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## Ubi caritas est vera, deus ibi est... The Lord's Prayer – God's present future

### ABSTRACT

The article is the second in a series examining the Lord's Prayer with a view to constructing a sermon on the prayer. In the first article the origin and setting of the prayer, as well as the address and the you-petitions of the prayer were examined. In this article the we-petitions and the doxology are explored. In a third article these insights come together in the construction of a concept sermon and liturgy, incorporating material from ecumenical resources. In the you-petitions the eschatological dimension dominates, whereas the ethical dimension comes more into focus in the we-petitions. It is argued that the biggest challenge in constructing a sermon and liturgy on the Lord's Prayer is to keep the fundamental dependency and unity of the eschatological and the ethical dimensions together.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Wieder vertrauen wir uns an mit gefalteten Händen, ein Zeichen dafür, dass wir uns in Gottes Willen gefangen geben, freiwillig. Beten heißt, sich anvertrauen... (Käßmann 2013:189)

Praying means entrusting yourself, subjecting yourself, giving yourself over to God's will. A certain body language is appropriate as a sign showing one's subjugation. Praying is therefore often done kneeling, with head bowed, eyes closed – and hands folded (see Käßmann above). Believers rise from their prayers often feeling comforted, assured and renewed: their praying has already done something to them and something for them. They also hope and believe that more will come from their prayers – that it will work for themselves and for the people they have prayed for. They trust God to listen and to act. This is however, exactly where a problem often lies: that people entrust themselves, their hopes, their fears and their expectations to God and then go on with hands folded (and eyes closed!) The responsibility now lies with God. God needs to bring about change. God needs to do the work. The responsibility is not theirs...

The Lord's Prayer often functions in the same way. As Luther already had indicated, it has become the prayer most often misused (in Kloppers 2013, Jung 2011). Prayed in churches over the world, it sometimes takes on almost ritualistic meaning and could function as a kind of mantra, making people feel comforted and safe, but also blurring the view of their own responsibility. New perspectives on the meaning of the prayer and a renewed sense of the responsibilities and challenges that also flow from praying the Lord's Prayer, should constantly be brought to the fore. A sermon is an appropriate vehicle for bringing about such a new consciousness. It is, however, no easy task to remind people of their own responsibility, without being accused of 'preaching politics' instead of 'proclaiming the Word of God'.

## 2. “WORD OF GOD” OR “PREACHING POLITICS” – ESCHATOLOGICAL OR ETHICAL?

In this article on the we-petitions and the Doxology, views from different milieus are discussed and presented as possibilities for the preacher, to engage with critically in the process of constructing a liturgy and sermon on the Lord’s Prayer. The challenge for the preacher is to speak and act in such a way that those hearing, reading and praying the Lord’s Prayer today, are challenged anew. The challenges discussed in this article are essential: reconciliation among people, forgiveness, justice and the fair distribution of the earth’s resources. Some of these themes are emphasized especially by the American Jesuit, Dominic Crossan, in his book on the Lord’s Prayer (2010). Controversial in many instances, his views of a present eschaton often cause difficulties, but these views do need serious consideration – even if they are not accepted one-sidedly. In this article his views are discussed and related to the views of other scholars. Differences, but also agreement where one might not have expected correspondence or agreement, come to the fore.

Crossan (2011) calls the Lord’s Prayer a “revolutionary manifesto” and a “hymn of hope”. He reads the prayer against the backdrop of the prophets, the psalms of justice, the issues of the Sabbath and Jubilee, the life-world and social context of Jesus and his disciples, and relates it to the socio-political influence of the Roman rulers in Jesus’ day. From this he gives an extensive and compelling analysis of the Lord’s Prayer as policy, as “manifesto” for the concept of *distributive* justice<sup>1</sup> within the vision of a well-run household. In this household God as the “Householder of the world” runs everything *in co-operation* with God’s people. This is done with a view for all on earth to be justly administered and distributed fairly.

