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Cilliers, Johan¹
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Prophetic preaching in South Africa: exploring some spaces of tension²

ABSTRACT

In this article a sermon that was preached during the height of the apartheid era by the well-known South African preacher and political activist, Allan Boesak, is re-evaluated, utilizing the Heidelberg Method of sermon analysis in conjunction with certain elements of the Grounded Theory Model and the administrative support of the Kwalitan Computer Program. The sermon represents an interesting reflection on the *South African context* at the time, as well as the *homiletic methodology* implemented by one of South Africa's most gifted preachers – indeed a brave effort to articulate the living voice of the gospel within this context. The analysis strives not only to reveal the *basic hermeneutic structure* of the sermon as it becomes apparent on a linguistic level, but also to offer a *theological interpretation*, specifically in terms of the God-images and ecclesiology that underline the preacher's efforts to address the South African context under apartheid. The sermon and analysis open up the possibility for a *retrospective reflection* on the question: did this form of prophetic preaching in fact serve the “living voice of the gospel” in a time of trial and transition?

1. THE ACOUSTIC SPACE OF VOICE

Allan Boesak can be described as one of the most gifted preachers that South Africa has ever produced – rhetorically, theologically, and especially prophetically.³ It has been said that “Allan Boesak belongs in the company of the great preachers of the Christian church, who have found in Jesus of Nazareth the authentic voice of Moses and the Prophets, and in Paul of Tarsus and John of Patmos formative hearers and doers of that voice. The voice of Boesak is a contemporary voice, joining in a single chorus of affirmation that ‘the Word of God is that which strikes the conscience!’”⁴

In this article we endeavour to re-hear this “authentic ... contemporary voice”, through listening to one of Boesak's own sermons.⁵ Boesak's sermons can indeed be described as “prophetical”,

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2 Edited version of a paper delivered at the 10th International Conference of the *Societas Homiletica*, held in Wittenberg, Germany, 10-15 August 2012. The theme of the conference was: *Viva Vox Evangelii: Reforming Preaching Today*.

3 Cf. Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 92. Tisdale refers to people like Allan Boesak, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Martin Luther King Jr., and others as people who put their lives on the line for what they believed in.

4 Paul Lehmann, “Foreword”, in: Allan Boesak, *The Finger of God. Sermons on Faith and Responsibility*. Translated from Afrikaans by Peter Randall (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1979), ix.

5 “Jesus Christ Frees ... and Divides” In: Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 76-81. The complete sermon is attached as an addendum. Direct quotations from the sermon are in bold. In some instances, I also compare Boesak's homiletic theory, as reflected in the preface to this compendium of sermons, to the sermon as such.

or, in his own words, as “situational”⁶ His brief definition of preaching states: “Preaching is the proclamation of the gospel in a language that can be understood by persons in a specific situation.”⁷ These keywords – prophetic and situational – fit in well with the notion of “voice”, which carries within itself the promise of a (prophetic, situational) *event*.⁸

A voice contains a personal element; the speaker creates an *acoustic space* that helps to express his or her identity.⁹ In fact, one can even say that if we do not hear another person’s voice, true communication with that person, is usually impossible – or at least affected.¹⁰ For example, reading a letter is not the same as personally meeting the writer when one can hear his or her voice.¹¹ When one speaks of a voice, one normally has sound and hearing in mind, and when one has sound and hearing in mind, it usually also implies acoustics.¹²

Preaching, in my opinion, communicates more than mere information about God to others; it is the *performance of God’s voice* through historical distances, the mists of incomprehension and deafness of ears – it is, as the classic advertisement stated, all about “hearing his Master’s voice”.¹³ A sermon is much more than the transfer of religious information, also much more than mere words on a written manuscript. It rather is a word event and a Word event, the sound of a voice, non-recurrent and unique. In fact, sermons cannot be repeated, nor be re-preached, because God’s voice is not static, not fixed in time and place, but historical, contingent, living and redeeming. Sermons are more than concepts or truths on paper, no matter how exegetical or dogmatically correct they may be. They are words that need to be re-grouped and re-tuned acoustically (i.e. in terms of *hearing*) by the Spirit to become a voice that articulates the Word of God.¹⁴

6 “What is true for theology is true for preaching: it is situational.” Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 7.

Obviously, prophetic preaching can be described in various ways, also linked to cultural settings.

According to Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, prophetic preaching reminds us of at least the following: the fact that God is compassionate, not deserting that which God has created; that God has made certain promises, expressing God’s enduring faithfulness; and that there are alternative manifestations of God’s inbreaking new world that can be discerned even in our darkest moments. Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, “God’s Word in the World: Prophetic Preaching and the Gospel of Jesus Christ”, in *Anabaptist Preaching: A Conversation Between Pulpit, Pew & Bible*, ed. David B. Greiser and Michael A. King (Telford, PA: Cascading Publishing House, 2003), 84-91.

7 Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 7.

8 Cf. John D Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1; A wide semantic field evolves around the Afrikaans word stem (voice), with concepts such as: instemming (concurrence), eenstemmigheid (unanimity), stemreg (the right to vote), stemloos (voiceless), buite stemming bly (refrain from voting), om stemming te skep (to create an atmosphere), stemmingsvol (full of atmosphere), stemmig (subdued), etc. These concepts all underline the fact that the voice is a living phenomenon – more than words or concepts on paper. Cf. Johan Cilliers, *The living voice of the gospel: Re-visiting the basic principles of preaching* (Stellenbosch: Sun Media, 2004), 31 ff.

9 Cf. Cilliers, *The living voice of the gospel*, 35; also C Möller, *Der Hörer als zweiter Prediger. Zur Bedeutung der Rezeptionsästhetik für die Homiletik* (in *Predigen aus Leidenschaft*) (Karlsruhe: Verlag Evangelischer Presseverband für Baden e. V, 1996), 33-36.

10 This does not exclude, for instance, deaf people from true communication. However, the rule is that the component audio- forms one of the basic points of departure in human communication.

11 This of course also underlines the limitations of a paper like this – trying to re-hear a sermon preached more than three decades ago!

12 An interesting challenge to this point of departure would be a painting like the famous artwork by Edvard Munch, titled *The Scream*. There is no sound, but the visual depiction is so strong that one actually can “hear” the sound in the mind’s ear, so to speak. In the painting, however, it is not the living voice of hope that one “hears”, but rather the anguished cry of despair and death.

13 Advertisement for a gramophone and gramophone records.

14 Cf. Cilliers, *The living voice of the gospel*, 35. This notion of the acoustic, i.e. *hearing*, does not exclude

This re-grouping and re-tuning of words finds its voice within, but also creates, certain *spaces of tension*. One can say: *the living voice of the gospel becomes audible within certain spaces of tension*. Boesak is acutely aware of this. Speaking about the authenticity of the preacher, he says: "Authenticity lies in the correct combination of exposition of the word, sensitivity to the situation of the congregation, and the inner conviction resulting from a personal experience of God's liberation in the life of the preacher."¹⁵ At least three tensions are implied here: the tension caused by the situation (context); the tension arising from the historicity of the biblical text; and the tension generated by the experience of the preacher. In this article, I add two more spaces of tension, namely those of God-images and ecclesiology.¹⁶

The sermon in question was preached during the late 70's – a time of socio-political turmoil in South Africa as seldom experienced before. The tension of this catastrophic phase of South African history forms the contextual background of the whole sermon. The details of this period need not be repeated here;¹⁷ suffice to say that the country was balanced on a knife-edge, with a full scale civil war and unimaginable bloodshed a real possibility. If ever there was a time when the "living voice of the gospel" needed to be heard, it was then. We are reminded of Bonhoeffer who declared that although life should not be overburdened with the ethical in a pathological manner, there may come times when this very life is threatened to such an extent that the church, if it wishes to retain its integrity, has no other alternative

communication via the other senses. Rather it acts as metaphor for a comprehensive, multi-sensory "observation" of reality. According to Bohren, our senses are actually connected much more closely than we can ever imagine: For instance, we also 'see' with our ears, and 'hear' with our eyes. On this interaction of the senses, this "engen Verknüpfung von Hören und Sehen", he says: "Was ich höre, stelle ich mir vor, und das heisst doch, dass ich auch mit den Augen höre." [Rudolf Bohren, *Predigtlehre* (München: Kaiser, 1980), 268.] In this regard, also see Ola Sigurdson's comments: "As we all know, in the Christian church, different senses have been regarded as the theologically most noble sense during different historical periods: vision in Orthodox Christianity, audition in Protestantism. But this hierarchy needs to be critically studied, since one could suspect that some of the theoretical accounts might be quite different from the established practices in the same historical period. But this is not the only reason for a theology of the senses. As theology often has realized in passing, our senses are ways of relating towards each other and towards God, and as there are different manners of looking, listening, touching and so on, there is need of a more systematic investigation into the theological and/or philosophical implications of the different way of sensing." [Ola Sigurdson, "How to Speak of the Body? Embodiment between Phenomenology and Theology", *Studia Theologica: Nordic Journal of Theology* 62, no 1 (2008):41.]

¹⁵ Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 15.

¹⁶ These will be discussed in more detail in the analysis. Obviously more "spaces of tension" could be mentioned here. Cf. Johan Cilliers, *Soos Woorde van God: Ontwerp van 'n Preekanalitiese Model*. (Stellenbosch: Ongepubliseerde DTh Proefskrif, 1982), 100-133.

¹⁷ For an extensive discussion, cf. CFJ Müller (red), *Vyfhonderd jaar Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis* (Kaaopstad: Tafelberg, 1980), 510-520. The period 1960 to 1980 was, on the one hand, characterized by post-war prosperity among a large part of the white population, and, on the other hand, by a growing relational problem and alienation among the various population groups. In this respect, the events at Sharpeville (1960) formed a type of watershed, and focused the world's attention on South Africa, with increasing foreign isolation, sanctions, and internal unrest and violence. South Africa's subsequent withdrawal from the Commonwealth (May 1961) caused its greatest economic crisis since the depression of 1930 to 1932. A combination of political, economic and social factors escalated into another watershed moment for South Africa, with the youth taking to the streets in the Soweto-uprising of 1976, resulting in a governmental clamp-down, called the "state of emergency". All of this eventually led to the release of Nelson Mandela, resulting in the first democratic general elections on 27 April 1994, which were described by many as "nothing short of a miracle". Time and space constraints do not allow me to describe the momentous events leading up to this breakthrough in detail. For an overview of this period, cf. H Gilliomme; B Mbenga, *New History of South Africa* (Kaaopstad: Tafelberg, 2007), 330ff.

but to proclaim the gospel as law for the hour.¹⁸ This was clearly such a time, such a *kairos*, in South African history.¹⁹

It is within this space of almost unbearable tension, this “situation”, that Boesak the preacher steps in and opens his mouth.²⁰ He does this, well knowing that he puts his life on the line. In his reflections on the act of preaching, he states: “The white government of South Africa has a vast array of oppressive laws that have an intimidating effect on the preacher. A sermon that is too clear may land the preacher in the hands of the dreaded security police, because such a sermon could, within the definition of the law, be anything from ‘instigation’ to ‘terrorism.’ To preach the word of God relevantly in South Africa is to walk through a minefield – blindfolded.”²¹ Boesak himself knew this from own experience – a member of the security police pointed a gun at his head after one of his so-called “political sermons.”²² The broad coordinating system within which this sermon can be placed is indeed the experience of threat on the one hand, and the intention to preach the gospel “in a language that can be understood by persons in a specific situation”²³ on the other hand.

In what follows I offer an analysis of this sermon, utilising the Heidelberg Method,²⁴ combined

18 D Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (London: SCM Press, 1955), 66f.

19 Many South Africans would say that we are in fact experiencing another such a *kairos* at present.

20 The theological tradition within which Boesak stands, is Reformed, with a strong affinity with Calvin in particular. Cf. Boesak’s comments on “Reformed Christians”, who “ought to know better”. Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 14.

21 Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 5-6.

22 Narrated to the author of this paper in a personal conversation.

23 Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 7.

24 Briefly, the Heidelberg Method can be described as: the method originated from research done by homiletic study groups at the Practical Theological Seminary of the Karl Rupprecht University of Heidelberg, Germany, during the late 1970s. After the theoretical basis was formulated, it was published for the first time at an international symposium on preaching held in Heidelberg on 8-12 October 1986. Here the Swiss practical theologian Rudolf Bohren, the German author Gerd Debus, and others shared their experiences in applying this method with a broader homiletically community. Generally speaking it can be called an intra-textual approach, which intends, by means of a “close reading” of sermons, and by implementing rhetorical and theological criteria, to interpret the Word of God in, and often against, the preached Word. Simply put, it asks: to what extent does the preached Word articulate the Word of God? Or in the definition of Bullinger: is the preached Word of God indeed the Word of God (*predicatio dei est verbum dei*)? As an analytical method it naturally represents a framework of interpretation. Its intention is therefore not to be the final word on specific sermons, but rather to open up dialogue concerning these sermons. It wishes to serve the maturing of preachers and congregations, the latter to its full stature as complete church (*ecclesia completa*), a church that has both the ability and right to judge the preached Word (Luther). It therefore literally takes preachers at their word(s), trying to truly understand them, sometimes even to the point of understanding them better than they understood themselves; trying to grasp the pivotal and often subconscious hermeneutical decisions which underlie their sermons. In doing this, the most basic questions are asked, such as: How is the biblical text implemented in the sermon? What role does the preacher play? And, of specific importance for this paper: What (kind of) God is pictured in the sermon? And: What congregation is presupposed and/or invoked? Cf. R Bohren, KP Jörns, *Die Predigtanalyse als Weg zur Predigt* (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 1989), 55-61. There are of course also other methods of sermon analysis, for instance the Heidelberg model with the use of the Kwalitan computer program; the hermeneutical model developed by Vaessen; the model for researching the sermon as a Word of God by Stark; the combination of the Heidelberg model and Stark’s model by De Klerk, De Wet and Letsosa; and the grounded theory model for inductive analysis of sermons in order to develop a theory from the data. For an overview of these approaches cf. HJC Pieterse, “Die Keuse van ‘n model vir inhoudsanalise van preke oor armoede en aan armes as hoorders.” In *die Skriflig*. (2010), Vol 44 No 2, 1-16. As indicated, I utilized a combination of the Heidelberg Method, the Ground Theory Model, and the

with certain elements of the Grounded Theory Model²⁵ and the administrative support of the Kwalitan Computer Programme.²⁶ The Kwalitan Computer Programme was initially used to identify certain key concepts in the sermon text. The Grounded Theory Model offers an inductive methodology that helps us to group key words and phrases that occur throughout the sermon together as categories, binding it together as a communicative unity. The Heidelberg method aims, *inter alia*, to disclose the *fundamental hermeneutic structures* of sermons. In the following analysis I will focus²⁷ on this, while also venturing a *theological interpretation*. The combination of these methods – all of which have been used within the South African context before²⁸ – seems most adequate to address both the empirical reality of the sermon, as well as offering possibilities for a hermeneutical and theological reflection. The methodological procedure was therefore one of data collection and selection; observation and interpretation, and (theological) reflection.²⁹

It is important to keep in mind, however, that this analysis does not pretend to be the final word on this sermon.³⁰ On the contrary, it intends to open up a provisional and experimental space within which the on-going discussion about “the living voice of the gospel” can be served.

We now turn our attention to the analysis of the sermon.

Kwalitan Computer Program in this article.

25 According to Pieterse “the process of grounded theory analysis of sermons develops in a bottom-up approach in three cycles: (1) open coding as an inductive exercise, initial identifying of categories and the development of an open coding analytical model; (2) selective coding that is a deductive exercise in which sermons are selectively chosen for analysis on the basis of the hypotheses that are developed in the open coding analytical model; (3) theoretical coding and the construction of a theory of preaching on the theme of the analysis. Open coding is an inductive analysis of what the preacher says, teaches, admonishes, appeals, etc. in the segments and is coded in short sentences. The idea is to move from the code as a linguistic designator to concepts in the sense that the codes are treated as indicators for larger conceptual categories.” Cf. HJC Pieterse, “An Open Coding Analytical Model of Sermons on Poverty with Matthew 25:31-46 as Sermon Text” In: *Acta Theologica* (2011), 31/1, 95-112; also T Pleizier, Religious involvement in hearing sermons. A Grounded Theory study in empirical theology and homiletics (Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2010), 113. In this article I restrict myself to the first cycle, i.e. that of open coding.

26 This programme enables researchers to acquire qualitative data from written texts, for instance in the form of keywords, codes, categories of codes, etc. Website: www.kwalitan.nl/english. For an example of how this programme was used in the South African context, cf. HJC Pieterse (Ed), *Desmond Tutu's Message: A Qualitative Analysis* (Köln: Brill, 2001), 112f.

27 This implies that not every sentence and/or word of the sermon is necessarily reflected in the analysis. Obviously the preacher also says some other moving and noteworthy things, but insofar as they do not impact on the basic hermeneutic structure, they are not mentioned or analysed.

28 Cf. for instance Johan Cilliers, *God for Us? An Analysis and Assessment of Dutch Reformed Preaching during the Apartheid Years* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2006); HJC Pieterse (Ed), *Desmond Tutu's Message: A Qualitative Analysis* (Köln: Brill, 2001); HJC Pieterse, “An Open Coding Analytical Model of Sermons on Poverty with Matthew 25:31-46 as Sermon Text” In: *Acta Theologica* (2011), 31/1, 95-112.

29 Cf. Pieterse, *Desmond Tutu's Message*, 113.

30 This analysis therefore does not profess to represent an exact image statistically of all (reformed) preaching from this time. But it can indeed say: preaching was also done like this. Naturally, there were other voices that expressed the “situation” completely differently. There were also “reformed” sermons – perhaps the majority – that made no mention of the situation.

2. ANALYSIS

2.1 Primary and secondary codes

A close scrutiny of the sermon following the notion of *open coding* reveals the following most often repeated phrases – grouped underneath as the *core code*, with *secondary-codes*. The core code indicates the dynamic key concept – mostly found in the form of a *verb*, in accordance with the definition of preaching as an *event* – on which the basic structure of the sermon in fact hinges. The core code (not necessarily inferred from the number of repetitions) appears at certain key moments in the sermon; the secondary codes are connected to and dependant on this core code.

Core code:

- Jesus/God/humans come (10); are in movement (4)

Secondary codes:

- Jesus/God/humans *decide/choose* (19)
- Jesus/God/humans *divide* (8)
- Jesus/God/humans long for *peace* (36)
- Really/real/reality (8) – used mostly as *emphasis*

We now take a closer, analytical look at these different codes.

2.2 “The coming of Jesus ...”

The very first sentence of the sermon sheds an interesting light on the preacher’s understanding of the *coming of Jesus* (the core code): **“The coming of Jesus the Messiah is a sign of great decisions.”** (paragraph 1) Three observations are of importance here, as they also have an impact on the unfolding of the rest of the sermon – in a sense, this first sentence contains the whole sermon, *in nuce*; the core code sets up the rest of the sermon.

Firstly, it is interesting to note that the preacher uses the nominalisation of the verb (**“The coming of ...”**), and not the active, indicative form (“Jesus comes ...”). One could say: this nominalisation of the verb represents a type of general description of “the coming of Jesus”; not so much as a performative articulation of this coming. The “coming of Jesus” is still historically abstract, not revealing *how* and *when* Jesus comes, at least in South Africa, today.³¹

The second observation concerns another important word in this first sentence, namely the word **“is”**. “Is” is the present tense, here pregnant with meaning. It actually means: so it is, and so it must be. Or, in theological terms: “is” contains and combines the indicative and the imperative. The first part of the sermon strives to proclaim the “coming of Jesus”, the how and when thereof, in clear indicative terms, by referring to a number of biblical instances, which the preacher defines as God’s **“liberation movement”**, and **“movement of freedom”**.

³¹ “Today” here means South Africa during 1979.

(paragraphs 4, 8). But the potential for the imperative – which is strongly emphasised later on in the sermon, is also already implanted in the word “is”.

Thirdly, the potential for emphasising the imperative is furthermore enhanced in the way that the preacher slightly adjusts the biblical text that he uses as basis for his sermon in this first sentence.³² The text articulates the words of Jesus: “I have come to bring division”; the preacher speaks of **“decisions”**. This secondary code is repeated 19 times throughout the sermon, and the first sentence already indicates the preacher’s intent: to call upon his hearers to *decide*, to *choose*. Although he does use the term “division” – another secondary code, found 8 times – which underlines the idea that God initiates this action, the notion of “decision” offers a better platform to speak about human responsibility and even “capacity” later on in the sermon (cf. paragraph 10). It is also interesting to note that the first sentence is in the form of an *impersonal construction* – “a sign of great decisions” – without revealing who in fact *makes* these decisions.

This brings us to a second occurrence of the core code.

2.3 “When Jesus comes ...”

Now the preacher no longer speaks of **“The coming of Jesus”** in a nominalised construction, but he prefers the verbalised form: **“When Jesus comes ...”** (paragraph 9). This seems like a step towards answering the question that was evoked by the first sentence of the sermon: how and when does the “coming of Jesus” in fact take place in South Africa, today? But it is interesting to note that the preacher – rhetorically gifted as he is – does not answer this question, at least not at this stage of his sermon. He keeps the suspense going. The *conditional terms* of the how and when remain open.

But the preacher in fact does *prepare the ground* for answering this question carefully and rhetorically. It is significant to see that the imperative is used quite emphatically in the section following this **“When Jesus comes ...”** One could say that the potential for the imperative that was given in the first sentence of the sermon now comes to fuller fruition. Now “is” does

³² It is not possible to do an extensive *exegetical reading of the biblical text and/or pericope* within the limitations of this article. The following broad strokes are however relevant for the *analysis of the sermon text*: Firstly, the pericope from which the sermon text is taken, forms part of the narrative of Jesus’ *journey to Jerusalem* (starting in 9:21), and his *escalating contrast to and conflict with the Pharisees and Lawyers* (cf. 11:37-54). The text that the preacher uses as basis for his sermon is furthermore part of the segment that calls for a *preparation for the coming judgement* (12:1-13:9), and is followed by an extended segment about reversals now and to come (13:10-14:35). Secondly, the pericope is drenched in Old Testament language and symbolism. For instance the fire here denotes *God’s intention* to purify God’s people in *God’s time*. For this purpose Jesus also came to the earth – to realize *God’s kairos*. Thus Jesus does not stand as fiery Judge over against the world – He himself will be judged, will be immersed in fire. He knows and expects this, but awaits *God’s timing* of this (eschatological) event. Thirdly, it is important to note that it is not clear *how Jesus is to be seen to be initiating this conflagration*. The reader is rather left with puzzling, paradoxical speech, e.g. the apparent clash between “fire” and “peace”. *Nowhere, however, is it expected of the church – or followers of Jesus – to initiate the how and when of God’s kairos in Jesus*. It remains an eschatological, and in this sense, also Christological event. For good overviews of this pericope, cf. SJ Patterson, “Fire and Dissension: Ipsissima Vox Jesus in Q 12:49, 51-53?” *Forum* 5.2 (1989), 121-139; P Sellw, “Reconstruction of Q 12:33-59.” In *SBL Seminar Papers* 1987, ed. KH Richards (Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1987), 617-668; A Vögtle, “Todesankündigung und Todesverständnis Jesu.” In *Der Tod Jesu: Deutungen im Neuen Testament*, ed. K Kertelge (Freiburg: Herder, 1976), 51-113; J Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 35b: Luke 9:21-18:34* (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1998), 131f.

in fact mean “should be”; now “decisions” should in fact be made. But all of these imperatives are still taken as examples from biblical incidents, i.e. they are not at this stage of the sermon directed at hearers in South Africa, today.

Many examples of this emphasised imperative can be pointed out in this section, perhaps culminating in: **“He demands of his followers faithful obedience and total trust; he demands of them the capacity to take up their cross ... ”** (paragraph 10). These imperatives are surrounded by strong words, like **“painful and controversial tension”; “confrontation”; “collision”; “radicality”; “division”; “radical”; “more radicalized”**, etc. (paragraphs 9, 10, 12),

This paves the way for the third nuance of the core code.

2.4 “ ... the real division still has to come!”

