.4 Subaltern studies

Historically speaking Subaltern studies emerged from attempts of Gandhi to open up possibilities of incorporating the peasantry of India into the political form of the new Indian State. Despite Gandhi's sympathies with the peasants and identification with them, Chatterjee (1986:124) concludes that the 'peasantry were meant to become willing participants in a struggle wholly conceived and directed by others.' From here on 'Subaltern Studies historians were thus concerned to focus on the very thing that Gandhi had most sought to control and contain: the autonomous agency of subaltern resistance' (Young 2001:353).

⁹⁰ Also see an explanation of critical realism in http://istheory.byu.edu/wiki/Critical_realism_theory. Critical realism theory states that the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, is different from a theory of being, or ontology. There is a reality, which exists, independent of its human conception. Critical realists believe that there are unobservable events which cause the observable ones; as such, the social world can be understood only if people understand the structures that generate such unobservable events. This is important in an experimental context, because it allows the scientist to distinguish between the event and what causes it. According to this theory, an individual conducting an experiment creates the conditions necessary for the experiment (observable event), but the results are caused by the underlying laws and mechanisms (unobservable events). The critical side of this theory arises from the identification of epistemic fallacy – the idea of analyzing ontological statements in terms of epistemological statements. Epistemic fallacy is caused by a failure to recognize a difference between ontology and epistemology. The realism side of the theory focuses on the existence of real mechanisms that shape events. 'A central idea of CR is that natural and social reality should be understood as an open stratified system of objects with causal powers' (Morton, 2006). There are three strata, according to the theory: domains of real, actual, and empirical. Domains of empirical include observable experiences. Domain of actual includes actual events which have been generated by mechanisms. Finally, the domain of real includes the mechanisms that have generated the actual events. The critical realism theory can be applied to social science as well as natural science. However, the applications of this theory in social science are different from the natural. Culture and society are generated by human activities; so society is continuously changing due to the dynamic nature of human actions. As such, there is a mutually influential relationship where humans shape the society, which in its turn affects human activities. Unlike natural laws, rules of culture and society are not universal but applicable only in a certain location and time. Furthermore, social structures are open and cannot be artificially controlled in a laboratory type setting. Therefore the critical realism theory does not have any predictive power, and the theory is used for its explanatory benefits only. Critical theory requires a deep understanding of any social situation, going beyond the observable and investigating the mechanisms behind any event. The focus of the theory is on ex-post explanations, as opposed to ex-ante predictions. As such the major application of this theory in research is explaining the complex social events and ruling out any other potential explanations. In information systems, critical realist theory primarily can be used to study how information is used by organizations and measure the perceived net benefits from using an information system.

Subaltern studies' central concept, as Young (2001:353) explains, is to 'describe the diversity of dominated and exploited groups who do not possess a general 'class consciousness.' In the first issue of *Subaltern Studies*, Guha characterizes subalternity as 'the general attribute of subordination in South Asia society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way' (Guha 1982a:vii). Guha (1982b:8) defines the subaltern groups as representing 'the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as 'the elite'.

The importance of the inclusion of this description of Subaltern studies in this Chapter is to include this hermeneutical cue in the methodology that is used by this study. Subaltern studies are a hermeneutical approach that initiates and describes the concerns for any marginalized or disempowered minority group, particularly on the basis of gender and ethnicity. Especially, in times of oppression or colonization where forms of imperialism manifests, the Subaltern Studies provide a 'social category and power structure a good deal less restrictive than that of class, and enable attention to be given to groups who's forms of resistance and struggle had been ignored' (Young 2001:355). For example, David Joy (2008) argues that the 'presence of the marginalized in Mark is not an accidental one, but is a careful construction by the author to present his theological understanding of the movement of Jesus' (Joy 2008:2).

Forms of resistance by the subaltern, the bottom-class, or the peasantry, which varied over history, is mainly found in resistance to imperial powers, colonial oppression and anti-colonial and anti-imperial protests. These protests at times included violence, but also took on other forms such as protest work songs, song-dramas, the articulating of grievances and demands against company systems. Young (2001:355) mentions how 'with the evaporation of Marxism in South Africa as the only credible form of intellectual opposition to *apartheid*, India could be said to be one of the few places where classical Marxism survives today.' John K. Noyes writes that a failure of language is the quietism invoked by the context. For example, language fails in the same way we used to be silent when walking into church; 'it fails as it recognizes the tautologies of its own interventions'. Regarding South Africa, it 'is the endemic quietisms that was found in the inability of many white liberal and even

Leftist academics to speak publicly in the face of apartheid violence' (Noyes 2002:278).

This study does not disregard those who did stand up, but merely explains how even their voices was muted. Spivak, in her well known essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, articulates the difficulties of recovering the voices constructed in colonial texts, especially those of the women, and reads them as potentially insurrectionary (Spivak 1993:66-111). Postcolonial criticism scrutinizes the colonial entanglements in, for example, the biblical texts, highlighting the impact of empire and colonization in shaping the collective memory of the Judean people, the literary production and redaction of biblical texts, and the process of the formation of the canon. Kwok Pui-Lan (2006:46) borrows from Sugirtharajah (2001:251-253), who shows how the cultural production and literary imagination of the Hebrew people and early Christians were invariably shaped by the social and political domination of successive empires, namely Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. 'Postcolonial critics in their reconstructive readings of the text highlight the struggles and resistance in the different colonial contexts, lift up the voices of women and other subalterns, and are sensitive to postcolonial concerns such as hybridity, deterritorialization, and hyphenated or multiple identities' (Sugirtharajah 2001:25).

Subaltern groups, as Guha points out, never succeeded in establishing a national liberation movement, and in effect, the emphasis moved from revolution to individual or local acts of resistance. Subaltern studies is therefore in direct conversation with exploitation through a hermeneutics labelled as the 'people's theology' (Joy 2008:49); it encourages depressed communities to bring to the fore ground breaking studies and interpretation of radical alternatives. Interwoven in the subaltern are certain categories of adaption to oppression that the subalterns use as self-defence and insurgent against the oppressor.

3.2.5 Mimicry, ambivalence, and hybridity

Mimicry, divided into two possible functionalities, is an important theoretical concept of building a model to interpret scripture from a postcolonial optic. Lacan (1977) and Bakhtin's (1990) analyses of parodic-travesty literary forms inform postcolonial critics to describe the ambivalent relationship between the oppressed (colonized)

and the oppressor (colonizer). This relationship is present in any colonial situation; for example in a globalized planetary reality with neo-imperial factors *vis-à-vis* potential global postcolonialism, and specifically in the postcolonial context of South Africa, the latter in which this study is interested.

Mimicry, in short, relates to those situations where the colonized, who are subjects of a superior culture mimic their masters' habits in terms of culture, religious assumptions, language and institutional values. Bakhtin (1990:60) shows that the result of these re-representations or reproduction is never simple, but rather a 'blurred copy', a 'camouflage' that can be quite disruptive. Ashcroft (*et al.* 1988:139) explains how the colonized that mimic these examples crack the certainty of colonial dominance and create uncertainty in its control of the behaviour of the colonized.

Homi Bhabha (1994) argue that colonial mimicry operates in two ways:

1. With the intention of 'civilizing mission', the colonist uses it as an effective strategy of colonial power and knowledge. The colonizer can then subdue and control the colonized 'other' under this pretext of an authoritative civilizing culture (Bhabha 1994:85). An underlying reality is that people endure these oppressive powers because they have no other choice, and in other cases because they really become, forced or not, habituated to the ideology and culture that they are oppressed with.
2. Mimicry also serves as a problem when the colonized subjects to colonial authority. When the colonized realize the opportunity to be recognized as the 'recognizable Other', they menacingly mimic and *repeat* their masters' discourses (Bhabha 1994:88).

Because of this dual function of mimicry, its impact is also twofold. Samuels (2007:27) argue that, first, it maintains the colonized subjects in their place of origin and cultural contexts, 'but at the same time alienates them from their cultural 'purity' or 'essence' and allows them to enter and expand into the cultural regimes of their colonial masters.' This is troubling as the subject has the means to confront the civilizing culture with their native tradition in mind, but with the recognition of possible acceptance from their masters as 'civilized natives'. The second impact of mimicry, Samuel shows, is that it 'enables them to pose a threat to the dominance of the

colonial unity and authority' (Samuel 2007:27). The colonized then, mimicking their masters, can be potentially rebellious as the subjects mimics the colonial discourses (see Ashcroft *et al.* 1998:142).

Important to note for this study is the effect of the contexts of the first-century Mediterranean world, regarding the Judeans and Galileans under the rule of the clients of the Roman Empire. Also important is the contemporary effect of postcolonial South Africa, regarding the alternate role of government and oppressed in South Africa in 1952-1994 and 1994 to the present. There can hardly be a 'colonial mimicry without producing some form of postcolonial mockery. Similarly the colonial mimic subjects pose a potential disruption to their own native discourses and cultural fetishism' (Samuel 2007:28). Was Jesus ever mocking? Was he a possible agent of an insurgent movement to liberate the deprived of sustainable, Mosaic-faith, cultural virtues?

Ambivalence, according to Bhabha, is always part of the colonial relationship and it generates seeds to subvert and destroy colonialism (1995:107). That duality suggests that in ambivalence both complicity and resistance in a colonized subject.

The postcolonial notion of *ambivalence* also needs to be seen in this light (where there are fairly pronounced power differentials). Ambivalence – the reminder that the powers that be are never uniform and without self-contradictions – only becomes a tool of resistance in a situation where these powers keep pushing for some kind of uniformity and for the erasure of local differences; otherwise, ambivalence would be just a frustrating and meaningless state of indecision.

(Rieger 2010:31)

Ambivalence, in this sense, is associated with colonial mimicry. 'Mimicry occurs as a result of colonial ambivalence... [i]t thus disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonial domination because it disturbs the simple relationship between colonizer and the colonized' (Samuel 2007:28). Ironically,⁹¹ the very fluctuating mentioned above influences the inevitable suggested by Ashcroft (*et al.* 1988:14) 'leads to an ambivalence that disables its monolithic dominance', back and forth, and so forth.

⁹¹ Also see Boehmer (1995:138-179) who argues that the colonized 'mimics their master's gaze, voice, language, style, discourse, ideology etc., not only to duplicate but also to mock, disrupt or rupture them.'

Hybridity is also known as 'in-betweenness' or 'liminality'. Sugirtharajah (2006:15) shows how Bhabha argues that hybridity and mimicry are strategies forged by the colonized as ways of responding to colonial rule. Hybridity is an 'in-between space' in which the colonized translate or undo the binaries imposed by the colonial project: 'From the perspective of the 'in-between', claims to cultural authenticity and sovereignty – supremacy, autonomy, hierarchy – are less significant 'values' than an awareness of the hybrid conditions of inter-cultural exchange' (Bhabha 2000:139).

Boehmer (1995:100) accentuates another important aspect of hybridity when a colonized people enter the stage of nationalist revival, whether through a religious revival, new literary and cultural poetics or renewed terms of articulation of the religious and cultural symbols. He goes on to show that both the myths and discourses inherited from the native religions, culture and traditions are the literary conventions and discourses received from the colonizer. These discourses are appropriated, translated, decentred and hybridized in way which seems to be postcolonial, but in fact is anti-colonial as a means of self-expression of a subjected marginalized people– this 'discursive phenomenon challenges both the alien and the native discourses of power' (Samuels 2007:32). Postcolonial criticism uses these categories of adaption to interpret the essentialist/native voices oppressed through colonization.

3.2.6 Postcolonial criticism: A summary

According to Joy (2008:182), there are two main reasons why postcolonial readings are legitimate. First, recent attempts by New Testament scholars, especially Horsley (2004) succeeds to highlight the presence of the text, and second, the plethora of postcolonial theories that consistently attempt to deconstruct the historiography in a postcolonial context heralded the urgency and necessity of an alternative reading strategy of the Bible in a postcolonial context.

Postcolonial criticism then, at this stage of the enquiry, can be translated in question form in the following manner:

1. What are the colonial socio-cultural and political examples of mimicry, ambivalence, and hybridity found in literature that stem from the context of the

first-century Mediterranean people under the colonizing rule of Roman provinces?

2. Was the outcome/intent of their literature (our available biblical and extra-biblical sources) written with the aim to survive as a religious-cultural community?
3. Were these texts written to resist, adapt-and-survive, or was it to systematically revolt through teachings of own religious values, renewed by iconic figures?
4. What is the content of the underlying marginal voices, which gave rise to the liberation of the community of Jesus-followers, later labelled Christianity?
5. What determined whether certain peoples were accepted as native or not?
6. What set of ethics determined inclusive and exclusive boundaries?

To answer these questions it is necessary to rethink a functional model of interpretation that has the ability to discern the voice and perspective of a subject minority community, spreading the teachings of Jesus's through performative speech (see §4.2.1.3).

3.3 A FUNCTIONAL MODEL TO STUDY THE SOCIAL GOSPEL OF JESUS FROM A POSTCOLONIAL ESSENTIALIST/NATIVIST OPTIC

Above, the key concepts uses a possible model that can be used to interpret Biblical and extra-biblical texts that relates to the Social Gospel of Jesus, recorded by the gospel and later apostolic writers, were mapped. Foundational to such a critical reading, from a postcolonial optic, is that one should be suspicious of the binary opposition (nativism/resistance and essentialism/recuperation) and the intercultural (subcultural) fragmentation models used in postcolonial studies. These models, when not considered as extent or exhaustive models, can be clustered together as the Essentialist/Nativist model;⁹² a Resistance/Recuperative model;⁹³ a Diasporic

⁹² See Horsley (2001; 1998:152-74), Anand (1935; 1981), Fanon (1961), Chinweizu (1985) and Thiong (1986) for essentialist revolution writings.

⁹³ See the works of Sugirtharajah (1998; 2001; 2002) for the point of view that postcolonial discourse in essence is insurgent discourse that aims to 'work against colonial assumptions, representations and ideologies' (Sugirtharajah 1998b:ix, x).

Intercultural model⁹⁴ and a Strategic essentialist and Transcultural Hybridity model.⁹⁵

The mimicry, ambivalence and hybridity models function for the deconstruction of the 'self' and the 'other'. Theorists of postcolonial criticism mentioned by Samuels (2007:26) are Spivak (1988), Bhabha (1997) and Boehmer (1995); all who believe that these models have a potential either to 'reproduce or perpetuate the colonial structures of thought, or to erase the possibility of an effective subversion of colonialism' (Samuels 2007:26). Postmodern epistemology analyses the ideologies that serves as prejudices, and then aims to responsibly translate the message to the contemporary world, (see again § 3.2.2). To assert that Jesus was preaching a Social Gospel, with the intention of liberating the oppressed, will require validating as an approximation. A viable outcome based on this estimate as truthful could provide the essential foundation for interpretation, especially in terms of Jesus' supposed 'renewal of Israel'.

When nativism potentially empowers cultural essentialism and religious-political nationalism of the 'other', intercultural sub-culturalism romanticizes fragmentation by splintering margins into dissident micro-territories, constellations of voices and plurality of meanings thereby allowing a center (or a system) to operate as the dominant 'self'. Therefore these theorist articulate the need for a careful deconstruction of the very structures of the dominant 'self' and the marginal 'other' in order to shed light on the complexities of negotiation and mutual dependence (the mechanics of intricate processes of cultural contact and conflict, intrusion and inter-animation, fusion and disjunction) between colonial center and colonized margin in a colonial/post-colonial context, and the need to go beyond the center and margin dichotomy to a different realm of experience where the claims of difference and desire for transculturality are both contradictorily – possible.

(Samuels 2007:26)

Instead of focusing on a 'strategic essentialist and transcultural hybridity model', this study rather focuses on an 'essentialist/nativist model' as proposed by Horsley, Anand and Fanon. The colonized community undergoes linguistic, cultural and religious influences by the colonizer over time. The oppressed culture, however, maintain their essentialist autonomous identities because the constituencies in which they originated and flourished are separate and radically different from that of the

⁹⁴ See Spivak (1988), Said (1978) and Walder (1998) who are diaspora academics from former colonies who choose to live in various metropolises in the west.

⁹⁵ See Spivak (1988:103-117) and Bhabha (1997:431-59) for writers who are weary and suspicious of binary opposition and intercultural fragmentation models.

oppressor. The reason for selecting the essentialist reading strategies' potential is for decolonization, and, regarding the life and message of Jesus, as the opportunity of recovering and renegotiating the native pre-colonial experience.

Jesus was born in a Roman colonized first-century Palestine, and raised in the Mosaic-religion who believe in the God of Israel. The Mosaic-faith, built on the native myths, Israelite religious tradition (and expectation), and history that plays a crucial counter-discursive role in this essentialist postcolonial reading. The model of postcolonial criticism regard the Roman imperialistic colonization as an agent, the 'other' (alien), that have an ideology and intention to justify the 'civilizing mission' of the Roman conquest. To keep focus on this study's chosen theme, that Jesus performed a Social Gospel, is to keep focus on the readers (hearers) of the message of Jesus that first circulated orally and later written down. With this focus, we might find that the followers of Jesus, like the Romans, had an oppositional essentialist agenda at the time when these texts came into being. For example, the history of Israel, moving to Canaan, illustrates the history of the covenant people of Israel's history as a *chosen* nation. The potential insight is that when one identifies Israel's renewal (supposedly advocated by Jesus), one realizes that this renewal also was part of an imperialistic system (oppression justified by a self-proclaimed monotheistic authority). Israel as renewed nation thus re-emerges, ironically, as an ideological system, the same form of system that they opposed.

This study engages with the biblical text with the suggested postcolonial model of interpretation. Taking into account the ideology of the Social Gospel and the missional intent of contemporary Christians (institutionalized or emergent Jesus mimics), the questions comes to mind whether 'Christianity' (understood as an exclusive faith) can renew its essentialist understanding to become the norm and guiding creed for this planetary (global) system called humanity? On the other hand, would it survive as a religion by enforcing exclusive authority and slowly fading away? The essentialist/nativist model, while being sensitive to these warnings, could help to identify what the intention of Jesus' message was in terms of its address and cultural setting. Did Jesus aim to renew Israel, in the sense of a new direction, or was his message a reproduction of the Abrahamic faith tradition? An understanding of essential/nativist history, the values and ethics of their tradition was interpreted

anew by Jesus. Jesus becomes the embodiment of God's image by portraying these essential values and ethics of the Mosaic-faith (see § 1.1.4 for the second aim of the study). Jesus's example of living was not so much ground breaking, as it was radical.