Change is demanded “here below” so that all God’s people have a fair, equitable and just proportion of God’s world (Crossan 2010:2-3). In this sense the prayer is *revolutionary*. It presumes and proclaims the radical vision of justice that is the core of Israel’s biblical tradition. It also reflects the radical vision of justice that was preached and lived by Jesus Christ – and for which he had died. Crossan argues that from the life and preaching of Jesus, justice can be seen as the body of love and love as the soul of justice (Crossan 2010:189).

Reading each petition from and against the historical background of the religious, social and political setting, and interpreting it literally, as Crossan does, indicates many possibilities – and difficulties for the preacher. Others, such as the German theologian Gerhard Ebeling (1966), work mostly from the textual indicators, or indicators given by the language. Ebeling interprets the text more metaphorically, emphasizing the proclamation, the preaching of the text as the “Word of God”.<sup>2</sup> Both approaches provide provocative possibilities for new and transformative interpretations.

From the biblical and social indicators, Crossan and others see a realised eschaton, while scholars such as Jeremias (1966) Luomanen (1998) and Wilckens (2002) work from the paradigm of a future eschaton. Could the preacher make a final choice? It is argued that the challenge in constructing a sermon and liturgy on the Lord’s Prayer is to keep the fundamental dependency and unity of the eschatological and the ethical dimension together, and at the same time retaining the dimension of prayer through the church service.

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1 Over against *retributive* justice – the prime meaning now attributed to “justice” (Crossan 2010:2).

2 Some may regard Crossan and Ebeling as adversaries in their views, but it is interesting to note that the depiction “revolutionary” for the Lord’s Prayer comes from Ebeling already (1966:83).

## 3. THE LORD'S PRAYER IN MATTHEW 6:11-13

### 3.1 The three we-petitions

The three we-petitions comprise of the petition for bread, for forgiveness (linked with the concurring sentence about human forgiveness) and the two-part closing petition about temptation and evil. In the you-petitions the eschatological dimension dominates and in the we-petitions the ethical dimension. The closing formula of the three you-petitions (on earth, as in heaven) refers materially to the you-petitions, but also functions as a hinge, directing the focus back and at the same time forwards, to the we-petitions, thus including heaven and earth (Schwier 2005:894).

#### 3.1.1 The first we-petition: Give us today our daily bread (Matthew 6:11)

The first of the three we-prayers concerns daily bread. The meaning of the adjective *epiousios*, is obscure. It is normally translated as daily, but many other possible translations are possible (see Ayo 1992:249 for interesting examples of translation). According to Luz (2002:452) it could mean "give us today our bread for tomorrow", referring to the situation of the day worker praying for the possibility to survive. Some read it as "for tomorrow" and see "bread" in a metaphorical sense as referring to spiritual bread, and "tomorrow" as the second coming, therefore in an eschatological sense. It could be seen as both eschatological and everyday. Lohse, for example, views the petition as eschatological (as "bread for tomorrow") but makes it clear that the eschatological view does not mean a spiritual overwriting of the food necessary for life. It rather opens a sharp view on the requirements of the "here and now" in saying that the content of the prayer for "tomorrow's bread" is bound to the immediate presence through the "today" (Lohse 2010:65).

Martin Luther in his *Small Catechism* argued that "our daily bread" includes everything that belongs to the needs of the body and our lives, such as food, drink, clothes, shoes, house, farm, field, livestock, money, goods, a devout spouse, pious children, dutiful servants, pious and faithful magistrates, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honour, good friends, loyal neighbours, and the like. "God gives the daily bread, even without our prayer, to all evil people; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to realise it, that we receive our daily bread with thanksgiving" (Luther in *Evangelisches Gesangbuch* 1995:883.3, my translation).

Ebeling (1966:86-96) takes the prayer for daily bread to indicate our dependence on bread, our dependence on God, and our dependence on other people. He argues that it is not without reason that we pray *give us today our daily bread*. It has to be in the plural, he argues, because eating is an act of fellowship. Through our daily bread and our dependence on it, through the receiving and enjoying of our daily bread and the handing of it to each other, fellowship is supremely constituted. He stresses that the dependence on others is not a burden, adding in a poignant way: "It is a blessing of which for the most part we do not become aware until no one takes any interest in us and we have to eat our bread, day in, day out, alone" (Ebeling 1966:93).