The preacher now starts to shift his attention to the hearers in South Africa, today. In a bridging paragraph, he speaks of Christ’s hold on **“our lives”**, about the fact that **“he has the last word over my life, that he rules over my total being – that makes it so difficult for us ... ”** (paragraph 12). For the first time we hear “our”, “my” and “us”. Then comes the bridging word – we often find variants of these in sermons – linking the first part of the sermon with that which is to follow: **“Therefore ... ”** (paragraph 13).

Again, the emphases catch the eye. The word “really” – another secondary code in the sermon, repeated 8 times in different forms – comes to the fore. But what is even more significant in this turning towards the hearers in South Africa, today, is the change in verbal tense. While the present tense was used predominantly in the first part of the sermon, inter alia to express the **“reality”** brought about by “the coming of Jesus” (paragraph 2), the future tense now takes over, strengthened by the use of emphasis. Now we hear: **“The real issue has still to come!”**, and: **“No, the real division has still to come!”** (paragraph 13, 14).

One could say: the reality of the peace that Jesus has brought, referred to in the first part of the sermon, and expounded in the closing section of the sermon, becomes the peace that Jesus will still bring – in the future, when certain conditions are met. The future coming of division places peace – another secondary code (repeated 36 times) – on hold.

It would seem that even the God-image of the preacher changes, or is at least affected by, this transformation of tense. In the first part of the sermon he stated that through God’s decision for the world **“old forms are affected in their innermost core”** (paragraph 2); in this section we hear: **“God is not yet even in this picture ... ”** (paragraph 14).

This prompts an array of questions: how then must or can God be brought (back?) into the picture? How can peace become “real”? What conditions must be met to activate the *when* and *how* of “the coming of Jesus” and “when Jesus comes” and the “real issue that still has to come”?

These questions lead to the fourth articulation of the core code offered by the preacher.

2.5 “When Christians really take Jesus seriously, then his fire and sword will become apparent”

Because “real” division (and consequently “real” peace) lies in the future, the hearers of South Africa, today (**“Christians in this country”**), are called up with the imperative to **“really take**

Jesus and the demands of the gospel seriously". "When" this happens "then it will be seen how dissension will really tear South Africa in two" (paragraph 15). Linguistically speaking, this emphasis means: only the "real" seriousness of Christians will or can lead to "real" division, i.e. the "real" gospel. The condition is clear: "when ... then".

With this unfolding of the core code of the sermon, the potential for imperative, already found in embryonic form in the first sentence of the sermon, reaches its rhetorical climax. At least on a linguistic level, this structure means that the "coming of Jesus" is now determined by the "real" seriousness of Christians. "Coming" becomes "becoming" – through the "**faithful obedience and total trust**" of the followers of Jesus, as well as the "**capacity to take up their cross**", (paragraph 10) as the preacher stated earlier in the sermon. The immediate relevance and reality of the Messiah now becomes a mediated relevance and reality; "the coming of Jesus" becomes dependant on temporality and human timing – "when" they are serious. We noted that the preacher used an *impersonal construction* in the first sentence of the sermon – "a sign of great decisions" – without revealing who in fact *makes* these decisions. Now, this impersonal construction is dissolved in the ecclesiological imperative: "When Christians ... "

This structure determines the rest of the sermon, or at least throws its shadow over it. The preacher for instance states: "And the decision of those who go with him through the fire will bring division" (paragraph 16). We are again reminded of the preacher's use of "decision" in the first sentence of the sermon, instead of division (as in the bible text). In this instance the division that Jesus brings, does not lead to our decisions, our decisions rather lead to divisions. Here the continuity of the "liberation movement" of the Messiah through history becomes the chain reaction of momentary "decisions" of serious Christians in history. No longer does Jesus make peace with us – we "now have to make peace with him ... " (paragraph 23).

3. RETROSPECTIVE REFLECTION

It is clear that the sermon represents a brave effort to confront the status quo, and preach against the powers that be. It could justifiably be called *prophetic preaching that strives to address a concrete situation* – in accordance with Boesak's own understanding of preaching. He articulates his aversion of pietistic traditions and preaching in the church in no unclear terms, stating that "this kind of theology is often the handmaid of authoritarian structures that preserve the status quo within the church, with the result that the church is being held back to an era that has irrevocably passed."³³ For Boesak, the gospel – and preaching – is about *this* world, not an "other-worldly theology".³⁴ In my opinion, it would not be an exaggeration to say that, to a certain extent, we still suffer from such forms of theology and preaching in South Africa, and perhaps even more so than before. We still need a prophetic voice that challenges this pietistic, "other-worldly" trend. For this, the sermon of Boesak gives valuable food for thought.

Obviously, prophetic preaching can be described in various ways, also linked to cultural settings. According to Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, prophetic preaching reminds us of at least the following: the fact that God is compassionate, not deserting that which God has created; that God has made certain promises, expressing God's enduring faithfulness; and that there are alternatives manifestations of God's inbreaking new world, to be discerned even in our darkest

³³ Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 5.

³⁴ Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 4-5.

moments.³⁵ Looking back at Boesak's sermon as an example of a "living voice" during the time of apartheid, how could or should we then evaluate it? I venture a few brief comments – using Ottoni-Wilhelm's understanding of prophetic preaching as broad parameters:

Firstly, it would seem fair to state that the preacher's hermeneutic structure is decisively influenced by his experiences under apartheid. For him, the situation under the apartheid government is so bleak and dangerous, so godless, that he interprets it in exactly this way: God-less, Jesus being not-in-the-picture. This then becomes his intention with his sermon: to bring God back into the picture, and the way to achieve this is by calling on the Christians in South Africa to act in such a manner that God can again be (experienced as) present in the South African situation. One could ask whether this intention does not open up one of the most profound spaces of tension to be found or created in any form of preaching – the presence of God's absence, and the absence of God's presence.³⁶ Or, in other words: of God being present – God is compassionate, not deserting that which God has created (Ottoni-Wilhelm) – and yet being (experienced as) elusive, as "not being in the picture". The "situation" under apartheid seems to have radicalised this fundamental space of tension – forcing Boesak to opt for the latter (God not being in the picture).

Secondly, it is clear that Boesak calls upon his listeners to act in a certain way with an eye to the future. He expects divisions and confrontations as a direct result of the earnest obedience of Christians in South Africa; he even foresees a chaotic future and suggests that the present is but an introduction to the greater crises which loom over South Africa – the "real issues" are still to come. Boesak's sermon hopes to call forth the future, so that the status quo can be shattered – in contrast to "the silence that some want the church to maintain on these issues (which) means that they are affirming the status quo."³⁷ In Boesak's sermon there is a search for what does not yet exist, namely true Christianity – when people will "really" be earnest and "radically" obedient.

Perhaps the conviction that underpins this stress on the future can be connected to Boesak's understanding of God's promises. According to Ottoni-Wilhelm God has made certain promises, expressing God's enduring faithfulness. This brings us to another profound space of tension within Boesak's prophetic preaching – that of the future of the presence, and the presence of the future.³⁸ Obviously the future by implication means "not now" – the future is the future – but this is often misunderstood as an experience of time exclusively related to a *futurum*, i.e. an attitude or mentality that somehow bypasses the present in its eagerness for the future. In the New Testament sense of the word, *advent* indicates a close connection between the saving presence of Christ who has already come and the future. The future is more about *adventus* (the coming of the present One), than it is about *futurum*.³⁹ Once again, it seems that the "situation" under apartheid has radicalised this fundamental space of tension – tempting Boesak to favour the latter (the *futurum*).

Thirdly, the basic intention of the sermon also has far-reaching implications for the ecclesiology implemented by the preacher. Boesak clearly expects much from his listeners. In a certain

³⁵ Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, *God's Word in the World*, 84-91.

³⁶ Cf. Johan Cilliers, "The absence of presence: Homiletical reflections on Martin Luther's notion of the masks of God (*larvae dei*).", *Acta Theologica* (2010) 30/2, 36-49.

³⁷ Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 11.

³⁸ Cf. Johan Cilliers, "Time out. Perspectives on liturgical temporality." NGTT. (2009) 50 (1 and 2): 26-35.

³⁹ Jürgen Moltmann has written extensively on this topic. Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, *Geloof in de toekomst* (Utrecht: Amboboeken, 1969), 177-178.

sense, the future is made dependant on the actions of Christians in the present, even to the point where “the coming of Jesus” flows forth from the chain of decisions made by Christians in South Africa. In this process Christology functions in an exemplary manner: Christ is the great and ultimate example of how Christians should make their decisions in the present; He is the culmination of a series of acts of God, but also the main Player in the Christians’ history of decision-making. In effect, Christ is shifted out to the future, and Christians are called upon to move towards this future by means of their devout “seriousness”.

This confronts us with yet another profound space of tension – that of *Christ in the Church, and the Church in Christ*. On the one hand, there is truth in what Boesak propagates. In a certain sense it *is* true that Christ is present in this world in the form, and through the mediation of, the church. We are reminded of Bonhoeffer’s “definition” of the church as: “*Christus als Gemeinde existierend*”.⁴⁰ This means: Christ exists in this world *as* church. And furthermore: the world (or, in this case: South Africa), will see Christ through the (devout and earnest) actions of the church. Christ *is* in the Church. But does this mean that the Church is (always) in Christ? That our hope of seeing and experiencing Christ and his peace is (always) dependant on the Church? Can the *adventus* of the Messiah (the coming of the present One) only be found in the serious devotion of Christians? Or, again in the words of Ottoni-Wilhelm: does the Church offer the only viable alternative of God’s inbreaking new world, to be discerned even in our darkest moments? It would seem, once again, that the situation under apartheid has radicalised this space of tension – causing Boesak to proclaim the latter (the serious devotion of Christians being the alternative).

So, the sermon of Boesak, preached in the late 70’s, prompts us to rethink certain spaces of tension when preaching. It reminds us that the living voice of the gospel is heard within the tension of – amongst others – these spaces: the presence (or absence) of God; the presence (or absence) of the future; and the presence (or absence) of Christ in the Church.

In conclusion, at least this critical question must linger: is the “coming of Jesus” indeed dependant on the “real seriousness” of Christians, and their “capacity” to take up the cross? If that is the case, South Africa is in trouble again, today (2012). “Really seriously” in trouble.

ADDENDUM

Jesus Christ frees ... and divides

Do you suppose I came to establish peace on earth? No indeed, I have come to bring division (Lk. 12:51, NEB).

The coming of Jesus the Messiah is a sign of great decisions. The introduction to the Gospel of John makes this clear from the very beginning: this event – his coming – is something extraordinary, because here indeed is the revelation of “the Father’s only son, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14, NEB).

In Jesus the Father makes an incomparable and unrepeatable decision for his world and for his people. Through this decision old forms are affected in their innermost core, and the disorderly “order” of this world is totally overturned and made unstable. The Messiah brings a new understanding, and a new (because changed) reality.

⁴⁰ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio. A Theological study of the Sociology of the Church*. Translated by Reinhard Kraus and Nancy Lukens (Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1998), 92.

God's decision for a changed world sets humankind before a similar decision.

God's decision about Jesus' coming forces humankind and the world into movement, because the decision is a powerful continuation of the liberation movement that he began with his people when he led them out of slavery in Egypt. And just as it was impossible for the pharaoh and the Israelites to withdraw from this movement inaugurated by God, so it was impossible for persons to withdraw themselves from Jesus of Nazareth.

Time and again Israel was confronted by God and faced the decision whether they wished to go further with him. Every time the choice had to be made anew: either further *with* God in faith to his promised land, or back to the reassurance of the fleshpots of Egypt. And later, when God had led them into the promised land, it was to be the same again. Then the choice was to be between Yahweh, the Living One, the Only One, and the idols; between trust in Yahweh and the temptation to follow Baal.

And each time this decision held the deepest repercussions for the people. And each time it brought dissension and division. So it was when Moses came down from the mountain and had to see how his people, while he was on the mountain struggling with God on their behalf, had begun to exchange, under the leadership of his brother Aaron, worship of God for worship of the golden calf. And then, once again, the challenge had to come: Moses "took his place at the gate of the camp and said, 'Who is on the Lord's side? Come to me'" (Ex. 32:26, NEB).

So it was also when Elijah threw down the challenge to the prophets of Baal and thus also (how could it be otherwise?) to those who wished to be the people of God. How deep this decision cuts each time: "How long will you sit on the fence? If the Lord is God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21, NEB).

This is the same God who in the same movement of freedom throughout history calls persons, in his decision to give his Son, in his choice for humankind, to make their own decision and choice.

When Jesus comes, he brings a painful and controversial tension. Inevitably he causes confrontation with tradition, with powers, with persons. He comes into collision with sinful attitudes, wrong structures, and vested interests. When his parents brought him to the temple and sacrificed two turtledoves, Simeon prophesied: "Many in Israel will fall and rise again because of him" (Lk. 2:34, NEB).

Confrontation with this Jesus makes it impossible for "the ordinary life" to run its normal course. His radicality with respect to the law, the Torah, the attitude of the Pharisees and the scribes, bring him into conflict with tradition. His majestic association with the poor and the oppressed, with harlots and tax collectors, causes division among the people. His followers worship him as Lord and thus come into collision with the Roman state and the idolatrous emperor. He demands of his followers faithful obedience and total trust; he demands of them the capacity to take up their cross, to regard everything else of lesser importance, and to follow him. Father and mother, brother and sister, husband or wife, are no longer all-important to his followers. Even the preservation of life is given a different, radical perspective by him:

If anyone wishes to be a follower of mine, he must leave self behind: day after day he must take up his cross, and come with me. Whoever cares for his own safety is lost; but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake, that man is safe (Lk. 9:23-24, NEB).

His hold on our lives is so total that all other human relationships have to be seen in another light. The word of the Torah, "There is no other god besides me...", becomes yet more radicalized in Jesus. and it is this fact that Jesus Christ is king, that *he* has the last word over my life, that he rules over my total being – that makes it so difficult for us, and brings division and fire in its wake.

Therefore the division caused among us South Africans by "the enlightened" and "the closed-minded", and the dissension brought about in the churches by the Koot Vorsters and the Beyers Naudés⁴¹ (think, for example, of the battle over sports policies) – all this is really nothing. The real issue has still to come!

In the squabbling about sports policies Dr. Vorster is of course correct when he says that sports must not become an idol. This is a very great danger in South Africa. But what is his alternative? The idol of ethnic identity? The purity of the volk? How many bloody sacrifices have already been laid on its altar in our history? God is not yet even in this picture and the issues are not yet really important. No, the real division has still to come!

When Christians in this country really take Jesus Christ and the demands of the gospel seriously, then his fire and his sword will become apparent. Then it will be seen how dissension will really tear South Africa in two. But then at least it will be for something, for in the Bible the fire of which Jesus speaks is always a sign of purification. The fire separates the pure from the impure, and tests for what is lasting. Jesus says: "I have come to set fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" (Lk. 12:49, NEB).

He knows that he will have to go through this fire himself. He knows that he will not escape the testing and the purification, and "What constraint I am under until the ordeal is over!" (vs. 50). And the decision of those who go with him through the fire will bring division. Verse 51 can perhaps best be translated: "No peace, nothing but division." This shows how radical is this choice, how deeply it cuts, how final it is.

But how can Jesus say these things? What about the angels' message on the night of his birth? What of the song about peace on earth? What of the promise that his kingdom will be one of peace? Is there a contradiction here?

No, Jesus is not denying the angels' song. His critical words here apply to another kind of peace, the peace that is proclaimed and sung about when in reality there is no peace and there can be no peace. Just like Jeremiah in his time, so Jesus has no patience with the slippery merchants of piety who barter away genuine peace at the clerical market and try to palm off artificial products on the assembly of the Lord. Jesus desires a peace that is authentic. Not the sort of peace in which differences are patched over, sins are concealed, and irreconcilables are reconciled.

Jesus speaks of peace as the Old Testament understands it: God's longing that *shalom* should prevail on the earth. *Shalom* is the wish that things may go well with others. It is concern for the welfare of one's fellow beings. It is a sign of solidarity, of commitment to one another, of

⁴¹ Dr. Koot Vorster was for many years the most famous leader of the white Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. He was an unbending, articulate spokesman for, and symbol of, the extreme right in Afrikanerdom. Dr. Beyers Naudé was also an Afrikaner, and once a leader in the Dutch Reformed Church, but he committed himself to the struggle for justice in South Africa, and was later shunned by most Afrikaners, but respected by those in the struggle. He was banned by the government on October 19, 1977.

standing in for each other. In this peace, responsibility for each other – before God and before humankind – is embodied. In the Old Testament peace is always associated with right and justice. Peace is there as a *socio-political* reality.

It is in this kind of peace that swords will be turned into ploughshares and spears into pruning knives. It is of this kind of peace that Jesus speaks. For this reason he opposes a superficial understanding of this word to which God himself has given content and meaning through his love and his liberation.

Peace, yes, but it must be genuine. Peace is not the power to pose a greater threat to the other with my better and more sophisticated weapons. Peace is not possible while thousands suffer hunger and the uprooting of communities and the destruction of families are glibly argued away with euphemisms such as “influx control”.⁴² There is no peace while millions are oppressed, and while right and justice openly stumble in public. There is no peace as long as conditions that give rise to hatred and bitterness, to repression and rebellion, are regarded as God-given. There is no peace while justified protest is smashed into the ground in the most brutal way. Let us not mislead ourselves: there is no peace.

The peace of God is different from the peace of the world. It is not only the absence of war, but the *active presence of justice*. And as long as injustice rules, no church and no Christian may not be at peace with themselves and the world. If Christians in South Africa are not purified in the fire of God’s love, then we shall be consumed in the fire of his wrath.

The peace of God is a summons to battle with sinful structures, with those who resort to injustice, with the prejudice and sin in my own heart – with everything that obstructs his true peace. We have to make peace with him and with each other, and quickly too. To paraphrase for our situation the famous saying of Martin Luther King, Jr.: I am convinced that we shall still have remorse in our time, not only over the poisonous words and the detestable actions of evil persons who take no account of God and give his word no place in their lives, but we shall also have remorse over the horrifying silence and the indifference of the good persons who did not know “what served their peace.”

If we are honest, we have to admit that the words which Jesus said in tears over Jerusalem also apply to South Africa:

If only you had known the path to peace this day; but you have completely lost it from view! Days will come upon you when your enemies encircle you with a rampart, hem you in, and press you hard from every side. They will wipe you out, you and your children within your walls, and leave not a stone within you, because you failed to recognize the time of your visitation (Lk. 19:42-44).

If only South Africa would listen so that we could know what serves our peace. If a Christian people would only stop shouting its own prophets down, ignoring them, shutting them up in prisons where they are treated as if their lives were not worth a cent. If Christian leaders would only stop glossing over evil, thereby strengthening evildoers in their evil. If only we would stop twisting, mutilating, and manipulating God’s word to make it fit the framework of the prevailing ideology. If only we could find the courage to speak the truth to each other and not to mislead each other for the sake of money or status, or out of fear.

⁴² An expression used by the South African government in reference to its limitation of the rights of black people to reside in areas reserved for white people.

It is painful, but we shall have to learn to accept that our obedience to Christ will also bring divisions within the church. We shall not always have everyone go along with us. And it would be wrong to sacrifice genuine peace for the sake of external conformity. We cannot indefinitely postpone doing what is right simply because not everyone is willing to go along with us.

Obedience and dedication to the Lord's work will bring division and a lack of peace. And of course they will then take sides against each other. But then it will no longer be on the grounds of race or colour or ideology, but on the basis of our willingness or unwillingness to follow the Messiah on his way through history. We seek not the peace of the world, but his peace, the peace of him who has made us one in him, and who has broken down the divisive wall of hostility.

KEY WORDS

Prophetic
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Space
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Only a fully trinitarian theology will do, but where can that be found?

ABSTRACT

The argument of this contribution, departing from a famous article by Arnold van Ruler, is that a fully Trinitarian theology requires attention to God's work and not only God's identity and character. The three relationships between Father and Son, Son and Spirit and Father and Spirit are briefly explored in order to demonstrate how difficult it is to do justice to both God's work of creation and of salvation, to both the freedom of the Spirit and the discernment of the Spirit, and to both a diversity of spiritualities and the identity of the Spirit as the one commissioned by the Father of Jesus Christ. This yields the conclusion that a fully trinitarian theology remains elusive despite the trinitarian renaissance over the last few decades.

INTRODUCTION

In a famous essay on "The necessity of a trinitarian theology" Arnold van Ruler (1989:1) observes that "Simply recognizing the necessity of a trinitarian theology does not mean that one succeeds in the project." He adds that he has not found such a theology in the entire Christian theological tradition, suggests that Calvin approached that ideal most closely, and admits that he is not able to offer anything approximating that. This comment may sound odd given the renaissance of trinitarian theology in the last century and the astonishing flourishing of books on the doctrine of the trinity over the last three decades. Yet, a "fully trinitarian" theology remains more elusive than a mere affirmation of its significance may suggest. Why is this the case?

The key does not necessarily lie in revisiting classic trinitarian distinctions or in delving into a form of inner-trinitarian mysticism based on the "social analogy". The trinity does govern the very core of the Christian confession and forms its doxological conclusion – rather than a logical point of departure for an entire theological system. Yet such a doxological conclusion is undermined by questions that emerge regarding the relationship between the work of the Father, Son and Spirit. Whatever position one may take on the relationship between the economic and immanent trinity, it should be clear that a fully trinitarian theology cannot be presented only on the basis of inner-trinitarian relationships without clarity on the work of the Father, Son and Spirit in relation to each other. As I will argue below, I still do not see such clarity emerging. A fully trinitarian theology may therefore be as elusive as before the renaissance of trinitarian theology over the last three decades.

The first and the second articles: Doing justice to creation and salvation

Both creation and salvation are the work of the triune God. One can speak about these themes only in a trinitarian way. However, merely offering three perspectives rather than one is not sufficient. If the relationship is understood in a way that undermines either the one or the

other, that reveals an inadequate understanding of the trinity. Various issues where justice has to be done to both creation and salvation therefore offer test cases for a “fully trinitarian theology. It is far more difficult to do justice to both creation and salvation than it may appear at first sight. Typically the one is subsumed under the other or under a third category.

The most acute formulation of the issue at stake is perhaps by Mercy Amba Oduyoye (2000:75): “Is the God of our redemption the same God of our creation?” This question is born from the African quest for identity. What is the continuity between a pre-Christian African notion of the creator God and the Christian message of redemption that took root in Africa following the work of Western missionaries? Since the earliest Bible translators have used the same word and name for the God of our ancestors and for the God of Christian proclamation, there appears to be some continuity, but given the legacy of colonialism certainly also deep tensions in this regard.

On this basis one may argue that the relationship between creation and salvation underlies much of contemporary African theology, especially theologies based on notions of indigenisation and inculturation, even though this is seldom articulated as such. This is closely related to discourse on “the gospel and our culture”. Whenever there is a too close identification of Christianity with a particular culture (Niebuhr’s “the Christ of culture”), this prompts a prophetic critique of culture. Such a critique is entirely appropriate as Christian discourse on consumerism illustrates (see Conradie 2009). However, in contexts of cultural, ethnic and linguistic marginalisation and oppression there is a need to affirm not only human dignity but also the authenticity of cultural expressions. There comes a time when black theologians need to insist that “Black is beautiful”. Indeed, theological reflection on “black liberation” requires justice to both creation and salvation. Of course, such an affirmation of culture may well be dangerous – as the rise of Afrikaner nationalism in response to British imperialism and cultural marginalisation illustrates.

One may argue that the relationship between creation and salvation was the underlying issue at stake in South African debates on apartheid theology. Apartheid theology was essentially a theology of creation based on the “orders of creation”. It maintained that differences of race and ethnicity was part of the created order and had to be maintained, if necessary through law and order. Salvation was thus understood as separation, keeping racial groups apart, for the sake of all concerned. In response, most notably in the Belhar confession, it was maintained that the theological legitimisation of apartheid undermined the message and ministry of reconciliation in Jesus Christ and assumed the irreconcilability of people – different races are so different that the best option is to keep them apart. The struggle against apartheid theology therefore rightly focused on soteriology and ecclesiology, but in reformed circles hardly addressed issues in creation theology. Elsewhere apartheid was described as an anthropological heresy (Maimela 1983) on the basis of a critique of racism, a liberal notion of the inherent goodness of humanity, African cultural notions of *ubuntu* and Desmond Tutu’s notion of being members of the family, the rainbow people of God (2005). It is at least clear that any evading of the doctrine of creation will necessarily undermine the plausibility of the message of salvation. If the relationship between God and the world is not addressed, it is scarcely possible to explain how God can save the world.