A postcolonial optic of essentialist and nativist theory identifies with Jesus's radical message from Scriptures, and might identify with a message similar to that of the Social Gospel. The focus lies here on the marginalized, the oppressed, and the poor. The Social Gospel advocated in the nineteenth century has elements in its theology that does not assume the church as an exclusive starting point for action in faith. It has a concern with the marginal, the subjugated communities through systems of our time such as neo-imperialism, the effect of oppressive globalism and the exclusivist nature of religions. These groups seems to be alienated from in-group communities, but still uphold their beliefs, even though they have out-group trauma to handle.

Due to the inclusivity of his [Matthew's] thinking, his understanding of Jesus' anti-societal language becomes applicable to post- and neocolonial South Africa. Such a finding holds even to his use of the imperialist image of God's already-presence in the 'kingdom of heavens', and to his conceptualization of people's collaboration in the process of making such values real 'on earth as it is in heaven'. There is no doubt in my mind that Jesus' kingdom message pivots around good news for the poor, just as Matthew articulates Jesus' beatitude of the 'poor in spirit'.

(Van Aarde 2009:8)

This good news does not only include people with material needs. It also includes people and communities with other traumatic experiences because of oppressive occurrences. The NHKA should familiarize itself with the factors of its ecclesiology that might be exclusivist, or oppressive in any way. A simple question might explain the familiarization: "Why is there almost no church attendance by other ethnic races even though there are multiple examples of care-programs for them?" The question initiates postcolonial criticism to identify oppressive factors. The NHKA, and Christianity as a religion, should apply its attention to the factors that distanciate and estrange people from faithful witness. If they disregard this, how can the good news be *believable*?

By doing so, Matthew simultaneously provided an empowering model for those Jesus followers who were threatened by opposing parties in both the synagogical and imperial settings of the first-century Galilean Syrian context, on the one hand, as well as, on the other hand, for other marginalised people, such as those in post- and neocolonial South Africa.

(Van Aarde 2009:9)

Postcolonial South Africa has elements of a variety of oppressive factors active over the last century. Currently, the groups concerned with the marginalized people in South Africa ranges from political parties, NGO's, NPO's and for some part also churches, from all religions. The problem is not getting these organizations more concerned about the marginalized but rather to disintegrate oppressive systems. Postcolonial research identifies the elements in the gospel that empower the marginalized to react to, and live an alternative to, the oppressive systems of political, and economical and religious structures. The NHKA should draw from a social gospel that is concerned with distribution of justice to all people, as we have discovered through a postcolonial optic regarding Roman Palestine.

Chapter 4

Richard Horsley's Jesus in Roman Palestine

Jesus' bold confrontation of the rulers of his crucifixion by the Romans became the key events in the breakthrough that empowered his movement(s) to aggressively expand its renewal of the people in what was now a public opposition to the imperial order.

(Horsley 2014:167)

There does not seem to be anything 'missing' from their lives — so you cannot just come proclaiming the good news of a Jesus who fills their 'God-shaped hole.' They do not have any sense that the 'secular' lives they have constructed are missing a second floor. In many ways, they have constructed webs of meaning that provide almost all the significance they need in their lives (though a lot hinges on that 'almost').

(Smith 2014:vii)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Christian theology, religious studies, and Biblical studies unfold in history as intertwined with the processes of globalization; not artificially connected but organically intertwined. Processes of globalization influenced theology over centuries. Consider only, for example, that the 'New Testament was written in the language of an earlier globalization process by the Greeks' (Rieger 2010:1), rather than the native *lingua franca* familiar to the Mediterranean communities. It is, however, when reading Chapters 1-3 of this study, more complex than that. The third aim of this study (see §1.1.4) is to use the outcomes of the first and second aim in collaboration with Richard Horsley's proposed 'renewal of Israel' perspective on Jesus' mission in Roman Palestine. This aim draws from the outcome of Chapters 1-3 (see § 1.1.4, 1.2.2.4, 1.3.2.4, and 3.3).

The good news is that the process of globalization has never achieved unifying different contexts, whether political, cultural, or religious, without transposing some form of imperialism on some or other community. It is good news because somehow globalization always turns on itself. In this studies' context, however, regarding the negative effects of globalization, colonialism is a factor, and when there is oppression through imperialism, there are marginalized. In effect, marginal groups form on the periphery of the so called *development*. In the process of colonialism

and post-colonialism, as in globalization (see § 1.2), there are complex cultural, economic, and political variables alternating in power/authority between oppressors and the oppressed. That is the good news, from a negative view. In these contexts, we identify 'actors', 'icons', and 'examples' of resistance that rise from within the periphery to resist the authority that disrupts the essential characteristics of the native folk. Examples of resistance (see § 1.2-1.2.4.4) are categorized by using different modes⁹⁶ of resistance from postcolonial criticism (see § 3.2.5-3.3). Throughout history, whenever such a movement, uprising, or revolt took place, it influenced the religious sphere of one or both of the cultures involved. It has an effect on interpretation of the religion involved, and has an effect on the writing of historical events. Religious interpretations, such as biblical texts, are therefore influenced.

The biblical scriptures we have available to understand the first-century Mediterranean world are complex because of these influences. Our Christian biblical and extra-biblical texts stand in relation to two thousand years of this process. It is therefore a complex process to interpret it in the third millennium. The complexity can be better understood when one identifies certain patterns. This study's focus is on the historic patterns Richard Horsley dissected from available texts and historical findings. In § 4.2.1-4.3.3 Horsley's view on Roman Palestine and the kingdom of God narratives, serves as the point of departure.

Roman Palestine is the micro focal point for Biblical studies. In this collection of Roman provinces, under the rule of client kings and the high priestly aristocracy, Jesus was born, performed his preaching and actions that marked the beginning of a movement that initiated the outcome of his mission on earth. Horsley's points of departure inform this study's focus on the people underlying the texts we have available. Firstly, it is important to understand Horsley's Jesus, and what Horsley considers Jesus' mission was in Roman Palestine (§ 4.2.1-4.2.2). Secondly, it is also important to understand how Jesus' mission initiated participation by the people in

⁹⁶ For example mimicry, ambivalence and hybridity with different intent like the Essentialist/Nativist model, a Resistance/Recuperative model, a Diasporic Intercultural model, and a Strategic essentialist and Transcultural Hybridity model (Samuel 2007).

the kingdom of God, and when they did, how they understood the mission of Jesus in relation to their unforgiving environment (§ 4.3-4.3.3).

4.2 INTERPRETATIVE CONCEPTS OF HORSLEY'S MEDITERRANEAN

4.2.1 Gospel sources: The narratives approached

Richard Horsley was never comfortable with the generalized assumptions, constructs, and procedures in the field of Biblical studies after almost half a century of research. His goal is to abandon these 'standard conceptions and modern assumptions in the field as they seem to obscure the diversities and complexities and dynamics evident in primary sources' (Horsley 2014:ix). He attempts to bring a fuller and more precise historical knowledge to the historical context. The first, according to Horsley, is to identify some interrelated and unwarranted assumptions. He lists these problematical assumptions⁹⁷ as follow:

- A. Mark is not only a set or collection of periscopes, it is a story, not only segments of history.
- B. Mark's story is not, as Westerners suppose, only about religion. Marks' story, however, is about politics and economics as inseparable from religion.
- C. The gospels are not texts of theological doctrine; it is a story, full of conflicts, ostensibly about historical events in ancient Galilee and Judea under Roman imperial rule.
- D. It is not an account of the emergence of Christianity founded by Jesus. When Mark was composed, however, neither Judaism nor Christianity had yet emerged as identifiable and distinct religions.
- E. Judaism, in pre-Late Second temple times, is not only confined to the powerful, literate, wealthy rulers, but also as the 90-95% of people whom persistently rebelled against them.
- F. The Galilean Pharisees is not necessarily under Jerusalem's jurisdiction at the time of Jesus' life. Apart from the one hundred years of rule under Jerusalem, before the birth of Jesus, Galilee had a very different history from that of Jerusalem and Judea.
- G. The Gospels were not circulated in written form and reread by literate communities, as one would assume in today's world. More probable is that listeners of Mark's account repeatedly orally performed narratives to communities of listeners.

(Horsley 2001:xii)

Horsley systematically explains how the gospel account of Mark is a holistic narrative, instead as a collection of sayings. First, reading segments and parts of the gospels are not sufficient to represent the fulfilment of the history of Israel in the

⁹⁷ Horsley's focus is here assumptions made by Biblical Studies and the interpretation of Mark. This study uses this as point of departure to show the concerns Horsley has with assumptions of interpretation in general.

story of Jesus. Jesus is inseparable from the socio-historical context of Roman Palestine, according to Horsley. Jesus lived in a time when the political and economic lives of people were entwined. For investigation then, one should also interpret the political-economic-religious realities presented to us through available sources. In the time of Jesus, there was conflict present in the political and economic life. In fact, in the world of the gospels and behind the gospels, it is clear that the action taken by the oppressed was integrated with religious life. As an example of this integration, Horsley (2014:38) cites Josephus:

The others [insurgents that revolted] then set fire to the house of Ananias the high priest, and to the palaces of Agrippa and Bernice; after which they carried the fire to the place where the archives were repositied, and made haste to burn the contracts belonging to their creditors, and thereby to dissolve their obligations for paying their debts; and this was done in order to gain the multitude of those who had been debtors, and that they might persuade the poorer sort to join in their insurrection with safety against the more wealthy; so the keepers of the records fled away, and the rest set fire to them.

(Josephus, *War* 2.426)

When Jesus prayed with his disciples, it is clear that the background of his prayer⁹⁸ indicates a level of 'indebtedness and to the level of popular distress and anger' (Josephus, *War* 2.427, in Horsley 2014:38) that accumulated over time. Thus, *καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν* (Mt 6:12) becomes the background when reading the Jesus narrative in its larger context.

Second, the problem is that because of recent research it is now becoming evident that the 'biblical' texts established by text critics are the products of modern scholarship, and that 'early', or the 'best' texts, 'may be figments of the modern scholar's print-cultural imagination' (Horsley 2014:18). There are variations in the translations, especially the 'further back we go'; there are 'multiple textual traditions that were unstable and still developing' (see also Parker 1997:188; Ulrich 1999:11, 14, 40-41, 91-91, 102; Epp 1999:10). Horsley's point with this reminder of the process of textual origins is the element of oral-written⁹⁹ scribal cultivation and

⁹⁸ See Horsley (1993:246-255) for a thorough explanation of his thoughts on debts between earthly and heavenly monarchs and peasants.

⁹⁹ See the essays in Kirk and Thatcher (eds. 2005), Horsley, Draper and Foley (eds. 2006) and Horsley (2008) for explanations of social memory in connection with oral performance.

composition of texts, appreciating the text for what it was through oral recitation before there were capable scribes to popularize it through writing. Horsley (2008:89-108) explains how Mark should be understood as oral performance. Like nearly all texts in antiquity, Mark most probably was performed for a group. 'And since it was impossible for someone to follow [while performing it] undivided words on a parchment scroll or papyrus roll without already being familiar with the text, the gospel must have been performed from memory' (Horsley 2008:101). According to Horsley, the popular form of communicating the speeches of Jesus was through performative speech, which is, telling and retelling. What we have today is merely a compiled collection of these performative speeches and history written after decades of retelling. Even if the diverse performances of the text were somewhat different from other performances, the overall structure of the message or narrative and most of the wording stayed the same. Mark, according to Werner Kelber (1997) in *Oral and Written Gospel*, (in is too complexly plotted to understand it as a 'bunch of independently circulating stories strung together end to end' (Horsley 2008:101).

According to Horsley, this implication of this recent research left literary critics in an awkward position.

The text of the Gospels that we have been trained to interpret are the synthetic products of modern Western biblical studies 'established' by text critics on the basis of relatively late and complete manuscripts. Established interpretations of Gospel texts, in which we have been trained, focuses on the meaning of words, phrases, individual sayings (verses), and discrete 'pericopes' (often 'lessons' for a given week in the lectionary). Text critics are now concluding that the wording of the phrases, sayings, and episodes in the Gospels are unstable – until a degree of stabilization was established in late antiquity.

(Horsley 2014:22)

This is why Horsley suggests that instead of trying to interpret or apply a critical reading of fragments in itself, we should rather attempt 'to recognize and appreciate the work that performed text does in and on the community of hearers in their particular historical situation' (Horsley 2014:24; 2008:147).

Given the dominance of oral communication in the ancient world, moreover, in all the aspects just sketched, the Gospel texts, even once they were written, functioned – had life – as text-in-performance in communities of Christ in particular life circumstances. The texts (the words and phrases) of the sayings and mini-stories that we have been

trained to interpret turn out to be unreliable even in the written form that we formerly assumed provided stability.

(Horsley 2014:22)

Horsley suggests that biblical scholars should rethink and consider retraining in the study of the gospels and the historical Jesus to develop an appreciation for texts in oral performance and develop appropriate approaches for the use of such texts as sources (see also Horsley 2014:172, n. 44; Foley 1991; 1995; 2002). Instead of deriving interpretation from increasingly complex fragments, the text's whole picture is significant. It is necessary to appreciate the gospels as stories, and speeches, which portray their text-in-performance in historical and cultural context. These contexts portray Jesus as actively engaged in communication, interaction, and conflict with people that were part of the social forms and institutions of his society. Drawing mostly from Foley's theoretical reflection, Horsley¹⁰⁰ suggests that text-in-performance relates to social memory:

Texts-in-performance involve several 'extra-textual' factors as well as the 'text' itself: a *text* is performed before *hearers* (audience) who interact with the performer-and-text-in their life circumstances or *context*; the community of hearers is affected by or *resonates* to the performed text as it *references* the cultural *tradition* of social memory in which both the performer (and text) and hearers are rooted. The referencing of tradition is usually 'metonymic' (i.e., a part signals the whole). To appreciate the Gospels as text-in-performance, therefore we focus on the *text* as performer in *context* as it references the cultural *tradition* (memory).

(Horsley 2014:14)

The focus of the study is on Jesus in his context as *performer* of his message. For the hearers (villagers) this message of Jesus is text-in-performance. The text, and Jesus (as performer), resonates with them (viewer-hearers) in their circumstances (see Horsley 2008:108). Therefore, Jesus excavated from the texts we have available today, does not make sense. This might seem impossible regarding the postmodern training we received in undergraduate studies. Horsley (2014:25) blames modern Western individualistic belief for the idea that 'an individual person and what he actually or most likely said and did could be isolated. That was a chimera of the modern Western, post-Enlightenment, individualistic imagination.'

¹⁰⁰ Horsley draws extensively on the ethnography of speaking from Foley and Kelber. See especially Part III, (Social Memory) of Horsley's *Jesus in context* (2008:109-167).

Today, for the would-be *hearers*, to appreciate Mark as ‘oral performance in context, moreover, will require relinquishing or even intentionally cutting through some of the most fundamental assumptions and approaches of the field of biblical studies in which we are trained’ (Horsley 2008:108). This suggestion by Horsley will mean trading ‘modern individualistic orientation for a more collective community orientation, and trading theological interests and concepts for political interests and appreciation of storytelling, innuendo and body language’ (Horsley 2008:108). It will also mean trading standard modern Christian issues for ancient peasant issues. This should be the point for further investigation of the world of Jesus and the community he grew up in – to discern what the Roman Palestinian’s needs and concerns were. What the community expected, detested, and lived for is reflected through the words eventually written about the *hearers* to whom these realities were communicated. The community therefore had to resonate with performances of the stories of God perfumed by Jesus.

Jesus as performer of speeches was renowned for being catalytic in his environment. The movements initiated by Jesus-followers and the events that resulted from it, thus took form through their interpretation of the text-in-performance (Jesus’ message as a whole). Jesus was not detached from the Israelite cultural tradition of his time (Horsley 2008:127). Rather, Jesus, and the Jesus movement after his death, was firmly rooted in the Israelite social memory. This is contrary to Crossan’s depiction of Jesus through his work at the Jesus Seminar. Horsley quotes Paul Connerton (1989:6), who argues:

All beginnings contain an element of recollection. This is particularly so when a social group makes a concerted effort to begin with a wholly new start. There is a measure of complete arbitrariness in the very nature of such an attempted beginning...But the absolutely new is inconceivable...In all modes of experience we always base our experiences on a prior context in order to ensure that they are intelligible at all; prior to any single experience, our mind is already predisposed with a framework of outlines.

(Connerton 1989:6)

Jesus shared in this ‘framework of outlines’, or social memory, of the people. He recollected memory from his own environment. Analogous to Connerton’s point of view, interesting enough, Crossan (2007:110) speculates that Jesus as boy stood next to his mother at some chosen moment in his youth, hearing the stories of how

Vespasian's troops destroyed and plundered and burned the nearby villages such as Sepphoris across the valley from Nazareth. Crossan, speculating on Josephus's accounts (*Wars* 4.488-89), pushes his speculation further, for the sake of example, by asking what the boy Jesus' perception was about God, Rome, resistance and violence when his mother told him about 'the year the Romans came?'¹⁰¹ It would be a timid scholarly move to operate on the anachronistic assumption that religion was separate from political-economic structures and institutions. Jesus grew up, formed his understanding of being a Galilean Israelite in Roman Palestine, and acted intelligibly upon that social memory as reverence. This understanding of Jesus's social memory drawn from his environment is not as simple to portray, as it seems. Horsley warns that our 'learning from social memory studies, however, will be different from the recent importation of various types of criticism' (Horsley 2008:109). Two important aspects in this regard are:

1. It will not be yet another case of borrowing an already delineated theory from literary studies or a ready-made model from sociology and applying it to biblical texts ... [rather] it is interdisciplinary, 'non-paradigmatic, trans-disciplinary, and centreless.'¹⁰²
2. Social memory studies will conspire with recent researches on other, related forms, such as orality-literacy and social history, which are challenging some of the standard assumptions of biblical studies.

Social memory is not something in itself. Rather, it can help us unravel the social and cultural relations we misinterpret, or misunderstand, when using other models of interpretation.