For Crossan (2011) the bread petition implies hard-core confrontation. Jesus lived in a land occupied by Rome and the occupiers laid claim to the food produced by the land. Those who opposed Jesus knew that his visionary program involved those who owned the earth, the land, the lake – that is God or Rome. Departing from the multiplication stories about loaves

and fish in the gospel of Mark as miracles in parable,<sup>3</sup> Crossan (2011:126-130) follows the sequence of *take, bless, break and give*, and argues that these “distribution stories” mean that there is more than enough food present upon our earth when it passes through the hand of divine justice – when food is seen as God’s consecrated gift. For him the present kingdom of God is the equitable distribution of our earth.

What happens before the resurrection continues after it. The story told in John 21 where the disciples caught a huge amount of fish at the Sea of Tiberias would be an indication that Jesus, and not Herodes Antipas, is in control of the lake. It refers to Galilee’s lake as a microcosm of God’s world, about who owns it, controls it, distributes it (Crossan 2010:130-133). From the narrative about the two people in Emmaus (Luke 24) who shared their meal with a stranger, and who recognised him as the Christ when he took bread, *blessed* and *broke* it, and gave it to them, Crossan (2011:133-134) argues that distribution is by sharing even with – or especially with – the random stranger. Only then is Jesus present in the Christian community.

Crossan (2011:135) further refers to the story that continues or even consummates the preceding ones: the story in Mark about the “Passover meal” where Jesus *took, blessed, broke and gave* the bread and the wine, and argues that the standard sequence of those four verbs draws our attention to the fact that bread and fish has now become bread and wine. This sequence of bread and wine allows the equation of bread with the body and wine with the blood of Jesus:

The Eucharistic meal recalls that Jesus not only lived for the just distribution of food and drink, but died for insisting on the same thing. ... Rome did not crucify people for those proposals. Jesus was insisting that the world and its food – summarized as bread and wine – belonged to God and not to Rome. For that he died violently on a cross – so that ‘bread and wine’ led to ‘body and blood’. It follows, therefore, that Christians participating in the Lord’s Supper are collaborating with the justice of God as revealed in the life and death of Christ (Crossan 2010:135).

Crossan summarises the petition as saying that when we read or hear, “Give us this day our daily bread”, the simple word “bread” carries with it connotations of all those share-meals with Jesus during his life, before his death, and after his resurrection. It contains the multiplication meal, the lakeside meal, the Emmaus meal, and the Eucharistic meal. “It is the daily bread of daily justice along with the daily danger of challenging daily injustice” (Crossan 2010:137-138).

Lohse (2010:66) stresses that for Jesus the rule of God and his justice stood in the first place. Jesus was no enthusiastic “Schwärmer” who promoted unconcern – he rather set the priorities new in the lives of people. In the light of this orientation the everyday and the formation of life therein receives its place. Lohse argues that praying people who move their hands diligently (in beautiful contrast to the remarks in the first paragraph!) are carried by the conviction that all doesn’t depend on their actions, but that they could expect from God the gift of a fulfilled life. Schneider-Harpprecht (2013:177) regards the petition as an exercise in trusting God, the father, and also an exercise in justice (*Einübung in die Gerechtigkeit*), because an ethical call flows from this petition: when I pray for my daily bread, I should remember that my neighbour should also receive this bread, because everybody has the right to it (Schneider-Harpprecht 2013:177). According to Crossan (2010:22) prayer to the God of justice “above” empowers one to divine justice “here below”.

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3 Crossan (2011:56) uses parable as a story that is not given as history, but is asserted as challenge.

Theißen (2012:189) argues that when we pray this prayer today, we pray for more than simply surviving hunger – we also pray for a life without fear of starvation on the following day. The prayer has a political accent indeed: in the face of starvation worldwide and the global exploitation of the life resources to the detriment of the next generation, our guilt for exceeding the next day by far, becomes clear. The need in the world also emphasises the need for the action of the praying individual and the praying church: the prayer for bread and *bread for the world* belongs together unbroken (Schwier 2013:241).