There are several other burning issues on the agenda of churches and theological reflection, in South Africa and elsewhere in the world, where clarity on the relationship between salvation and creation as *creatura* is also required.

- How is the Christian faith related to scientific theories, for example quantum cosmology and biological evolution? Some would tend to offer either a theological legitimisation or a theological repudiation of such theories. Others would suggest that “faith has nothing to do with science”. The two categories operate at different levels and should not be confused. What does Jerusalem have to do with Athens? The church with the academy? Is that an adequate theological response though?
- How should medical evidence around the reversibility (or not) of a homosexual orientation be employed in theological reflection? Often such evidence seems to be decisive in forming a theological position. Is that appropriate in terms of a theological methodology? However, an approach where such evidence is not taken into account at all would be equally problematic.
- Many have observed that the stigmatisation of HIV/AIDS forms part of the problem. Accordingly, AIDS cannot be regarded as God’s punishment for human sin, more specifically for sexual promiscuity. In response, many have treated the spread of the HIV-virus merely in medical, sociological and psychological terms? Those infected or affected by the virus are regarded as victims, even as purely “innocent” victims. They are treated as patients who suffer from the disease. However, given the associated issues around faithfulness to one’s partner, one can scarcely argue that the spread of the disease has nothing to do with human sin. How, then, is the Christian message of sin and salvation related to the medical issues. Moreover, why are there such viruses in God’s good creation?
- What is the place of the church amidst other groups in civil society? How should its uniqueness as an “eschatological community” be understood? Is the church just another non-governmental organisation? Is the church a voluntary association, a club or a civil organisation? What is the relationship between church law and civil law? How should the church (at different levels) engage with the state, political parties and policy making?
- How should the relationship between Christianity and other religious traditions be understood? Can Christianity be regarded as one particular form of religion alongside others? Would any such generic term not undermine the claims to universality of Christian faith? Does God have indeed many names? Alternatively, how should the continuity between Christianity and Judaism and between Judaism and earlier religious traditions be understood? What do the gods of Egypt and the God of the Bible have in common? Where do our notions of God and of transcendence come from in the first place? How is that related to the common human sense of wonder?
- In terms of everyday life Christians have to explain to themselves how being Christian is related to being human. How is Sunday related to the rest of the week? What is the relationship between Christian faith and the world of work, culture, science and art? What difference does being a Christian make in coping with the demands of life, with the production and consumption of food, with human sexuality, with health and sickness, with capability and disability, with generation and degeneration? What about death? Is death natural? Is that part of God’s good creation too?
- In ecclesial praxis the basic questions of a theological hermeneutics cannot be avoided. What is the relationship between human words and God’s Word? How can our human words and images be used to express something about God’s identity and character?

What is the difference between Christian and secular ethics? What role should social analysis play in a contextual hermeneutics? What “point of contact” may be found for education, pastoral care, apologetics and mission? How can the dominant vocabularies of a particular culture be used to express the gospel without distorting it by translating the gospel into something that it is not, for example by “selling” it as a “product” on the market of religious ideas?

In each of these cases it is not self-evident why and how the world as we know it (or don't know it) can be described as God's own creation (*creatura*). The problem is that the world as we know it is always already perceived to be the product of God's work of creation, of the legacy of human sin and of God's work of providence and salvation. This requires considerable discernment. To return to the example of homosexuality: Is being gay part of God's good creation? Or the result of fallenness? Is being gay good, but being straight better? Does one have to be “saved”, or healed, or even exorcised from being gay? Or will one remain gay also in the eschatological consummation since God declared that to be good too? Or does sexual orientation no longer matter? Is sexuality abolished in the eschaton? Do we then have to be saved from our sexuality? These questions cannot be answered on the basis of soteriology or creation theology alone.

Questions around creation and salvation are perhaps expressed most acutely whenever the theodicy problem is raised. This is indeed the experiential heart of discourse on creation and salvation. Inversely, the theodicy problem can only be addressed on the basis of an adequate understanding of the relationship between creation (God as the omnipotent Creator) and salvation (God as the loving Saviour). Indeed, without reflection on the relationship between creation (*creatio*) and salvation and on the question what creation (*creatura*) is to be saved from, discourse on the theodicy problem would all too easily take a theological short-cut by failing to address the origins of evil (especially sin) and the consequences of sin (evil).

The examples above illustrate the social and pastoral significance of discourse on creation and salvation, the work of the Father and the work of the Son. They do not as yet indicate the underlying theological difficulties. As I have explored this in far more depth elsewhere (Conradie 2013:1-50), I will only hint at these problems here through a series of questions in bullet form:

- How is God-talk possible in the first place? What enables us to describe the world as we know it as God's own beloved creation? Some may argue that this is only possible on the basis of experiences of or witnesses to God's salvation, but that claim poses similar problems: How can experiences of healing, reconciliation, justice or peace be ascribed to God's work? What theory of divine action is assumed in this regard?
- Many would argue that salvation should be understood as the salvation *of* God's creation (*creatura*) and not as salvation *from* creation. But what does that actually mean on an evolving planet in an expanding universe? It can all too easily be reduced to the salvation of human beings or human culture (or the lifestyles of the consumer class) from the impact of anthropogenic ecological destruction. Moreover, is the planet to be saved only from human sin or also from what is called “natural suffering”? If the former, can death still be regarded as the result of human sin only? If the latter, how can a notion of salvation as elevation from that which is natural, material, bodily and earthly be avoided? Sharply formulated: Is the work of Christ to improve on the inadequate work of the Father?

- If creation is understood as *creatio* the question shifts to the relationship between God's acts of creation (in the beginning?) and God's acts of salvation. One may then portray God's acts of creation as salvific, establishing order amidst chaos (Gen 1), while God's acts of salvation may be portrayed as creative. However, a different set of problems emerge in order to prevent either a compartmentalising or a fusion of these categories. A compartmentalising of these two categories typically lead to a form of neo-Calvinist apartheid theology where salvation can only be understood as the restoration of the order assumed to be established through God's work of creation. Creation becomes normative for salvation. The dangers of fusion are equally pervasive if less well understood. If the act of creation is itself salvific, what is it that salvation is from? Inversely, if salvation is understood as creative, where does such creativity come from? What theory of divine action is involved and how is that shaped by an understanding of God as Creator?
- A somewhat different set of issues emerge when the focus shifts from God's work of creation, salvation and consummation to reflection on God's identity. Here the question is how the relationship between the Christian confession of faith in God as Creator and as Saviour (the first and the second articles of the Christian creed) may be understood. One may argue that it is impossible to do justice to both creation (the work of God the Father/Mother) and salvation (the work of Jesus Christ) without the work of the Holy Spirit (re-creation, comfort, sanctification). However, to avoid distortions in understanding the relationships between the work of three persons in the trinity is far easier said than done.

The underlying problem may also be clarified when the different ways of constructing the plot of God's work of creation, salvation and consummation are considered. I see only the following four possibilities and all of them are deeply problematic, namely the (neo-Calvinist) *restoration* of creation (where evolution and natural evil is underplayed), or the (Roman-Catholic) *elevation* of human nature in terms of transfiguration or recapitulation (or liberal notions of education and development), or the (Anabaptist) *replacement* of nature with God's new creation (where the problems posed by evolution through natural election and natural evil are nowadays highlighted) or a (secularist) recycling of that which is natural (where nature will inevitably save itself without much of a role for God). Alternatives to these options do not seem to be forthcoming.

The underlying difficulties may also be illustrated by the criticisms of "Christomonism" and a "binitarian" theology raised against Karl Barth who was responsible for the renaissance of trinitarian theology in the 20th century. Regin Prenter (1946) accused Barth of "creation docetism" while Gustaf Wingren went so far as to suggest that Barth influenced many to regard the first article of the Christian creed as a Nazi principle (see Vander Goot 1981:145). Although these criticisms may well be refuted through Barthian scholarship, they do suggest that a trinitarian theology needs to go beyond a mere affirmation of relatedness to explore the nature of the relationship in all its complexity.

In a section of his meditations on the Apostolicum Van Ruler comments on the dramatic significance of the word "and" between the first and the second articles of the creed. He says:

The most important aspect of the word "and" still lies elsewhere. It links two aspects with each other and distinguishes them also. On the one side stands the confession of God as Creator. This expresses the awesome mystery of being: we experience being as creation

and therefore as gift. On the other side stands the confession of God as Saviour. This expresses the almost equally awesome mystery of salvation (*heil*): we experience ourselves not as lost in the abyss of meaninglessness or guilt, but as kept unto eternal life. ... These are two enormous themes: the theme of being and of salvation. The confession links and distinguishes these two themes in a carefree (*argeloz*) way through the simply word "and". The theme of being comes first, salvation follows upon that. That we are is more fundamental and deeper than that we are saved. Therefore this particular sequence. However, we should not replace this sequence with a contrast. Being and salvation are linked with each other through the word "and". Salvation means that being is saved from decay (*verderf*) and can be again. Creation is the primary matter. It is kept for all eternity. That is salvation (Van Ruler, *Ik Geloof*, no date:46, my translation).

To summarise: if justice is not so easily done to both God's work of creation and salvation (and this seems to be an almost insurmountable problem), an affirmation of the intimate relationship between Father and Son remains all too easy and cheap.

THE SECOND AND THE THIRD ARTICLES: DOING JUSTICE TO CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT

While the *filioque* controversy may be regarded as a highly technical theological dispute (see especially Oberdorfer 2001), the underlying issue of the relationship between the Christ and the Holy Spirit is of immense pastoral significance. One may argue that it continues to divide Christianity in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. Such ecumenical conflict provides another test case for a "fully trinitarian" theology.

Mainline and evangelical churches tend to maintain a strong Christological and ecclesiological emphasis. The Spirit completes the work of Christ. The Spirit works through the body of Christ (the church), the various offices of and the structures of governances in the church, the ministry of the sacraments (the body and blood of Christ) and especially the apostolic witnesses to Christ (the Bible). The clarity of the work of the Spirit is emphasised on the basis of these functions. The Spirit works in the state and in civil society but only through the ministries of the church in the world. At best, the movement of the Spirit can be discerned through an exegesis of the letter of the biblical texts and through processes of spiritual formation and higher education. At worst, the movement of the Spirit is controlled on the basis of ecclesiastical authority, for example in gate keeping around access to the sacraments, the baptism of children of secular parents, church discipline against those who are baptised again as adults, exclusion to the holy communion on the basis of race, class or sexual orientation, the right to a church-based marriage and funeral and so forth. According to critics, such control of the movement of the Spirit can only lead to intellectualism and spiritual aridness.

By contrast, the freedom of the Spirit to "blow wherever it wants to" is emphasised in a variety of other Christian movements (see the essays in *Scriptura* Volume 79 – Conradie 2002). These movements include, to a lesser or a greater extent, a variety of indigenous theologies ("God's Spirit was here in South Africa before the message about Jesus Christ arrived"), Pentecostal theologies, including African Pentecostalism (the free gifts of the Spirit), liberation theologies (the political work of the Spirit outside the church), feminist theologies (the feminine face of the Spirit as a counter to a male Christ), religious pluralism (the universality of the Spirit is preferred to the exclusiveness of Christ) and perhaps also ecological theologies (the cosmic scope of the Spirit's presence). Critics from mainline churches recognise the attractions of these

movements, envy the numerical growth of new Pentecostal churches, but also warn about the need to discern the spirits. Not every Spirit may be called the Spirit of Christ. Thus mutual suspicions remain rife. One example of this tension is the differences in ecumenical theology between those who adopt a Christological orientation (e.g. Geoffrey Wainwright) and those who call for a pneumatological reorientation in the name of a fully trinitarian approach (e.g. Konrad Raiser). The spread of Orthodox Christianity in South Africa (especially in its Coptic and Ethiopian forms) may offer a distinct and perhaps illuminating position within this tension.

Theologically, this requires much deeper reflection on the relationship between the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. One may use the work of Christ as a point of departure to reflect on the distinctive work of the Holy Spirit. For me, Arnold van Ruler's remarkable essay (1989:27-47) on several significant structural differences between Christology and pneumatology points in the appropriate direction. One may also regard the life and work of Jesus Christ as one manifestation of the movement of God's Spirit. For me, Michael Welker's portrayal (1994) of the emerging clarity in the biblical roots of Christianity on the movement of God's Spirit remains extremely helpful. Klaus Nürnberger's very different account (2002) of the interpretation of the work of the Spirit completes the story regarding the subsequent history of Christianity, but in my view also illustrates how difficult a fully trinitarian theology may be, given the many connotations attached to "spirit" in philosophy and theology alike.

THE FIRST AND THE THIRD ARTICLES: DOING JUSTICE TO THE UNIVERSAL AND THE PARTICULAR

The relationship between God the Father / Mother and the Holy Spirit poses another test case for a fully trinitarian theology. Here a different set of issues emerges. Perhaps this becomes most evident in Christian responses to religious diversity. This forms a test case for an affirmation of the doctrine of the trinity in ecclesial praxis, also and especially in the African context. For many African Christians, the only way to engage with people of other faiths is to acknowledge that "God has many names" and that knowing God as the Father of Jesus Christ is only one such name for the Supreme Being. Thus faith in the triune God is reduced to faith in God the Father on the basis of some form of subordinationism, the link between the immanent trinity and the economic trinity is discarded and God's revelation is clouded. The God who is revealed in Jesus Christ is different from the actual One behind the mask in the sense that the Supreme Being cannot be immediately named as the Father of Jesus Christ. Ironically, the Spirit (or a vague sense of spirituality) provides the generic category to place different notions of the transcendent, of Ultimate Mystery alongside each other, thus compromising their ultimacy. In other words, there are many claims to discern the movement of the Spirit in the context of the African Spirit world. However, it is not all that clear if and when this Spirit proceeds from the Father, at least not the Father of Jesus Christ.

While no trinitarian theologian would put the matter in such crude terms, the challenges for ecclesial praxis remain undeniable in a world characterised by the peaceful co-existence of different religious traditions, if not by a "clash of civilisations" and religious-infused conflict (for example in Nigeria or the Sudan). How could faith in the triune God plausibly guide Christians in such a context? How can the trinitarian mystery be protected doxologically? Only a fully trinitarian theology will do, but where can such a trinitarian theology be found?

CONCLUSION

The argument of this contribution has been that a “fully trinitarian” theology cannot emerge only on the basis of an inner-trinitarian exploration of the social analogy or the psychological analogy. The issues identified in the three sections above provide test cases for a trinitarian theology and set an agenda in this regard. They serve as a protocol against trinitarian short cuts. Each of these issues can only be addressed in a trinitarian way. However, this does not merely imply that three different perspectives (rather than one) need to be offered on each of these issues. This form of “Trinitarian spread” (Noordmans) is in my view entirely appropriate and adds a certain richness to the discussion of any theological, ethical or contextual topic. However, this would not suffice. Instead, the question is whether justice can be done to the work of Father, Son and Spirit. Can the tensions be maintained and not be resolved prematurely? As the discussion above illustrates, all too often the tension is collapsed by subsuming one category under another with far-reaching pastoral implications. This can only undermine the plausibility of a Trinitarian theology. It remains elusive, something like a theological vision that cannot be attained easily.

In the interim an affirmation of trinitarian theology remains important. As Herman Bavinck recognised, this affirmation has to focus on the work and not only the identity of the triune God. He formulated this in terms of the tension between creation and re-creation:

The God of creation and of the Old Testament is not lower than the God of re-creation, than the Father of Christ, than the God of the new covenant. Christ, the mediator of the new covenant is also he by whom God created all things. And the Holy Spirit who is the author of regeneration and sanctification is the same as he who in the beginning hovered over the waters and adorned the heavens. Creation and re-creation, therefore cannot be contrasted in terms of being lower and higher. They are both good and pure – splendid works of the one Triune God (Bavinck 2008:436).

Only on this basis can one entertain the beauty of an inner-trinitarian perichoresis (literary: dancing around) in which we as human beings and the whole earth community may participate. Arnold van Ruler (1989:173) captures this in the image of a *reidans* where the focus is on the relation between God’s actions: “Historical reality is fully a divine reality, a dance in round (*reidans*) of God’s deeds. God’s deeds are not yet complete, the Lord God is not yet finished with his world or with his children. All that we as human beings can do is to try with breathless attention to follow God in his journey through time.” God is asking us this question: “May I dance with you?” The core of our human existence lies in our willingness to entertain this question (see, for example, Van Ruler 2009: 170).

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The “clothe” metaphor in Paul and the entity taking the active role in baptism

ABSTRACT

The “clothe” metaphor in Paul contributes to the understanding of the entity taking the active role in baptism. Within the infant baptism tradition, it is understood to be God who is the active participant in baptism, while in the believer’s baptismal tradition, human beings respond in obedience. The “clothe” metaphor in the Pauline and disputed Pauline material is applied in connection with baptism, ethical exhortation that is associated with baptism, or within an eschatological context in which the language continues with the baptismal imagery. The metaphor occurs mostly as a direct, reflexive middle, which points to the participation of the entity in the action. The entity thus acts in relation to himself or herself. This nature of the middle voice corresponds to the way in which the metaphor is used in the Pauline and disputed Pauline material, and indicates the conscious participation of the baptismal candidate in baptism. This interpretation argues for understanding baptism in Paul as believer’s baptism, which in turn poses certain questions for those who believe in the infant baptismal tradition.

1. INTRODUCTION

Baptism has always been a controversial topic in the church, especially in connection with the traditions of infant and believer’s baptism. Thiselton (2007:512-513) refers to one of the classic debates between Joachim Jeremias and Kurt Aland (1960-1962) during which Jeremias produced a study in which he examined the background of proselyte baptism and the οἶκος formula of household baptisms, including Lydia (Acts 16:15), the jailer of Philippi (Acts 16:31-33) and Stephanus (1 Cor 1:16; 16:15). Apart from describing other New Testament passages, Jeremias examined the development of baptism and infant baptism up to the end of the third century. Aland responded by contending that the “households” did not necessarily include children, but rather slaves and other adults. He argued that an age restriction was imposed on baptism in the early church and that infant baptism was not introduced before around 200-203 CE. Thiselton (2007:513) states:

Appeals to historical sources and to exegesis might appear to be inconclusive, since both sides tend to use the same data to argue their case. The real issue is a deeper one. It is hermeneutical, for, as Jeremias declares, the debate ultimately turns on two different understandings of baptism.

One of the specific areas that have an influence on the understanding of baptism, especially with reference to infant and believer’s baptism, is the perception of who is the person who is the *active* participant in the act of baptism. Within the infant baptismal tradition, baptism is mostly understood as an event where God is the person who acts (e.g., Ridderbos 1966:411, 444, 459-460; cf. Versteeg 1983:93-94), whereas in the believer’s baptismal tradition, baptism is mostly understood as a human response of obedience (e.g., Beasley-Murray [1962] 1972:

266-275; cf. Barth 1969). The latter comparison largely corresponds to a perception of infant baptism in terms of an objective or indicative character, and believer's baptism in terms of a subjective and imperative character. I will argue in this article that the "clothe" metaphor in the Pauline corpus, including the disputed letters of Ephesians and Colossians, contributes to an understanding of baptism as a theological imperative, where the baptismal candidate consciously participates in baptism. In doing so, my intention is not to cover the whole discussion on baptism or to reach a final conclusion on the subject, but to contribute to future discussion on the matter by taking believer's baptism, with a specific focus on the person taking the active role in baptism, as a point of departure. Although it could be argued that infant baptism was a later development within the early church (e.g., Ferguson 2009:378-379, 857) and that applying the "clothe" metaphor in Paul to the question concerning believer's or infant baptism is strictly anachronistic, the particular meaning of baptism in Paul (as portrayed by the "clothe" metaphor) should be brought into line with the theology behind infant baptism, if infant baptism is considered as a form of baptism that is based on the New Testament. In other words, the presupposition of this article is that Paul's theological thought on baptism is considered as normative with respect to justifying the doctrine of infant baptism.

Based on the semantic domains of "activities involving clothing and adorning" in Louw and Nida (49 in Vol. 1 1988:525-528), the main terms that denote the use of this metaphor throughout the Pauline corpus, including the disputed letters of Ephesians and Colossians, can be identified within the following 25 occurrences: ἐνδύω (1 Thess 5:8; Gal 3:27; 1 Cor 15:53 [X2], 54 [X2]; 2 Cor 5:3;¹ Rom 13:12,14; Col 3:10,12; Eph 4:24; 6:11,14), ἐκδύω (2 Cor 5:4), ἀποτίθημι (Rom 13:12; Col 3:8; Eph 4:22,25), ἀπεκδύομαι (Col 2:15; 3:9), ἀπέκδυσις (Col 2:11), επενδύω (2 Cor 5:2,4) and υποδέομαι (Eph 6:15). As can be seen from this data, some of the cognate terms occur together. When the data are combined together, nine passages emerge: 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Galatians 3:27, 1 Corinthians 15:53-54, 2 Corinthians 5:3-4, Romans 13:12-14, Colossians 2:11-15, Colossians 3:8-12, Ephesians 4:22-25 and Ephesians 6:11-15.

It is impossible to fully exegete all nine passages within the scope of this article. My approach will be (1) to describe grammatically the nature of the action within the "clothe" metaphor, (2) to determine the metaphor's relation to water baptism in (a) church history (briefly) and (b) in each of the nine identified passages, and (3) to describe theologically the character of the metaphor in each passage, focusing especially on the subject of the action(s) and the measure of human participation in the action(s). In the latter two methodological steps (2b and 3), the passages will be addressed in approximate order of relevance to these methodological aims for the undisputed and disputed letters respectively. The implications of the enquiry will lastly be applied to the understanding of the person taking the active role in the act of baptism, and its implications for the discussion on infant and believer's baptism.

2. THE PROMINENCE OF THE MIDDLE VOICE IN THE CLOTHING METAPHOR

Apart from ἀπεκδύσει in Colossians 2:11 which occurs within an adverbial phrase, the rest of the terms are verbs (24 of them). Of these 24 verbs, two occur as a deponent middle voice

¹ Although the Nestle-Aland (27th ed) text (Aland et al 1993) reads ἐκδυσάμενοι, the 25th edition had ενδυσαμενοι. The reading in the 27th edition (εκδυσαμενοι) is based on D*.c ar fc; Mcion Tert Spec. The reading ἐνδυσάμενοι is based on P46 κ B C D2 Ψ 0243. 33. 1739. 1881 M lat sy co; Cl. Metzger (1971: 579) is probably correct that ενδυσαμενοι should be retained for its superior external support, despite its supposed banality and tautology (so with most commentators, e.g., Harris 2005: 368; Furnish 1984: 268; Barrett [1973] 1976: 149).

(ἀπεκδυσάμενος, Col 2:15; ἀπεκδυσάμενοι, Col 3:9) whereas the remaining 22 each occur as a direct reflexive middle voice (Wallace 1996: 416). Wallace (1996: 416) states that “the direct middle is quite rare, used almost exclusively with certain verbs whose lexical nuance included a reflexive notion (such as putting on clothes)” (emphasis added). The sentence ὁ Ἡρώδης ἐνδυσάμενος ἐσθήτα βασιλικὴν (Acts 12:21) can thus be translated as “Herod clothed himself with royal clothing” (Wallace 1996: 417, emphasis original). The middle voice in general signifies the “subject’s participation” (Wallace 1996: 414) in the action. The middle voice “calls special attention to the subject” and signifies the subject as “acting in relation to himself [or herself] somehow” (Robertson 1914: 804, adopted by Wallace 1996: 415; cf. Zerwick & Grosvenor 1988: xxiii; Van Rensburg 1953: 101).