'In attempting to appreciate how particular Gospel stories of Jesus' mission resonated with the movements in which they were performed, we can discern how

¹⁰¹ Crossan's (2007:110) speculation is not without some grounding. He refers to Josephus's *Jewish War* (2.56; 268) that recalls the history of Ptolemais and Gaius who 'captured and burned the city of Sepphoris and reduced its inhabitants to slavery.' His speculation describes the effect on the nearby village Nazareth, and therefore the analogy of Jesus's social memory formed not as an excavated protagonist in a novel, but as sharing in a collective social memory formed by his immediate and secondary surroundings. According to Horsley in Kirk & Thatcher (2005:58), Crossan detach Jesus from Israelite cultural tradition.

¹⁰² Horsley (2008:109) credits Olick and Robbins (1998:106) for their work on social memory-studies in the field of historical-social studies.

he was understood as interacting with his followers and his opponents in historical context' (Horsley 2014:25). By hearing the gospel accounts as holistic narratives we can then make informed comparisons of those portrayals to ascertain what may have been the main agenda of Jesus' mission in historical context. To Horsley (2008:152), the core message that Mark's gospel portrays as a whole is that 'Jesus and his followers, carrying out a renewal of Israel, stand opposed to and opposed by the Jerusalem high priestly rulers'.

The overall purpose of Horsley's investigation of Roman Palestine, with the assistance of social memory studies, is to re-evaluate assumptions about the gospels as containers that objectify Jesus dislodged from his environment. He wants to reconstruct the social-religious and social-political world with Jesus in-movement-in-society.¹⁰³ The reason for this is to evaluate what the mission of Jesus was when we seek to understand him as part of the social environment of Roman Palestine.

The nativist/essentialist model as part of postcolonial criticism this study uses to investigate the text, searches for these same elements Horsley conjure up through interpretation. There are potential examples of decolonization/anti-imperialization derived with this perspective of including Jesus as part of the social memory of his time, and more, as an active catalyst for renewing the essential/nativist elements of Israel's faith. Jesus, in this sense, is *from* the world, *for* the world.¹⁰⁴

Jesus' world was Roman Palestine and his social memory drew on the imaginative boundaries constructed by his faith. His historical social memory, derived from Israel's history, was his reference. To be frank, Jesus shared in a human life, and therefore continuously learned through experience.

What this study *does not* imply is that Jesus is not divine. What this study does acknowledge, however, is that we can interpret social interaction through available

¹⁰³ See Horsley (2012:72-78), in a chapter titled 'Jesus-in-movement-in-context', where he discerns about approaching the historical Jesus in a more adequate, relational, and contextual approach.

¹⁰⁴ The study here refers to the age old saying that the church is '*in the world but not of the world*'. This study aims to reintroduce possible alternative interpretations of Jesus' mission; interpretations that are not *anti*-church, but relevant to an emerging post-church globalized community that can identify with the first followers of Jesus (see Mt 7:25; 12:31).

historical data and interpretation. Jesus was directly involved in first-century Roman Palestine where there was imperial oppression driven by Romans on the one side and the client kings on the other. This oppression was also relevant in the *Zeitgeist* – the general intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of an era – of Jesus’ followers, an oppression from which they had sought deliverance.

It is important take notice of oppressive factors in Roman Palestine under which people were subjected. Two simple examples is the Roman eagle on top of Herod’s Temple gates in Jerusalem. This symbol reminded Temple-goers who control the state and religion. Secondly, Herod’s name was inscribed on most monuments as a reminder of his rule and the oppressive system in Israel. A further example of oppression is that of ἡ σαμαρῖτις woman in John 4:9. She questions Jesus’, who is σὺ ἰουδαῖος, request for water. This is not simply a question derived from patriarchal hierarchy from her own life. There is a very vivid sense of alienation in terms of politics of place (Samaria and Judea) when the woman refers to Judeans (from the ruling temple-state) that λέγετε ὅτι ἐν ἱεροσολύμοις ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος ὅπου προσκυνεῖν δεῖ (Jn 4:20). Jesus answers, understanding this background, that ἔρχεται ὥρα, καὶ νῦν ἐστὶν, ὅτε οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ πατρὶ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ· καὶ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ τοιοῦτους ζητεῖ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτὸν πνεῦμα ὁ θεός, καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτὸν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν. Jesus adapts to the situation and explains that former assumptions are about to change. Jesus’s view in terms of liberation is much broader than the socio-political-religious assumptions of his time even compared to his closest followers. When the disciples return from town καὶ ἐθαύμαζον ὅτι μετὰ γυναικὸς ἐλάλει, referring to patriarchalism, they do not recognize the more relevant ἔρχεται ὥρα, to which Jesus refers. Underlying this misunderstanding of the disciples and the ‘hour’ explained by Jesus to the woman is the history of the people. The woman’s reaction in this narrative becomes the voice of the oppressed (others who is also under the same delusion). Her account, taken up in John’s gospel, translates the peoples’ history. In §3.2.4, as mentioned, Subaltern Studies is in direct conversation through hermeneutics labelled as the ‘people’s theology’ (Joy 2008:49). It encourages the depressed communities to come out with groundbreaking studies and answers rather than radical alternatives, for example a violent revolution. The example of the Samaritan woman of John 4, explains how the Roman colonization took a very deep effect as

oppressive system on all communities. Conspicuous, however, is the essential/nativist self-understanding the woman has (and of her fellow Samaritans) in terms of faith shared by them and the Judeans. Postcolonial criticism, through this model of essentialist/nativist critique, intends to relocate the marginalized voices that did not come to their rights in historical writings. Jesus hears her (representative) voice and immediately confronts the misunderstanding. Roman Palestine, therefore, had complex realities of conflict, boundaries, and subversion (resistance), and Jesus was included in it. Jesus is part of the people's history. He had the ability to react and improvise so that whomever he met could get a glimpse of the kingdom that came near. Jesus's mission was informed by the context of Roman Palestine wherein Galileans, Samaritans, and Judeans respectively, resisted empire(s). He was part of daily life like everyone else.

Reading the gospels while including Jesus in all spheres of daily life and sharing in Israel's social memory can help with more adequate assumptions about what his mission was while being *from* Nazareth, and living *for* his faith *in* God. This is the point of departure and the context for interpretation; it is important to portray the historical context of Roman Palestine where Jesus *performed* his mission.

4.2.1.1 Roman Palestine

As noted in § 4.2.1, it is necessary to abandon some of the basic synthetic Christian constructs, such as (early) 'Judaism' and (early) 'Christianity'. These constructs have been obscuring the complex concrete realities of 'ancient history in order to discern the political dynamics of Roman Palestine where Jesus worked and the ways in which he might have been engaged in those dynamics' (Horsley 2014:26). Roman Palestine is where Jesus lived. Roman Palestine is where he was actively engaged in catalysing a movement. Horsley regards the act of Jesus' crucifixion¹⁰⁵ as central starting point for reference to Jesus as being part, if not the main insurgent, to a movement against the Roman imperial order. To consider critically the politics of Roman Palestine, Horsley (2014:28) moves past the synthetic constructs of Christian

¹⁰⁵ In § 4.2.1.4 this point will be pursued as conclusion to § 4.1-4.3.3 of the study. See Horsley (1993:167-245) on the renewal of Israel and the kingdom of God.

scholarship and approaches the Mediterranean world and Jesus's mission in three steps:

1. He regards material from outside of the gospels as informative to the situation of first-century Roman Palestine. His focus is on the people and events in Galilee and Judea in late second-temple period.
2. He considers how recent cross-cultural studies may offer insight into modes of peasant politics that fall in between the usual dichotomy of concession and revolt.
3. He then considers how Jesus's prophecies in the gospels fit into the world of Roman Palestine.

Important to note here is Horsley's understanding of the writing of history. He contributes a whole chapter to 'People's history' and gospel studies in 2008. His argument is that 'ordinary people', according to established historians, simply were not a subject worthy of historical investigation. He refers to the people not identified as laity but rather as 'the small groups among the diverse peoples in the provinces and cities of the Roman Empire, such as Galilee or Judea, Antioch or Corinth' (Horsley 2008:22). These groups were not yet identified as 'Christianity'; they rather formed part of more than only a 'religious' people referred to in Biblical texts. Jesus moved and lived amongst these people. Horsley attempts to show how this interaction cannot be described or interpreted by scholars with exclusively religious terms. Rather there are

[i]nterrelated factors in what were complex and varied historical developments, depending on local conditions and cultures: the interrelationship of problematic circumstances, discontent people, distinctive leaders, messages, and organizations that resulted in movements and communities with the solidarity and staying power to survive and expand.

(Horsley 2008:23)

Jesus was part of Roman Palestine like any other person. He participated in the Roman Palestine context. Horsley (2008:23-24) argues that the 'focus of interpretation was based on standard assumptions, approaches, and agenda of traditional New Testament studies in several basic respects'. He lists them as follow (Horsley 2008:24):

	PEOPLES HISTORY	NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES
Focus	Reconstruction of peoples history	Interpretation of Text
Scope	All aspects of life	Mainly religion and meaning
Basic Division	Rulers versus ruled	Judaism versus Hellenism
Issues	People's circumstances and actions	Christian theological questions
Media	Oral communication in communities	Writing by authors
Culture	Popular culture versus elite culture	Stable scripture
Agenda	People in their own circumstances	Bridging the distance from text to today

This graph is obviously oversimplifying historical complexities. The point is, however, to focus on Horsley's concern for not neglecting the voices of the people groups actually involved and active in the texts we have about Roman Palestine in which Jesus lived and acted. When this becomes clear, it is easier to move past the synthetic assumptions as mentioned above.

Roman Palestine was not a neatly organized environment for virtuous religious banter by a radical prophet with the goal of reviving the religious sentiments they hold. There is much more at stake when Jesus spoke, when insurgents revolted, and when insurgent leaders were crucified beside a road. The elite, officers of state and the rulers, whether Roman imperial or client rulers, did not interfere with the village communities' affairs as long as their revenues were forthcoming. Villagers, or peasants, therefore were under immense pressure to produce the expected taxes, tithes, offerings, and tributes. What was left of their crops was not always enough to sustain families and the communities to which they belonged. The high rate of interest on borrowing from the same elite was placed on them as a further burden. There was no way out for the lower class people living in Roman Palestine. What made the burden even heavier was the tithes and offerings expected by the Temple elite centralized in Jerusalem as a religious-political power. Religiously the people were expected to live up to their faith (faith in God who delivered them from bondage

of an oppressive ruler in Egypt) only to be oppressed by the elite (scribes, Pharisees) politically.

The Romans took over the temple-state in Palestine and broadened their rule. Horsley (2014:30) also shows that because of this temple-state, with the temple as central religious place, there was 'hostility between Samaritans and Judeans. Therefore communities, for example people from Galilee, were placed under the same rule as their fellow Israelites in Jerusalem for the first time in eight centuries.' It is understandable that the Galileans became loyal to the Temple *and* 'the Torah'. In addition, Horsley (2014:30-31) identifies, this subjection of the Galileans was likely to be ambivalent about their Jerusalem rulers, and fellow followers of the Torah. Galileans shared in the same social memory and immediate oppression in which Jesus himself grew up. Roman Palestine, thus, in itself, bore conflicts. Jesus therefore takes action from within this frame of mind. Jesus takes up action, not only religiously, but also with political intent against the oppressive powers that rules over him. His fellow Galileans also suffered with him. Van Eck (1994:47) argues that Jesus 'begins his subversion of Palestine's economic system by healing, teaching, and expelling demons'. By this, Jesus expressed a vivid subversion against the oppression of communities under Roman and client rule. Jesus does this by religious, spiritual, action, but it relates directly to political and economic subversion. Van Eck (1995:47) explains how Myers (1988:188) argues that in Mark 1:1-20 Jesus' mission will take place in two symbolic spaces: 'The temple and its representatives (Jerusalem) and the periphery and its representatives (the oppressed and marginalized in Galilee)'. He goes on and refers to John's execution (Mk 6:14-29) as representing the same destiny that Jesus would follow. This serves as the first example of how the ruling state suppresses any opposition.

In Mark 11:15-19 Jesus's direct action against the economic and political exploitation of his day reaches its climax: Jesus shuts down the temple, the centrepiece in Mark's unrelenting criticism of the political economy of the temple ... it becomes clear that Mark's narrative means to portray Jesus as convicted of charges of sedition by a Roman politico-legal process. Both parties in the colonial condominium, the Sanhedrin and the Romans, perceived Jesus as a supremely subversive, political and dangerous threat. He had to be eliminated, and they cooperate to do so. Understood as such, the opposition in Mark between Galilee and Jerusalem is a political one.

(Van Eck 1995:47)

From the above it is clear; first, that Jesus was not only a religious leader. Second, the space in the gospels that portray Galilee and Jerusalem, and the interpretation of Jesus' life by New Testament scholars are important in binary terms. On the one hand, it is important to note how Jesus confronts the oppressive leaders of his time with practical examples relevant to the faith of the people of Israel. On the other hand, the Roman Palestinian world wherein Jesus does this has conflict in terms of specific places. For example, the conflict and differences between Galilee and Jerusalem as shown convincingly by Van Eck (1995), has conflict (of interest and intent) between the communities. There is, however, an equalizing factor, namely the covenant in which both Judeans and Galileans share in as YHWH's 'chosen' people. Not only as far as the Pharisees allowed it, but also according to birth and/or conversion. For Jesus, there is merit in this shared fundamental truth between the followers of the Torah, the believers of YHWH. This study argues that Jesus' mission was not, as seen above, only religious in intent. Not even to mention that it is possible to excavate him from his environment, as a 'talking head'. Rather Jesus' mission as in 'being on the way' implies that he was concerned about all (of his) people colonized under oppressive rule, whether political-economically or religious. Galilee, together with Jerusalem, became the space for Jesus's mission and resistance.

4.2.1.2 Empire and resistance

In this Chapter thus far it has been shown how Horsley develops his assumptions from reading the gospel narratives as holistic narratives rather than dissecting it as containers, which hold pericopes dislodged from their social context. Secondly, to then unravel and bring to the surface the voices of the oppressed, the marginal and those on the periphery in history, rather than focusing on the idealistic representation by historical writers. This brings us to the Roman Empire and the colonization of Palestine, the situation in which these stories were written in, the people involved, and how Jesus, with them, reacted to the empires that were forced on them by the client kings and Roman elite.

According to Horsley, this new world *order* created by those in power with privilege in the Roman empire 'was experienced as a devastating and debilitating new world *disorder*' (Horsley 2014:108, emphasis in original). For Horsley the mission of Jesus

is better understood when looking at the Empire's effect on Judeans and Galileans. The more pressure the elite placed on the agricultural producers to pay taxes, offerings and tribute, the less the peasants had to sustain themselves with. 'The result was the disintegration of the fundamental social forms of family and village community' (Horsley 2014:108).

The Romans attained control over the Galileans and Judeans by brute force. Through burning, enslaving, and traumatizing villagers, they took control. For Rome, it meant more income collected from the occupied provinces. The high priestly aristocracy collected the quarter of the harvest every second year, except in the sabbatical year. This tribute was applied to Galilee and Judea. As a result, an increasing number of families were unable to 'survive until the next harvest without borrowing. To survive they were forced to take loans from those outside the village community ... that would lend at interest' (Horsley 2014:111). This continuous pressure accumulated to the point where these economic circumstances brought unrest and a level of hostility in Judea and Galilee. It is in these circumstances that Jesus preaches his message, not as an outsider, but as a native sharing in the oppression.

In his discussion of the socio-economic situation in Palestine during Jesus' ministry, Horsley (2011:24) takes one step back in asking 'what drove the Romans to extend their control over more and more'. Important in this question, regarding Horsley's understanding of the ideals of Roman Empire, is the connection he makes with the American 'Manifest Destiny'. He argues that the Romans set the example for their American imitators two millennia later for their *civilizing* mission. The Romans, according to Horsley (2011:25), believed that their empire had been 'willed by the gods' and that they are a 'special people that had learned from the woes of others and taken the best from history which was now embodied in Rome's piety, justice and institutions. 'Rome, like America, claimed to be a universal example insofar as it represented the ideals and interests of humankind generally' (Horsley 2011:25). In their minds then the international community can expect them to rule through various ways, which gives them international responsibility and exceptional privileges to meet those responsibilities. The intention of Rome, in extending its rule to other people, was its civilizing mission. According to Horsley, '[t]he expansion of this civilizing mission ... involved a considerable amount of brutality. Nevertheless, the

Roman master organizers of the world claimed to be doing was bring about salvation, peace, and security – as they inscribed on monuments all over the empire’ (Horsley 2011:32). *Pax Romana* relates to the same frustration Martin Luther King Jr had with the *Pax Americana*, administered by the American government ‘who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice.’ In mid-first century, the client rulers (Herod and his self-appointed high-priests) struggled to control the growing turbulent and oppressed community. Nevertheless, the community was still religious, and that kept them ‘enslaved’ to the massive temple Herod build in Hellenistic fashion, even naming it after him. The new temple and ‘Herodian-kings and the Jerusalem high priests became the face of Roman imperial rule in Galilee and Judea’ (Horsley 2011:37).

This section (§ 4.2.1.2) attempts to show how futile the resistance of the oppressed was against the regime of the Roman elite, their client kings and the high-priestly elite. The explicit conflict between the Israelite tradition of independence (chosen by their God, YHWH), and the reality of imperial rule cannot be ignored. ‘This conflict vividly illustrates the utter inseparability of politics and religion for Judeans under Roman imperial rule’ (Horsley 2003:78). The following remark of Josephus implies this:

When the festival called Passover was at hand ... a large multitude from all quarters assembled for it. [The Roman governor] Cumanus, fearing that their presence might afford occasion for an uprising, ordered a company of soldiers to take up arms and stand guard in the porticoes of the Temple to quell any uprising that might occur. This has in fact been the usual practice of previous procurators of Judea at festivals.

(Josephus, *Ant.* 20.106-107)

Caught in the middle of this absolute turmoil and complex power struggle to maintain imperial order, was the ordinary priests and scribal circles (Horsley 2003:79). Their role was to guide the people on how to maintain the sacred traditions and traditional way of life. They were, however, dependent on the rule of the high priestly aristocracy. Horsley identifies how ‘standard modern oversimplification of complex ancient Judeans’ historical realities reduces the most influential scribal groups of the late second-temple period to religious ‘sects’ of ‘Judaism’ (Horsley 2003:79). Rather

one should understand the futile, yet persistent, resistance of these scribes¹⁰⁶ as activists in the Judeans' struggle to maintain their traditional way of life. But it was futile, because of the position they were in: on the one hand religious and content to serve 'One God', and on the other hand brutally oppressed by powers unfamiliar to their tradition.