### 3.1.2 *The second we-petition: And forgive us our debts,<sup>4</sup> as we forgive our debtors*

“There cannot be any true prayer, unless it is offered in a forgiving spirit.”  
(Origen, in *On Prayer* 8.1, collected in *Ancient Christian Writers* 19, Ayo 1992:253)

The second we-petition is connected by “and” to the first we-petition. The one is as necessary as the other: our daily bread and forgiving our debtors. “Debt” often are taken metaphorically as sins, asking God to forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us, but Crossan insists that it also means literally that enough food for today must involve no debt for tomorrow. Reading through the lens of various Old Testament texts and their contexts, he concludes that these examples spelled out in precise detail how *literal* debts were to be forgiven (Crossan 2010:140, 145-154). For God to forgive us our literal debts, however, we must owe God literal debt. Crossan gives a compelling “invoice”:

We owe it to God to run God’s world responsibly. We owe the divine Householder the conservation of the world house; we owe the divine Homemaker the consecration of the earth home. We owe God adequate care of all God’s creation. We owe God collaboration in hallowing God’s name, in establishing God’s kingdom, and in doing God’s will ‘as in heaven so also on earth.’ We owe it to God to cease focussing on heaven, especially in order to avoid focussing on earth. We owe it to God to ensure that there is enough food and not too much debt in God’s well-run household” (Crossan 2010:155).

Working through various views of the gospel writers on sin and debts (Crossan 2010:143-162), he concludes that debts was originally intended quite literally, but he comes to the conclusion that in its present format, it is advisable to read Matthew’s text as including both debt and sin. It also is not to be read as a comparison – as God forgives, so we also must forgive – but as a condition: “God will forgive, only if we forgive” (Crossan 2010:160). This condition is explicitly stated in the verses following the Lord’s Prayer: For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive you your sins (Matthew 6:14-15). Matthew (in 18:21-35) also connects this petition with the parable of the king’s servant who is let off his debt and then goes straight off and puts another servant in prison because he owes him a small amount of money. In this parable, forgiveness from the king is conditional on the servant’s forgiveness of a small debt owed to him. The second part of the petition can be seen as a reminder of being forgiven (*Selbsterinnerung* – Jeremias 1966:168). Those who live from God’s forgiveness are compelled “seinerseits nun Vergebung weiterzureichen” (Cullman 1994:76). It goes without the possibility of a human *claim* to forgiveness (Schwier 2005:895).

Simone Weil (1951:222-224, in Ayo 1992:165-166) argues in the same vein that we should not think that we have rights over the future, given by the past. We think however that we have a

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4 In some versions the term *debts* is used, in others the term *trespasses*, while others use the term *sins*.

right to compensation for every effort whatever its nature. The “effort of doing good” makes us expect the right to the gratitude of the person we have helped. When suffering from some offence, we expect the punishment or apologies of the offender. Because we expect this, we think we have a *right* to it: “In every claim we think we possess there is the idea of an imaginary claim of the past on the future. That is the claim we have to renounce. We cannot hold onto the past without retaining our own crimes.” Keeping track of sin, and keeping guilt alive, destroys the possibility of fellowship. It destroys the future. We must be able to forgive wholeheartedly. To be able to forgive our debtors in full and to let go in full, means that we are prepared for the future.

Schwier (2013:241) quotes the sixth stanza of Luther’s *Vaterunserlied*: “All unsre Schuld vergib uns, Herr, dass sie uns nicht betrübe mehr, wie wir auch unsern Schuldigern ihr Schuld und Fehl vergeben gern...”<sup>5</sup> (*Evangelisches Gesangbuch* 344:6) and refers to the rhyme between vergeben gern and Schuldigern. From the two concepts “meeting” through the rhyme he deduces that we should meet our debtors, those who owe us, those who stand in guilt before us. It is about meeting one another, about reconciliation – and reconciliation depends on forgiveness. Real freedom is to be able to give forgiveness *and* to receive forgiveness. Forgiveness in the literal sense of the verb is to let go, leave behind, release from captivity. “Forgiveness is the verdict of acquittal, liberation by word. ... What human existence needs most of all is the word that acquits” (Ebeling 1966:107, see also Weingardt 2003).