3. THE “CLOTHE” METAPHOR AND BAPTISM

One of the areas in which the close relationship between the clothing metaphor and baptism can be seen is in the practice of baptism in the early church. George (1994:280-281) discusses several elements from the late second century that accompanied an elaborate baptismal process where the baptismal candidates divested themselves of clothes prior to baptism: catechesis, fasting and prayer, renunciation, credo, disrobing (removal of clothes),² immersion, investment in a new white robe, symbolising the “putting on” of Christ in a newness of life (cf. Gal 3:27), anointing, the laying on of hands and the Lord’s Supper.³ These elements formed part of an understanding of baptism where it involved a transition from an old way of life to a new way (George 1994:281). Yet the “clothe” metaphor’s connection with baptism can be demonstrated exegetically.⁴

3.1 The undisputed letters

Within the undisputed letters, the relationship between the clothing metaphor and baptism is most evident in Galatians 3:27, where the clothing with Christ is identified with baptism. While most understand baptism here as referring to water baptism (e.g., Hays 2000:271-272; George 1994; Longenecker 1990:155; Fung 1988:173), Dunn (1993:203-204) argues for understanding εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε as a metaphor that is borrowed from baptism (cf. Witherington III 1998:276). Ferguson (2009:148), however, shows that although the verb βαπτίζω may on occasion be used metaphorically, the context normally gives an indication of such use. Without such an indication, the rite of water baptism should be assumed (cf. Fung 1988:173; Oepke 1968:539-540). Baudry (2001:5) therefore refers to baptism “in water” as a pleonasm.

The next passage that probably alludes to water baptism is Romans 13:12-14. Many see a direct correlation with the baptismal imagery of Galatians 3:27 (e.g., Wright 2002:729; Schreiner [1998] 2005:700-701; Moo 1996:825; Bruce [1985] 2000:243; Cranfield 1979:688; Barrett [1962] 1975:254; Ridderbos 1959:301). Apart from the close similarity in terminology between Romans 13:14 (ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν) and Galatians 3:27

² It is not certain whether participants in baptism were naked or semi-naked (Ferguson 2009:855). Collins (2008:101) argues that they were semi-naked, but Ferguson (2009:477) argues that it is likely that they were naked, although the room was probably dark and men and women were separate.

³ George (1994:280-281) conflated these elements from several baptismal traditions (e.g., Tertullian, *De Baptismo*; Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*; Chrysostom, *Baptismal Homilies*; cf. Hinson 1981:73; Whitaker 1960).

⁴ See Du Toit (2011) for a more elaborate exegetical motivation of the relationship between the “clothe” metaphor and baptism.

(Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε), the motive of renewal in Romans 13:12-14 alludes to 12:1 where Paul calls his readers to the renewal of their mind (Moo 1996:826). Rom 12:1 in turn is probably a reminder of what happened at baptism. With reference to Romans 12:1, Peterson (1993:177) writes: “The initial presentation of ourselves to God in Christ, made at conversion/baptism, needs to be renewed on a regular basis.” Cranfield (1979:685) writes that the frequency with which ἀποτίθεσθαι and ἐνδύεσθαι occur in passages of moral teaching in the New Testament suggests the possibility that their use was a feature of primitive catechetical material.

Although the language of 2 Corinthians 5:3-4 is eschatological, Furnish (1984:297-298) argues that the language in these verses is doubtlessly influenced by the language of early Christian baptismal liturgy, especially Galatians 3:27 (cf. Pop [1953] 1962:144). The clothing (ἐνδυσάμενοι, v. 3) would then point to the transformation in a person’s earthly existence and not a future, metaphysical transformation, while the sighing and desire to be further clothed (v. 4) would refer to the completion of salvation that has been a reality at baptism (Furnish 1984:296; cf. Lang 1973:187-188; Hanhart 1969:455).⁵

In terms of 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Collins (2008:220) argues for the presence of baptismal language. Apart from the term ἐνδύω which corresponds with Romans 13:12,14, there is correspondence in terms of sleeping (ὑπνῶν in Rom 13:11; καθεύδωμεν in 1 Thess 5:6,7), armour (ὅπλα in Rom 13:12; θώρακα and περικεφαλαίαν in 1 Thess 5:8) and drunkenness (μέθαις in Rom 13:13; μεθυσκόμενοι and μεθύουσιν in 1 Thess 5:7). Collins (2008:220) furthermore connects the clothing with Christ and the Adam-Christ typology with the eschatological day of the Lord: “With the coming of the day, the ‘clothing’ that is to be put on is Jesus Christ, that is, Christ as Lord.”

As for 1 Corinthians 15:53-54, while the clothing metaphors are purely eschatological, an allusion to the imagery of baptism is probably not impossible. In terms of Paul’s thought on baptism, the theme of the resurrection is prominent (esp. Rom 6:3-5). The same theme of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:44 might be a continuation of the realised aspect of resurrection that is experienced in baptism,⁶ which would signify its completion. If an allusion to baptism is intended, it would at most be in the background and be present in the connotations of the language used (cf. Du Toit 2011:63-64).

3.2 Colossians and Ephesians (the disputed letters)

In Colossians 2:11-15, the reference to baptism is explicit in verse 12. This passage shows several elements of similarity with Romans 6:2-8. There is especially a similarity with (1) the theme of Christ’s death and the believer’s identification with His death in baptism, in which the “old person” dies (Rom 6:2,3,5,6,8; cf. Col 2:12,13), and (2) the identification of the believer with Christ’s resurrection, which stands in parallel with the resurrection into new life by faith in Christ (Rom 6:4,5,8; cf. Col 2:12).

⁵ It is perhaps necessary here to point out that I do not understand baptism as having power to save or as mediating salvation, but that baptism symbolises and enacts salvation that has already become a reality by individual faith (Du Toit 2011:47-48).

⁶ The realised dimension of the new life in Christ in Rom 6 as experienced in baptism is evident from ζῶντας (vv. 11,13), the past (aorist) of the old life (συνετάφημεν, v. 4; συνεσταυρώθη, v. 6) and the reality of already being (aorist participle) slaves of righteousness (ἔδουλώθητε, v. 18). This logic is, in fact, what causes many interpreters to understand one or both of the future tenses in Rom 6:5,8 (ἔσόμεθα, v. 5; συζηήσομεν, v. 8) as “logical futures” (e.g., Kruse 2012:262; Jewett 2007:406; Wright 2002:539, 540).

Most scholars understand Colossians 3:8-12 as alluding to baptism (e.g., Moo 2008:266-267; Thompson 2005:79; Pokorný 1991:168; Wright 1986:138; Meeks 1983:188; Martin 1974:106; Ridderbos 1966:447). The correspondence with baptism can be derived from the “divestment” (ἀποτίθημι, v. 8; ἀπεκδύομαι, v. 9) of the conduct that characterises the “old person” (τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον, v. 9) which is parallel to 2:11-12. Similarly, the “clothing” (ἐνδύω) with the “new person” (v. 10) and its virtues (v. 12) allude to the theme of resurrection and new life in 2:12. In addition, the relativising of social and ethnic identities in Christ (v. 11) is reminiscent of similar language in Galatians 3:28 where the context of baptism is explicit.

Ephesians 4:22-25 displays very much the same elements as Colossians 3:8-10, especially regarding the “old person/new person” contrast and the corresponding virtues and vices. The concept of renewal (ἀνανεώω, v. 23) is also characteristic of baptismal language (cf. Rom 12:1-2; Col 3:10). Both Lincoln (1990:289) and Schnackenburg (1982:203) argue that the language in this passage is reminiscent of baptismal catechesis. Schnackenburg (1982:203) points to the use of infinitives which show syntactical similarities with the language of education (see διδάχθητε, v. 21). Mitton (1976:164) argues that it was a well-known figure of speech in the early Christian ethic doctrine to refer to the putting off of vices as if they were old clothes. This metaphor probably became entrenched in the practice where the baptismal candidates divested themselves of old clothes and clothed themselves with new clothes after baptism (cf. Meeks 1983:151), especially a white robe (Ferguson 2009:148; George 1994:281).

The question is whether baptismal imagery features in the background of Ephesians 6:11-15. Mitton (1976:220) thinks that the putting on of the complete armour is a step that a believer has to take in order to accept the offer of experiencing God’s spiritual power. He argues that this notion would be fitting at baptism, when a Christ-believer is ready to walk the walk of discipleship. If the reference to spiritual armour in Romans 13:12 can be applied to a baptismal context, it is conceivable that baptism might figure in the background of Ephesians 6:11-15 as well (cf. Du Toit 2011:75; 1 Thess 5:8).

4. THE PARTICIPATORY AND CONSCIOUS CHARACTER OF THE “CLOTHE” METAPHOR

If the middle voice in which the “clothe” metaphor is mostly employed signifies conscious participation on the part of the subject, it should additionally be demonstrated by the context in which the metaphor is employed.⁷

4.1 The undisputed letters

To be “clothed” with a quality or attribute is to take on the characteristics of that in which one is clothed (Hays 2000:272; Arihea & Nida 1975:84), which in Galatians 3:27 is Christ Himself. The “putting on” of the character of Christ corresponds to a “new spiritual existence” (Fung 1988:172; cf. Ridderbos 1966:447). At the heart of Paul’s baptismal imagery lies the transformation of identity that the Galatians have undergone (Hays 2000:272; cf. Collins 2008:101-102). Beasley-Murray ([1962] 1972:148-149) argues that the literal stripping off of clothes and the putting on of clothes corresponds to the stripping off of an old life and the putting on of a new one which has become realised in the individual believer (cf. Col 3:9,10). The same meaning can be identified in part with bishop Cyril of Jerusalem’s *Lectures on the Mysteries*. He saw the divestment of clothes prior to baptism as the putting off of the old person (cf. Col 3:9). He understood the nakedness at baptism as imitation of the cross of Christ (cf. Col 2:15) and as

⁷ See Du Toit (2011) for a more elaborate exegetical treatment of these aspects in the “clothe” metaphor.

restoration of the likeness of Adam in Paradise who was naked but not ashamed (cf. Gen 2:25; in Ferguson 2009:477).

When the full force of the aorist and the middle voice are allowed for in Galatians 3:27 (ἐνεδύσασθε), baptism can be understood in such a way as to mean that the human person acted in baptism and “clothed” *himself or herself* with Christ (cf. Barth 1969:116). The “clothing” can then not be understood as something that needs to be done after baptism, but something that already has gone into effect at the time of baptism.⁸ Although verses 23 and 25 certainly bear the notion of faith as a salvation-historical moment in history (e.g., Versteeg 1983:93-94), faith in verses 24 and 26 and baptism in verse 27 can hardly be understood mechanistically as if working *ex opere operato* (Fung 1988:173; contra Schweitzer 1912:225-226 and Lake 1911:385). The clothing with Christ at baptism is rather the way in which faith is actualised in the life of the individual. The subjective participation in the act of faith can be derived from Abraham whose believing was counted as righteousness (ἐπίστευσεν, v. 6), and faith in Jesus Christ (πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, v. 22).⁹ The subjective mode of Abraham’s believing is logically carried over to the faith of the Christ-believer. Furthermore, it is probable that Galatians 3:27-28 formed part of baptismal liturgy in the early church (Collins 2008:100; Witherington III 1998:270; Fung 1988:175; Betz 1979:184; Schlier [1949] 1971) or part of baptismal catechesis (Dunn 1993:203), which underlines the subjective, participatory character of the language in Galatians 3:27. This liturgical formula probably communicated information regarding the eschatological status of believers, and constituted their cultural and religious self-understanding and responsibility in the present age (Betz 1979:184). Paul probably reminded his readers of their identification with the new identity in Christ and their renunciation of the old identity by faith (Du Toit 2011:51; cf. Collins 2008:101-102).

In Romans 13:12-14, the “clothe” metaphor functions in terms of paranesis (cf. the imperative ἐνδύσασθε, v. 14), where the believer has to resist evil consciously, which in turn underscores human involvement and participation (Du Toit 2011:67, 69). In view of the “old person” that has died in Christ and the “new person” that has been put on, Romans 13:12-14 carries the notion that we as believers “are consciously to embrace Christ in such a way that his character is manifested in all that we do and say” (Moo 1996:825-826). In comparison to Galatians 3:27,

⁸ The aorist can be described as denoting a snapshot of a past action (Wallace 1996:555).

⁹ Although the phrase can be understood either as a subjective genitive (“[the] faith[fulness] of Jesus Christ”: Hays 2000:239-240; Longenecker 1990:145), it is more likely an objective genitive (“faith in Jesus Christ”: George 1994:181-182, 257-258; Dunn 1993:164, 195; Fung 1988:165; Betz 1979:117, 175). Silva (2004:227-234) convincingly argues for viewing the phrase as an objective genitive, for the following main reasons: (1) The witness from the Greek fathers (e.g., Chrysostom) who understood it as “faith in Christ” shows that native Greek speakers had no difficulty in understanding the phrase as an objective genitive, and that such an understanding was not unnatural (cf. Lk 6:12; Rom 3:3). (2) The human response of believing is undeniably present in the New Testament (e.g., ἐξώ with πιστις: Mt 17:20; 21:21; Mk 4:40; 11:22; Lk 17:6; faith contrasted with doubt: Mk 11:23). (3) In Paul’s other letters, he uses πιστις in reference to faith in Christ rather than as an attribute of Christ (e.g., Rom 4:5,9), and never unambiguously refers to πίστις that belongs to Christ. Faith(fulness) that belongs to Christ is thus not characteristic of Paul. (4) In Gal 2-3, when Paul uses the verb πιστεύω, he seems to use it mostly in connection with our faith in God or Christ (Gal 2:16; 3:6,22). In Gal 2:16, the clause εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπίστευσάμεν, exegetes the phrase πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (similarly τοῖς πιστεύουσιν in 3:22). Paul’s language about faith thus has to be understood against the contrast between the notions of law-works (as human action) over against the act of faith, which remains a prominent theme in Paul. That Paul was capable of using a subjective genitive or that he might have used the genitive with some ambiguity in relation to Christ is, however, not being denied here.

the clothing with Christ has thus more to do with the moral dimension and the spiritual battle of the new life in Christ that result from baptism than with baptism itself (Du Toit 2011:68; cf. Wright 2002:729; Cranfield 1979:688; Barrett [1962] 1975:254). An eschatological motive, which converges with the baptismal motive is evident in verses 11 to 12 (Dunn 1988:787; Cranfield 1979:682-683), in that baptism signifies the reality of the new eschatological era that was inaugurated at Christ's first advent.

The eschatological motive in 2 Corinthians 5:2-4 is carried on with baptism and completes the new eschatological way of existence that was inaugurated in Christ (Du Toit 2011:66; cf. Furnish 1984:296). The eschatological language thus points to the transformation of the earthly way of existence. In addition, the hope constituted by the eschatological language serves as the basis for walking by faith (v. 7) and a life focussed on pleasing the Lord (v. 9).

In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, the "clothe" metaphor functions within the context of the hortatory subjunctive (νήφωμεν; see Wallace 1996:464) to be sober. Paul defines soberness as wearing the spiritual armour. In this context, the "clothe" metaphor thus functions as a theological imperative wherein the believer is actively and consciously involved.

In 1 Corinthians 15:53-54, Paul ends his argument about the living and dead that both have to have transformed bodies to enter their final heavenly existence (Fee 1987:802). Barrett ([1971] 1976:382) connects immortality (ἄφθαρτος, v. 52) with the consummation of the new humanity. In other words, that which was eschatologically inaugurated in Christ is completed at the parousia.

4.2 Colossians and Ephesians (the disputed letters)

In Colossians 2:11-15, the "flesh" is put off in "the circumcision of Christ" which probably points to His whole body and thus His death on the cross, and not so much to baptism as such (e.g., Thompson 2005:56-57; Versteeg 1983:107-108; Ridderbos 1966:451; Beasley-Murray [1962] 1972:153). The circumcision in Christ in turn alludes to the circumcision in the heart (Moo 2008:197; Pokorný 1991:124) and probably points to conversion (Moo 2008:198,200; Dunn 1996:156). In the death of Christ, believers divest themselves of their "body of flesh" which is not their physical bodies, but the "body" which "serves sin" (Zerwick & Grosvenor 1988:606) and denotes "the domination of sin" (Moo 2008:200).¹⁰ The old "self" is being stripped off (Moo 2008:200) and being buried in Christ. The death of the "self" in Christ (v. 11), the identification with Christ's death and resurrection (vv. 11-13), and faith in the power of God (v. 12) all signify the baptismal participation of the baptismal candidate in the actions of "putting off" (v. 11) and baptism itself (v. 12). In 2:15, the term ἀπεκδυσάμενος is used in connection with Christ's "divesting Himself" of the rulers and authorities (Zerwick & Grosvenor 1988:607;¹¹ cf. Harris 1991:110).

The "putting off" of the "old humanity" and the "clothing" with the "new humanity" in Colossians 3:8-10 point to two ways of existence, the one before or outside of Christ, and the other as inaugurated by Christ's death and resurrection (Thompson 2005:78; Lincoln 2000:643). The old humanity in Adam is "the embodiment of the unregenerate humanity", and the humanity

¹⁰ This notion corresponds to "the body of this death" of Rom 7:24 and "the body of sin" of Rom 6:6, which in turn corresponds with the old ἄνθρωπος of both Rom 6:6 and Col 3:9.

¹¹ Zerwick and Grosvenor translate the term ἀπεκδυσάμενος reflexively in spite of its being a deponent middle.

in Christ is the “recreated humanity in the Creator’s image” (O’Brien 1982:191; v. 10; cf. Moo 2008:268; Dunn 1996:222). The new identity in Christ, however, has to be actualised in the life of the individual believer. The “clothe” metaphor in this passage functions in the context of the exhortation to renew the mind to be in line with the new reality of life in Christ (vv. 1,2). Verses 12 to 17 are about the appropriation of the character of the new life, which constitutes an ethical dimension in which the human person is actively involved. This subjective, theologically imperative dimension of the new humanity in Christ corresponds well with the reflexive, participatory function of the middle voice (ἐνδύσασθε, v. 10). Verses 16 and especially 17 show a close relationship of the “clothe” metaphor with worship. Since baptism is probably implied with the “clothe” metaphor here, baptism itself can be seen as part of the believer’s worship (cf. Rom 12:1-2; see Du Toit 2011:58).

In Ephesians 4:22-25, the concept of the renewal of the mind is central (v. 23). As in Romans 13:12 and Colossians 3:8, the word ἀποτίθημι (Eph 4:22) bears ethical connotations (Mitton 1976:164). The new identity in Christ has to be “put on” in order for the ethical dimensions to become visible (Lincoln 1990:287), which can be understood as a subjective actualisation of what happened inwardly (cf. Du Toit 2011:62).

The imperative ἐνδύσασθε in Ephesians 6:11 is ultimately rooted in the indicative of the new humanity in Christ (4:24; cf. Lincoln 1990:442). It is therefore noteworthy that most of the armour is defensive (cf. 1 Thess 5:8) and the instruction is not to fight or win the enemy, but to remain standing (vv. 11,13,14). It is to guard and keep what has already been won (Lincoln 1990:442-443; cf. Roberts 1983:173). Hoehner ([2002] 2003:822) by implication emphasises the subjective, reflexive character of the middle voice of the “clothe” metaphor when he writes: “The middle voice indicates that they are responsible for putting on the full armour of God.”

5. CONCLUSIONS AND QUESTIONS

The close connection of the “clothe” metaphor with baptism has been demonstrated from the practice in the early church as well as from the exegesis of representative passages from the undisputed Pauline letters, as well as from the disputed letters, Colossians and Ephesians. The participatory, subjective character of the middle voice in which the “clothe” metaphor is mostly employed has been shown to correspond with the context in which these metaphors are employed. In terms of baptism or the ethical dimension wherein the “clothe” metaphor is used, the human person is the subject of all the actions (1 Thess 5:8; Gal 3:27; Rom 13:12-14; Col 2:11 [by implication]; 3:8-12; Eph 4:22-25; 6:11-15). These tendencies in turn argue for understanding baptism as part of a theological imperative (esp. Gal 3:27), in which human beings consciously act on and appropriate what they have received in Christ. This theological imperative, however, does not replace the theological indicative of what is received in Christ, which in fact remains the basis for the imperative. The eschatological context in which the “clothe” metaphor is employed (1 Cor 15:53-54; 2 Cor 5:3-4) is consistent with baptismal language, and can be understood as the culmination of salvation that has already become a reality by individual faith at the time of baptism.

In response to these conclusions, it can be asked if it is not anachronistic to relate the justification of infant baptism to Paul’s thoughts on the “clothe” metaphor. However, if Paul’s thought on the “clothe” metaphor and its bearing on the understanding of baptism is considered as normative in justifying and/or informing the doctrine of infant baptism, some of the questions directed to adherents of infant baptism which flow from these conclusions

(although not necessarily final), are the following: (1) If baptism is understood as an objective act of God, how is the reflexive and participatory character of the “clothing” action accounted for at the time of baptism? (2) How are the “putting off” of flesh (as denoting an old way of existence outside of Christ) and the “clothing” with the new identity in Christ incorporated within the understanding of baptism? (3) If soberness and resistance to evil are intrinsically part of what is intended by the baptismal candidate at baptism, how can this meaning form part of the doctrine of infant baptism? (4) How would the renewal of the mind of the person being baptised be accounted for at the time of baptism? (5) If God acts in baptism, and if that act is not understood *ex opere operato* as if salvation is mediated fully or in part at baptism, what would be the nature of God’s act in baptism? In other words, what exactly is baptism doing to you? If baptism in itself does not ensure salvation, why would it be necessary to baptise an infant?

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KEY WORDS

Clothe metaphor
Paul
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TREFWOORDE

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Nuwe Testament

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AIDS, CURRICULA AND GENDER IN TWELVE AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the three related issues mentioned in the title in twelve theological schools that formed a network called NetACT. A questionnaire on these matters was answered by all the institutions. The article discusses the answers to three basic questions: did they implement the HIV and AIDS curricula that their network developed; what was the influence and place of these programs in their curricula and what is the gender equity situation and attitudes like at their institution? The data reveal that by addressing the issue forcefully ever since 2000 the NetACT network has decidedly changed the culture of silence and stigmatisation prevalent in the surrounding society. The article thus gives one an insider view of how African seminaries struggle with HIV and AIDS issues. As to gender it is clear that in the network's schools female lecturers overwhelmingly feel accepted and treated as equals. They are taken seriously and listened to in classes by the students and in staff meetings by their male colleagues. However, the plight of women in African society is not an easy one. What this entails is spelled out in the answers.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article follows a previous article titled Networking theological education in Africa – the NetACT story, that told the story of the Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT) and dealt with its founding, growth and important statistical data that helped to outline the contextual situation of the theological schools. The collected data was statistically quantified in order to show the existence or not of unequal gender representation in the participating theological schools and the churches that are their clients.² Since the research was part of a project on AIDS, curriculum and gender, questions about these issues in the churches and schools were asked, but the absence of factual data led to speculation and uncertainty. We wanted to see what the gender ratios at our institutions are like because we argued that the lack of women in leadership positions in church and theological institutions is one of the major reasons why HIV and AIDS programmes as such will not stop the pandemic. This article reports on three research questions.

1. We wanted to know whether or not the seminaries implemented the HIV and AIDS programmes that their project team developed.
2. We wanted to know about the influence and place of these programmes in their curricula.
3. We wanted to get some understanding of the gender equity situation and attitudes to gender equality at our seminaries.

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² Hendriks, HJ. 2012. *Dutch Reformed Theological Journal*, 53:3&4:120-129.

The NetACT Board developed a hypothesis that motivated these research questions. When the network was founded in 2000 and its vision and goals were formulated in 2001, it announced as one of its goals:

To address the HIV and AIDS problem, especially by providing the theological, moral and spiritual undergirding to curb this pandemic.

NetACT developed HIV and AIDS programmes and wrote a book on the topic³ but then realised that even though the programmes or modules dealing with HIV and AIDS were taught by someone who was trained to do so, they were often “outsiders” in a course that does not integrate the content with the rest of the theological programme. It was pretty much an “add-on” about something shrouded in silence and stigma. In other words there was little coherence with the rest of the curriculum of the institution.