To appreciate the powers imposed upon the colonized by the Romans and their chosen client kings, we turn to Horsley's discussion of the overpowering effect this colonization had on the oppressed.

4.2.1.3 The powers

According to Horsley (2011:2), the Gospels 'are stories about a struggle between *opposing powers*, both at the political-economic level and at the spiritual level' (emphasis in the original).¹⁰⁷ Anachronistic assumptions about these powers are, according to Horsley:

1. Gospels should be read as a whole by historical Jesus scholars, not as containers for individual sayings of Jesus.
2. Religion is not separate from politics (and economics). Therefore, Jesus was not merely a religious figure but also engaged in political-economic life.
3. In traditional agrarian societies, religion was integral to fertility and economic production and the political-economic order. Because religion in contemporary Western societies is external or marginal to the relations and processes of economic production and political order, does not mean we should not view Jesus as primarily an individual teacher of individuals about individual religious ethics or lifestyle.
4. The God of marginalized modern theology has a drastically reduced jurisdiction compared with the God of Israel because of the modern understanding of God that separates him from political-economic and personal religious affairs.
5. Theologically orientated interpreters focus mainly on the features of Jesus' 'ministry', compatible with and developed by 'early Christianity', as it spread among 'Gentiles' in the Hellenistic world. There are particular concerns and political conflicts in Galilee and Judea that should be taken note of before such interpretations.
6. Standard critical study of Jesus took spirits and acts of power as elements of an ancient worldview that had to be 'demythologized' in order for the teachings and acts of Jesus to become palatable for scientific-minded modern individuals.

(Horsley 2011:5-6)

¹⁰⁶ Horsley (2001:35) explains this persistence by the Judeans 'in resistance to Roman rule must have something to do with the Israelite tradition in which they stood ... [and] memories of prophets such as Moses and Elijah were very much alive among the people.'

¹⁰⁷ See Horsley (2009:113) where he argues that for Jesus the covenant was indeed important, but that he also was concerned about economics. In fact, covenant and economics are closely linked in his prophetic preaching and teaching.

Horsley lists these assumptions with the goal in mind to gain a fuller appreciation for Jesus' mission in its historical context. The historical context is complex and therefore we have to consider factors, which are 'the structure and dynamics of political-economic power relations in Roman Galilee and Judea, the regional differences, and the emotional as well as ideological results of prolonged relations of domination and subjugation' (Horsley 2011:156). Horsley is of opinion that God's direct rule, manifesting in the kingdom of God, is inseparably political, economic, and religious.¹⁰⁸ 'Jesus's mission shows that for those rooted in a tradition of independence and power sharing, it may still be possible to (re)generate sufficient empowerment to formulate movements of resistance and alternatives to that superpower' (Horsley 2011:15).

For the sake of clarity, what Horsley regards as the plethora of dominant powers involved in the lives' of people in the ancient world, are the following:

The powers of Empire, referring to biblical and other Near Eastern sources, 'do not share Enlightenment theology of sophisticated intellectuals (ancient and modern), that demythologize these superhuman Powers, imagining that they were 'just' vestiges of a pre-rational worldview or even just a certain pre-modern mode of language' (Horsley 2011:17). Profound to this study is the unequalled (super-) power of the Romans that used 'shock and awe methods' (such as the 'scorched earth' method, later also used in South African colonization by the European imperialists) to expand their *imperium*. With these brutal tactics, the Romans could oppress their provinces to mere servants and slaves by 'civilizing' them. Here the power of Empire is enforced through military 'hard power' (reference to the British forces in Cape Town and Port Natal, 1795-1910, and U.S. forces in Iraq 2003-present). Military power, however, does not operate by itself. Therefore, the Romans used a sense of mission, an underlying ideology,¹⁰⁹ to support the idea of colonization, also understood as civilizing barbaric or uncivilized people groups. Enslavement always

¹⁰⁸ Below (see § 4.2.1.4 and § 4.3-4.3.3) the discussion of Jesus' mission in terms of the proclamation of the kingdom of God is discussed in more detail.

¹⁰⁹ Horsley (2011:25) refers here to the American ideology known as the 'Manifest Destiny'. See also the compact and incisive account of the American ideology of Stephanson (1995) 'for statements by American religious leaders, presidents and senators that is strikingly parallel to statements by distinguished Romans such as Cicero.'

follows colonization and its examples can be seen in the Roman Empire in first century BCE that accumulated slaves to '40% of the total estimated population, the same percentage as the slaves in the southern United States in the nineteenth-century' (Horsley 2011:29). This statistic¹¹⁰ is to point to the reality of displacement through slavery to which the Galileans and Judeans were subjects. If they could not pay the tributes and taxes to their oppressors, they had to become sharecroppers on their own land, or forced off their land to become wage labourers. Military power and the power of ideology, or mission,¹¹¹ were also centralized to keep an even stronger hold on the oppressed. For example, the Roman circuses and triumphs were held to sustain and entertain Roman citizens. The produce that was spent at these occasions could only have come from 'pyramids of power' that were collected by client kings such as Herod, who subjected whole communities to his building projects, self-enrichment, and tributes to be paid to Augustus who held the circuses on ancient 'Capitol Hill'. The powers of empire were devastatingly real and fuelled on by the greed and ambition for power. Israel caught up in this web, was still loyal to one God with whom they were in a covenant (Horsley 2011:32-35).

Israel's covenant and prophetic protest was firmly rooted in their 'cherished origins as independent people and an alternative society' (Horsley 2011:43). Israel's deliverance was attributed to one more powerful than the natural-economic-political of the ancient imperial civilizations. In the covenant were principles of political-economic cooperation and justice, with power shared in the community. The imperial power of Rome that oppressed them could not understand and/or 'tolerate the Israelite people's exclusive loyalty to a transcendent power and the principles of political-economic justice that had become embodied in resilient 'Mosaic' and prophetic traditions' (Horsley 2011:43). They found it difficult simply to compromise and acquiesce their commitments even in the face of invasion by the above-mentioned imperial powers. Horsley explains why this tradition of independence was so strong by referring to the long history of resistance of Israel against imperial

¹¹⁰ Horsley draws from Hopkins (1978:7, 9, 67) who did an elaborate analysis that is well documented.

¹¹¹ The example of 'Christian mission' informed by popular and dislodged gospel texts are starting to draw some embarrassing attention, especially where the voice of the oppressed, or the reality of the native, are weighed against the ideology of the powerful.

forces such as 'Egypt, Philistines, their own imperial kingship, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and the Persian Temple-state' (Horsley 2011:44-60). Important to note is that under the Persian Temple-state, even though they had to maintain Persian order in Judea, those being exiled viewed themselves as the restored elite of a new exodus;¹¹² but only in the sense as a virtue in being a humble and obedient local elite, with little or none of the glory of imperial power or wealth.

Far from imposing justice on other people [Cf. Is 42:1, 4, 6] from a position of power over them, the servant of YHWH was to embody justice in a covenantal community in abject humility as an example to other peoples. Even in acquiescence to imperial rule, some had confidence that it was possible to establish covenantal community as an alternative to replicating imperial power relations in Judean society itself.

(Horsley 2011:61)

Jesus considered himself as being part of this covenant and realized his own origin in it, as well as the responsibility a servant of YHWH had. According to Horsley, the renewal of the covenant 'between God and Israel made at Mount Sinai was the very centre of Jesus' preaching in the Synoptic Gospels' (Horsley 2011:131). Jesus understood and recollected from this social memory the fundamental truths to being true to a people with one God. Examples are: serving through being humble, and secondly, imposing distributive justice (social-political-economic-religious) for other peoples. This is an essential/nativist characteristic about the servants of YHWH. John 4's woman shares in it, Jesus shares in it, every mouth that shared on the few loaves of bread and fishes, and every disciple that shared the Last Supper with Jesus, shared in it. 'Jesus' covenantal renewal speech (Lk 6/Q 6:20-49) addresses economic and social conflict between families hard-pressed by the pressures of the Roman imperial rule' (Horsley 2011:140). Horsley understands this speech as not just another teaching, but rather, a 'performative speech' that enacts what it states; 'by restoring their mutual cooperation and solidarity, villagers could resist the further disintegration of their communities' (Horsley 2011:140). Horsley relates this renewal of covenant speech of Jesus as integral to his mission of the renewal of Israel.

¹¹² Horsley here uses the work of Gottwald (1992:43-57), a section in which Gottwald discusses the social classes and ideology of Isaiah.

The power of hope manifests itself in the lives of the followers of the Mosaic tradition, cherishing a popularized social memory that their God will deliver them, again, from oppression. Horsley (2011:63-86) refers in this regard to the development of 'heavenly power' and 'people power'. Heavenly power was understood as the God of Israel who delivered the nation from oppression and still holds true to the covenant made with the chosen nation. This covenant, however, was collaborative and participative. As long as the people sat back and waited for God to step in and take action, their expectations are discontent. Then, without participation in the covenant, the people resorted to terrorism. The Roman elite and their client kings with the priestly aristocracy's oppression deemed impossible to resist through the scribes' and intellectual's influence. The subjected people could not tolerate this oppression any longer. An example of such a violent movement was the Sicarii, an extremist splinter group of the dagger-men with their Persian-like *sicae*.¹¹³ In other forms, peasants reacted through popular movements and revolt rooted in the fundamental social forms and traditional customs and culture of peasant life, against those who determined the conditions under which they lived.¹¹⁴ Why did these groups revolt by themselves and not waited on the scribes and priests to start a revolt? It is because they were oppressed and could not tolerate it anymore. They had hope to be delivered from oppression, and their hope was that a prophet like figure, an icon, someone that was similar to Moses, or Elijah, would emerge; someone that could act with authority. This was the power of hope, primarily in their God, via the performance of a *new* Moses. Jesus arrived in the perfect place at a time prone for revolt, anxious with expectation. 'Jesus catalysed a movement in the village communities' (Horsley 2011:93), and they followed him because their memory of Moses (and Joshua and Elijah) was justified by Jesus as the expected liberator. On this point, Horsley is very critical on modern scholars and Western political scientists who understand politics in relatively narrow terms of public office and therefore assume that Jesus did not engage in politics. However, even though Jesus did not lead a revolt, according to the Gospels, he must have done so through religious-cultural activity (Horsley 2011:93). When Jesus stated that πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ· μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεῦετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ (Mk 1:15), or

¹¹³ Josephus calls them 'a different type of brigand' (Josephus, *War* 2.13.3; *Ant.* 20.8.10).

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Horsley (1995) on the fundamental social forms of village community and family.

μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί, ὅτι ὑμετέρα ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (Lk6/Q 6:20), his ‘performative speech’ resonated with the villagers and effected God’s blessing upon them. They followed Jesus because they understood his teaching as the will of God. ‘Through them [parables and speeches], hearers are invited to see the prolific activity of God flourishing among them and to know themselves embraced by God’s compassion-beyond-measure’ (McEvoy 2014:132). This ‘report’ of Jesus, however, according to Horsley, is not interpreted today in this vein because of Jesus being typified as a teacher, and not as someone whose actions were directly directed against oppressive powers.

Jesus’s struggle for power, according to Horsley, is found in his *performances* of exorcisms and healings.¹¹⁵ ‘The first two narrative steps of the Gospel [of Mark] (1:16-3:35; 4:35-8:26) that deal with Jesus’ mission in Galilee consist mainly of twelve episodes of exorcism and healing. The third narrative stem (8:27-10:52) is framed by two episodes of healing of blind people and include a lengthy exorcism episode’ (Horsley 2011:109). These narratives, according to Horsley, are the very heart of the Jesus mission. Horsley adds that ‘prophetic teaching’ also was part of this mission (see Lk/Q 7:18-23; 10:2-16). Horsley argues that ‘Jesus is thus transmitting power to the people of Galilee and beyond that enables them to overcome debilitating illnesses and possession by ‘unclean spirits’. This empowerment, to Horsley, is not ‘magical’ or ‘miraculous works’ as the equivalent of the modern concept of it, ‘and certainly no equivalent of the modern Western dichotomy between the natural and miraculous or the ‘supernatural’ (Horsley 2011:110).

By the mid-second century, opponents of the nascent ‘Christian’ were charging that Jesus had been working magic. In the first-century Gospels, however, Jesus is castigated for healing on the Sabbath, accused of casting out demons by Beelzebul, and executed as (rebel) ‘king of the Judeans’, but he is not accused of practicing magic.

(Horsley 2011:110)

These acts (performances) of Jesus are understood by Horsley as ‘acts of power’ that enabled the people to not only realize that they can free themselves from their

¹¹⁵ See Horsley (2010; 2008:41-58) for a more elaborate description of the impact and significance of Jesus’ exorcism’s and healing performed.

circumstances, but that they already possessed 'the power' to do so. The people of the Mediterranean world were under the yoke of the oppressive, imperialistic, and alien power from other regions. Their own understanding of what was sinful, bad, dark and unclean were personified through these colonizers and they questioned themselves because of it. For example, they asked themselves: 'What sinful wrongs did we do to deserve such resistance?' This must have been the same effect people from Africa experienced when different 'alien' influences started to erode their nativist life-style. It devastated the villagers, both in Galilee and later in Africa, when the colonizers pursued and enslaved them with the mission of *civilizing* them. To Horsley this is significant because Jesus' exorcisms were 'acts of power' that brought the struggle between God versus Satan (read: unjust) to a climax. Jesus overcomes these 'dark' forces, and is an example of the 'demise of the demonic force' that influenced the oppressed people's lives. The rule of the darkness had fallen, and was overcome, by Jesus. Jesus acts with authority casting out demons, renewing the people's understanding of the power of overcoming 'alien' (as in opposite of native) oppressive forces through faith. Jesus confronts these powers directly and his confrontation, through truth, offended those with 'power'.

Speaking truth to power is the way in which Jesus confronted the authorities of his time. Jesus, assisted by his envoys sent to work in village communities, 'transformed the long-standing ideology and the people's resentment into excitement about the coming of God's kingdom of justice and the renewal of covenantal community in their villages' (Horsley 2011:160). Jesus strengthened the cooperation and solidarity of the village communities to resist further encroachment by the various layers of rulers. Speaking 'truth to power' was a direct and explicit confrontation, in public, of political resistance, especially the bold declaration of popular opposition in the face of violent repression. According to Horsley, Jesus' crucifixion most probably was the result of him going up to Jerusalem and posing a significant threat to the Roman imperial order. He was more than just a lonely oracle prophet who pronounced judgment on the temple and city; he also brought with him an entourage. 'He was the leader of a movement in the tradition of Moses and Elijah' (Horsley 2011:172). Jesus then spoke 'truth' openly in the temple. Not only did he forcibly disrupt the temple operations, it 'was also a profanation of the most sacrosanct institution and a challenge to imperial rule. It was prophetic action symbolizing God's judgment' (Horsley 2011:172). When

Jesus confronts the Roman imperial rule, it is placed in the broader confrontation between the oppressed Israelite people and the Roman domination. This is what made the Pharisees' confrontation an intended trap for Jesus. The direct confrontation is about the 'Pharisees [who] knew very well, on the one hand, that the Romans looked upon failure to pay the tribute as tantamount to rebellion and that the high priests who headed the temple-state collected the tribute for the Romans, on whom their own position of power and privilege depended' (Horsley 2011:175; 2014:139). On the other hand, the 'Pharisees, as the recognized interpreters of the laws of the Judeans, also knew very well that payment of the tribute to Caesar was *not* lawful according to Israelite tradition' (Horsley 2011:175; Cf. 2014:151-153). They asked Jesus (Mk12:14): 'διδάσκαλε, οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθῆς εἶ καὶ οὐ μέλει σοι περὶ οὐδενός, οὐ γὰρ βλέπεις εἰς πρόσωπον ἀνθρώπων, ἀλλ' ἐπ' ἀληθείας τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ θεοῦ διδάσκεις· ἔξεστιν δοῦναι κῆνσον καίσαρι ἢ οὐ; δῶμεν ἢ μὴ δῶμεν;' Obviously the Pharisees anticipated Jesus to answer sincerely and truthfully according to Israelite tradition, which will then be the proof that Jesus is susceptible to arrest because of inciting rebellion against the Roman rule. Jesus' answer, however, explicitly spoke 'truth to power', by which he eluded the trap 'but states the implications of Israel's exclusive loyalty to God with unmistakable clarity' (Horsley 2011:175): 'ὁ δὲ ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, τὰ καίσαρος ἀπόδοτε καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ (12:17).' Jesus displayed to every one present at this public confrontation that everything belongs to God, and that the payment is not lawful according to Israelite tradition, καὶ ἐξεθαύμαζον ἐπ' αὐτῷ (Mk 12:17). According to Horsley (2011:175), this was not an example of a call to arms by Jesus but rather a 'clear declaration of independence of Roman rule and of life under God's rule.' It is also at this point where the powerlessness and ongoing subjugation of the people of Israel should be appreciated. This moment is the start of the breakthrough to open and activate resistance of Jesus' followers. Jesus, later crucified, marks the event that gave sudden voice to the people. To Horsley this example of opposition in the public sphere confronted people to take action. A number of factors intensified the impact of his 'speaking truth to power':

1. Passover as setting is already a highly religious-politically charged festival for his politically charged confrontation.
2. He not only spoke out but also acted out demonstratively and forcibly his and his people's anger the way their resources were being drained away to the Temple and the Roman tribute.

3. His forcible demonstration of the people's indignation was a blatant profanation of a long and deeply institutionalized sacred space and of sacred rituals of subordination.
4. The traditional prophetic forms Jesus spoke in and acted resonated with the memories of earlier prophetic heroes and the more recent announcement by John the Baptist that one was coming after him who would baptize with fire as well as with Spirit.

(Horsley 2011:175-176)

Horsley draws from Scott (1990:207-208), who adds to these factors the probable reaction of the followers of a leader. There is 'a sense of personal release, satisfaction, pride, and elation' that indignant subjugated people feel when their spokesperson speaks truth instead of more submissive lies (Scott 1990:208, in Horsley 2011:176). Now the followers can actually express the response they had on many previous occasions choked back to avoid repressive consequences. Horsley understands this, with Jesus' crucifixion, as the moment the Jesus movement began, with 'Jesus speaking truth to power at Passover time in Jerusalem', and then died as a martyr on the cross (Horsley 2011:175).