Forgiveness is more than letting go of the past. It is also a vital step on the road to reconciliation. Forgiveness is about truly meeting each other, about the restoring of relationships, rebuilding good faith, creating freedom, making space, opening up the future, giving hope, realising the truth – about living the true liberating love of God. Where love is true, where there is true love, there God is present – *Ubi caritas est vera, deus ibi est...*<sup>6</sup>

### 3.1.3 *Third we-petition: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*’ (Matthew 6:13)

In different contexts the Greek *peirasmos* can mean temptation, testing, trial, experiment. Jeremias (1996:170) understands it eschatologically as referring to the big temptation at the end of times when the secrets of evil will finally be revealed, but Schwier (2013:241) argues against such a view and emphasises that it rather refers to the current trials of need, illness and persecution in our everyday lives. It could also be about bringing others into temptation.

From the presence and actions of the Roman legions in Israel and surroundings in Jesus’ time, Crossan (2011:163-168) argues that the petition “lead us not into temptation” refers very specifically to the temptation to answer violence with violence: “it asks God to deliver us from that evil action or evil one.” With reference to the test/trial/temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, Crossan shows how, in Matthew’s sequence, the three temptations – turning stones

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5 Forgive our sins, Lord, we implore, remove from us their burden sore, as we their trespasses forgive who by offenses us do grieve. Thus let us dwell in charity and serve our brother willingly. (Composite translation of verse 6 of Luther’s hymn, *Vater unser im Himmelreich*.)

6 The original form of the medieval hymn now known as *Ubi caritas, et amor*. With appreciation for the reference from Pater Rhabanus Erbacher (Münsterschwarzach) at Kloster Kirchberg, Germany, March 2013 and email dated 27 August 2013. Note also in the English translation of verse 6 of Luther’s *Vater unser* (footnote 5): Thus let us dwell in *charity*...

7 Other translations include: but deliver us from the evil one/ Save us from the time of trial.

into bread, descending from the pinnacle of the Temple and gaining all the kingdoms of the world – progress from *personal and individual*, through *corporate and communal*, to *structural and systemic* temptation (Crossan 2010:170). The last and climactic temptation concerns violence done for the name, kingdom, and will of God on earth. “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil’ is about avoiding violence even or especially when undertaken to hallow God’s name, to establish God’s kingdom, and thereby to fulfil God’s will as in heaven so on earth” (Crossan 2010:168).

The warning that evil could be done, even when people have good intentions, is in accordance with the view in the *Heidelberg Catechism*, where the consequences of human action are summarised as having the possibility to bring about the hallowing or blaspheming of God’s name. The importance is stressed *first* to know God rightly: “*Hallowed be thy name*; that is, grant us, first, rightly to know thee, and to sanctify, glorify and praise thee, in all thy works, in which thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth, are clearly displayed; and further also, that we may so order and direct our whole lives, our thoughts, words and actions, that thy name may never be blasphemed, but rather honoured and praised on our account” (Question 122, in EG 1995).

### **3.2. Doxology: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever (Matthew 6:13)**

According to Aune (2010:299) and Aland & Aland (1998:306) the doxology is not present in the oldest manuscripts and also is not a part of the original text of Matthew. It is however a Jewish custom to end a prayer with a doxology to give the honour to God and probably was the custom also in the early church – even if a specific wording wasn’t set. It could be accepted that the people praying could give God the honour in their own wording (Lohse 2010:88-89). A two-part doxology is found in the Didache 8.2 (Schwier 2005:893). It indicates the first known *use* of the doxology in the liturgy. Many modern translations omit the doxology. Most Latin Rite Roman Catholics, as well as some Lutherans do not use the doxology when reciting the Lord’s Prayer in the liturgy. The Anglican Book of Common Prayer sometimes gives the Lord’s Prayer with the doxology, sometimes without. Most Protestants, however, use the doxology in the liturgy to conclude the prayer. The doxology concludes the petitions with the aspect of praise. It creates a frame and it connects the eschatological with the present orientation (Schwier 2005:895). What is said in the petitions comes again to the fore in the doxology. Lohse (2010:91) shows how the doxology is linked with the various petitions:

“Yours is the kingdom” refers to the second petition – that is: “Your Kingdom come” which means the coming reign of God. God’s reign, which is already present, is given back to God in the words of Jesus.