In order to effectively and faithfully address the contextual reality of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, everybody teaching in an institution should deal with it purposefully in every sub-discipline of theology with the type of input unique to that sub-discipline. To achieve this, the students, staff and board of theological institutions should be familiar with the basic principles of constructing and teaching a contextualised curriculum. The basic elements of curriculum development should be known and applied. This was certainly not the case in the Network schools. Thus, in 2006 in Windhoek the Board decided to ask Rev. Kruger du Preez to do a doctoral dissertation in which his research examined the curriculum (development) situation at the schools. In 2009 we started with curriculum development workshops, which led to the realisation that this should be done with all staff and board members of an institution present. These workshops were very well received and helped the seminaries in many ways.⁴ They were motivated to contextualise the HIV and AIDS modules and address the pandemic holistically. It also helped the seminaries to work towards getting national and international accreditation.

It was during this process that we realised that our goal to address the HIV and AIDS pandemic would never be successful without addressing the cultural bias that existed in a patriarchal system⁵, in other words, the gender issue. Thus the central hypothesis of the research questions that we are now discussing is that the reality of the HIV and AIDS pandemic will not be eradicated without addressing the gender issue in our culture and thus in our theological curricula.

The logic of this hypothesis and the importance of explaining it also had to be made clear to those churches and NGOs that had supported our work and research over the past ten years; we had to explain why we moved from simply writing HIV and AIDS programmes to engaging with issues of curriculum development and then gender equality work. The original goal is still being pursued, but we are addressing it on a much more fundamental level.

3 Mash, R. (et al). 2009. *Our Church has AIDS. Preaching about HIV & AIDS in Africa Today*. Stellenbosch: NetACT.

4 The reports of some of these workshops are available at <http://academic.sun.ac.za/theology/netact/2011-Malawi.html>, <http://academic.sun.ac.za/theology/netact/2011-Angola.html> and <http://academic.sun.ac.za/theology/netact/2012-Nigeria.html> accessed 27 June 2012.

5 On patriarchy and its influence on the different continents on the globe, see Castells (2004:192-302). He defines patriarchy as: *is the founding structure of all contemporary societies. It is characterized by the institutionally enforced authority of all males over females and their children in the family unit (:192) ... By the crisis of the patriarchal family I refer to the weakening of a model of family based on the stable exercise of authority / domination over the family by the adult male head of the family. (:196).*

2. METHODOLOGY

A few remarks about methodology are necessary. The previous article⁶ quoted from the covering letter and the instructions on how the questionnaire should be completed. When the questions pertaining to HIV and AIDS and gender were asked, specific reference was made to the HIV and AIDS modules developed by the institutions through NetACT's mediation as well as to the curriculum development workshops. It was thus clear to the respondents that the gender questions were related to the HIV and AIDS as well as the curriculum issues.

The questions from the second part of the questionnaire are extremely sensitive within our African cultural setting. They dealt with the gender topic and how women were treated in church, seminary and community. The default response to these issues is silence. Instead of silence, the questions boldly expected to initiate a conversation about the elephant in the room, an elephant that cultural expectations demand should not be mentioned. Notwithstanding the cultural constraints, the answers conveyed an openness and trust that endorse the statement made in the previous article about the high levels of mutual trust between the institutions in this network.

In August 2011 the NetACT Board and the women delegates from the seminaries for the first time openly and directly addressed the gender issue. During the evaluation session several of the principals requested that we handle this issue with the utmost care. If we really want to serve the gender cause, we should be culturally sensitive. The attitude with which we approached the issue held the key to the success or failure with which it is addressed. In the evaluation of the workshop it was evident that the delegates picked up the smallest of signs of any arrogance about these issues. On the other side of the equation, it was equally clear that the men and the women who attended the workshop (in equal numbers) were more than willing to set out on this most challenging of cultural and spiritual journeys.

The key to this journey was a spiritual one and the firm conviction was that the answers to our quest should be sought in the Bible. Thus the second part of the book during the workshop⁷ of August 2011 dealt with this challenge.

Let us return to the methodology issue. In the light of the above-mentioned sensitivities, the questions about how women experience gender issues in their seminaries and churches were highly sensitive. They were working with and under the "protection" of their principal. The answers to the last two series of questions that tried to assess the degree of gender discrimination could have put them in an awkward position if, for instance, the principal got hold of them and could trace the answers to an individual staff member. Thus the following guidelines were set:

Questions 30 and 31 should be duplicated for each female staff member. Their answers should be treated as anonymous and confidential. The delegate female researcher should be solely responsible for this part and either email or post this section in such a way that anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed.

To the credit of the principals it should be said that they respected this request and gave female staff members the freedom they needed to answer the questions anonymously and without fear.

6 Hendriks, HJ. 2012. *Dutch Reformed Theological Journal*, 53:3&4:120-129.

7 Hendriks (et al) 2012:85-130 (Part II: The Bible and gender).

In the compilation of the data the researcher's first choice was to use the exact words of the respondents. However, in most cases the responses had to be edited and abbreviated to what can now be read in the tables below. Because the researcher is familiar with the institutions and the respondents as well as the cultural setting, it was possible to grasp what the respondents were trying to convey in a second and often third language.

3. DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS / TABLES

Table 6: Implementation of the NetACT HIV and AIDS curriculum

The first remark to make regarding the table is that, in comparison to the situation in 2000 when the Network was founded and none of the institutions had a module on HIV and AIDS, all the institutions now had programmes in place. Nine used the material developed by their lecturers in collaboration with other experts that NetACT invited to help them write contextualised modules. The three institutions that are not using the exact modules which they helped to create obviously continued to create programmes that satisfied their needs.

Some remarks

- Janet Brown attended the now legendary NetACT meeting in 2002 at ABC in Lilongwe, Malawi where she initiated ABC's HIV programme. She was a fully qualified intensive care nurse. The plight of people in townships and squatter camps led her to start ministering to those people together with ABC students. She did her doctoral degree on this topic.⁸ She later died of cancer, after which Rev. Maggie Madimbo, another ABC staff member, continued with the programme and work. She is at present completing her doctoral degree in the USA.
- NetACT developed its own publication on the process of HIV and AIDS curriculum development: Mash, Rachel, Cilliers, Johan, Griffiths, Keith, Chemorion, Edith & Katani, Archwells (Eds). 2009. *Our church has AIDS. Preaching about HIV & AIDS in Africa today*. Stellenbosch: NetACT. Copies can be ordered from the NetACT office (e-mail netact@sun.ac.za).
- The MTh programme in Clinical Pastoral Care and Counselling (HIV and AIDS) is training eight students per year as specialised professional counsellors. Four African universities present this programme in collaboration with the Swedish government. For more information contact the NetACT office at netact@sun.ac.za or the secretary of the Department of Practical Theology (brobyn@sun.ac.za).
- The books mentioned in the answers are:
- Van Dyk, Alta. 2008. *HIVAIDS Care & Counselling: a multidisciplinary approach*. Cape Town: Pearson Education. 4th edition.
- Musa W Dube was mentioned. Some of her books are:
- Dube, Musa W. 2003. *HIV/AIDS and the curriculum: methods of integrating HIV&AIDS in theological programmes*. Geneva: WCC.

8. Brown, Janet L. 2004. *HIV/AIDS Alienation: Between Prejudice and Acceptance*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch University. Online at <http://scholar.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.1/5491> [Accessed: March, 16, 2012].

- Dube, Musa W. & Kanyoro, R.A. 2004. *Grant me justice! HIV/AIDS & gender readings of the Bible*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster.
- Dube, Musa W. & Phiri, Isabel A. 2003. *Africa praying: a handbook on HIV-AIDS sensitive sermon guidelines and liturgy*. Geneva: WCC.

The realities with which the Network has to cope can be illustrated by two answers to the question: "If you have not implemented the (NetACT) HIV and AIDS curriculum, why not?"

- Hefsiba answered the question in the following way: *The proposed curriculum by the workgroup of NetACT was never officially sent to us. There was no follow-up as to how to implement it. We did not receive any information on which books to use.*

The writer of this article can explain what happened: Rev. Venancio Patrique was the Hefsiba lecturer whom NetACT trained. He helped to develop and translated all the material into Portuguese. However, after his training and as a result of his training he took up a much better paid appointment. This and the irritating lack of good e-mail and telephone communication with Hefsiba in those years explain how the problem arose.

Hefsiba is now using the following Portuguese books:

- **Van Zyl, Daniel, Murray, Logy.** 2003. *Edificando a vossa habilidade para lidar com SIDA*. Wellington: Instituto Biblico de Neemias; N7/3E. (In English: Building your ability to lead in Aids).
- **Welbourn Alice, Williams, G and Williams, A.** 2003. *Caminhando de maos dados. Manual de Formacao sobre HIV/SIDA. Tecnicas de Commujnicacao e de Gestao de Relacoes Humanas*. London: Strategies of Hope and ActionAid Mocambique. (In English: *Walking together. Training manual on HIV/AIDS. Communication techniques and the issue of human relations.*)

RTS Nigeria (which joined NetACT in 2010) reported: "We are yet to have a professional or expert in the field to handle the course. Also owing to stigmatisation of the pandemic (HIV), most people are reluctant to teach the course or even to receive training in order to teach it".

Table 7: HIV and AIDS programmes and credits

The table confirms that the HIV and AIDS modules taught are getting due recognition in the curricula of the schools. There are only two schools that seem not to be on standard at the moment. ABC in Lilongwe Malawi has stopped teaching them because their designated lecturer is on sabbatical. She has in the meantime been informed of the situation and will certainly rectify it! RTS in Nigeria joined the network in 2010 and as such they have not been part of the campaign to address the pandemic in the way all the schools decided on. This difference highlights the influence of a network that addresses contextual issues.

Table 8: Effectiveness of curriculum

What a joy to read the answers in this table! They show the spectrum of motivations that makes the overwhelming Yes so interesting, as it highlights the influence and effect of the programme.

Table 9: HIV-positive students in the seminary?

Six of the schools reported that they are not aware of any HIV-positive students living openly with HIV and AIDS and six schools do report known cases. The culture of silence – that is, not openly speaking out on these issues – can be illustrated by an observation. This researcher was teaching and staying at one of the schools where the woman who answered the questionnaire left this question open. One night I was awakened by someone crying out loud – obviously in grief. When I enquired the next day I was told that someone died that night and that she had AIDS. The principal of the school told me that several of their students died of AIDS-related deaths.

When the question: “Do you have lecturers who are openly living with HIV?” was asked, all institutions replied that there are no lecturers living openly living with HIV and AIDS.

Table 10: The impact of HIV and AIDS on seminaries

The data of this table are really interesting and an eye-opener to the reality that theological schools face. The impact of HIV and AIDS is acknowledged by all. The disease has an impact on all the schools, and the illustrations of how and why this occurs reveal the devastating influence of the HIV and AIDS scourge. It is the openness of discussions like this that prove that by addressing the issue forcefully ever since 2000 the NetACT network has decidedly changed the culture of silence and stigmatisation prevalent in the surrounding society.

Table 11: Most affected: women or men?

The question was asked: “Who are most affected *in your seminary?*” Four respondents did not answer the question; one said that they could not really see any *visible* impact on campus (which was most probably the case in most schools). One mentions the reality of orphans. There must be very few households in Africa without orphans. Three respondents point out that, though one cannot really discern this on campus, women in general are most affected as a result of cultural, economic and societal factors.

Table 12: About faithfulness and poverty

It is important to remember that this question was put to the two respondents (the principal and the female delegate) to give their view on the **public opinion** about the question. Eleven of the twelve responses agreed that in the public opinion the unfaithfulness of women was a more serious matter than that of men. Ten of the twelve were certain that women suffer more than men.

The reasons why women are more affected by poverty were explained. Most often mentioned was the fact that they are not economically empowered (seven times). Indirectly all the answers give their precarious economic situation as the root cause. They referred to having to take care of the household, children, orphans and the vulnerable people of society (three times). Lack of education / illiteracy was mentioned three times. The impact of patriarchy is clear in all the answers. Women do not have access to land and cattle, and do not inherit. When a husband dies or when they are divorced, they often lose the basic necessities to life.

Table 13: Women’s experience of gender bias (or not)

The methodology discussion explained how the 14 questions of this section were asked and how the respondents’ anonymity was protected. Since there were ten respondents for

SU, their combined response was mentioned in the first line of the table and those of the 20 respondents of eleven schools were mentioned in the second line. There is enough safety in numbers to refer to the SU group as an entity. This is not the case with other schools. It is therefore ethically correct not to mention how a specific school voted when there are only one or two respondents from that school. Where the totals of the first and second lines agree, they will be treated as a whole, i.e. a response out of 30 (n=30). Where they differed significantly, this will be mentioned and discussed.

The first seven questions were intended to establish whether women lecturers experience gender bias and discrimination.

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Do you feel accepted as a woman in your institution? | 26 out of 30 agreed. |
| 2. Do you feel treated as an equal in decision making? | 26 out of 30 agreed. |
| 3. Did you experience sexual harassment? | 11 out of 30 agreed. |
| 4. Equal promotion for female staff? | 22 out of 30 agreed. |
| 5. Taken seriously while teaching / in classes? | 28 out of 30 agreed. |
| 6. Taken serious in meetings by male staff? | 27 out of 30 agreed. |
| 7. Do female students have equal work opportunity? | 13 out of 30 agreed. |

It is clear that in the NetACT network's twelve schools female lecturers overwhelmingly feel accepted and treated as equals. They are taken seriously and listened to in classes by the students and in staff meetings by their male colleagues. This says a lot for these institutions and is something to be proud of.

There is, however, a serious issue: eleven female staff members have experienced what they regard as sexual harassment. Wisdom is needed in order to deal with this matter in a responsible way. Situations differ so much at the twelve schools that it would not be wise to prescribe a particular course of action. Leaving the matter in silence, however, would not be a wise move either.

The last question about whether female students have an equal chance of being called to congregations produced an interesting response: at Stellenbosch nine out of ten female staff members disagreed. Men get preference when congregations call ministers. This certainly was the case up to now in the DRC in SA. This researcher thinks that this tendency will change in the foreseeable future. The staff members of the 11 other schools voted the other way round. 12 out of 20 indicated that women have an equal chance of being called. The writer who compiled the answers can in this case say that it is clear that in some churches women will find it difficult to be ministers, while in other churches there is certainly less bias.

The second set of seven questions enquired about gender issues *in the community*.

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Rape and abuse are serious problems. | 20 out of 30 agreed. |
| 2. Rape and abuse are seriously talked about | 18 out of 30 agreed. |
| 3. Domestic violence is treated seriously | 14 out of 30 agreed. |
| 4. There are safe places for women to talk | 19 out of 30 agreed. |

5. There are safe places where women can get help 21 out of 30 agreed.
6. Bible views support violence against women 17 out of 30 agreed.
7. The church is a safe place for women to get help 17 out of 30 agreed.

The first remark is obvious: there are not clear cut answers to these questions that deal with the wider community in which the schools are located. In compiling the answers, it was clear that there are distinct differences between institutions. The highest level of agreement is that there are safe places where women can talk about their problems... yet only 70% agreed on this issue.

It is clear that in the communities in which the schools are situated women have a raw deal. If 17 out of 30 respondents indicate that popular opinion agrees that the Bible supports violence against women, no church, synod or seminary should feel proud of its teaching. The same number of women agree that the church is a safe place to get help. If thirteen disagree, this is a sad state of affairs. Seven out of ten women lecturers at SU don't find the church a safe place to get help. This is bad news.

It may also be said that there is progress. Rape and violence are in most cases regarded as serious problems and talked about. Domestic violence does not receive the same attention, but it is at least treated seriously, according to nearly half of the 30 women respondents. The fact that the highest score, 21 out of 30, indicates that there are safe places for women to get help, is encouraging.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The research questionnaire gave us clear answers to the three questions we asked.

In the first place the NetACT goal to seriously address the HIV and AIDS pandemic through its schools was certainly attained. At all the seminaries programmes teaching HIV and AIDS are in place. At the same time it is equally clear that this is a long journey that has only started.

Secondly, the network was successful in implementing HIV and AIDS curricula. They are having a positive effect, even though there is certainly still room for improvement. This was clear from the answers received. HIV and AIDS certainly has a dire impact on students and institutions. It is clear that this is not directly seen in students or lecturers being HIV positive, but in the reality that everybody in church and society is directly affected by the pandemic.

However, it was equally clear that women are most affected by the pandemic and poverty. The patriarchal cultural system in particular discriminates against women and cause lots of pain and injustice.

The third question that the network wants to address, namely that of gender equity, proves to be a very valid concern. The result of the questions that addressed this issue proved without any doubt that gender inequality it is a sad reality in African cultures. But it did surprise us how much progress theological schools have made in this regard. There certainly still is a gender imbalance in seminaries when it comes to women as students and women as staff members. However, within the NetACT schools women by and large testify that they are well accepted and treated as equals.

In conclusion, the central hypothesis of the research questions is that the reality of HIV and

AIDS pandemic will not be eradicated without addressing the gender issue in our culture and thus in our theological curricula. This hypothesis certainly holds true in the responses to the questionnaire and in the rationale of the NetACT network.

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KEY WORDS

HIV&AIDS
Curriculum development
Gender equality
Stigmatization
NetACT

TREFWOORDE

MIV en vigs
Kurrikulum-ontwikkeling
Gender-gelykheid
Stigma
NetACT

ADDENDA: THE TABLES

The addenda below are the compiled data from the questionnaires. Both the questions and the detailed answers are important for research and researchers.

Table 6: implementation of the NetACT HIV & AIDS curriculum

Note to those who answered the questionnaire: In 2008 and 2009 some of your staff members attended the NetACT HIV curriculum development workshops. Ask knowledgeable staff member(s) to supply the information about your HIV & AIDS modules.

Has the NetACT curriculum that was developed been implemented at your seminary? If not, indicate what material you are using in this regard.	YES	NO
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ABC: Lilongwe Malawi

YES

The programme was first taught by the late Janet Brown, who did her DTh degree on HIV&AIDS. Up to 2009 we were using the materials that we had developed up to that point at NETACT. Since Mrs Madimbo left to do doctoral studies (2010 onwards) the programme was not taught.

Hefsiba: Vila Ulongue, Mozambique

NO

They are using some of the NetACT material used by the presenter of the NetACT programme as well as material from other sources (Logey & Smith).

ISEU: Huambo, Angola

YES

ISTEL: Lubango, Angola

YES

JMTI: Nkhoma, Malawi

YES

JMTUC: Lusaka, Zambia

YES

They are also using internet sources, library sources, NetACT's book *Our church has AIDS* and a book by Musa Dube .

MThC: Masvingo, Zimbabwe

YES

NETS: Windhoek, Namibia

NO

They are using some of it, but added material from the Namibia Council of Churches.

RITT: Eldoret, Kenya

YES

RTS: Mkar, Nigeria

NO

They joined NetACT in 2010 and report: The denominational HIV&AIDS counsellor lectures on HIV&AIDS to students every semester using his material.

SU: Stellenbosch, South Africa

NO

Our faculty focuses on HIV and AIDS on different levels. We have a short course (official University certificate) in HIV and AIDS. This short course was developed in collaboration with the University's HIV and AIDS desk and the European Foundation. The content is based on a manual (consisting of different units) and the book by Alta van Dyk.

We also have an HIV and AIDS course/module as part of the MDiv programme in pastoral care. The focus in this programme is on the medical content and the counselling content. The book by Alta van Dyk and other material is used in this programme.

We also have a full Master's clinical program on HIV and AIDS. This is a one-year programme based on a clinical and academic programme as well as a research thesis. This programme was developed in collaboration with five other universities in Africa and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

ZTC: Zomba, Malawi

YES

Table 7: HIV & AIDS programmes and credits

Question: Please indicate the following about the HIV&AIDS curriculum that you are following: In which study years it is taught? In which programme (subject) it is taught? What is the credit value of the modules?

ABC: Lilongwe Malawi

An elective offered to 3rd and 4th year students in the Personnel Management two-credit programme.

Hefsiba: Vila Ulongue, Mozambique

Taught in first year. It is called SIDA (Portuguese for AIDS) 113 and 123. It has 8 credits each, which means there are two classes per week devoted to it for the whole year.

ISEU: Huambo, Angola

It is taught in the second year in the regular programme and fourth year in the part-time programme. It is considered a complementary subject and constitutes three credits or six hours per week.

ISTEL: Lubango, Angola

Taught in first year in the programme HIV&AIDS. Three-credits programme or 45 hours a semester.

JMTI: Nkhoma, Malawi

Final year. Programme is called: HIV&AIDS. Four hours per week.

JMTUC: Lusaka, Zambia

It is taught in the third year and called Pastoral Theology. 3 periods of 50 minutes each per week.

MThC: Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Taught in 2nd year in the programme Practical Theology, which has a 4-credit value.

NETS: Windhoek, Namibia

1st, 2nd, & 3rd years. It is called "African Social Issues in the first year (6 credits) and HIV & AIDS in 2nd and 3rd years: 8 credits for the two years.

RITT: Eldoret, Kenya

It is taught in the second year. The programme is called "Interpreting the Bible in the light of HIV&AIDS." The credit value of the modules is 2 hours per week.

RTS: Mkar, Nigeria

They joined NetACT in 2010. It is taught by the denominational AIDS counsellor once a semester to all students in all classes. These presentations carry no credit value.

SU: Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch South Africa

A short 12-credit course was developed so that anybody with a senior certificate can enrol in this course. Thus it is open to the broader community. The MDiv programme (fifth year of the ministerial training) has a five-credit module on HIV and AIDS. The MTh Clinical Pastoral Care in HIV and AIDS is a full year, 180 credits. HIV and AIDS programmes are part of the Practical Theology curriculum.

ZTC: Zomba, Malawi

Taught in 3rd and 4th years in the programme: Practical Theology and Moral Issues. It constitutes 25% of the module.

Table 8: Effectiveness of curriculum

Question: Has the curriculum that you use been effective? Please motivate your answer.

ABC: Lilongwe Malawi

It certainly was effective. Students went for voluntary HIV testing – which was well received.

Hefsiba: Vila Ulongue, Mozambique

Yes, very much so. The students are well informed about the facts, but also of the ethical issues. The lecturer is following a very open approach in his teaching and there is a lot of discussion.

ISEU: Huambo, Angola

Yes. Our students are very effective activists and they are doing good work in their communities in Huambo and surrounding towns.

ISTEL: Lubango, Angola

It has been very effective even though it is only taught in the first semester of the BTh programme.

JMTI: Nkhoma, Malawi

Yes. Many pastors are now aware of HIV and AIDS and are not just negatively condemning it, but deal with it more positively.

JMTUC: Lusaka, Zambia

Yes. Students have acquired basic theological understanding of HIV and AIDS and are able to apply the knowledge in specific ministry situations.

MThC: Masvingo, Zimbabwe

To a certain extent. Most people are not ready to open up on issues of HIV and AIDS status.

NETS: Windhoek, Namibia

Yes, the curriculum is very effective, because it is practical and gives the students skills to minister to HIV&AIDS. Some of our students are ministering to PLWHA.

RITT: Eldoret, Kenya

Yes; students are sensitive about PLWHA as well as to those who are affected by it. This is noticeable in their preaching.

RTS: Nigeria

They joined NetACT in 2010. They report: So far this has been effective. The students did well in the inter-seminary joint lecture session. The resource persons rated our students as being the most alert on issues of handling HIV and AIDS in ministry.

SU: South Africa

Yes, to a large extent. We had good feedback from the participants in the short course and the students in the MDiv programme. The MTh in Clinical Pastoral Care & Counselling (HIV and AIDS) is regularly externally audited and updated with the latest research information.

ZTC: Zomba, Malawi

Yes. It helps students with: managing skills, counselling skills, pastoral skills and awareness raising in how to deal with the different age groups.

Table 9: HIV-positive students in the seminary?

Question: What is the effect of HIV and AIDS on the seminary and how many students do you have who are openly living with HIV?

ABC: Lilongwe Malawi

It is difficult to know the effect as it is not discussed publically. The school did lose students and other members due to HIV and AIDS.

Hefsiba: Vila Ulongue, Mozambique

If there is an effect, we don't know about it, because people are not open about it. We are not aware of HIV positive students.