Horsley describes the powers that were active in Roman Palestine as integral to understanding the actions taken by both Jesus movements in reaction to imperial rule, and the oppression asserted by the imperialistic regime. Horsley is of the opinion that if one can 'appreciate the reality of powers that figure prominently in the Gospels and their component episodes and speeches, then it may also be possible to gain a fuller appreciation of Jesus' mission in its historical context' (Horsley 2011:10-11). The anachronistic assumptions about these powers has to be resolved and identified as potential stumbling blocks to appreciate the integrated impact of these powers active in Roman Palestine. This includes the ideology found in the gospels introduced by their authors. This study considers the diverse powers important because of their impact on both the oppressor and the oppressed. Globalization with its own ancient and modern (neo-) imperialistic powers numbs the efforts of believers across the world. On the one hand, there is the acquiescence of globalized systems that forces religion to secondary, even trivial, importance of daily life. On the other hand, it forces steadfast believers to compromise and relativize faith for the sake of eluding confrontation. As believers in God, they, and us today, become numb to faith because of these influences that is overpowering. Jesus understood that his fellow communities needed to be reminded of a God that holds a

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covenant with them. Jesus' actions overthrew these powers by being an example of God's manifest destiny on earth.

4.2.1.4 Crucifixion as the *kairos*-moment for renewal

According to Horsley, the most certain fact of the life of the historical Jesus is that Jesus was 'was crucified by order of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate' (Horsley 2014:154). Horsley is of opinion that the Roman elite would not have crucified 'a sage who taught an itinerant individual lifestyle or an apocalyptic visionary who preached the 'end of the world' (Horsley 2014:154). Jesus was the catalyst of a movement already underway by the time he reached Jerusalem supposedly on a donkey, but a movement, nonetheless, that was constituted as a 'breakthrough' that energized the rapid expansion of the movement of renewal of Israel' (Horsley 2014:154). For Horsley the resurrection, and all the theories surrounding it, was not the decisive moment that started the Jesus-movement; the moment that inspired the movement was the crucifixion.

The power of crucifixion is categorized as a 'public display of power' (Horsley 2011:180). Horsley explains the torturous death reserved for those who were made examples of: it was designed to terrorize subject peoples into submission. Crucifixion was the most brutal mode of execution in antiquity, 'the most wretched of deaths' (Josephus, *War* 7, in Horsley 2014:156). The impact of crucifixion was more than just the ultimate punishment, rather,

it sought to display its absolute power over human life by rendering those who resisted utterly powerless ... paradoxically however, in the crucifixion of Jesus the display of power that Rome used to render subjects powerless was transformed into power to form communities of an alternative social order and, when necessary, to maintain solidarity against repressive measures by the local or imperial authorities.

(Horsley 2011:180)

Did Jesus then die as the expected Messiah on the cross? Horsley suggests the contrary. When regarding the crucifixion as an important/informative action at the time of the movement of Jesus, it is also important to understand why his death is important to his followers. Did their Messiah die? Did just another prophet die in a line of similar insurgents? According to Horsley, the following three sources depict Jesus, contradictory to popular scholarship, not as the 'Messiah':

1. **Q-Speeches** depict Jesus as the latest and most important in a long line of Israelite prophets, and at points the speeches present him as killed by the rulers as many of the prophets had been (Lk/Q 7:18-35; 11:47-51; 13:34).
2. **Mark's Gospel** does not present Jesus as having been crucified 'because he claimed to be or was acclaimed as the Messiah or a popular king. The Markan narrative of confrontation (Mk 11-12; 14:1-2) states rather that the high priests and the scribes sought to arrest Jesus because of his public condemnations of the Temple and ruling aristocracy, that is, as a prophet, which is consistent with his role throughout the Gospel story as a prophet.'
3. Early views in **Acts** understand the sequence of events not as crucifixion-as-messiah and the resurrection, but as crucifixion followed by resurrection and only *then* divine appointment of the exalted Jesus as *Messiah*.

(Horsley 2011:193-94; emphasis in the original)

For Horsley the importance of the crucifixion of Jesus¹¹⁶ for the Jesus-movement was not found in the empty tomb, but earlier 'in the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus in response to his confrontation of the rulers' (Horsley 2011:202). To understand the condemnation of the rulers and his crucifixion and the Jesus movement(s), 'one must appreciate the effects of coercive power and dehumanization on subjected people, and the creative forms of political resistance that people can muster' (Horsley 2014:163). To Horsley, when Mark includes the divine vindication of Jesus in the rending of the curtain of the Temple just at the moment of Jesus' death on the cross, followed by the centurion's recognition: 'ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν' (Mk 15:39) signifies the moment for the 'empowering event for the dynamic expansion of the movement he had begun' (Horsley 2011:202). Now the movement has the attention of the oppressive rulers, which required active opposition from them (Horsley 2014:166).

This means that Jesus' followers continue their movement in opposition to the imperial order in imitation of Jesus, in full awareness that they too may face crucifixion. Mark's Gospel places the key admonition by Jesus immediately after this announcement of the crucifixion and his rebuke of Peter's misunderstanding about "messiahship" (8:34-9:1). Jesus followers must expect that they may be required to "take up their [own] cross," boldly facing their own condemnation – but in the confidence that they will be vindicated in the divine judgment and that the direct rule of God will soon be "coming with power."

(Horsley 2011:204; 2014:167)

¹¹⁶ See Horsley (2014:160-163) for his explanation of *why* Jesus was crucified by the rulers. 'The point is that the Gospel sources portray a direct connection between Jesus' exorcisms, healing and actions, and his arrest and crucifixion' (Horsley 2014:163).

From within the community a power arose that was rooted in the conviction that the God of Israel was again ‘acting for their deliverance and fulfilling their longings for a life of dignity’ (Horsley 2011:210). Through their solidarity, the communities realized again that they could function as an alternative society under the rule of God (Horsley 2014:127). Jesus’ active performance of their history, their shared social memory, resonated with them and emboldened them to imitate Jesus’ mission and ‘expand the movements in resistance to, and despite periodic repression by, the powers that still determined the conditions of their lives’ (Horsley 2011:211).

4.2.2 Horsley’s Roman Palestine

Often cited in debates about the historical Jesus is Schweitzer’s comment that scholars’ interpretations of Jesus can be compared to someone looking down into a well and seeing his own image reflected.

(Horsley 2012:150)

As mentioned at the onset of this Chapter, Horsley questions popular assumptions that does not hold true when weighed against historical criticism. It is as if, after years of research, Horsley learned that one should also lean in and look into others’ wells to identify the origin of their reflections to test them for viability and assumptions. Horsley’s Roman Palestine and his depiction of Jesus’ active catalytic life in it do not always resonate with other scholars. However, it does question popular assumptions for the sake of spreading light on controversial elements of Biblical studies.

This study draws from Horsley purposely because of that characteristic. The Roman Palestine Horsley defines as complex and sometimes viewed with anachronistic assumptions, also has elements of continuity. For example, the followers of YHWH share in the same common heritage, even though they have a turbulent history. That essential element binds them. Furthermore, without trying to oversimplify, they share in the marginalization of a variety of oppressors over their history that colonizes them as an independent nation, a nation with one God. A nation, under Roman rule, that shares the social memory of a covenant in history to which they all belong. Horsley’s Palestine, viewed as a whole, through the Gospels, then makes sense, in terms of the Jesus for which he argues. Horsley’s Jesus cannot be excavated from his diverse surroundings. He cannot be viewed as an individualistic oracle teaching

virtues to Israel's provinces. No, Jesus is actively involved, with his people, for his people. In his latest book, Horsley brings more fuller and precise historical knowledge of the historical context and the implications of recent research to bear on investigation of the historical Jesus. As Horsley views Jesus as impossible to be extracted from Roman Palestine as a religious figure, it is impossible to extract Jesus' faithful mission, in our modern understanding as Christian Mission, from the realities of Globalization and its marginalizing effect. Moreover, that goes today for the institutionalized church with the responsibility of renewing Israel everyday as the kingdom of God.

4.3 KINGDOM NARRATIVES OF JESUS

4.3.1 Richard Horsley's kingdom of God and 'renewal of Israel'

The idea of the coming kingdom came alive when it was connected with the conviction of God's living power...now the coming kingdom appeared not as a goal toward which men were travelling but as the end which was hastening toward them.... (Niebuhr 1956:137)

When the doctrine of the kingdom of God is lacking in theology, the salvation of the individual is seen in its relation to the Church and to the future life, but not in its relation to the task of saving the social order. (Rauschenbusch 1945:138)

Horsley, as seen above, reads the gospels as holistic narratives, interpreting the mission of Jesus as the *renewal of Israel*. Horsley also does not separate political, economic, and religious contexts (Roman Palestine) from each other. He views them as integrated in the world of first-century Roman Palestine. This integrated reality that the villagers shared in was oppressive and obviously hard to survive in. The communities and families therein were disintegrating because of the pressures from the Roman elite, the high-priestly aristocracy, and the client kings of the Romans. As seen above (see § 4.2.1-4.2.2) Horsley describes Jesus, and his first followers, as catalytic to a movement actively involved with the village communities.

Jesus also shared the people's difficulties and understood their plea for liberation. He shared in the social memory and the history of the covenant that YHWH had with Israel. Jesus *performed* speeches and his own understanding of the covenant to the

people, and it resonated with them. Jesus' declarations that accompanied his actions was perceived as astonishing as they were 'empowering to villagers in despair about their disintegrating families and communities' (Horsley 2011:98). Jesus' recital of the kingdom of God was integral to understanding the relevance of his speeches to village listeners.

Through Jesus, acted upon what he said, the people remembered that God of Israel had a covenant with them and that he will respond to them under the pressure from Herod and Caesar. Jesus' 'performative speech' (Lk 6:20 for e.g., μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί, ὅτι ὑμετέρα ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ) was a form of speech-act that not only conveyed a message, but also 'effect what they pronounce' (Horsley 2011:99). When Jesus pronounced the kingdom of God, it resonated with the listening villagers and affected God's blessing upon them. When we interpret these performances of Jesus in the gospel accounts, Horsley argues that the 'concrete circumstances of the ancient Galilean village life that Jesus addressed and how the 'kingdom of God resonated with them in that context' (Horsley 2011:100) should be taken into consideration. It may therefore be useful to use the following structure about the 'renewal of Israel' and the 'kingdom of God' as theme to read the gospel of Mark:

Mark's Gospel	Renewal of Israel over against Rulers	Mark's Gospel	Kingdom of God as theme of Gospel Mark
1:1-13	John announces coming of prophet like Moses/Elijah		
1:14-15	Jesus (as prophet) proclaims the kingdom of God is at hand	1:15	– kingdom of God is at hand – Theme of story as a whole
1:16-3:35	Jesus (as prophet) campaigns in Galilee, healing, saving, exorcising as manifestations of God's rule ,and calling the twelve as representatives of renewed Israel.	3:22-27	– kingdom of God is implicit, declared happening in Jesus' exorcisms
4:1-34	Jesus teaches mystery of kingdom in parables	4:11	– secret kingdom of God; parables of kingdom of God (4:26, 30)
4:35-8:22/26	Jesus (as prophet) like Moses/Elijah enacting renewal of Israel in sea crossings, exorcisms, healings, wilderness feedings, and insisting on	4:26, 30	– parables of kingdom of God

Mark's Gospel	Renewal of Israel over against Rulers	Mark's Gospel	Kingdom of God as theme of Gospel Mark
	covenantal communities		
8:22/26-10:45/52	Jesus (as prophet) like Moses/Elijah teaching renewed covenantal principles as criteria for entering kingdom of God, with his own suffering as positive example juxtaposed twelve disciples as negative examples	9:1 9:47 10:14-15 10:23, 24, 25	– kingdom of God coming in power – enter the kingdom of God – belong to/receive kingdom of God – enter kingdom of God
11:1-13:1-2	Jesus (as prophet) proclaims judgment of Temple, high priests	11:10	– coming of the kingdom of David
		12:34	– not far from kingdom of God
14-15	Jesus (as prophet) renews covenant, anticipating kingdom of God; is arrested and tried by high priests, then crucified by the Romans	14:25	drink cup of renewed covenant in kingdom of God
		15:43	waiting expectantly for kingdom of God
16:1-8	Jesus rises and leads way to Galilee (for continuation of movement)		

(Horsley 2003:74-75)

Horsley relies on this outline to show how, when reading the narrative of Mark as a whole, the 'dominant theme running throughout the Gospel is (the presence of) the kingdom of God' (Horsley 2003:75).

This study draws from Horsley for two reasons: First, the hearers of the performed speeches are mostly villagers that have an underlying hope for liberation from their current intolerable, supposedly inescapable, reality of Roman oppression. Also, that the 'kingdom of God' was a 'central symbol, deeply rooted in Israelite tradition, of the life that the people were supposed to have under the direct rule of their God as

king...’ (Horsley 2011:100). YHWH, Israel’s only God, is the one who chose them as nation to be liberated from Egypt, or so they believed because to the covenant.

We do know, however, that the memory of Yahweh's great acts of salvation—in the exodus, the way through the wilderness, the conquest of the promised land, and the several defensive holy wars led by the judges—was prominent in Judean society from the Persian period on.

(Horsley & Hanson 1985:150)

The rule of God, as king, therefore was a reality in their daily lives. Important to note that this was not, as popularly believed, a purely religious relationship between God, as King, and his *servants* (Israel). Rather, the rule of God, understood as the ‘kingdom of God, was thus political, or rather more comprehensively a political-economic, as well as religious symbol ... [and] was articulated and structured as a functioning polity by the Mosaic covenant’ (Horsley 2011:100).

‘What will Roman Palestine look like when God of Israel sits on the throne of Caesar?’ This forms the foundation for the social memory in which Israel shared, and probably still do. The Roman oppression, however, did not allow this underlying narrative of the followers of the Mosaic covenant to bring offers only to their own/only God. Rather, the effects of colonization forced the oppressed into portraying characteristics of servant-hood with the system (i.e., ambivalence). Then, without specific intention, but rather for the sake of survival, the oppressed mimics the oppressors’ demands, ideology, and culture. As mentioned in § 3.2.5 ‘mimicry occurs as a result of colonial ambivalence ... [i]t thus disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonial domination because it disturbs the simple relationship between colonizer and the colonized’ (Samuel 2007:28). The communities therefore had to portray this image of servants to the Romans for the sake of survival. Ironically, the inevitable, as suggested by Ashcroft (*et al.* 1988:14), is that it ‘leads to an ambivalence that disables its monolithic dominance’. Therefore, even though the villagers had an ambivalent relationship regarding Roman rule, because of the interconnectedness of religious-political economics they had to bring tribute to Caesar as well. In principle, this was unlawful according to the Mosaic covenant, but was the hard reality the people had to face while being in the kingdom of God and the (kingdom of) Roman Empire. Jesus is the living example of the kingdom of God alone in Israel. This opened their eyes to God’s presence and their responsibility to the covenant. ‘The

ideal of life is no longer subject to the invasive and oppressive powers of empire but directly under the rule of God is now happening' (Horsley 2011:101)

Second, this study recognizes how Horsley draws an affirmation between kingdom of God and the social memory the people of Israel shared. It was not something new Jesus offered them. According to Horsley, the villagers were 'informed by the deep memory of early Israel's independent life under their divine ruler, the long-hoped-for renewal of Israel is now at hand' (Horsley 2011:101). Jesus brings this by *performing* the petitions to God, for example through the Lord's Prayer. Jesus prayed (as a prophet) with the people he encountered and encouraged them to petition their need to God; not only for the sake of deliverance, but also to reintroduce the covenant of a God that is present with them in the kingdom of God. He taught them how to use the same 'performative speech' he used. They had to memorize, re-enact, and repeat to one another in a reliable way: For example, performative speech is used here to exclaim that, the Lord's Prayer 'as a whole also points to its earthly meaning.' To see this most clearly, we need to remember that Jesus' primary audience was the peasant class (Borg 2003:133).

Jesus, according to Horsley, teaches his listeners the first and last petitions of the Lord's Prayer engirdle the requests they have. The performative strategy effects what they pronounce. The kingdom becomes a reality again through participation. No longer can the nation be idle in action, but has to practically live the words they pray.

The petitions in Mt 6:10-13 'could not be more concretely economic and political' (Horsley 2011:103-104). They are hungry, they are struggling under heavy taxation and tributes, and it is an inescapable fact that they still had to care for each other, as the law requires. The petitions are not merely to have *some* bread, or be relieved of their *current* taxes, it is about the fact that they pray for God's kingdom wherein there is *enough* bread. 'The coming of God's Kingdom involves bread and debt forgiveness' (Borg 2003:113). For Crossan it asks

what this world would look like if and when God sat on Caesar's throne, or if and when God lived in Antipas's palace. That is very clear in these parallel phrases of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in

heaven.’ The Kingdom of God is about the Will of God for this earth here below. That earthly presence agrees, of course, with everything we have seen so far about apocalyptic eschatological expectation. It is about the transformation of this world into holiness, not the evacuation of this world into heaven.

(Crossan 2007:117)

Jesus refreshed their memories through deliberate performance of petitioning to God through this prayer. There is another effect this performance had on them: ‘The equitable economics anticipated in the Lord’s Prayer, moreover, was not a matter of demanding that the heavenly Father do everything for them’ (Horsley 2011:104). Rather, realizing that it is possible to live in the reality of the kingdom, the ‘petition about debts presupposes and belongs in the context of village communities involved in a movement in which, empowered by the hope of the kingdom’s coming, the people are able to revive covenantal cooperation’ (Horsley 2011:104). As described later in Acts 2, these communities, as part of the movement of Jesus take up the example of Jesus and literally take action. Barth (1981:168) adds to this discussion by stating that ‘the law of prayer is the law of action’. In our being faithful, we are commanded to pray for these things. The practical result for us is that ‘those who look back to the first revelation of the hallowing of God’s name that took place in Christ, and who also look forward to its second and final revelation, cannot come to terms and be satisfied with the status quo’ (Barth 1981:173). The format of the first communities of the Jesus movement, or *first followers*, took form in local communities of which we have, at best, only a vague description. These communities were real people in real places. Horsley (1989:106) shows that Acts 2:44-45 and 4:32-35 are an idealized projection of a ‘joyous group of Jesus followers’ that gathered in Jerusalem and sold their possessions for the sake of the needy. The movement, sharing in the coming of the kingdom started to perform the covenant in a renewed, practical, way. What did they do? They lived for the *ecclesia*; understood as communities, they were local chapters of international alternative societies where people took care of one another.¹¹⁷

Jesus launched a mission not only to heal the debilitating effects of Roman military violence and economic exploitation, but also to revitalize and rebuild the people’s cultural spirit and communal vitality. In these manifestations of God’s action for the

¹¹⁷Unpublished lecture in Jerusalem by Horsley; see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIG2QEEvdM0>.

people, and in his offering the kingdom of God to the poor, the hungry, and despairing people, Jesus instilled hope in a seemingly hopeless situation. The key to the emergence of a movement from Jesus' mission, however, was his renewal of covenantal community, calling the people to common cooperation action to arrest the disintegration of their communities and to revitalize their cooperation and mutual support.