“...the power” refers to the petition that God’s will be done on earth as in heaven.

“...the glory” refers to the beginning of the prayer where the honouring of God’s name is given the first place.

The doxology ends with: “for ever and ever”. It refers to God’s eternity that is distinct from all temporal limitations to which our earthly existence is subjected.

In German versions the plural *Ewigkeiten* or *von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit* is sometimes used. For Lohse (2010:91) it is an indication of the fullness or the full sound of the expression

(*voltönender Ausdruck*). The endless fullness is named in plural (Ewigkeiten), which shows how the succession of ages follows one another and in their fullness are oriented towards God's eternity. At the end a powerful "Amen" is said: it is true and indisputably valid. It also shows us how we should pray: ending in praising God with hearts full of gratefulness.

#### 4. PRAYER AND PRAYING THE LORD'S PRAYER

With regard to the types of prayer in the Bible, Crossan shows that in the Psalms we find the speaking to God, where the two major categories are distinguished as Psalms of Request (some positive: *for us* and some negative: *against them*) and Psalms of Gratitude (reflected in *praise* and *thanksgiving*). The speaking *for* God is found in the Prophets. It includes the negative view of ritual prayer over and against the demand for justice and righteousness. He places the prophetic assertion of justice *against* prayer into a dynamic and organic unity of *justice-and-prayer* or *prayer-and-justice*. He emphasises that meditation and action or ritual prayer and distributive justice can be distinguished, but not separated – like two sides of a coin that exist only as a unity (Crossan 2010:10-21). The prayer can only be prayed by the Holy Spirit already within us. Crossan (2011:26-28) argues that to obtain the Spirit is a process of maturity – and maturity in prayer means working more and more *from* prayers of request (complaint or petition), *through* prayers of gratitude (thanksgiving or praise), and *on to* prayers of empowerment (participation or collaboration) with a God who is absolutely transcendent and immanent at the same time.

The German poet and Nobel prize winner, Hermann Hesse (1945/1976, in Michels 1976:90) emphasizes that for whom God is not an idol and who won't use prayer as a magic formula, but who experience it as the deepest concentration of all inner powers which bring about the strong will to do good, to do the best as the only necessity – that he will get strength from the prayers, because they forced him to test his own heart, to fight against idleness<sup>8</sup> and to forget his own small interests for the general good. In the Lord's Prayer the whole proclamation of Jesus is given in compact and concentrated form (Tertullianus in KKK 1993:2761; Jeremias 1966:161).<sup>9</sup> Therefore the prayer should indeed not be understood as a formula, but that it names the most important themes as orientation for our prayers.

Referring to the various theories on the origin of the prayer, Lohse (2010:92) and Ayo (1992:9) argues that even if Jesus had not composed or used the Lord's Prayer as we know it today, we have in these words the mind and heart of Jesus, and the direction for how we are to pray. When the origins of the prayer are considered – that it is rooted in the rich prayer tradition of Israel, then another aspect comes to mind: whether it would not be possible that Jews could also take part in this prayer (Lohse 2010:102-103; see also Brocke, Petuchowski, Stolz 1974). It should form part of the understanding and practice of Christian praying that the content of the main prayer of the Christian church connects the church with Israel – and even other confessions.<sup>10</sup> Christian praying should then also be such a practice as to give people space, inviting them to hear and become part of the meaning of the Lord's Prayer which bridges time, space and confessions (Schwier 2005:896; 2013:242). The prayer is described as a prayer from the *heart of Judaism* on the lips of *Christianity*, for the *conscience of the world* (Crossan 2010:2).

8 Note again the first paragraph of the article!

9 See also Haacker (2010) for a discussion of the Lord's Prayer in view of the full proclamation of Jesus.

10 As shown in the first article (Kloppers 2013), it already seems to function as an inter-confessional prayer at some occasions – it was prayed together by Muslims and Christians for example in a worship service on 17 June 2012 in Kamp-Lintfort, Germany.

Could it become more? Perhaps it could become the prayer on the lips of all the world for the whole of creation.