ISEU: Huambo, Angola

Before the HIV module was implemented in the curriculum, silence reigned and HIV&AIDS were simply seen as sin. Attitudes changed with the introduction of the modules. It clearly affects the church. We had two HIV positive students in 2010.

ISTEL: Lubango, Angola

At present there are no known cases of HIV positive students. However, before the HIV programme one of their students died because of HIV and AIDS.

JMTI: Nkhoma, Malawi

People are normally affected when one of their family members are sick or has died; then one has to excuse him or her from classes to attend the funeral. Since students have medical check-ups before being interviewed and allowed, the Executive Committee knows that there are two positive students.

JMTUC: Lusaka, Zambia

No answer. / Not aware of students who are HIV positive.

MThC: Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Everyone is affected in one way or another especially through close relatives who are infected. They are not aware of students who at present are HIV positive.

NETS: Windhoek, Namibia

No answer. / Not aware of students who are HIV positive.

RITT: Eldoret, Kenya

Not sure. Nobody comes out openly.

RTS: Nigeria

They joined NetACT in 2010 and report: Three of our students are infected with HIV and AIDS and are facing the challenges of fear of stigmatisation.

SU: South Africa

I do think the effect is due to the lack of students and staff who have been tested. Indirectly one can only imagine the emotional, economic and spiritual effect of family and friends living with HIV and AIDS must be high due to the reality of the infections in Africa. Some lecturers do know of HIV positive students.

ZTC: Zomba, Malawi

Today we live in a community where all have been affected in one way or another. The effects of this are some orphaned children being raised by relatives in the college community. The HIV and AIDS modules have inspired them to form an HIV and AIDS response group. / Not aware of students who are HIV positive.

Table 10: The impact of HIV and AIDS on seminaries

Questions: Do you have students and lecturers who are affected by HIV? How has HIV impacted your seminary?

ABC: Lilongwe Malawi

Students are affected, lecturers not. HIV and AIDS do affect the seminary, but are only talked about when someone dies.

Hefsiba: Mozambique

If there is an effect, we don't know that it is because of HIV and AIDS. People are not open about it. The impact of AIDS is not noticeable, but people are now aware of the dangers.

ISEU: Huambo, Angola

Students and lecturers are affected by HIV. The seminary is now more open to address the issue of HIV and AIDS as we are all affected by the problem. There is a theological approach concerning the issue and through Bible studies people are becoming more aware of the disease and they feel responsible to fight against this epidemic.

ISTEL: Lubango, Angola

At present no students or lecturers are known to be HIV positive, although everyone is affected by it.

JMTI: Nkhoma, Malawi

In Malawi there is no family that can say that it is not affected by HIV – thus everyone at JMTI is affected. HIV did impact on the seminary, for those infected are often ill and spend lots of money on medical bills; they miss classes and their performance is affected.

JMTUC: Lusaka, Zambia

Students and lecturers are affected by HIV. The college has lost some students due to HIV and AIDS-related illnesses.

MThC: Masvingo, Zimbabwe

All students and lecturers are affected by HIV. Lecturers are affected when students and lecturers attend funerals. There is financial strain on students and lecturers in assisting HIV and AIDS-infected relatives.

NETS: Windhoek, Namibia

Students and lecturers are affected by HIV. Impact: it has caused us to come up with additional courses that are relevant to the community around us. This meant major changes to the curriculum.

RITT: Eldoret, Kenya

Students and lecturers are affected by HIV. It impacts on the seminary in that most people are willing to know their HIV status and support vulnerable people in the society.

RTS: Nigeria

They joined NetACT in 2010 and report: We lost two students in the last two years to HIV. Some students have difficulty paying tuition fees as their relations who could support them are infected or affected.

SU: South Africa

They have students but not lecturers affected by HIV and AIDS. The effect is limited in terms of direct infections but it could be much more significant in terms of family and friends.

ZTC: Zomba, Malawi

All students and lecturers are affected by HIV. The impact is not much, because previously ministry students have gone through a screening process before joining ZTC. This has now been discouraged in order not to violate human rights. The situation might therefore change.

Table 11: Most affected: women or men?

Question: Who are most affected by HIV and AIDS in your seminary: Women or men? Why?

ABC: Lilongwe Malawi

Men are more affected because most of the students are men.

Hefsiba: Vila Ulongue, Mozambique

No visible impact.

ISEU: Huambo, Angola

It is difficult to evaluate who is more infected or affected by the disease, because at the moment none of the lecturers or students are assumed or confirmed HIV positive. But in practical terms women are more affected. Why? Because they have no power, even within some churches, they become more vulnerable.

ISTEL: Lubango, Angola

No answer.

JMTI: Nkhoma, Malawi

No answer.

JMTUC: Lusaka, Zambia

Both are affected. Taking care of the orphans affects all.

MThC: Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Since there are more male students it is difficult to see who is more affected.

NETS: Windhoek, Namibia

No answer.

RITT: Eldoret, Kenya

Women. Why? They are victims of cultural practices that fuel the spread of HIV and AIDS. They are biologically vulnerable, often without power and as such often very poor.

RTS: Nigeria

Men. Men tend to be more unfaithful in marriage. They hide their status and claim not to have safe sex to prove they are not infected.

SU: South Africa

I do think both. Why? The male student living with HIV struggles with many issues that are known to me. But broader in terms of friends and family it must be women, because they are the most vulnerable in terms of our cultural and economic realities.

ZTC: Zomba, Malawi

No answer

Table 12: About faithfulness and poverty

<p>Questions: We requested the two delegates to the Gender Equality workshop to give their opinion of what the view of the general public is on the following issue: Is it more serious if a wife is unfaithful to her husband or is it the other way round? Who is more affected by poverty: women or men? Explain.</p>
<p>ABC: Lilongwe Malawi</p> <p>It is more serious if a wife is unfaithful. Women are more affected by HIV and since most people in Malawi live below the poverty line women are affected most. Also: more women are not educated and illiteracy makes poverty worse.</p>
<p>Hefsiba: Mozambique</p> <p>It is more serious if a wife is unfaithful. Both genders are suffering, but perhaps women are suffering more, because often they are tending to the house, children and land. Men use the money they earn for themselves. If the man dies, the family of the husband will come and take everything.</p>
<p>ISEU: Huambo, Angola</p> <p>It is more serious if a wife is unfaithful. In my opinion and according to the practical reality, women are more affected by poverty because they have less access to financial resources. They have no input in decision making which makes them more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS.</p>
<p>ISTEL: Lubango, Angola</p> <p>It is more serious if a wife is unfaithful. Reasons: less access to finances and no say in decision making.</p>
<p>JMTI: Nkhoma, Malawi</p>

It is more serious if a wife is unfaithful. Pastors divorced unfaithful wives, but it does not happen when the husband is unfaithful. Culture and poverty make women stay and take care of the children.
JMTUC: Lusaka, Zambia
It is more serious if a wife is unfaithful. Both are affected since there is a high rate of unemployment.
MThC: Masvingo, Zimbabwe
It is more serious if a wife is unfaithful. Women are less economically empowered. They do not own cattle or land which are the traditional symbols of wealth.
NETS: Windhoek, Namibia
They are uncertain in which case unfaithfulness is more serious. Women are more affected by poverty in their communities because of their day-to-day responsibilities of taking care of the family.
RITT: Eldoret, Kenya
It is more serious if a wife is unfaithful. Women are less educated and they have no right of inheriting.
RTS: Nigeria
It is more serious if a wife is unfaithful. Most women depend on their husbands and do not have any personal means of livelihood. Men don't always provide women with what is needed.
SU: South Africa
It is more serious if a wife is unfaithful. Women are more affected by poverty because: 1) They are paid less for the same work (the situation is improving though); 2) Race plays a role, black women are paid least; 3) Women are taking responsibility for children, orphans, and all vulnerable people in society; 4) Because of these responsibilities they are often divorced and exposed to hardship and hopelessness.
ZTC: Malawi
It is more serious if a wife is unfaithful. Women are more affected because of illiteracy and the lack of economic empowerment.

Table 13: Women's experience of gender bias (or not)

<p>The following questions were put to women staff members.</p> <p>The first line represents the response of ten women from SU. The second line is the combined response of nine schools totalling 20 respondents. JMTI and RTS have no women on staff and did not respond to these questions. The = signifies the total of the 30 who answered (n=30).</p>

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
30a	As a woman, I feel completely accepted in our institution.	3 12=15	5 6=11	2 2=4	=0
30b	I feel treated as an equal in decision making.	3 9=12	6 8=14	3=3	1 0=1
30c	I have experienced instances of sexual harassment in the seminary / faculty / college.	1 6=7	3 1=4	5 8=13	1 5=6
30d	Opportunities for promotion and advancement are equal for female staff members.	3 7=10	6 6=12	5=5	1 2=3
30e	When I lecture, I feel like I am listened to/taken seriously by students (1 no answer).	3 12=15	6 7=13	1 0=1	0 0=0
30f	When at staff meetings I feel I am listened to and taken seriously by faculty members.	3 11=14	6 6=12	1 3=4	
30g	Your view please: Compared with male students, women students have an equal opportunity of being called to a congregation (1 no answer).	0 7=7	1 5=6	6 4=10	3 3=6
Evaluate the following statements					
31a	In my community, rape and abuse are serious problems.	3 4=7	5 8=12	2 6=8	0 2=2
31b	In my community, rape and abuse are seriously talked about.	0 2=2	4 12=16	4 3=7	2 3=5
31c	Domestic violence is treated seriously.	0 6=6	4 4=8	5 8=13	1 2=3

31d	There are safe spaces where women can voice their pain.	0	7	2	1
		5=5	7=14	5=7	3=4
31e	There are safe spaces where women can get help if needed.	0	7	3	0
		6=6	8=15	5=8	1=1
31f	People's view of the Bible supports violence against women.	1	6	3	0
		1=2	9=15	7=10	3=3
31g	The church is a safe place for women to look for help for domestic violence, rape and abuse.	0	3	5	2
		5=5	9=12	3=8	3=5

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CALVIN AND HIS PURITAN HEIRS ON CHRIST'S HUMANITY IN HEBREWS

ABSTRACT

John Calvin was a highly influential second-generation Reformer whose commentaries on most of the books of the Bible shaped the theology and piety of Reformed churches in successive centuries. In his commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Calvin sets forth a Christology that often focuses on how Christ's humanity has practical benefits for the Christian believer. With that in mind, however, his comments on Christ's humanity lack the sophistication found in the writings of several noted Puritan theologians, such as John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, and Stephen Charnock. These Puritan theologians address questions that Calvin was either apparently unwilling to entertain in any detail or unable to give the type of rigorous analysis that we find among his Post-reformation heirs. This article will demonstrate that Calvin's Christology paves the way for more intricate discussions of the person of Christ, and for this reason scholars should acknowledge that later Reformed theologians did not in fact jettison the so-called "Christocentricity" of Calvin, but in fact developed his Christology in ways that were more positive in order to meet the needs of emerging heresies as well as foster a more robust Christian spirituality that focuses on the benefits of Christ's human nature for the Christian believer.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nobody disputes that John Calvin (1509–1564) played a hugely significant role during the time of the Reformation. As a demonstration of his significance there are literally hundreds of studies devoted to his life and theology. What more can really be said of the Genevan Reformer's life, theology, and influence? Still a great deal, no doubt – a testimony to Calvin's massive output of writing during his years in Geneva. Still, even if every area of Calvin's thought had been analyzed, the fact remains that scholars will still find themselves disagreeing with each other over what Calvin said and why he said this or that, as well as debating his enduring influence (or lack thereof) upon later Christian theologians.

In the secondary literature, a major area of inquiry in Calvin studies over the past several decades has focused on Calvin's relation to the Reformed tradition, particularly his heirs in the Post-Reformation era.² The well-known phrase "Calvin against the Calvinists" refers to the idea promoted by a number of scholars that Calvin's heirs departed from Calvin's theology in various ways, some of which are not insignificant. The "Calvin against the Calvinists" thesis has suffered a number of blows in the last decade or so, but the final death-blow to that

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2. See Andreas J. Beck & William den Boer (eds.), "The Reception of John Calvin and His Theology in Reformed Orthodoxy," *Church History and Religious Culture* 91.1–2 (2011). 11–274.

thesis came with the publication of Richard Muller's most recent work, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*.³

This essay attempts to analyze Calvin's understanding of Christ's humanity in the book of Hebrews in comparison to how several Puritan theologians spoke of the humanity of the God-man in their writings on certain passages in Hebrews. The idea that Calvin's heirs somehow lost or jettisoned the "Christocentricity" of Calvin has been adequately refuted in various ways, either by questioning the usefulness of the term "Christocentricity"⁴ or by showing that scholars have sometimes not adequately analyzed the primary sources of those theologians who allegedly departed from Calvin's Christological focus.⁵

This essay contends that while Calvin's 1549 commentary on Hebrews certainly demonstrates an understanding of the benefit of Christ's humanity for his people, his Christology is in fact not as developed as the Christology of later Reformed theologians. There are clear areas of agreement between Calvin and his heirs, but there are also places where they ventured to speak on the benefit of Christ's humanity that Calvin did not address with the same degree of sophistication or, some might argue, speculation.

This can be partly explained by the fact that Calvin was a second-generation codifier of Reformation theology, and for that reason was, as Richard Muller notes, "seldom highly original, and frequently not as detailed or carefully defined in his arguments as would eventually become necessary to resolve the debates of subsequent generations."⁶ This point by Muller may surprise many, particularly in the broader Reformed community, who have come to revere Calvin as the greatest theologian of the Reformed church; but the evidence below shows that Calvin's well-known penchant for lucid brevity kept him from making the types of contributions to Christology that one finds among his Puritan heirs in the seventeenth century.

In terms of biblical spirituality, a further aim of this essay is to show that one of the most rewarding studies for anyone wishing to come to a deeper love and appreciation of the Christian faith is to study the man, Christ Jesus, and precisely what it means for him to be not only *homoousios* with God, but also *homoousios* with man.

2. REFORMED CHRISTOLOGIES?

The Chalcedonian Creed (A.D. 451) provides an orthodox statement of the person of Christ. But anyone familiar with the Christological debates leading to Chalcedon knows full well that

3. *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, 2012).

4. See Richard A. Muller, "A Note on 'Christocentrism' and the Imprudent Use of Such Terminology," *Westminster Theological Journal* 68 (2006): 253–60.

5. For example, Julie Canlis speaks about the Reformed tradition's decreased emphasis and inadequate understanding of Calvin's doctrine of union with Christ, but she does not really marshal any evidence to support her claim from the primary sources of Reformed orthodox theologians. See "Calvin, Osiander and Participation in God" *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6/2 (2004): 177–82. See Muller's response in *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, *passim*.

6. "The 'Reception of Calvin' in Later Reformed Theology: Concluding Thoughts", *Church History and Religious Culture* 91.2 (2011): 256.

the Creed lends itself to various interpretations.⁷ Scholars continue to debate which side – the Antiochene’s or the Alexandrian’s? – came out victorious.⁸ In the Western tradition, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed theologians have developed Christologies that differ significantly. Of the three aforementioned traditions, only the Reformed tradition is able to do justice to the humanity of Christ. For example, John McGuckin shows that Cyril explained Christ’s prayer life “as an economic exercise done largely for our instruction and edification.”⁹ This is wholly unacceptable for Reformed theologians. Contrary to this position, they believed that Christ, as a true man, needed to pray; which is to say, of course, that he did not pray merely for our instruction. Moreover, in relation to this point, Herman Bavinck correctly notes that Reformed theologians “had fundamentally overcome the Greek-Roman and Lutheran commingling of the divine and the human” in understanding how the two natures related to one another in the one person, Christ Jesus.¹⁰ Because of the well-known Reformed axiom, *finitum non capax infiniti*, the human nature of Christ retained its integrity in both his state of humiliation and his state of exaltation.

There were a number of important implications that resulted from this premise. However, even in the Reformed tradition, there has not been entire unanimity on the *communicatio idiomatum*.¹¹ The difference between how Calvin and John Owen (1616–1683) understand the relationship between the two natures of Christ are rather remarkable. Calvin has been described as the theologian of the Holy Spirit; but it was actually Owen who gave the most erudite and sophisticated account of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Christ, which enabled him to explain to readers the precise relationship between Christ’s two

7. Two relatively recent studies stand out in terms of analyzing the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376–444) and Nestorius (386–451): Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); and John McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004). McGuckin’s analysis, which is deeply sympathetic to Cyril, paints a remarkably fair picture of Nestorius’s Christology. Wessel shows that Nestorius was in fact prepared to refer to Mary as theotokos!

8. Among the studies that argue for a Cyrilline victory, see H. Diepen, *Les Trois Chapitres au Concile de Chalcedoine* (Oosterhout, 1953); John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (Washington: Corpus Books, 1969). Conversely, Robert Jenson has argued that Chalcedon leans in an Antiochene direction. See *Systematic Theology, 1: The Triune God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), ch. 8. Before Jenson, Jaroslav Pelikan also argued for an Antiochene victory: “Even though it may be statistically accurate to say that ‘the majority of the quotations come from the letters of St. Cyril,’ the contributions of Leo’s *Tome* were the decisive ones.” *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 264.

9. *Saint Cyril of Alexandria*, 133. Related to this point, Susan Wessel makes the comment that Luke 2:52 “presented Cyril with something of a challenge, for it clearly stated that Jesus advanced in stature, wisdom, and grace....Cyril could say only that Christ’s advance and increase were merely apparent.” *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy*, 133.

10. *Reformed Dogmatics: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 258.

11. See Stephen Holmes, “Reformed Varieties of the *Communicatio Idiomatum*” in (eds.) Stephen Holmes & Murray Rae, *The Person of Christ* (London: T & T Clark International, 2005), 70-86.

Calvin describes the *communicatio idiomatum* thus: “[The Scriptures] sometimes attribute to [Christ] what must be referred solely to his humanity, sometimes what belongs uniquely to his divinity; and sometimes what embraces both natures but fits neither alone. And they so earnestly express the union of the two natures that is in Christ as sometimes to interchange them. This figure of speech is called by the ancient writers ‘the communication of properties.’” *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), II.xiv.1.

natures.¹² Not all agree with Owen; but there is very little in Calvin's writings that provide an adequate explanation for why there is such a decided emphasis upon the role of the Holy Spirit in Christ's ministry. For these reasons, and others, the topic of Christ's humanity was an area where a great deal of advancement took place less than a century after Calvin.

3. LIKE HIS BROTHERS

Of all the Epistles in the New Testament, the book of Hebrews provides the most fascinating insights into the human nature of Jesus Christ. The first chapter has made readers inescapably aware that Jesus is divine (1:8-12); chapter two makes his humanity equally clear, as verses 14-18 speak of Christ sharing in "flesh and blood", being made "like his brothers in every respect" in order to be a merciful high priest. Commenting on these verses, Calvin states that in Christ's human nature there are two things to be considered, "the essence of the flesh and the affections."¹³ But then he claims that the Son did not need to experience misfortunes "to become accustomed to the emotion of mercy."¹⁴ According to Calvin, Christ's life experience and qualification for being a merciful high priest was not, then, for himself, but for us. We are assured of his merciful disposition towards us only because he was acquainted with our miseries.¹⁵ The emphasis on Christ's *learning* to be merciful is missing in Calvin.

In the seventeenth century John Owen wrote the most extensive commentary ever on the book of Hebrews. Owen's commentary dwarfs Calvin's in point of length; but more germane to the present discussion, Owen also provides occasion to look at certain points of Christology in a lot more detail than Calvin. Calvin speaks of Christ's mercy and assures believers that Jesus is indeed merciful. But Owen goes farther by distinguishing between God's mercy, which is "but a naked simple apprehension of misery, made effective by an act of his holy will to relieve," and Christ's mercy, which is "a compassion, a condolence, and hath a moving of pity and sorrow joined with it."¹⁶ This is one example of several where Calvin seems content to give a basic, albeit accurate (in my opinion) answer, whereas Owen draws a great deal more out of the text for his readers.

The issue is not whether Christ is merciful, but whether he is a merciful high priest. God is merciful; but God is not a merciful high priest – it is an ontological impossibility. To be a merciful high priest, the Son had not only to assume a human nature and be called to the priesthood, but he also had to experience miseries, sufferings, and temptations. According to Owen, Christ "had particular experience thereby of the weakness, sorrows, and miseries of human nature under the assaults of temptations; he tried it, felt it, and will never forget it."¹⁷ For these reasons, Christ will relieve, favour, and comfort his people by his grace. Christ's experiences did not "add" to his mercifulness, but made him more ready to dispose grace to those who require it. Owen observes that Christ "bears still in his holy mind the sense he had of his sorrows wherewith he was pressed in the time of his temptations, and thereon seeing his

12. See Alan Spence, *Incarnation and Inspiration: John Owen and the Coherence of Christology* (London: T&T Clark International, 2007).

13. John Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of St. Peter*: Translated by William B. Johnston (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 32.

14. Calvin, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 33.

15. Calvin, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 33.

16. John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*. 7 volumes. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1991), 3:469. Hereafter cited as *Commentary on Hebrews*, vol:pp.

17. Owen, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 3:470.

brethren conflicting with the like difficulties is ready to help them.”¹⁸ There is much agreement between Calvin and Owen on this matter, but it seems as though there is for Owen a sense in which Christ’s human experiences on earth were as beneficial for him as they are for us. Calvin has an almost exclusive emphasis on the latter.

4. AFFECTIONS IN HEAVEN

Having previously spoken of Christ’s human nature in relation to the priesthood (2:17-18), in chapter four the author of Hebrews brings into distinct focus the role of Christ’s humanity in his current high priestly ministry in heaven. Calvin again explains how Christ’s life and trials persuade his people that he is merciful towards them. But Calvin also notes that Christ’s humanity in heaven has the added benefit of assuring believers that there is no reason to fear him since he is our brother as well as our Lord. His heavenly majesty might cause some to shrink back from seeking him; but his humanity gives us confidence that he is more inclined to take care of us. In this context Calvin raises the “frivolous” question whether the exalted Christ is still subject to our sorrows.¹⁹ Answering this question would be, to Calvin, nothing more than an “idle speculation.”²⁰ Nonetheless, in his comments on Matthew 9:36, written in 1555, he claims that in heaven Christ “does not retain the same feelings to which he chose to be liable in this moral life.”²¹ What Calvin was apparently unwilling to discuss in 1549 he now answers, albeit modestly, several years later.

Among the Reformed orthodox theologians in the seventeenth century, Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680) wrote one of the most sophisticated and penetrating treatises on Christ’s humanity in the context of his heavenly ministry. Goodwin ventures to discuss Christ’s human affections in his state of glory in the type of detail nowhere found in Calvin’s corpus. Indeed, Goodwin raises the question concerning how to distinguish between Christ’s affections in his time of weakness and frailty and his remaining affections in his state of glory. He candidly admits this is a difficult question, and judging by his opening discussion one might be persuaded that Calvin’s relative simplicity is the best course of action.

Christ’s resurrected body is termed a “spiritual” body (1 Cor. 15:44). This does not mean, of course, that he somehow shed his human nature in heaven, but that his body is now “powerful” (Rom. 1:4). Not only Christ’s body, but also his affections are “spiritual.” According to Goodwin, Christ’s affections do not, then, work in his soul only, but also in his body, “as their seat and instrument.”²² However, the body is “so framed to the soul that both itself and all the operations of all the powers in it are immediately and entirely at the arbitrary *imperium* and dominion of the soul.”²³ In other words, the infirmities in Christ’s human nature on earth, experienced in terms of hunger and weakness, do not now affect his soul in heaven because his body is raised in power. Following from this, Goodwin notes that the affections of pity and sympathy move

18. Owen, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 3:485.

19. Calvin, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 55.

20. Calvin, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 55.

21. John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew Mark, and Luke*. Volume 1.

Translated by William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, repr. 2003), 421.

22. *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, D.D. 12 vols. (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1861-66), *The Heart of Christ in Heaven Towards Sinners on Earth*, 4:144.