(Horsley 2003:126-127)

This is the renewal of Israel, living in the kingdom of God with justice. The problem for the followers of the Mosaic covenant and the 'Gentiles' was, however, that the kingdom of God (depicted by Jesus) was merely one kingdom amongst other more dominant kingdoms that influenced their daily lives. This was the catalyst for action, indeed for revolt, therefore, 'we who pray for the future sanctifying of God's name cannot accept its present desecration ... so we are in revolt and resistance against the regime of vacillation', says Barth (1981:123). For Israel, there is only one God (Dt 6:4) and one kingdom that encourages them to take action, in their zeal for the honouring of God.

4.3.2 The presence of the kingdom(s)

Kingdom in the sense of space is multidimensional in first-century Roman Palestine and relative to the respective contexts of the different groups of peoples. Palestine had been under one imperial rule after the other since the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonian armies in 587 BCE. By the time of Jesus's mission, the kingdom(s) of Palestine was the imperial system of the Romans. Through the client kings, appointed by this Roman kingdom, the semi-independent kingdom of Palestine was ruled by the priestly aristocracy. Opposing this multi-layered kingdom of Rome and the client kings was the kingdom of God. Understood as a time of oppression through imperialistic forces, whether Roman or through the priestly aristocracy, colonization of the whole of Roman Palestine was the reality of the once independent people of Israel. From the essentialist/nativist model postcolonial critique used in this study, specifically focusing on the oppressed, this multi-layered system of kingdoms had an ambivalent effect on the people. 'It is important to recognize that relations between the dominant empire and the subject people are full of tension and conflict' (Horsley 1993:4). When considering the impact it had on the native people, a possible understanding of Jesus' mission can be interpreted. In addition, understanding the reason why people would follow a kingdom represented

by Jesus, could be informative as to what the elements of such a kingdom of God consisted of.

According to Horsley (1993:4), the 'relation between empire and subject people is one of power.' The domination had an impact not only on religious life; it was essentially integrated into the political-economic-cultural environment of Palestine, including Jesus' Galilee. The interests of these kingdom(s) in these environments are only relevant to the rulers of each respectively. The Romans had their mission and interest in the Palestine provinces, the client kings and high priestly aristocracy had their own interests linked to the temple, and the people had their own interests. As mentioned above, the circumstances affecting the (kingdom) world of the native people became so atrociously intolerable that the reference (social memory) they shared of an equitable life (exclusive to Israel, the chosen nation) faded away because of these two dominating kingdoms imposed upon them.

Regarding then Roman Palestine from a postcolonial optic, Van Eck argues that each of these 'kingdoms had their gospels, claimed the favour of God or the gods, had their patrons, and all three had a mission with a concomitant ethics' (Van Eck 2013:3). He lists them as Rome's kingdom, the Temple elite's kingdom and the kingdom of God, with their respective gospels and patrons.

Rome's imperial theology claimed that Rome was chosen by the gods to rule an empire without end (mission). To show these gods' rule, will and blessings, Rome claimed sovereignty over sea and land, and all its inhabitants; the 'right' to domination, power and violence (ethics). Rome was 'the lords of the world', with Caesar as main benefactor or patron (identity). The result of this ideology was the pax Romana, a peace gained through violence. This was Rome's gospel.

(Van Eck 2013:27-28)

Rome's gospel had direct impact on the world of the once independent nation of YHWH. 'God's call of Israel to be his people, to live under his rule, was itself designed as the central move in putting the world to right' (Wright 2011:33). Israel, as chosen nation of YHWH, was struggling to find its identity and destiny as the covenant people through and for whom God's justice would ultimately break into this world. Living under the covenant, Israel was (supposed to be) modelling authentic human existence that God willed for the world. This essential element (being God's chosen nation) in Israel's history became the key factor shaping them into a nation

who longed for the coming of the kingdom (of God). However, under Rome's gospel, this 'responsibility' became unattainable. Accomplishing the goal of God's sovereign rule over all of humanity was replaced by an ideology of an alternative (Rome's) kingdom, implemented by brutal force.

Jesus understood this dilemma the communities had. He reintroduced the covenant of God through his speech-acts that signified the kingdom (of God) as being near. Wright (2011:37) refers to Brueggemann (1997:146) that interprets Psalm 33:6 to explain this speech-act's authority in Jesus' time: 'The imagery is of a powerful sovereign who utters a decree from the throne, issues a fiat, and in every utterance the thing is done.' Still, even though Jesus' words have an effect, the people struggled to grasp the significance of it due to the alien ideology, kingship and kingdom of Rome ruling over them. Colonized under the Roman rule the people were further oppressed by their own religious tradition that (unlawfully) became a kingdom in itself.

The ideology of the Temple elite was based on the understanding of God as holy, expressed by creation as the divine order of the world. To replicate God's holiness was to separate the ritually and social clean and unclean, a purity code that defined a society centred on the temple and its priests (mission). Acting as God's 'appointed' patrons (identity), priestly elite preserved their power and privilege by always taking the side of Rome, accumulating wealth through tithes and offerings and adding peasant land to their estates by investing in loans (ethics). The result of this ideology was 'peace', gained through systemic violence by drawing boundaries to exclude the impure and social expendables. This was the gospel of the Temple elite.

(Van Eck 2013:28)

Again, the religious sphere cannot be separated from the political-economic¹¹⁸ system integrated in the lives of the oppressed. Uncertainty was followed by ambivalent reactions to the two kingdoms imposed on the people of Israel. For them (and any community of people under imperial rule), to survive and to stay faithful to the covenant, they had to submit to the kingdoms of Rome and the kingdom of the Temple elite. Naturally, mimicry occurred and the people habituated to the ideology and culture that they were oppressed with. Important here is to recognize that

¹¹⁸ The insight regarding the intertwinement of political-economic-religious spheres in first-century Palestine is common in recent research. See Borg (2003:127) for a further explanation of why separating these spheres is anachronistic when interpreting texts from this period.

mimicry also serves as a problem when the colonized subjects to colonial authority. When the colonized realized the opportunity to be accepted as the 'recognizable other', they menacingly mimic and *repeated* their masters' discourses (see § 3.2.5). Samuels (2007:27) argue that this mimicry not only maintained the colonized subjects in their place of origin and cultural contexts, 'but at the same time alienates them from their cultural 'purity' or 'essence' and allows them to enter and expand into the cultural regimes of their colonial masters.' Jesus realized this as the challenge the people were caught up in. He therefore reintroduced, or 'renewed', the kingdom of God that was supposed to be central, without having to compromise to other authorities. The third kingdom became the answer and the challenge of the people who familiarized themselves with Jesus' message and mission.

The gospel of the kingdom of God, however, proclaimed peace through justice. Mission and ethics went hand in hand. To be part of this mission – embodied by the Markan Jesus, God's appointed patron – μετένοια from the gospels of Rome and the Temple elite and πίστις (loyalty) towards the gospel and mission of God's kingdom was a prerequisite. Enacting this mission was to stand up for justice and to show compassion towards outsiders created by the gospels of Rome and the Temple elite, thus by being patrons of the God of this kingdom (identity). Because of this mission, identity and ethics, *pax* (peace), *concordia* (social harmony), *felicitas* (happiness), *clementia* (mercy), *iustitia* (justice), *salus* (health), *virtus* (the common good) and *spes* (hope) was available to all.

(Van Eck 2013:28)

Horsley calls this enactment the renewal of Israel, as this study has shown numerous times. Wright, on the other hand, calls Jesus' public career 'kingdom-initiation.' Wright uses the parable of the Sower (Mk 4:1-20) and the Prodigal Son¹¹⁹ (Lk 15) to describe what 'God was doing through Jesus' message... [H]e was judging Israel for her idolatry and was simultaneously calling into being a new people, a renewed Israel, a returned-from-exile people of God' (Wright 1999:41). Jesus thus called onto Israel to be the alternative society as Horsley suggests, but in Wright's case to 'find a way other than the revolutionary way'; 'Do not resist evil'; 'turn the other cheek'; 'go to the second mile'. Wright indicates that this 'is not an invitation to be a doormat for Jesus but constitute a warning not to get involved in the ever-present resistance movement' (Wright 1999:46). As Van Eck also argues above, Wright exclaims the importance of that the 'real new Temple, the real house-on-the-rock, will consist of the community that build its life upon Jesus' words ... the great

¹¹⁹ See Wright (1999:125-131) for his detailed explanation of the parable of the Sower.

play in which Israel would at last fulfil her ancient vocation to be the light of the world' (Wright 1999:47). Through this enactment of faithful in the world, according to Wright, is the 'way of true love and justice through which Israel's God would be revealed to the watching world' (Wright 1999:47).

This study is of the opinion that something else could be added to the interpreted outcomes of these writers. The question asked earlier about the intention of Jesus' mission could be answered by the above mentioned explanations of Jesus revealing God's kingdom. Another question that could be answered by the above explanations of God's kingdom is answering why God *sent* Jesus 'to earth'. However, something is amiss. What if the given assumption that Israel is God's (first) chosen nation had been wrongly understood by Israel in an exclusive way since the time of Egypt up to Jesus' birth? What if Jesus realized, through participating in the social memory of the Galileans that Israel as nation is in the wrong by not sharing, delivering (interacting) and spreading the kingdom of God to people other than them? This study will not pursue this question here. What is important for this study is that Jesus was concerned with the kingdom of Rome in the sense that he opposed it. He was also concerned with the kingdom of the Temple and confronted it. Importantly, he also confronted, through his speech-acts, the people's understanding of the kingdom of God to reintroduce to them what he understood as *essential participation* to the meaning of the kingdom of God *in* the world.

Wright points in this direction by saying that Jesus 'told the story of the kingdom in such a way that Israel's long exile was finally coming to its close' (Wright 1999:52). This, however, was not all 'good news' for the followers of the Temple elite, or even the exclusivist followers of YHWH. 'His [Jesus's] retelling of the story [about the kingdom] was deeply subversive, with sharp polemic reserved for an alternative telling of Israel's story' (Wright 1999:52). Horsley also understands Jesus as opposing imperialism, but places Jesus against the Roman oppression and their client kings with the high-priestly aristocracy 'under God's judgment' (Horsley 2003:126). Jesus' mission could not have been only to prove these kingdoms wrong. He must have had an ideal in mind. His understanding (social memory) of Israel's sharing in the covenant implicated the very action he took and the example he set for his followers. For Van Eck in 'Mark's narrative, Jesus, through his patronage, creates

an inclusive community for outsiders by remedying the inadequacies of Rome and the Temple elite within the overarching quality of kinship' (Van Eck 2013:28). This was the effect of Jesus's speech-acts, but Van Eck points out more:

Being part of the kingdom of God turn outsiders into insiders. This new identity entails the willingness to be taken up in the mission of its patron by standing up for justice and showing compassion in the same way as the patron of the kingdom of God. In Mark's narrative of Jesus this means the same κηρύσσειν (Mk 3:14) as Jesus (Mk 1:14), the same call to μετάνοια (Mk 6:12), the same resistance towards the Temple elite and Rome (Mk 3:15; 6:7), as well as an ethos that participates in the ethos of the patron. In Mark this entails the following: Being part of the kingdom entails 1) the willingness to deny oneself and to take up one's own cross (i.e., the willingness to lose one's life for the sake of the patron and his gospel (Mk 8:34-35); 2) to be [last] and servant of all (Mk 9:35; 10:45); 3) not lord over others but to serve (Mk 10:42-45); and 4) to expect nothing in return (i.e., to practice generalized reciprocity). A life that enacts this set of ethics is identity concretely expressed, and is missional in the sense that the *participatio Jesu* relates to being taken up in and being a broker of Jesus' patronage, especially towards outsiders.

(Van Eck 2013:28)

Horsley (2003:105, 129) argues similar to Van Eck when he states that in Jesus, God was busy with his 'cosmos' to 'revitalize and rebuild the people's cultural spirit and communal activity ... [and] to re-establish just egalitarian and mutually supportive social-economic relations in village communities' – even towards outsiders and those who did not fit the role the Romans or the Temple elite required. Through his speech-acts, Jesus gave everybody the chance to partake in the kingdom of God. Not for the sake of 'Judaism', or Christianity today, not for the sake of the survival of the institutional church and its club members, and surely not because of God's coming judgment. Rather, Jesus reintroduces the kingdom of God that have always been present and in which we share, because he has chosen us. Reciprocity, then, is not found in exclusive judicious religious talk, it is found in the *participatio Jesu*; by everyone willing to accept its presence, not by some claim to have owned it.

14 καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὑψώσεν τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ νθρώπου, 15 ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον. 16 Οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ πώληται ἀλλ. ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

(Jn 3:14-16)

4.3.2.1 Elements of κοινωνία and the kingdom of God

In the preaching and action of Jesus, including the 'kingdom of God' sayings and the references to God as Father, the focus is almost always on the people, and the concern is not abstract or even primarily religious, but is with the people's concrete circumstances, both somatic and psychic, both material and spiritual.

(Horsley 1993:191)

εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.

(Mk 8:34)

'Mark portrays Jesus' mission as focused on village communities, the fundamental social form in which the people's life is embodied in any peasant society' (Horsley 2003:111). The missionary discourses in the gospels confront these communities, one village at a time. In short, Jesus renewed Israel's covenant community by calling people (groups, not necessarily individuals) to an active sharing of social resources during crisis and by affirming the patriarchal family (see Q 6:20-49; Mk 10:2-45). As argued above, this mission was the (re-) introduction of the kingdom of God over and among the other kingdoms oppressing the people. This Section aims to connect the lines between the characteristics of the first-century Roman Palestinian community (regardless of place, i.e., Galilee, Judea, Samaria), and the mission of Jesus as re-introducing the already present kingdom of God.

What are the implications for the community to participate in the kingdom of God that Jesus, as catalyst of the movement, expects? To oversimplify a possible answer, with a third millennium, individualistic, reply: to honour God in one's community through the example of Jesus (honour God and serve your neighbour). The problem with this is that, unlike from today, the first-century individual experienced identity and value in the collective group of ancient antiquity. Today, individuality is a means in itself and the collective identity is not necessarily a factor. Jesus understood this and therefore spoke to communities or villagers as a whole. When speaking to individuals, we should take this in consideration, namely that Jesus understood the collectivist identity of every community.

Horsley's Jesus is polemical because Horsley interprets Jesus' mission as interconnected with political-religious-economic factors and not only as religious action. Horsley's interpretation is in line with Malina's understanding of the communities' participation as followers of Jesus as a faction leader. According to

Malina (2001:113), Jesus initiated a 'faction' through his mission. Horsley (2003:113) distinguishes between new communities (all of Israel as alternative faction) and already existing like-minded groups (struggling village communities). 'Jesus could have spoken of the 'family' of God or the 'community' of God, but he chose to speak of the 'kingdom' of God. Though we might speak of family politics or church politics, these terms are not intrinsically political. Nevertheless 'kingdom is'" (Borg 2003:131). The kingdom(s) under which the people lived was that of Caesar and Herod (see § 4.3.2). Therefore, when Jesus referred to 'kingdom of God', there were hearers who would immediately identify with the characteristics of that kingdom, and either resonates with it, or repudiated it because of the integrated (religious-political-economic) effect it had on their lives as a community.

Matthew's ethical portrayal of the kingdom of heaven being manifested on earth amounts to the restructuring of an antisociety. His portrayal reveals something of Jesus' alternative lifestyle, which Matthew sought to re-enact. Jesus' kingdom message advocated values totally different from those extolled by the Israelite and Graeco-Roman conventional traditions. To be a part of the kingdom of God meant being the opposite to what was expected by being a part of the kingdom of Caesar. The antilanguage of Jesus and Matthew, found in their comparison of the status of the 'poor' to having the same status as that of animals, is tantamount to being resocialised into a totally different society, an anti-society. As the notion of an 'anti-society' is also linked to social identity, the distinction between insiders and outsiders, which is a fundamental first-century Mediterranean perspective, is redefined in terms of such a new, alternative society.

(Van Aarde 2009:8-9)

Borg explains this understanding in a sentence: 'It is what life would be like on earth if God were king and the rulers of this world were not' (Borg 2003:132). Therefore, the expectation of the communities was structured according to their understanding of a kingdom under the rule of God, but also on the example set by Jesus as faction leader. Focusing on Horsley and Malina, describing Jesus' alternative/faction in-group, a better understanding of the expectations of the group can be identified. Understanding their circumstances, and expectations as oppressed communities under Roman rule helps to identify Jesus' mission, but also how, and why, it made sense for Jesus' followers to take up their cross. Horsley understands Jesus' kingdom for Israel as alternative to the Roman Imperial order as follows:

1. Jesus instilled hope in a seemingly hopeless situation to the poor, hungry, and despairing people by offering the kingdom of God to them.
2. In Jesus' preaching and action, the kingdom clearly includes the social-economic-political substance of human relations (society) as willed by God.

3. The key to the emergence of a movement from Jesus' mission however was his renewal of covenant community, calling the people to common cooperative action to arrest the disintegration of their communities and revitalize their cooperation and mutual support.
4. The divine activity of the kingdom of God is focused on the needs and desires of the people.
5. This kingdom of God is not as in Matthew understood as 'heaven', but rather as 'realm', rather, the focal concern of the kingdom of God means the use of power in 'mighty deeds', to liberate, establish, or protect people in times such as the exodus from Egypt.
6. This kingdom does not imply alienation from society (wicked high-priestly establishment) seeking realization of the ideal covenantal life in the wilderness (Qumran community).
7. The thrust of Jesus' ministry, his practice and preaching, was to realize and to make others realize the presence of the kingdom of God. Available to be recognized, received, and entered.
8. By pointing to the forgiveness of God as directly available, Jesus was exposing the religious means by which the social restrictions of the people were maintained.
9. Jesus preached the presence and availability of the kingdom of God for the people generally, seeking the renewal of Israel as a whole people, not the establishment of a separate community or the separation of a 'remnant'.