## 5. CONCLUSION : HOMILETICAL AND LITURGICAL INDICATORS

...the text actually makes preaching difficult for us by obliging us to say not what we like but which is necessary... (Ebeling 1966:46)

The Lord's Prayer, in its simplicity, unites the enormity of God's coming and the most human and "everydayish" into a harmony (Dutch Catechism, Utrecht 1966, in Lohse 2010:120). As shown, however, the prayer could be read from various angles. Should one stress the immediacy, the here and now, or depend on the future? Should one work from the paradigm of a realised eschaton such as Crossan, or depend on the paradigm of a future eschaton? Or should one rather choose for the paradigm that both views should co-exist in an "insoluble interdependence" (Schwier 2005:896)? For Ebeling the prayer is directed towards the end, when the contradictions will be cleared, when the work and command of Christ is fulfilled, when that which in the present still divides as Christ and as God, will become the undivided reign of God ... Therefore everything aims only at the praise of God: "alles zielt also allein auf die Doxa Gottes ab" (Ebeling 1979 II:332). However, for Ebeling (1966:53) praying as response to God's word and God's work is also *participation* in the work of God, in the redemption of the world, in the process in which God's creation becomes true creation and we become true people. Ebeling therefore also emphasizes the importance of a realised eschaton, but his approach is more metaphorical, more poetical, and maybe more balanced than that of Crossan. Could it be that various approaches speak to various people – that one person would hear a Crossan and the other an Ebeling? And that in the same way one wouldn't hear Crossan and the other wouldn't hear Ebeling? Crossan calls the prayer a "revolutionary manifesto and a hymn of hope". Maybe this is exactly where the difference lies: that one person would hear a direct appeal in a hymn, in a poem, in a metaphor, and the other would hear it in the word spoken in a revolutionary way.

The challenge for the preacher would be to find a balance between views, in approach, and in presentation, in order to accommodate various viewpoints, various types of people and various personalities. The preacher also needs to decide carefully which approach to follow for each situation or context of preaching. In constructing a new encompassing text of sermon and prayer and liturgy, the format of the original Biblical text should also be honoured. All aspects of content and form should also be borne in mind. Crossan argues quite poetically himself: "Where the *content* of the Lord's Prayer is deeply embedded in the biblical tradition of justice, so its *form* is deeply embedded in the biblical tradition of poetry – all which indicates that a careful mind and a poetic soul gave us the present version of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew's gospel" (Crossan 2010:4, 47-49).

Creating a sermon and liturgy from these readings will be discussed with a view to convey the essential meaning and challenge of the Lord's Prayer within a new context. The Lord's Prayer and the individual petitions it contains, provides the opportunity to address the most pressing issues within the South African context – issues of distributive justice such as poverty, ownership, land reforms, basic 'daily bread'; forgiveness within the frame of not retaining past crimes (Weil), but also remembering in order not to make the same mistakes again; unearthing unsolved histories and addressing remaining pains and fears; reconciliation among people within the frame of broken fellowships; fostering human rights, where crime

against the people God created is rife; actively working towards the healing of people within an AIDS-ridden society; campaigning for the healing of the earth in a country where the earth is destroyed by limitless mining activities; addressing issues of power and corruption. It will be argued that through the sermon and by creatively incorporating poetic and hymnic material into the liturgy, space could be opened up so people could speak to God in various ways, *hear* what God says in various ways – and be changed. The biggest challenge for the preacher remains indeed: to “speak” in such a way that people would hear and pray differently; hear, and act with new vitality; hear, and be opened up for God’s future – God’s future which is already present<sup>11</sup>: *Ubi caritas est vera, deus ibi est...*

In Christ we learn to love and care and spread his truth abroad;  
and in his Name we lift our prayer:  
“Your kingdom come, O Lord!”

Timothy Dudley-Smith ©  
(We bring you, Lord, our prayer and praise, verse 6)

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<sup>11</sup> The reign of God is eternal presence in heaven. In the liturgy God’s reign is praised as presence, while at the same time we pray for the coming of God’s reign (Schwier 2005:894, my translation).

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#### KEY WORDS

The Lord's Prayer  
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Kingdom

#### TREFWOORDE

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Daaglikse brood  
Verlos van die bose  
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