23. Goodwin, *The Heart of Christ in Heaven*, 4:144.

his “bowels and affect his bodily heart” both in his states of humiliation and exaltation.²⁴ But there is this difference: his affections in heaven “do not afflict and perturb him in the least, nor become a burden and a load unto his Spirit, so as to make him sorrowful or heavy.”²⁵ This is so because Christ’s human nature is “impassible” insofar as he cannot experience any hurt now that he is in his glorified state. Jesus is still compassionate and merciful, and thus his perfection does not destroy his affections, “but only corrects and amends the imperfection of them.”²⁶ Echoing the “best of the schoolmen”, Goodwin adds, “*Passiones perfectivas* to be now in him.”²⁷

Like Calvin, Goodwin aims to address the benefits of Christ’s human nature towards believers. In addressing the abovementioned question, Goodwin states that man has certain affections that are natural, and not the result of sin. In the Garden of Eden, Adam possessed natural affections that were governed not by sin, but by reason. Thus Christ’s affections of pity and compassion in his state of glory “quicken and provoke him to our help and succour.”²⁸ That is to say, Christ is no longer a “man of sorrows”, but rather a “man of succours” to his people! There is no doubt that the members of Jesus’ bride who remain on earth are living in a world of sin and misery. Christ must necessarily possess affections suitable to their condition while he is in heaven. If heaven was suited only for Christ’s personal happiness then there is no need for Christ to possess the affections of sympathy and mercy. But, as Goodwin observes, Christ’s relationship to his people is a part of his glory. Therefore, these types of affections are required to be in him if he is to be a good husband to his bride. Moreover, far from being a weakness, Christ’s affections of pity and mercy are his strength; it is his glory to be truly and really, even as a man, sensible of all our miseries, yea, it were his imperfection if he were not.²⁹

The beauty of Goodwin’s theology emerges precisely at this point. Though Christ has shed affections that were once a burden to him, and are thus not compatible or suitable to his state in heaven, there are nonetheless other affections that possess a “greater capaciousness, vastness” that more than makes up for his lack of the former affections. In fact, Goodwin argues that just as Christ’s knowledge was “enlarged” in heaven, “so his human affections of love and pity are enlarged in solidity, strength, and reality ... Christ’s affections of love are as large as his knowledge or his power.”³⁰ Another way to look at this would be to argue that since Christ is freed from oppressive affections it actually gives greater scope to his effective affections – being free from grief actually lets you be more compassionate. So, for example, when you yourself are desperately hungry other people’s problems don’t receive your best attention. This can be applied to Christ based on the theology that Goodwin sets forth.

Whereas Goodwin uses Hebrews 4:15 to discuss what affections are now in Christ in his heavenly state, Calvin actually claims that the author “does not discuss the nature of Christ in Himself, but His nature as He shows Himself to us.”³¹ So while both Calvin and Goodwin are concerned to highlight the pastoral value of Christ’s humanity in heaven, Goodwin ventures

24. Goodwin, *The Heart of Christ in Heaven*, 4:145.

25. Goodwin, *The Heart of Christ in Heaven*, 4:145.

26. Goodwin, *The Heart of Christ in Heaven*, 4:145.

27. Goodwin, *The Heart of Christ in Heaven*, 4:145.

28. Goodwin, *The Heart of Christ in Heaven*, 4:145. To “succour” is to give help, especially in times of difficulty.

29. Goodwin, *The Heart of Christ in Heaven*, 4:146.

30. Goodwin, *The Heart of Christ in Heaven*, 4:146.

31. Calvin, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 55.

into territory that Calvin does not. Some might argue that Calvin is less “speculative” than his heirs on certain questions; others might contend, however, that Calvin simply is not as sophisticated as later Reformed theologians – after all, he was not a trained theologian in the same manner as Reformed theologians in the period of high orthodoxy. Goodwin’s example might show that his Christological concerns enabled him to draw more out of Hebrews 4:15 than Calvin. As a result, the question between Calvin and a later “Calvinist” is not one so much of divergence, but rather one of heightened clarity and greater spiritual value.

Another example of the value of good Christology in relation to a believer’s personal frailties comes from Stephen Charnock (1628–1680). Looking at Hebrews 4:15, Charnock argues that because of the incarnation “an experimental compassion” was gained which the divine nature was not capable of because of divine impassibility.³² As our sympathetic high priest, Christ “reflects” back on his experiences in the world and so the “greatest pity must reside in him” because the “greatest misery was endured by him.” Christ is unable to forget above what he experienced below.³³ Charnock does not intend to say that Christ’s human nature suffers in any way, which would contradict Goodwin. Instead, he is speaking about Christ’s knowledge and memory of his sufferings as the means by which Christ is able to be sympathetic to his people in a way that would otherwise be impossible if the Son did not assume a human nature. Consequently, the value of an elaborate Reformed Christology for the advancement of biblical spirituality cannot be overstated.

5. LEARNING OBEDIENCE

The idea that the God-man, Jesus Christ, learned obedience (Heb. 5:8) has been a perplexing thought to some, both laypeople and many pastors as well. Calvin constantly aims to draw out the benefits of Christ’s humanity to his people. It is a constant refrain in his exegesis of Hebrews. Calvin’s focus may even cause him to miss the point of Hebrews 5:8. He notes that Christ was “more than willing” to obey the Father; but he obeyed “for our own benefit, to give us the instance and pattern of His own submission even to death itself.”³⁴ Moving to a more decidedly Christological focus, Calvin does affirm that Christ, by suffering, including his death, learned what it was to obey God. However, his analysis of what it means for Christ to “learn obedience” is rather anemic in his comments on Hebrews 5:8.

In discussing the obedience spoken of in Hebrews 5:8, Owen distinguishes between Christ’s general obedience, which refers to the whole pattern of his life on earth, and Christ’s peculiar obedience, which refers specifically to his obedience unto death.³⁵ This verse in question has in view particularly the latter understanding of obedience. Following from that, to learn obedience has a threefold sense: 1. To learn it materially, that is, to be taught by God to obey him, which we were at some time ignorant of. This does not apply to Christ, for he knew what was required of him. 2. To learn it formally, which has in view God’s instruction, help, and direction of us in our acts of obedience because we are weak and unskilful. Again, this could not be true of Christ since he always had a fullness of grace, and so constantly knew what he had to do and was perfectly willing to do what was required of him. 3. To learn obedience

32. Stephen Charnock, *A Discourse of Christ’s Intercession in The Complete Works of Stephen Charnock*. 5 vols. (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1864), 5:106.

33. Charnock, *A Discourse of Christ’s Intercession*, 5:106.

34. Calvin, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 65–66.

35. Owen, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 4:523.

through experience. By undergoing such severe trials of hardship, even death on a cross, Christ learned suffering-obedience. This type of obedience required suffering so that his knowledge of suffering might be of great value to the church.³⁶ All of Christ's life was one of suffering. In his sufferings he "had occasion to exercise those graces of humility, self-denial, meekness, patience, faith, which were habitually present in his holy nature, but were not capable of the peculiar exercise intended but by reason of his sufferings."³⁷ Owen makes a pastoral note that should not go unnoticed. He claims that in God's dealing with men, those who have been most afflicted have also been the "most humble, most holy, fruitful, and wise among them" – no doubt this applies to Christ himself.³⁸ By the use of various distinctions, Owen gives his readers a lot more to think about concerning Christ's obedience than Calvin. Calvin aims to help his readers with his remarks on Christ's humanity, but Owen helps his readers more because his exegesis is more elaborate and detailed than Calvin's.

6. A BODY PREPARED

Hebrews 10:5 draws on Psalm 40:6 to address the body that was prepared for Christ by the Father. Instead of explaining what this verse means relative to the incarnation and Christ's human nature, Calvin spends his time explaining why "the Apostle" used Psalm 40:6 the way he did. After all, Calvin rightly notes that Psalm 40:6 reads "you have given me an open ear." The Septuagint translation (Ps. 39:7–9) understands this phrase to indicate the creation of a person's body, which the author of Hebrews picks up on rather than quoting the Masoretic text. Calvin comments that the Apostles were "not over-scrupulous in quoting words provided that they did not misuse Scripture for their convenience."³⁹

Calvin's "lucid brevity" on this verse is inexcusable, for his readers are not given any hint of what it means for Christ that a body was prepared for him. This verse addresses directly the humanity of Christ, and an important detail of who "prepared" the body the Son was to assume.

In his learned commentary on Hebrews, the Puritan theologian William Gouge (1575–1653) notes that "body" is meant by way of synecdoche to refer to the soul as well.⁴⁰ In the context of Hebrews 10, the human nature of Christ is necessary for Christ to be able to offer a sacrifice. Gouge understands the word "prepared" in 10:5 as a compound which signifies "to make perfect."⁴¹ The Father "ordained, formed, made fit and able Christ's human nature to undergo, and fulfil that for which he was sent into the world."⁴² Following from this, Gouge contends that God enables men in specific ways to do the work for which they have been set apart. In other words, God does not "send forth dumb Orators...lame messengers. Such are not prepared of God."⁴³

God prepared a sinless body, and fitted Christ with the requisite gifts and graces to perform the work of mediator. Owen picks up on this very theme, and notes that the body prepared

36. Owen, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 4:524.

37. Owen, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 4:525.

38. Owen, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 4:530.

39. Calvin, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 136.

40. William Gouge, *A learned and very useful commentary on the whole epistle to the Hebrews* (London, 1655), 436.

41. Gouge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 436.

42. Gouge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 436.

43. Gouge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 437.

for Christ by the Father was “the effect of the mutual counsel of the Father and the Son.”⁴⁴ According to the terms of the covenant of redemption the Father was required to provide the Son with all things needed to be able to fulfil the will of the Father. According to Owen, “Among those the principal was, that the Son should have a body prepared for him, that so he might have somewhat of his own to offer.”⁴⁵ Two of Owen’s “observations” are worth noting. They are beautiful instructions to believers on how they ought to respond to the idea that the Father prepared a body for the Son. First, that we should praise the Father for the “holy properties” of Christ’s human nature.⁴⁶ Second, in connection with the first point, it was the Father who not only “prepared” the Son’s body, but also “filled it with grace...strengthened, acted, and supported it in [Christ’s] whole course of obedience.”⁴⁷

After that, Owen claims that a more particular inquiry is required into the nature of this preparation of a body by the Father for Christ. He highlights ten points for consideration: 1. That the body should come from the loins of Abraham; 2. That the body should be free from sin; 3. That the body should consist of real flesh and blood; 4. That the body should have a rational soul; 5. That the body should be able to undergo sorrows and sufferings; 6. That this body could be tempted by outward temptations; 7. That the body could physically die; 8. That the same body could be raised again from the dead; 9. That his soul could be with God in heaven while his body lay in the grave; and 10. That his body was visibly taken to heaven, and there resides.⁴⁸

Gouge’s explanation is no doubt sufficient, and he pulls something out of the text that not only explains what the verse means, but also some practical application for his readers. Owen, true to form, takes verse 5 and draws out many important truths about Christ’s humanity along with several applications that should cause believers to marvel at the wonder of the Father’s preparation of Christ’s body. Calvin does not commit any sins of commission, so to speak, but his apparent reluctance to be too prolix in his commentaries essentially robs his readers of insights into Christ’s humanity.

7. CONCLUSION

What conclusions can be drawn from this brief analysis of how Calvin and the “Calvinists” understood the humanity of Christ in the book of Hebrews? First, there is little doubt that Calvin’s Christology is not nearly as developed as what we find in many later Reformed theologians. His *Institutes*, which were not analyzed in this essay, were a manual for ministers. Despite the fact that the *Institutes* are one of Christ’s greatest gifts to the church, the theology contained in that work is not nearly as intricate and refined as the writings of later Reformed Protestant scholastics, such as Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706) and Francis Turretin (1623–1687). This is not to minimize Calvin’s obvious genius and importance; but it seems to me that there is a sort of existential crisis among many Reformed churchmen, and indeed even some scholars, who feel the need to make too much out of Calvin – as if getting the Reformer to agree with our position is the ace in the pack. Perhaps if the Latin writings of other theologians had been translated, as Calvin’s have, the typical view of Calvin would be slightly modified.

44. Owen, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 6:460.

45. Owen, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 6:461.

46. Owen, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 6:461.

47. Owen, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 6:461.

48. Owen, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 6:462-64.

Second, as this essay has shown, Calvin's commentary on Hebrews was less than detailed, sometimes even neglecting to actually comment on the passage in question. The specific details that would need to be answered by Calvin's heirs did not appear to occur to Calvin to answer at the time, though it is interesting that Peter Martyr Vermigli (1500–1562) did in fact answer certain questions with a great deal more clarity than Calvin.

Third, Calvin's omissions and absences of detail may reflect an "anti-speculative" bent on his part, which some find appealing. But the precision and clarity of later theologians such as Owen, Goodwin, and Charnock on the humanity of Christ actually fosters a richer, deeper spirituality. Knowledge of the person and work of Christ is the chief part of Christian growth. Calvin paved the way – he pioneered the threefold office of Christ – and his heirs have done much to improve on his own contributions. This is precisely how theology ought to function in the Reformed church. And I have little doubt that a Calvinistic Baptist such as Professor Haykin would heartily agree with that sentiment.

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KEY WORDS

John Calvin
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As in heaven... Reading the Lord's Prayer with a view to constructing a sermon¹

ABSTRACT

The Lord's Prayer is an important ecumenical symbol. It is the main prayer of the Christian Church and is prayed collectively in almost every worship service in churches over the world. In this, the first of three articles, the prayer is discussed with a view to eventually construct a sermon in which poetic material, hymns and songs are incorporated to form not only a part of the liturgy, but an integral part of the sermon itself. In this article the origin and setting, as well as the address and the you-petitions of the prayer are examined. In a second article the we-petitions and the doxology are explored and in a third all these aspects come into play for a concept sermon, incorporating hymnic and poetic material from ecumenical resources.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Lord's Prayer is the main prayer of the Christian Church and is prayed collectively in almost every worship service. In this, the first of three articles, the prayer is discussed with a view to eventually construct a sermon in which poetic material, hymns and songs are incorporated to form not only a part of the liturgy, but an integral part of the sermon itself. In this article the origin and setting, as well as the address and the you-petitions of the prayer are examined. In a second article the we-petitions and the doxology are explored and in a third these aspects come into play for a concept sermon, incorporating hymnic and poetic material from ecumenical resources.

2. THE ECUMENICAL MEANING OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer is an important ecumenical symbol. Not only is it prayed collectively in almost every worship service in churches over the world, it also has an important role in catechesis, in personal piety and in forming the spirituality of Christian groups and therefore is a constitutive symbol in the formation of the Christian identity. Over centuries philosophers, writers and theologians, as diverse as Augustine² and Dante, Thomas of Aquin (in KKK1993), Luther (2011, 1998), Calvin (see Busch 2005:53-66), Karl Barth (1951), Simone Weil (1951), Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1987), Leonardo Boff (1986) and Joseph Ratzinger/ Benedikt XVI (2007:161-203) have reflected on the Lord's Prayer. New scholarly books appear regularly, such as the more recent studies by Klaus Haacke (2010) and the American scholar, Dominic Crossan (2011). Gerhard Ebeling (1979) began his encompassing work in dogmatics with an exposition on prayer and the Lord's Prayer as the foundation for a systematic description of the Christian

1. This article is a re-worked version of a paper that was delivered at the Bi-annual Conference of Societas Homiletica in Wittenberg, Germany, in August 2012.

2. See Ayo (1992:253-258) for a bibliography of Patristic Commentary on the Lord's Prayer and books on the Lord's Prayer in English from 1850 -1990.

belief, thereby indicating that the prayer holds the most important collective content of the Christian faith and therefore also could function as the core from which ecumenical consensus could best be reached.

Praying the Lord's Prayer and reflecting on it through sermons, writings, poetry and music could help spanning borders between churches, confessions and even nations. It is meaningful indeed that Muslims and Christians prayed the Lord's Prayer together in a worship service on 17 June 2012 in the *Friedenskirche* of the Evangelisch-Freikirchlichen Gemeinde (Baptists) in Kamp-Lintfort.³ After being elected on 13 March 2013, Francis, the new Bishop of Rome, asked to pray for Benedikt, the pope emeritus, and started praying the Lord's Prayer. Thousands of people joined in and the prayer sounded over the whole world.

3. PREACHING ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

Constructing a sermon requires a comprehensive hermeneutical process in which many aspects come into play – aspects such as the origins of the text, the author(s), the original language, the first readers or hearers, the world of the text, the historical milieu, the underlying social and political problems, world views, ideologies, the setting of the text within a broader text and context, the scope of the text, the communicative strategy of the author(s), the intention of the text, the possible meaning for the original hearers, the tradition of interpretation or *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the text, as well as the possible meaning for contemporary readers of hearers – people living in their histories in a particular place and time in the present, facing the future. Ebeling (1954:8) correctly observed that the spectrum of history nowhere comes more vividly into play than in preaching.

Sermons on the Lord's Prayer are abundant – often also printed in books and on the web. Referring to Fuchs' view (1959:106) that God seeks to speak to us through the spoken word and not in writing, Ebeling (1963, *Vorwort*) acknowledges the problematic character of printed sermons, but nevertheless argues that a printed sermon allows the reader to measure a preacher's theology and that a sermon therefore forms the criterion of a person's theology. A sermon on the Lord's Prayer could be problematic, because the prayer is so well-known – according to Ayo (1992:ix) the average Christian can repeat it on "automatic pilot" (!). For Luther the prayer could be the biggest martyr on earth as it is said too often and is often "blabbered without attention" (in Jung 2011:42). This is, however, exactly where the challenge lies to open it up theologically, meditatively and personally, in order to promote the honest praying and understanding of the prayer so the transformative appeal is also heard.

A sermon could be on the prayer as a whole, or on a group of petitions, or could depart from a single petition at a time. Styles functioning on an argumentative, narrative, poetic and metaphorical level could be used. In this article the origin and setting of the prayer, the address, and the you-petitions are discussed. In another article the we-petitions and the doxology comes under scrutiny, and in a third these insights come into play in constructing a concept sermon and liturgy where hymns, songs, text and poems on the theme of the Lord's Prayer are incorporated to form not only a part of the liturgy, but also an essential part of the sermon itself.

3. It was accompanied by singing and reading texts from the Bible and the Koran. The service was broadcast on the ZDF-Television Channel. Source: *idea* (18.06.2012)

4. THE ORIGIN AND SETTING OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

An Aramaic *Urform* is accepted (Schwier 2005:893). In an Aramaic version, reconstructed by scholars, the richness in sound can be heard (in Lohse 2010:13-14). The version also contains end rhyme, which would have made it easy to be memorised. Scholars such as Haacker (2010:257-263) accept that the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic stems from Jesus, whereas others such as Dominic Crossan are rather convinced that a rich tradition of prayers and versions of the Lord's Prayer existed in an oral tradition, was handed down and later written down and edited into a more fixed form as the "Lord's Prayer". It would therefore be impossible to determine the exact words of Jesus. Existing Jewish prayers that probably had an influence on the formation of the Lord's Prayer are the petitions from the eighteen benedictions and the Kaddish of the Jewish synagogue liturgy (Lohse 2010:16-27, 103). Schwier (2005:894) also points at the clear presence of Jewish motives, but argues that methodically a direct dependency, or a conscious rectifying of Jewish models by Jesus or the editors, could not be proved.

In the New Testament a version is found in Matthew 6:9-13 and another in Luke 11:2-4. They are preceded by Q, a translation in Greek (Schwier 2005:894). In both Luke and Matthew the prayer is built up by an address and six petitions (three *you*-prayers and three *we*-prayers.) The version in Matthew is longer. It has a doxology added at the end and has expansions in the address, the third *you*-petition (10b) and the 'deliver us'-petition in the third *we*-petition (13b). The shorter text in Luke is regarded as the older of the two. A version which corresponds largely to that of Matthew is found in the *Didache* 8,2, a second century manual of church practice. These versions of the prayer were used for community worship in different Christian localities (Lohse 2010:12, 101). The longer text in the Gospel of Matthew, with the added doxology, has prevailed as the version mostly used in the liturgy of churches.

Luke wrote for a gentile audience within a Greek context. His prayer language therefore is less ornate and his writing style in general less Jewish than that of Matthew, who probably had a Jewish-Christian audience and a Hebrew context (Ayo 1992:10, 22; Lohse 2010:98-101). Luke set the Lord's Prayer within the framework of a separate scene in which one of the disciples makes the request: *Lord, teach us to pray* (Lk 11:2-4). In Matthew the prayer forms the centre of the Sermon on the Mount (Luz 1997:185). Inserted as an example and model of prayer, it comes immediately after two preliminary remarks – one saying that the prayer of the disciples of Jesus should not be a display for the approval of this world, as hypocrites do, and another saying that it should not be a repetition of words as the pagans do. The pagans are pointed to as a warning, not because they don't pray, but because they think they will be heard when they use a lot of words – therefore making God ubiquitous. In parts directly surrounding the prayer and in other parts of the gospel there are themes related to some of the petitions, and others expanding on the petitions.

Crossan (2011) discusses the prayer throughout his book against the backdrop of an agrarian society, the issues of the Sabbath and Jubilee, and the social and political influence the Roman rulers had on this society. He chooses for the concept of *distributive justice*, which should be seen within the vision of a well-run household where God is the *Householder of the world house* and where everything is justly administered and distributed fairly. He argues that the two halves of the Lord's Prayer – as in Matthew 6:9-10, which talks about the Father's name, kingdom and will, and Matthew 6:11-13, which mentions bread, debts and temptation – are in deliberate parallelism with each other: they need to be read as the two sides of a coin. Karl Barth (1951:115) argues in the same vein: "Die drei letzten Bitten des unser Vaters sind die Umkehrung und Konsequenz der drei ersten."

5. THE LORD'S PRAYER IN MATTHEW 6:9-10

5.1 Address

5.1.1 Address: *Our Father*...

Whereas Luke's version begins simply with *Father*, Matthew has *Our* (father) and *in heaven* or *who art in heaven*. At the root of the address lies the Aramaic *abba*, which was also taken over in Greek-speaking communities, as can be seen from three other texts – Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:15 (probably written in the mid-50's) and Mark 14:36 (probably written in the early 70's). *Abba*, *father* is meant as an invocation which at the same time means: My Father, our Father (Ebeling 1966:53-56). Ebeling (1966), as well as Jeremias (1966) and Crossan (2011:22) argue that the Aramaic word *abba*, is like a child's word for father, thus nearer to *dad*, denoting nearness, affection, love. Schwier (2005:894) however, speaks against the concept of child language (*Kindersprache*), as well as the possibility of depicting an exclusive understanding of God, but argues that the address should be understood within the frame of Jewish traditions as a prominent but not exceptional address or title for God.

Ebeling (1966:53-54) indicates that Father for God is already found in Judaism and is so widespread in the realm of pagan religions, that it has become a kind of religious root word, but that Jesus uses it to denote the *nearness* of God. Ayo (1992:26) refers to Gregory of Nyssa saying the Fatherhood of God suggests accessibility and intimacy with God. Schwier (2013:239; 2005:894) expands on the concept of God's nearness, indicating that it functions first on an individual level: as God's helpful and healing nearness, his care and compassion, and then on a structural level: his reign and authority, his liberating action. The certainty of being heard is connected with God being father. Schwier (2013:239) further emphasizes that the metaphorical way of speaking to God as father does not legitimize patriarchal or paternalistic concepts. It is not theologically founded in creation (*schöpfungstheologisch begründet*) but christologically centred that we could speak to God as the father of Jesus Christ – he shows us the Father. Through him an unknown father steps into our lives (Theißen 2012:188) a father whom we know only from the stories of others and who remains the other (*ein Gegenüber*), contrary to a mother of whom we had been a part (Schneider-Harpprecht 2013:175, in a sermon on the *Vaterunser*). In Jesus Christ, however, God turns to us, become our father. Praying, we share in his relationship with the Father. But, as Schneider-Harpprecht also argues, God is and remains the totally other, the hidden God, the God in heaven. The compassionate, loving father is the creator of the universe, nothing less. Referring to these views of God as the totally other God, Schwier (2013:239) accordingly warns against addressing God too hastily as both our Father and our Mother, seeing it a dead-end on an important road to find female images for God.