(Horsley 1993:167-211)

Horsley describes the kingdom through the lens of the villagers. He understands the kingdom of God as a *place* for Israel as *community* wherein Israel's covenant is renewed and wherein Israel can return to being under the rule of God. However, what would realistically the expectations be of communities to actually realize Jesus' expectancies in his movement? Malina proposes the following expectations of such a faction:

1. Jesus recruited a faction and the first requirement of the faction members is self-denial (Cf. Mk. 8:34; Mt 16:24; Lk 9:23; GThom 55, 101).
2. This requirement is two-fold: On the one hand one has to deny oneself and live in the way of Jesus, mostly for 'others', for the sake of the kingdom. On the other hand, this requires the individual in a collectivist environment (where identity is found in the collective group) to step out of it (Cf. Mt 10:34-38) and be ready to be shamed, to face shame, or be shamed even to death (Referring to the cross as possible outcome of following Jesus' faction).
3. The 'self' encountered in the New Testament, whether in Synoptic gospels or Paul, must necessarily be a collective self (or ingroup), typified as individualistic.
4. Collectivist virtues put the emphasis on the views, needs, and goals of the ingroup rather than on single group members. These virtues include generalized reciprocity, obligation, duty security, traditionalism, harmony, obedience to authority, equilibrium, always doing what is proper, cooperation, fatalism, pessimism, family centeredness, high need for affiliation, succour, abasement, nurturance, acquiescence, dependency, high superordination, and high subordination.
5. When persons yield to temptations such as self-centered or enjoyable activities, ingroup sanctions can run from shaming to expulsion.

6. Survival in a collectivist society [such as Roman Palestine with Galilee/Judea/Samaria as centres] after a negation of family integrity [as prescribed by Jesus] would require that a person move into some other actual or fictive kin-group.
7. The faction formed by Jesus would follow Jesus's goals. The attributes of a faction's core group (here: Jesus' recruits) are loyalty to the central personages (called faith), and group solidarity (called love), enabling the new in-group to develop survival ability until the central person's goals are realized.
8. Jesus' ingroup goals, with outgroup effects, are seen in Mt 10:5-42, Mk 8:35, 10:29 and commitment to it described in Mt 10:18, 10:39, 16:25, Mk 8:35, 10:29, 13:9, and Lk 9:24.
9. Faction members share then in a common fate, for example sharing in the kingdom of God, but only through emphasis on the views, needs, and goals of the faction founder. Collectivist will look to benefit the faction founder and his goals: the gospel of the kingdom of God.
10. Attitudes of members include: a sense of honour vested in core membership (to judge the tribes of Israel: Mt 19:28), respect for the faction founder ('for my sake'), other-centred behaviour in support of ingroup members (service as criterion), satisfaction with one's status/position in the group, and preserving the group's public image (honour-shame ripostes).
11. Affiliation with the Jesus faction will have to be a dyadic decision rather than a personal decision. Since Jesus' problem is revitalizing 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt 10:5), his faction produces a new ingroup [alternative] that will be the true Israel (other than the Israel of the kingdom of Rome and the Temple).
12. The purity orientation derived from Israel did not prevent new Israel from attempting to include those who were different, and to be noncompetitively within their group.
13. In the post-resurrection Messianic Jesus groups, it was adherence to the fictive kin-group centred on God, and adhering to the re-appropriated teachings of Jesus, that was to characterize Israel.

(Malina 2001:113-139)

The intention of Jesus, according to Malina, was not to initiate a new religion or covenant. Rather, Jesus initiated a faction *for* Israel that characterizes what God initially intended for them. Malina urges for a strong bond between faction members, because of the ideal – the kingdom of God for the whole world. This is problematic when the history of Israel and the intention (message) of Jesus' teachings are compared. Jesus, according to Malina and Horsley, has his focus on the people, the community, and the people reacted from a collectivist system. Therefore, the challenge would be to take the risk of being shamed for following Jesus, or stepping out of a traditional community, or faction. However, what if the problem was with Israel as a nation? Maybe they misunderstand the covenant of kingdom of God for *all* of the earth. What if the faction 'Israel', that escaped from bondage and were liberated many times after that first occurrence, misunderstood YHWH's covenant as exclusive to Israel, instead of inclusive towards outsiders?

Mark indicates that Jesus' patronage and extension of justice is not only available to Jews, but also to non-Jews. The first feeding narrative (Mark 6:30-44) takes place in Galilee (Jewish territory; see Mk 6:1, 6, 30, 32-33), and more specifically, in a 'desolate place' (ἐρημον τόπον [Mk 6:31, 32] and ἐρημός ... τόπος [Mk 6:35]).... As Jesus, the angels ministered to God's designated patron, in a time of need, Jesus now extends his patronage to a crowd who was like sheep without a shepherd (ὅτι ἦσαν ὡς πρόβατα μὴ ἔχοντα ποιμένα; Mk 6:34). Jesus' mission, received at his baptism, is now extended by means of redistributive justice. God's compassion towards Jesus in a time of need becomes Jesus' compassion (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη) to those in need.

(Van Eck 2013:21)

Jesus also embodied this perspective in his mission by acting out his preaching. He took the step out of the mainstream community to embody the mission he received from God and therefore became the example to the villagers that were stuck in the structures of the Temple-state kingdom. Jesus actively encouraged Israel to step out from an exclusivist understanding of sharing the kingdom of God, and to expand and redistribute the same justice they received from God. Jesus, as leader of this new faction, is still *for* Israel, but he is also *for* all nations. He became the patron who extended what he received to others. 'For the Markan Jesus, patronage received must become patronage extended; being part of Jesus' mission implies partaking in Jesus' mission' Van Eck 2013:21). Those who realized that the kingdom of God was already present in their κοινωνία and saw in Jesus' action that it was meant for everyone was called on to act likewise. This gave the communities the courage and example of justice to leave/forsake what held them back from partaking in the kingdom of God. It also created the identity of the new faction that saw brotherhood and redistributive justice as virtue, and therefore security.

Apart from the content of Jesus' patronage, Mark also describes the result of Jesus' patronage: He has become the patron that everybody is talking about (Mk 1:28; 3:7-8) and wants to see (Mk 6:56), the one that has authority (Mk 1:27, 44; 2:12, 28). As such, Jesus bounded the strong men (the patrons of Rome and the Temple elite), entered their houses, and plundered their property (Mk 3:27). The kingdom of God has turned the world upside down: the official patrons has been replaced by a new patron, and the 'sinners' are not the outsiders created by the gospels of Rome and the Temple elite. The sinners are those who ransack the temple (the priestly elite; Mk 11:17) and those in which hands Jesus is delivered to be killed (Mk 14:41). Above all, the pretentious 'son of god', Augustus, has been replaced by Jesus as the only and true Son of God, ironically proclaimed by a Roman centurion after Jesus' death on the cross (ἀληθῶς οὐτός ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν; Mk 15:39).

(Van Eck 2013:26)



Chapter 4 introduced the different views of the kingdom of God. Horsley, Malina and Van Eck's definitions of Jesus's primary intention with the 'kingdom message' as his mission for Israel and the implications it had for the oppressed in the first century, can inform us what kingdom of God meant for Jesus. We can relate to that intention today. Crossan adds to this account that

[w]e are but waiting for God to act; apart from preparatory faith, hope, and prayer, there is no more we can do. When God acts, it will be, presumably, like a flash of divine lightning beyond all categories of time and place. But to claim an already present Kingdom demands some evidence, and the only such that Jesus could have offered is this: it is not that we are waiting for God, but that God is waiting for us. The present Kingdom is a collaborative *eschaton* between the human and divine worlds. The Great Divine Cleanup is an interactive process with a present beginning in time and a future...

(Crossan 2007:116)

Moving on to the final Chapter of the study, it is important to understand how each section discussed thus far relate in one or another sense to κοινωμία. Jesus did not start this; he reinitialized it. This brought a new responsibility to those following him, not *for* him, but with him, *in* the kingdom of God, *for* the world.

The kingdom of God is not a press conference, or a resolution, or a short course in how to be eloquently indignant. It is a table, laden with grace, at which the social maps are all redrawn. The guest list comes straight out of One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest.

(Meyers 2009:48)

'By proclaiming the kingdom of God and God as patron, Jesus was presenting solutions to existing social problems' (Malina 2001:142). The people were in need, they trusted in the covenant God had with them for liberation. When Jesus preached an alternative kingdom to those of the systematic injustice of the other kingdoms, it resonated with the people. Jesus did not initiate 'heaven' in our sense of the word. Rather, he was with them, sharing in their need, remembering the covenant, but also understanding it as being *for* the earth. 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it already is in heaven.' To cite one of John Dominic Crossan's memorable quips: 'Heaven is in great shape; earth is where the problems are' (Crossan 2001:275).

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The logic of Jesus's Kingdom program is a mutuality of healing (the basic spiritual power) and eating (the basic physical power) shared freely and openly. That program built a share-community from the bottom up as a positive alternative to Antipas's Roman greed community established from the top down.

(Crossan 2007:118)

Participating *in* the world and performing gospel virtues *for* secular communities, from a collaborative understanding of equality, is the ultimate sacrifice of the 'self'. Arguing that mission is the vital manifestation of Christian ethics-in-action might be considered as a sacrilege to the contemporary ecclesiastical identity sermonized on Sundays. What this study introduces to the reader is the valuable and constructive characteristics of both globalization and the Social Gospel. These characteristics can inform the NHKA, and Christianity as religion, in its responsibility of living – and letting others participate – through 'mission' in the kingdom of God.

However, describing these constructive characteristics without sensitivity to institutional religious environments might rupture the spiritual contentment people currently have. Such an oblivious confrontation would only further some exclusivist reactions for the sake of the preservation of their ecclesiastical contentment. Rather these characteristics drawn from the Social Gospel should be, ideologically speaking, informative examples for the sake of their furthering of inclusive action. This is where collaboration and interaction becomes the vital word for missional response. This missional action has to be, on the one hand, informed by Scripture as *norma normans* and, on the other hand, the contemporary global situation as *norma normata*. Such an interpretation of these two components becomes dangerous if the interpreter (for example institutionalized Christianity) abuses the message because of sanctimonious or pious intentions. This study then poses the plausible theory that, *firstly*, churches (including the NHKA) have marginalized communities through its imperialistic self-understanding as a superior authoritative institution, and *secondly*, because of this misunderstanding of the secular community, people are marginalized

because of their own understanding of being faithful. The contemporary church can no longer assume this exclusivist attitude towards its own members and those indifferent to the traditional institutions. Reason being, we do not find Jesus pursuing such exclusivist activities, he rather embraced otherness from within the ingroup. The ingroup, mostly polarized in opinion on these challenges, have the responsibility to reconsider the implication of exclusivism.

For this reason the study aimed to use postcolonial theories and Richard Horsley's depictions of Jesus' activity in Roman Palestine. Firstly, this was done to narrow down the interpretation of the first century world in the Scriptures to an essentialist/nativist reading, and secondly to identify the elements of the *renewal of Israel* and its *κοινωνία*. To understand the context of verbal interaction between the groups (Jesus followers and other communities) will help the contemporary church, and the faithful, how best to approach the task of performative speech (or bearing witness to) and the best approach to engage in the public sphere. Performative speech, relating to active collaboration and faithful witness, requires a renegotiation of the church's attitude towards the modern (exclusive humanist) world. The church should engage with the secular world rather than withdrawing from it and consequently find itself opposing forces outside the church. This does not mean an absolute acceptance of a relativistic society, but rather to be more attentive to the possibility of God's action in the liberal society through the adoption of a dialogical approach to the church's social and cultural context.

In the concluding sections (§ 5.1.1-5.2) of this Chapter the outcomes derived by this exploration of Globalized mission and the Social Gospel of Jesus in Chapters 1-4 will be summarized.

5.1.1 Globalization amid a re-venant missional crisis

Focused attention to these two interrelated questions has the capacity to shed light on and resolve some of the difficulties most troubling to the NHKA today, the line of thought pursued in this Section. The questions derived from this hypothesis is 'How can the valuable and constructive characteristics of globalism and mission, perceived as an opportunity, inform Christianity's missional reaction *in* the world in a justifiable way?', and 'What is believable action to be taken by the faithful today?'

The contemporary examples of globalization have features of oppression because of imperialization, neo-colonization and postcolonialistic reaction from post-colonial communities. Globalization, and the form it takes, today has elements that prove to be similar to those of Roman Palestine (see § 1.2.2.4, 4.2.1.1). These elements bear consequences for nations, communities, families, and individuals. The church, in this study the NHKA, should give an answer to the revenant crisis globalization presents. This study argued against the use of Christian mission as an *instrument* to ensure the continuity of the church in this world. The contemporary examples of mission have proven, especially over the last millennium, that certain missional intentions have, apart from evangelization, some secondary motives like the civilizing of communities, land reform and trade. In the introduction the question was asked ‘How Jesus would have been ‘missional’ today, and on whom would he have focused his mission? What would have been the first things he would have taught the church, and other faiths, to focus on in their missional activity?’

This study is of opinion that the church should regard globalization as an opportunity to identify not *with* the world but rather understand itself as being part of it. For centuries mission was seen as the answer to spreading the gospel message. Now that the world has become more accessible than ever before, the church withdraws itself for the sake of survival. Instead of pursuing ecclesiological self-preservation, mission can take the actions of Jesus and use it as the framework from which it can approach the world. *Positively* the cultural shift over the last half-century can highlight the furtherance of human rights, the recognition of equal dignity of women, the increasing emphasis on aid for the poor communities and other marginalized developments. *Negatively* the shift can be viewed as highlighting the dictatorship of relativism, the decline of religious practice, the seeming failure of family life and other signs of disintegration in contemporary culture (also see examples listed in § 1.3.1). The cultural change in South Africa, and the globe, is much more subtle and complex than either these positions allow. In both views of the cultural shift, positive and negative, elements are overlooked. For example, it is admirable that human rights are furthered, but in the same sense it is frightening to view marriage (and other significant relationships) as instrumental to meet individual needs. Rather, what is needed is an analysis that would better account for the whole of modernity. A

proposed line of thought is to understand the cultural shift from the perspective of Taylor's illuminating notion of the 'modern social imaginary' (Taylor 2004).

Taylor's argument is that the whole framework out of which we approach life has shifted. Not only have the social structures and institutions changed, but also the assumptions and expectation (the self-understanding) that inform them. The social practices that characterize our age – especially the market economy, democratic government, and the public sphere – are informed by a view of individuals who, through pursuing their own legitimate goals, serve to benefit the good of the whole.

(McEvoy 2014:xvi)

Smith (2014:viii) shows how Charles Taylor point to the reality that your neighbours inhabit an 'immanent frame—'they are no longer bothered by the God question' as a problem because they are devotees of exclusive humanism — a way of being-in-the-world that offers significance without transcendence'. Therefore, the need for sensitivity when confronting the world, in these cases the globalizing secular world, with the examples we find in Jesus' life.

They don't feel like anything is missing. So what does it look like to bear witness in a secular age? What does it look like to be faithful? To what extent have Christians unwittingly absorbed the tendencies of this world? On the one hand, this raises the question of how to reach exclusive humanists. On the other hand, the question bounces back on the church: To what extent do we "believe" like exclusive humanists?

(Smith 2014:iii)

The institutional church has arrived at this crossroad. Because of the globalizing effects on reason through scientific and historical research, the question is not whether the church, or Christianity for that matter, is authoritative, but rather to question what foundations portrayed by contemporary Christianity are *believable*?

As you'll notice, these questions are not concerned with what people believe as much as with what is believable. The difference between our modern, "secular" age and past ages is not necessarily the catalogue of available beliefs but rather the default assumptions about what is believable.

(Smith 2014:19)

Only when this reality is embraced by contemporary Christianity as a significant certainty can it begin to explore ways to (authoritatively) inform specifically those 'believers who are trying to not only remain faithful in a secular age but also bear witness to the divine for a secular age' (Smith 2014:x).

The question then, when we consider ourselves as living in a secular age is (see § 1.2-1.2.1): What does it look like to bear witness in a secular age? What does it look like to be faithful? Again, this does not imply an uncritical acceptance of modernity on the church's part. With a more optimistic evaluation of globalization, it is required of the church to participate in the commitment of genuine dialogue with society that will acknowledge the equality of the interlocutors and, therefore, not claim a unique or absolute position for the church.

Globalization may paradoxically make integration rather more than less difficult to achieve. Therefore it is necessary to re-evaluate Tony Blair's four conditions for faith to support a process of reconciliation (see § 1.2.2.2). This study is of the opinion that as long as there are distrustful conflicting factions in faiths there will be segregation in the world. As long as Christianity, or any faith for that matter, proclaims an all-inclusive invitation to the world, but exclusive salvation on the basis of membership, there will be other religions.

Globalization connects the world and when the 'other' arrives on your shores, there should be a justifiable approach. To identify missional action that can be sustainable, for reasons derived from Scripture, a supportive and responsibly balanced interpretation is needed. It is obvious from the summary that the mere belief, or the connotation of being labelled a Christian, just is not enough to welcome the outgroup. For that matter, it is not enough to acquire 'salvation'. Rather *because* of belief, one has to take formative action. Borg (2003:189) explains the importance of practical action. Practice is about paying attention to God, the formation of Christian identity and character, nourishment, compassion and justice and living 'the way'. Borg goes on to explain what this Christian practice consists of. It is about 'walking with God, becoming kind, and doing justice. It is not about believing in God and being a good person; it is about how one *becomes* a good person through the practice of loving God' (Borg 2003:205). However, regarding that it is possible today to live a life without reference to the divine, the church needs to proclaim the unique significance of faith for humanity. Those oppressed through church practice over centuries should be heard, recognized and liberated. Through these proposed dialogues a far richer understanding of the church's collaboration *in* the world can be discussed and some of the polarities resolved for the sake of liberation of the

oppressed.

5.1.2 Postcolonial potential

Answering the above-mentioned questions it is necessary to understand the contextual diversity wherein culture is forged. In this case, contemporary Christianity needs to carve away some ungrounded assumptions or excessive traditions for the sake of drawing as truthful as possible to the example of Jesus.

This study argued (see § 3.1-3.3) that postcolonial theory can help categorize the behaviour of the first followers of Jesus with regards to their missional imperative by either being exclusivist Mosaic faith followers or inclusive followers of Jesus' gospel. This informs an outcome to the hypothesis and second aim of this study (§ 1.1.3-1.1.4). Postcolonial studies can detect elements of oppression and liberation in Roman Palestine and identify indispensable characteristics in the Christian religion to help us better envision the practical missional action to be taken in this globalizing era.

Jesus became the embodiment of God's image by portraying the essential values and ethics of the Mosaic faith. Jesus' example of living was in a sense not so much ground breaking as it was radical. A postcolonial optic of essentialist/nativist theory can identify Jesus's radical message from Scriptures, and might even be identified with a message similar to that of the Social Gospel. Postcolonial theories consistently attempt to deconstruct the historiography in a postcolonial context and herald the urgency and necessity for an alternative reading strategy of the Bible in a postcolonial context. Through this mode of interpretation postcolonial theories also inform mission and the relevant praxis mission should undertake. A postcolonial optic of essentialist/nativist theory can identify Jesus's radical message from Scriptures, and might identify with a message similar than that of the Social Gospel. Because of postcolonial interpretation of the Scripture, mission can identify specific outcomes, for example that missional practice cannot oppress, tyrannize, imperialize and marginalize, or negatively influence the community it intends to serve. This includes members of religious denominations and 'secular communities'. Postcolonial theory helps the delegates of mission to prioritize with the view of specific outcomes that is not biased or that has unjustifiable secondary gains. This study found that through the essentialist nativist model postcolonial theory could remind Christianity (*renewed Israel*) of what spheres, powers and authorities are

currently the obstacle for sustainable action. For example postcolonial and globalization studies can contribute extensively to how a *different kind of globalization*, or planetary understanding, should look like and how it can be brought about. Understanding context on a local level and on a global scale, local denominations and Christianity as a religion can constructively contribute to the different and diverse realities of each context on earth. This study acknowledges the fact that a universal ethic is (almost) impossible to construct understands that globalization does not have the same impact universally. It does however argue for essential characteristics performed by Jesus that are globally implementable.

Postcolonial criticism further has the potential to identify marginalized groups in contemporary Christianity; groups and communities marginalized by institutional churches, whole communities marginalized because of economic globalization¹²⁰ and religious war.¹²¹ To actively contribute to resolve such marginalized conditions postcolonial theory needs to identify the most conceivable course of action. Possible examples of investigation through postcolonial studies by the NHKA should include:

1. The language used to portray biblical narratives to every generation and nation;
2. The possible negligence of attention to specific outgroups;
3. Gender (in-) equality;
4. Underlying racist consciousness;
5. Ethnic exclusivity and cultural marginalization;
6. Segregation through institutional traditions.

Therefore, its importance for Biblical studies in the future where resolutions will have to be uncovered between the oppressor and the oppressed, and the imperialist and the marginalized.¹²²

¹²⁰ Third World status to a particular country was not based on any stable economic or political criteria, and was a mostly arbitrary process. The large diversity of countries considered part of the Third World – from Indonesia to Afghanistan – ranged widely from economically primitive to economically advanced, and from politically non-aligned to Soviet or Western leaning.

¹²¹ Israel held Hamas responsible for all attacks emanating from the Gaza Strip, and has carried out three major military campaigns in Gaza: Operation Cast Lead in December 2008, Operation Pillar of Defense in November 2012 and Operation Protective Edge in July 2014.

¹²² It is so convenient writing (from an air-conditioned library) these conclusive comments drawn from academic research. While typing, on this 11th day of July 2014, the death toll from Israeli air strikes in Gaza has risen to 100 and by 30 July 2014 the death toll reached 1255, militant rocket attacks on

5.1.3 The Social Gospel of Jesus and the kingdom of God in Roman Palestine

The only strategy apt in the human situation was for Him strategy based on a hope which did not evade death and judgment, but saw beyond them, and on a faith which did not deny the destructiveness of the cosmic God but included it. On this faith and hope was built, we believe, the social gospel in the mind of Jesus, and on it alone, we believe, the only adequate social gospel can be built.

(Yeager 1988:127)

The second and third aims of this study (see § 1.1.4, 2.2.2) were to identify indispensable characteristics of the early twentieth century Social Gospel movement, and how the Social Gospel of Jesus influenced his immediate listeners. Reviewing Richard Horsley's understanding of Jesus' mission in Roman Palestine, it is clear that the Postcolonial studies (§ 3.1-3.3) and elements of the Social Gospel movement (§ 2.1-2.2.2) is foundationally informative. It explores the first century world with all its diverse domains and influences on the colonized subjects and explains more thoroughly the possible intention Jesus had with this life.

This study did not attempt to downplay doctrines of sin, salvation, heaven and hell and the future kingdom of God through the application of Christian ethics. This study also does not insinuate that a Social Gospel is the answer for today in asserting that Christ's second coming could not happen until humankind rid itself of social evils by human effort. Neither did this study argue that Jesus' examples of action in Roman Palestine, understood as a Social Gospel, answer the question why societal structures are inherently cruel and most of times exploitative. This study also does not identify with the assumption that the Social Gospel's main objective is concerned with redemption or salvation.

This study rather proposed that the intent of the Social Gospellers was to activate Christian collaboration, not for the sake of their own moral or spiritual wellbeing, but because of the fact that they understood the kingdom of God as inviting with a concomitant contributive life as consequence. Our cultural involvements are the reflection of the deeper reality of our collaboration with God.

Israel continue. When realizing the small, almost negligible contribution this study might bring, the hope this study has, embraces the minute possibility of justice for all of humanity.

But neither is passive waiting possible. Activity is inescapable. The only activity which man cannot exercise is God's activity. But he cannot evade the necessity of acting in the interim before the judgment, of preparing for death and for life. He is confronted with a forced option. This day the Lord sets life and death before him. Such interim ethics are not the ethics of quiescence. Precisely because God is moving, man cannot sit still.

(Niebuhr 1988:126)

This study argues that Jesus' mission was not, as seen above, only religious in intent; not even to mention that it is possible to excavate him from his environment, as a 'talking head'. This study's opinion is that Jesus did aim to renew Israel, in the sense of a new direction, but not in the sense of building a new faith; that is, rather to initiate the essential *believable* truths in the life of the faithful he met. The Social Gospel concerns itself with this renewal for the sake of the faithful society, but more, also with conveying their faith to those outside of their 'ingroup'. Our conception of the outgroup today is reference to the secular. We find this in the performative speeches of Jesus where he preaches equitable justice in the kingdom of God wherein everybody shares. The kingdom of God for Jesus, as underlying theme, was the place wherein those who want to can contribute to the nation(s).

The kingdom of God is already in collaborative process. Crossan (2007:188) claims that the 'divine vision of freedom and justice, of nonviolence and peace, and of an earth in which all have a fair and equitable share was there from creation itself'. With this understanding of kingdom of God, in Roman Palestine, Jesus reacted and lived according to what he believed necessary for the communities to understand what was important for the time that they live in. Richard Horsley's Jesus launched a mission aiming not only to heal the debilitating effects of Roman military violence and economic exploitation, but also to revitalize and rebuild the people's cultural spirit and communal vitality. This study argues that the focus of Horsley's renewal of Israel is not inducting the kingdom of God, but represents the active participation in the present kingdom. This is also the understanding the Social Gospeller Walter Rauschenbusch has of the kingdom of God (see § 2.1.4.1). For example, to Rauschenbusch the doctrine of the kingdom of God *is* the Social Gospel and the distinctive ethical principles of Jesus were the direct outgrowths of his conception of the kingdom of God. When the latter disappeared from theology, the former disappeared from ethics.



This answers the third aim and second part of this studies' hypothesis. 'The aim is to identify indispensable characteristics of both the early twentieth century Social Gospel movement', and if 'Postcolonial Studies can detect elements of oppression and liberation in Roman Palestine, translatable to today, then an existent kingdom of God can be recognized through which mission can pursue collaborative and participative action' (see § 1.1.3-1.1.4).

The study identifies this in Jesus' intention with his performative speeches; speeches made in public within communities and for specific groups. Jesus advocates action and relegates inaction because of tradition. This *renews* understanding of participation in the present context even though there was a variety of existent empires in Jesus' time.

The radical question for first century Jesus followers remains: 'What will daily life expect from them, if God is on the throne of Caesar?' This question remains relevant today, even though, through postcolonial criticism, and a Social Gospel prerogative, the empires of the third millennium are different from that of Roman Palestine. Today we have to renew collaboration through these proposed optics and choose to take deliberate action that is justified because of the present kingdom. Therefore, the relevance of the question asked at the beginning of Chapter 5: What does it look like to bear witness in a secular age? What does it look like to be faithful?

It asks everyone, including faithful radical humanists, institutionalized religious communities and secular groups to contribute collaboratively by taking action not branded with institutionalized intentions of building the church. It asks of us to cooperate in re-establishing the kingdom of God in a globalized world. It asks us to participate in it as if already contributing to the kingdom of God as we imagine it to be. Because if we do not, and the world turns unknowingly on itself, we should not claim that 'God wills it', but instead, we will realize that the outcomes of our 'cause and effect' are no one else's responsibility but our own.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt stand,
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust against our land?
Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 'tis Truth alone is strong,
and, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her throng
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all wrong.

(Lowell 1904:189)

5.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study acknowledges that the nature of an inter-disciplinary study raises the possibility for potential continuing research, as it did not pursue an exhaustive account of the different lines of thought that were drawn together. This study also acknowledges that the field is more extensive than the interpretations drawn from the selective field of studies. This might leave room for further research from additional resources.

The initial aims of the study set out in the introduction have been explored and conclusions have been drawn, but because of the immense expansion of Biblical studies related to mission and globalization, the study foresees the potential for more specific and in depth research such as context specific formulations for missional action; instructive programs for further Biblical studies on the social Gospel and Postcolonial theory; the development of exegetical structures with the goal of interpreting the relation between Roman Palestine and the third millennium; and the formulation of an ethical foundation derived from this studies' proposed missional action, to name but a few possibilities.

This study recommends further reading as referenced in the Bibliography on each topic considered in Chapters 1-4. Further reading might help the reader to identify with more opinions and arguments, leaving the reader more informed. Finally, Lowell has the last word:

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's page but record
One death- grapple in the darkness 'twist old system and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne, -
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

(Lowell 1904:189)

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Summary

This study's focus is Jesus' significant representation of the kingdom of God utilizable for mission today – a topic of importance for contemporary Christianity's sustainable reaction to a globalizing world. Christianity should not have to be a spectator to globalization but one of its agents, one of the forces at work by extending interconnection between peoples, shared ideas and promoted social, political and cultural links. How should Christian churches conceive of their mission within the context of a globalizing world? It is remarkable that after two millennia of Jesus' life, 'mission in the kingdom of God' is still of great importance for human life on earth. Indeed, contemporary secularists might not commend religion with the custody of such a fundamental burden of responsibility. Yet, considering the times we live in, a foundation of sustainable values for earth are inescapably important. Nevertheless, from what foundational values does Christianity draw to bear witness of the divine in a secular age? When considering all the factors mentioned, what foundational ethics and virtues of Christianity that we bear witness to are still *believable* in a secular age?

The purpose of this study is not to provide a complete response to the question of mission of the church in a globalizing world, but to establish a framework within which answers may be sought. The study is informed from a variety of disciplines such as politics, cultural theory and politics, which are not the usual fields of New Testament Studies. Therefore, this study presents itself in five chapters informing one another. Chapter 1 addresses the issues that surface from current missional reaction and the broader implications that globalization has on changing social and institutional realities and the churches' response to it. Chapter 2 identifies indispensable characteristics of the early twentieth century Social Gospel movement to implement those values as essential building blocks in globalized mission. In Chapter 3 investigates the potential use of Postcolonial Theory for categorizing postcolonial characteristics of marginalization, oppression, neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism. Chapter 4 applies the outcomes of Chapter 1 through 3 with which Richard Horsley's proposed perspective on Jesus' mission in Roman Palestine as

the 'renewal of Israel' is considered to discern about the first century world and the implications it has for the third millennium.

The Christian faith, among others, has marginalizing practices derived from centuries old traditions and biased interpretations of Scripture. We see examples of it strewn over two millennia. Chapter 5 concludes this cursory study by summarizing the valuable and constructive characteristics in mission, globalization, postcolonial studies and the Social Gospel. These characteristics can inform the Christian faith in its responsibility of living, and letting others participate, through 'mission', in the kingdom of God. Because if we do not, what is still *believable* today about the significant life of Jesus?

Key words

Biblical studies, New Testament, Globalization, mission, Social Gospel, Postcolonial, Roman Palestine, kingdom of God, secularism, Christianity, Jesus, imperialism, marginalization, Post-Church, NHKA.

Addendum A

<p>Questions concerning Historical Jesus research</p> <p><i>Who did Jesus understand himself to be? Prophet? Sage? Messiah? Cynic? God in flesh or combination of above?</i></p>	<p>Questions concerning hermeneutics</p> <p><i>What are texts and how do they function? Vehicles? Purpose of reader/author/self-understanding/self-referential?</i></p>
<p><i>What was Jesus' message? Why did Jesus die: Threat, unaccepted practices, Final dramatic act for kingdom? What way can we speak of resurrection historically: physically, existentially, metaphorically?</i></p>	<p><i>What is the readers' role in interpretation? Should reader discover author/texts intended meaning or own/other meaning? Predetermined?</i></p>
<p><i>Relationship between Jesus to the early church and orthodox Christianity? Did Jesus initially found Christianity or does it have no immediate relationship? If yes, is there discontinuity between early church and orthodoxy today?</i></p>	<p><i>What constitutes a legitimate reading of the text? Interpret diachronically (surface questions/historical questions)? Synchronically (Linguistic structures/text about social/political concern)? What can, and should be learned from the text?</i></p>
<p><i>Relationship between Jesus and canonical Gospels? Gospels accurate historical records of Jesus or reflection of theological /social beliefs of the early church?</i></p>	<p><i>Relationship between history and hermeneutics? Objective meaning to history apart from interpretation? One's own hermeneutic affects one's reading of history?</i></p>
<p>Prerequisites for a hermeneutic for historical Jesus-research</p>	<p>Hermeneutical concerns for Jesus-research</p>
<p><i>Approach texts with an open mind. Handle texts historically, not metaphysically or theologically.</i></p>	<p>Identify the worldviews</p>
<p><i>One's presuppositions should be clearly stated and open to critique.</i></p> <p><i>Understand what a text says before assessing it theologically. Logical and Chronological order is necessary.</i></p>	<p>Sensitivity to genre and form</p> <p>Awareness of how narrative works. See Greimas' insights to narratives.</p>
<p><i>Proper Hermeneutic must be multidisciplinary.</i></p>	<p>The context or background of a historical text.</p>
	<p>Intentionality: See Osborne, The hermeneutical spiral, 414.</p> <p>Analysis of the logic of explicit or implicit historical arguments. Remember logic.</p>
	<p>Grammatical-Historical Exegesis. Learn Greek.</p>
	<p>Do not neglect theology in interpretation.</p>

THE PRESENT CRISIS BY JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL (1819-1891)

When a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad earth's aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east to west,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul within him climb
To the awful verge of manhood, as the energy sublime
Of the century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem of Time.

Through the walls of hut and palace shoots the instantaneous throe,
When the travail of the Ages wrings earth's systems to and fro;
At the birth of each new Era, with a recognizing start,
Nation wildly looks at nation, standing with mute lips apart,
And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child leaps beneath the Future's heart.

So the Evil's triumph sendeth, with a terror and a chill,
Under continent to continent, the sense of coming ill,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels his sympathies with God
In hot tear-drops ebbing earthward, to be drunk up by the sod,
Till a corpse crawls round unburied, delving in the nobler clod.

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears along,
Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right or wrong;
Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast frame
Though its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy or shame; -
In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal claim.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide;
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt stand,
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust against our land?
Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 'tis Truth alone is strong,
And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her throng
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all wrong.

Backward look across the ages and the beacon-moments see,
That, like peaks of some sunk continent, jut through Oblivion's sea;
Not an ear in court or market for the low foreboding cry of those Crises,
God's stern winnowers, from whose feet earth's chaff must fly;
Never shows the choice momentous till the judgment hath passed by.

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's page but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old system and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne, -
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

We see dimly in the Present what is small and what is great,
Slow of faith how weak an arm may turn the iron helm of fate,
But the soul is still oracular; amid the market's din,
List the ominous stern whisper from the Delphic cave within, -
'They enslave their children's children who make compromise with sin.'

Slavery, the earth-born Cyclops, fellest of the giant brood,
Sons of brutish Force and Darkness, who have drenched the earth with blood,
Famished in his self-made desert, blinded by our purer day,
Gropes in yet unblasted regions for his miserable prey;
Shall we guide his gory fingers where our helpless children play?

Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified,
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied.

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes, -- they were souls that stood alone,
While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelious stone,
Stood serene, and down the future saw the golden beam incline
To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine,
By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's supreme design.

By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet I track,
Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns not back,
And these mounts of anguish number how each generation learned
One new word of that grand *Credo* which in prophet-hearts hath burned
Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face to heaven upturned.

For humanity sweeps onward: where today the martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands;
Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling fagots burn,
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn.

'Tis as easy to be heroes as to sit the idle slaves
Of a legendary virtue carved upon our father's graves,
Worshippers of light ancestral make the present light a crime;
Was the Mayflower launched by cowards, steered by men behind their time?
Turn those tracks toward Past or Future, that make Plymouth Rock sublime?

They were men of present valor, stalwart old iconoclasts,
Unconvinced by axe or gibbet that all virtue was the Past's;
But we make their truth our falsehood thinking that hath made us free,
Hoarding it in mouldy parchments, while our tender spirits flee
The rude grasp of that great Impulse which drove them across the sea.

They have rights who dare maintain them; we are traitors to our sires,
Smothering in their holy ashes Freedom's new-lit altar-fires;

Shall we make their creed our jailor? Shall we, in our haste to slay,
From the tombs of the old prophets steal the funeral lamps away
To light up the martyr-fagots round the prophets of today?

New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth;
Lo, before us gleam her campfires! We ourselves must Pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key.