Ayo (1992:25, with reference to Mangan 1984) also discusses the problems presented from one-sided views of the metaphor of father and the concerns that it may appear to validate a patriarchal God. He argues that Jesus does not *describe* God as Father, but that he *calls* God *Abba*, *Father*. Jesus therefore uses Father as a proper name for the hidden God, thus far "only known with that ineffable name no one could utter" (YHWH). As a text which undercuts patriarchy, Ayo recalls the text in Matthew 23:9: "Call no one on earth your father; you have but one father in heaven." Ayo discusses a few possible alternatives to the metaphor *father*, such as *Our Mother in heaven*, or *Our Creator in heaven*, but argues that even if one were to suggest an acceptable alternative, the problem of *usage* and *acceptable change* is not easily resolved. He questions the reason to undo the word, "which of all the words attributed to Jesus

in the gospels, may be the one authentic word that Jesus himself actually spoke” (Ayo 1992:23) and suggests that we should rather reclaim the meaning of the word for the contemporary Christian. Referring also to the possibility that in prayer one should avoid concrete metaphor as far as possible, Ayo (1992:23) argues that abstract words for God indeed exclude no one, but that abstract words in praying to God (such as *our parent*) seem to distance God.⁴

Crossan (2011:32; 34) questions whether we could dare to replace metaphors without knowing their original meaning and content and warns that we should be “very, very careful about our transcendental metaphors.” From various Biblical passages referring to father, Crossan (2011:40) deduces that, despite its male-oriented prejudice, the biblical term father is simply a “shorthand term” for *father and mother*, and that, unless context demand exclusive male emphasis, it is usually wiser to presume an inclusive intention. He does not see *father* as a proper name, but describes it as follows: “The well-run household is a microcosm, a miniature of the macrocosm, a well-run world. To call God *Father in Heaven* is to call God *Householder of Earth*. And that is why Jesus addresses God as *Abba* in the Lord’s Prayer” (Crossan 2011:41). He therefore chooses to translate *Abba* as “the Father”, rather than “*our Father*” (Crossan 2011:21-22).

For Ayo (1992:21) praying *our* (father) indicates that a vertical relationship between the believer and God is established. As such a horizontal bond is also formed among the members of the praying community: they have in common a father in heaven and therefore are brothers and sisters to each other on earth. “The sisterhood of man is based upon the fatherhood of God. ... The communion of Saints is based on the fatherhood of God in which we all share and the brotherhood with Jesus, which is particularly realized when we are gathered as one to pray the *Our Father*” (Ayo 1992:21,22).

5.1.2 Address... in heaven / who art in heaven

In Matthew *Our* (Father), and *in heaven* or *who art in heaven* are later additions. Ebeling (1966:53) argues that it is a matter of indifference whether *in heaven* is an addition, except if it is understood as an expression of the *distance* of God.⁵ “For the kingdom of heaven is come near. It is not where heaven is, there is God, but rather where God is, there is heaven. *Our Father which art in heaven* means nothing else than *Our Father who art present here on earth*” (Ebeling 1966:55). The view some people have of a God somewhere in heaven and thus distant from our world, is satirized by Robert Browning in his poem *Pippa Passes*, where a strong twist of irony is embedded in the girl’s naïve view of the beauty of the day and God in (his!) heaven:

The year’s at the spring,
 And day’s at the morn;
 Morning’s at seven;
 The hill-side’s dew-pearled;

4. An inclusive example (for variation, not as replacement) could be deducted from Springhart (2012:166) describing the direction, the addressee of our prayers: “Das Gebet geht nicht ins Leere, es steigt nicht in die vagen Wolken, sondern es ist an Gott gerichtet. An den, *der unser Vater ist und uns tröstet wie eine Mutter.*” Therefore a possibility: *Our Father in heaven*, who comforts us like a mother.

5. The popular song “God is watching us from a distance” (sung by Bette Middler and others) may sound quite pious, but it presents the view of God keeping at a distance, just observing us...

The lark's on the wing;

The snail's on the thorn;

God's in His heaven –

All's right with the world!

Schneider-Harpprecht (2013:175) argues that God is and remains the totally other, the God in heaven, and that heaven is an image for what can not be fathomed: the full greatness of God, his power and his encompassing presence. For Ayo (1992:31) "Our Father who art in heaven" is a reminder that "our God is both near and far, both Many and One, both immanent and intimate as a *Father*, and transcendent and utterly other *in heaven*."

5.2 The three you-petitions

In the history of exegesis the understanding of the petitions sways between emphasizing the ethical dimension on the one hand, and the eschatological dimension, on the other. Over time the petitions were seen as prayers for God's will to be fulfilled *through the people*, therefore praying as response to God's word and God's work, and *participating* in the work of God for the redemption of the world. Referring to Lohmeyer (1962), Jeremias (1966), Philonenko (2002) and Wilckens (2002), Schwier (2005:894) indicates, however, that in the exegesis of the twentieth century there came a turn to an eschatological understanding, according to which it was about praying constantly for God's action, which should bring about the turn of the end of time. In the older Q-version the you-petitions were probably understood as eschatological and the we-petitions as paranetic (also Theißen and Merz 1997:239-241), but Matthew strengthens both moments through their reciprocal limitations: the limitation of the ethical character in the you-petitions through the third petition and the eschatological accent in the we-petitions through the prayer for triumph over evil at the end of times.

5.2.1 The first You-Petition: *Hallowed be your Name*

"Knowing the name of someone creates privileges and obligations. Only those who are intimate with us know our name in a way that exceeds its usefulness as a label to distinguish us from someone else. Only friends are given access to the inner thoughts of another that allow them to say the name with a profound communion behind it" (Ayo 1992:34).

The you-petitions strengthens the theocentric focus of the prayer: "Es geht hier allein um die Durchsetzung Gottes in der Welt und zwar des Gottes, dessen Name auch ohne das Gebet schon heilig und dessen Herrschaft in Jesus bereits Gegenwart ist" (Schlink 1983:452). Schwier (2013) argues that God's name is God himself. The hallowing of God's Name, the coming of his Kingdom and that his will happens is God's deed. The hallowing of the name, however, is also done by the angels, and we participate with them in prayer and praise – as in the Sanctus⁶ (Schwier 2013:239). God's name is hallowed by the whole of creation, where all that is created comes "*zum Einklang*" in the loving work and loving answer of all that was created (Schlink 1983:452). To hallow God's name is to recognise and praise the great deeds of God in the creation of the world and its ongoing providence. The name of the Father is hallowed "not

6. An important indicator for incorporating the *Sanctus* into the liturgy to be constructed on the Lord's Prayer.

because we wish for God that he be hallowed by our prayers, but because we seek from the Lord that his name be hallowed in us" (Cyprian, in Ayo 1992:35). The hallowing of the name therefore means that God *happens*. God steps out of his anonymity and we too, are brought out of our anonymity. God happens in us. We receive the *freedom* to respond. To call upon the name of God is to enter into the mystery of God (Ebeling 1966:61; 62). To dare to address God is a privilege.

Crossan (2011:53-71) argues that the infinite God is beyond the limitation of any verbal name and that when God tells Moses at the burning bush: "*I am who I am*" send you (Ex 3:13-14) that God makes it clear that his being is unbounded and his name ineffable. He was to be known however, as the Deliverer of the oppressed: *I have observed the misery of my people ... I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them... This is my name forever, and this is my title for all generations* (Exodus 3:7-8; 15). From these passages in Exodus 3 and from Leviticus 19, Crossan deduces that the holiness of God was mirrored in the holiness of God's people – and that both types of holiness meant deliverance of the oppressed and the impoverished. Crossan also deduces from Genesis 1 that the holiness of the Sabbath day – the justice of an equal rest for all – came from creation itself: a challenge of distributive justice for the whole world. "Hallowed be Thy Name" is as much to say: Holy One, become holy; God, become God – in time, *in the reality of this world, in history*" (Crossan 2011:71). We glorify God in the praise embodied in *works of justice and love*. In waiting on God and praying to God we therefore also *participate in God*. Human freedom is enlisted in the unfolding of God's sovereign providence. We become *part of him* and his work. Doxology and moral demand, sovereign providence and human freedom are reconciled. "*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name* invites our Father to finish what the Father has already begun. ... Be our Father, hallowed in name" (Ayo 1992:37, 38).

According to Ebeling (1966) Jesus presented God to humankind and humankind to God in becoming human, and in dying. Jesus therefore *lived this petition*. In waiting on God, Jesus gave himself to humankind, and this giving meant the coming of God – thus the hallowing of God's name already fulfilled: "That is how God really became God in time, in history, in the reality of this world. This petition is the first and greatest petition – it can be prayed even when in doubt whether our prayers are heard, it can be prayed in the knowledge that it has been fulfilled already" (Ebeling 1966:63).

5.2.2 The second You-Petition: Your kingdom come

At the most literal level the request for God's kingdom to come is interpreted as a reference to the belief that a Messiah figure would bring about a kingdom of God – not a human achievement but a divine gift to be prayed for. Scholars such as Ebeling and Crossan speak against a one-sided view of God acting on his own and argue that God incorporates human action. Crossan (2011:77) refers to the term "kingdom" as "rather outmoded" and asks whether it would not be better to use another concept and to speak of the "community of God", "the kingship of God", or "household of God" – the latter a description he uses throughout to describe what Jesus' teaching was about. He argues for retaining "kingdom" but in qualifying it as divine, as a way of showing that it clearly, directly, and explicitly opposes all earthly imperial kingdoms. "Our English word 'kingdom' translates the Hebrew *malkuth* and the Aramaic *malkutha*. Both those words emphasize *process* over person and *style of rule* over area of control." He suggest that when one reads kingdom of God, that one should think *reigning of God* or *ruling style of God* (Crossan 2011:78). Schwier argues in the same vein that the political use of metaphor is

not about God as King, but about God's reign, God's *Königsherrschaft*. In this way the kingship of God is connected to God being the father as in Matthew 6:32, 7:21 and other passages (Schwier 2013:240; Crossan 2011:78).

Crossan also emphasizes that *eschaton* is not about the end of the world, but that it refers to the end of this age, period, or time of evil, war, violence, injustice and oppression (as Matthew uses the term): "The eschaton is not about the destruction of the world, but about its transformation into a place of justice and nonviolence. It is not about the annihilation of the earth, but about its *transformation* into a location of freedom and peace" (Crossan 2011:79). Ebeling declares that we should "forbid ourselves all dreams about the future and instead make our *thankful affirmation* of the kingdom of God which *has come*" (Ebeling 1966:68-69). He argues that God and time has been separated in that God has been put beyond time as the Eternal to keep time well clear of God as being something "limited, earthly, human. But with this kind of piety we make God unreal and reality godless. And thus we lose both reality and God" (Ebeling 1966:72). He argues that we should rather refer to the "time of God" rather than the "kingdom of God", in order to avoid the concept of a state or condition which is static and which "corrupts the present kingdom of God into the absent kingdom of God" (Ebeling 1966:70).

Fulfilled time is the time God bestows on us "by having time for us, making time for us, drawing us out of our own time and into his time, ... so that we too, have time for God and allow our time to be determined by him. ... That is God's kingdom: the sovereignty of God not beyond time, but *in the time* which God by his coming has made his time" (Ebeling 1966:72). Ebeling argues that this concept of time makes our concept of time controversial. For him the question is rather whether it is time that is empty, hopeless, void of future, or whether it is time that is fulfilled, hopeful, loaded with future. He therefore beautifully argues that the true measure of time is not the clock, but that the true measure of time is hope (Ebeling 1966:72, 73). "We have understood that correctly when we can also say: the true measure of time is love. For love has time, and love makes time, and love bestows time. Love is the essence of the time of God. Love is the fullness of the sovereignty of God" (Ebeling 1966:74). People with faith look to a future "which fulfils the present and lets man live wholly in the present as one who, like God, has time" (Ebeling 1966:73).

It is this way of announcing the time that encourages us to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God. Praying for the kingdom of God is not contradicting the fact that it is here, in our midst. "It is here only in that it *comes*. It is here only in that it is announced, published and proclaimed by our thus announcing the time of God" (Ebeling 1966:74). For Ebeling the proclamation of Jesus Christ (also through our actions) is the kingdom of God in action. "Participation in the kingdom of God takes place only through faith that effects love; but because it is through faith, it is also by constant asking and constant receiving and so also in constant thanksgiving (Ebeling 1966:74). To have faith in what Jesus has given is to have part in the kingdom of God. "Each petition has to be prayed as one that is already fulfilled, as a prayer that is grounded in gratitude and asks for the abiding continuance of what has already begun" (Ebeling 1966:69). "For to pray in the name of Jesus for the coming of God's kingdom is to pray not for the absent but for the present kingdom of God, not for a kingdom whose time is not yet come, but for the kingdom whose time has long ago been proclaimed and, if we would only listen, is proclaimed in every sermon and every testimony to Jesus Christ" (Ebeling 1966:70).

God's time has come. The reign of God is already eternal presence in heaven, praised as present

in worship and proclamation, while at the same time being prayed for on earth (Schwier 2005:894). The reign of God already limits and ends human reign, also that of the tyrants. It limits the power that people could exercise over others. When we pray this prayer, we are also compelled to work for a just society (Schneider-Harpprecht 2013:176).

5.2.3 *The third You-Petition: Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*

“The risen Jesus is the kingdom come now, the very beginning of a new heaven and earth. Therefore we pray ‘that the Father’s name be hallowed *in us*, that the kingdom come *in us*, and God’s will be done *in us*.”

(Cyril of Jerusalem, in Ayo 1992:42)

We pray that God’s will happens here and in us, as it is the reality already in heaven, but the kingdom come on earth depends upon the will of God being done on earth. Matthew therefore balances the eschatological character of the first two you-petitions with the ethical character of the third you-petition (Schwier 2013:238).

Saying that the challenge about God’s kingdom coming is not about the imminence of divine intervention, but about the empowerment of human collaboration, Crossan refers to the two African bishops who lived at either end of the continent: “Augustine of Hippo in 416 who said ‘God made you without you, but he doesn’t justify you without you’, and Desmond Tutu in 1999, who beautifully misquoted Augustine as saying, ‘God, without us, will not; as we, without God, cannot’” (Crossan 2010:93-94). To do the will of God is to *collaborate with the creator* in the cosmic work of love (in *Einklang*, see Schlinck above.) By doing the will of God, people give flesh and blood to the coming life of the kingdom. Who longs for the coming of the reign of God, works towards the realising of God’s will on earth. Doing the will of God therefore also has a political meaning (Haacker 2010:117). Crossan (2010:111) is convinced that Jesus had consummated God’s will through the political deed of resisting violence nonviolently as a revelation of God’s own character, and that he had gone as far as dying for it, making a “sacrifice”, and therefore making sacred both death and life – as God’s will.

From the parallelisms in the prayer, Crossan describes the petition *as in heaven so on earth* as the hinge of the prayer. It is the key phrase that insists on mutuality and reciprocity, on an interaction between the heavenly “Your” of God’s name, kingdom and will, and the earthly “our” of bread, debt and temptation. The you-prayer thus begins with calling on our Father in heaven, and finishes with the prayer that the Father’s will be done on earth as in heaven. The meaning in sum: That earth and heaven may be as one under God. Where God’s will is done it is as in *heaven*. Where God is, there is heaven (Ebeling 1966 above). God can be seen in our actions. We re-present God. Where we show care and love, God can be seen in us, and heaven and earth become one under God.

Ubi caritas et amor deus ibi est – where there is love and care, God is present.

6. CONCLUSION

In this reading of the Lord’s Prayer the eschatological and ethical dimension are both

7. In this regard Crossan (2010:102-111) argues for *sacrifice* against the concept of *vicarious satisfaction* or *substitutionary atonement*.

emphasized. The focus should be on what God does with a view to the future, as well as what people should do to bring about the future of God. "The two parallel halves of the Lord's Prayer – the divine triplet of name, kingdom and will, and the human triplet of bread, debts and temptation – are correlatives that must be seen as the two sides of the same eschatological coin: they come together or never come at all" (Crossan 2011:92-94). It is about God's work in Jesus Christ, as well the co-operation of people into the work of God, bringing about the eschaton. These two aspects cannot be separated – they go together and are intrinsically connected and interdependent. This tension should be held together in a sermon and a liturgy on the Lord's Prayer.

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KEY WORDS

Our Father
The Lord's Prayer
Hallowed be your name
Kingdom come
Will be done
Ecumenical symbol

TREFWOORDE

Ons Vader
Gebed van die Here
Naam geheilig word
Koninkryk kom
Wil geskied
Ekumeniese simbool

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Sakramentele kerkwees herontdek

ABSTRACT

Rediscovering a sacramental ecclesiology

The demise of a participatory world view – characterized in this article as a world view of transcendence in immanence – has had far reaching consequences for the understanding of the church, the embodiment *par excellence* of transcendence in immanence. This article traces the radical separation of transcendence and immanence with special reference to the influence it has had on ecclesiological understanding by contrasting it with the sacramental, participatory world view of the first millennium of the church's existence. The central claim of the article is that the rediscovery and subsequent recovery of a truly sacramental understanding of the church is of vital importance to the current context, characterized as it is by schisms and seemingly irreconcilable antagonisms. Such a recovery would not entail an impossible return to premodern times, but would encompass the inflected, interpretive performance of salient themes from the time prior to the advent of modernity.

1. INLEIDING

Die oorgang vanaf die laat Middeleeue na die moderne tyd kan terugskouend verstaan word as 'n oorgang wat met 'n epogmakende filosofies-teologiese ontwikkeling gepaard gegaan het, te wete die radikale en absolute skeiding van transendensie en immanensie. Die disintegrasie van 'n wêreldbeeld van transendensie *in* immanensie in 'n proses van sekularisasie wat steeds aan die gang is, het verreikende gevolge gehad vir die verstaan van die kerk, die beliggaming *par excellence* van transendensie *in* immanensie.

In hierdie artikel word die kontoere van 'n deelnemende wêreldbeeld, 'n wêreldbeeld van transendensie *in* immanensie, eerstens in breë trekke geskets. Vervolgens kom die verval van die deelnemende wêreldbeeld in die radikale skeiding van transendensie en immanensie aan die orde, met spesifieke verwysing na die implikasies daarvan vir die siening van die kerk en van die verstaan van kerkwees.

Die artikel sluit af met die voorstel dat die herontdekking van 'n waarlik sakramentele verstaan van kerkwees dringend noodsaaklik is vir die konteks waarin die kerk homself tans bevind, en maak ook sekere voorstelle vir 'n praktiese begin met so 'n herwinningspoging. Die herontdekking en herwinning van 'n deelnemende wêreldbeeld sal natuurlik nie kan beteken dat sodanige wêreldbeeld eenvoudig na vandag oorgeplaas word nie. Waarvoor die skrywer wel pleit, is dat sekere temas vanuit die tradisie voor die aanvang van die moderne tyd op 'n toegeëinde en geïnterpreteerde wyse vir vandag gedramatiseer word.¹

1. Nadenke oor hoe so 'n dramatiese herinterpretasie op 'n metodologies regverdigbare wyse kan geskied, kan aansluiting vind by die gedagte van 'n "inflected interpretive performance", soos voorgestaan deur Rowan Williams. Vgl. McCurry, J. 2007. "Towards a poetics of theological creativity: Rowan Williams

2. KONTOERE VAN 'N DEELNEMENDE WÊRELDBEELD

Die wêreldbeeld wat vir die eerste duisend jaar van die kerk se geskiedenis deel van sy selfverstaan uitgemaak het, kan in 'n belangrike opsig as 'n deelnemende wêreldbeeld beskryf word.² Hiervolgens moet die bestaan (die wese, die syn) van die ganse skepping verstaan word as dat dit deelneem in die bestaan (die wese, die syn) van God. Hoewel die skepping natuurlik nie self God is nie (dit is juis 'n skepping wat God *ex nihilo* laat wees het), is dit ook nogtans nie los te verstaan van God nie. Wat goed is in die skepping, is goed omdat, en tot die mate waarin dit deel in God, die hoogste Goed. Wat waar is in die skepping, is waar omdat en tot die mate waarin dit deel in God, die Waarheid self. Dieselfde geld vir wat mooi is in die skepping. Dit geld verder nie slegs vir die attribute van die skepping nie, maar inderwaarheid vir die bestaan van alle eindige dinge.

Die kontoere van 'n deelnemende, teologiese wêreldbeeld het beslag gekry in die eerste eeue van die Christelike jaartelling soos wat die kerkvaders, in gesprek met die Hellenistiese filosofieë en godsdienstige dwaalleringe, genoodsaak was om die verhouding tussen God en die skepping noukeurig te verwoord. In die hitte van die trinitariese en Christologiese kontroversies het die kerkvaders van die noukeurige onderskeidings gebruik gemaak wat eie was aan die Griekse filosofiese denkwêreld waarin baie van hulle ook, vanuit hulle opvoeding tuis was. Derhalwe, in die vierde eeuse Kappadosië het kerkvaders soos Basileus die Grote en Gregorius van Nyssa ter verdediging van die ortodoksie van die Konsilie van Nicéa, aangevoer dat die Christelike God enersyds oneindig meer transendent is aan die skepping, maar andersyds ook juis oneindig nader is aan die skepping as wat die metafisika van die Griekse filosofie kon akkommodeer. In die woorde van David Bentley-Hart:

“In the fourth century the Cappadocians, in their struggle against the *pneumatomachoi*, made it clear that the elaborate, but explanatory metaphysical hierarchies of Alexandrian speculation ... were alien to genuine Christian trinitarianism, and that the Christian God is at once infinitely more transcendent of and, in consequence, infinitely nearer to (within the very being of) finite reality than was the inaccessible God of antique metaphysics ...”³

Dieselfde konsensus as wat deur die Kappadosiese vaders in die Ooste gehuldig is, is 'n eeu of wat later deur Augustinus in die Weste voorgestaan. Volgens hom is God enersyds interior *intimo meo* (“nader aan my as wat ek aan myself is”), terwyl dit terselfdertyd ook so is dat God *superior summo meo* is (“hoër as die hoogste waarby ek kan kom.”) God is inderdaad altyd groter.⁴

'n Deelnemende wêreldbeeld is 'n wêreldbeeld waarin die immanente (die skepping) nie

reads Augustine's De Doctrina after Derrida” In: *Modern Theology*, 23 (3), July.

2. In hierdie verband kan gekyk word na die nou reeds klassieke studie van Henri de Lubac wat in die veertigerjare van die twintigste eeu in Frans gepubliseer is: De Lubac, H. *Corpus Mysticum – The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, vert. Simmonds, G (*Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ of Notre Dame Press, 2006*). Teen die einde van die twintigste eeu het Louis Dupré die oorgang vanaf die deelnemende wêreldbeeld na die moderne tyd in 'n invloedryke werk beskryf: Dupré, L. *Passage to Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). Vanuit reformatoriese kringe is dieselfde genealogiese trajek onlangs deur Hans Boersema uitgemerk: Boersema, H. *Heavenly Participation – the weaving of a sacramental tapestry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).

3. David Bentley Hart. *The Beauty of the Infinite* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) p. 182.

4. Confessiones, 3.6.11 “tu autem eras interior intimo meo et superior summo meo”. Die uitdrukking “God is altyd groter” (*Deus semper maior*), is afkomstig uit die *Enarratio in Psalmum LXII*, 16: CCL 39, 804.

absoluut geskei is van die transendente (God) nie, maar juis daarin deel het. In filosofiese taal uitgedruk, dui 'n deelnemende wêreldbeeld op 'n wêreld van transendensie *in* immanensie. In die taal van die Christelike teologie: die skepping bestaan as 'n uitdrukking van die Woord van God. Dit is geskep deur die Woord (die tweede persoon van die goddelike Drie-eenheid), en as sodanig dra dit die karakter van die *Logos*. Nogtans beteken hierdie verstaan geensins dat die skepping self God is nie. Daar is juis die absolute noodsaak om 'n onderskeid te maak tussen die transendente en die immanente. In 'n leerstelling van die vierde Lateraanse konsilie van 1215 word hierdie formulering van transendensie in immanensie op 'n klassieke wyse saamgevat: "n Mens kan nie 'n ooreenkoms tussen die Skepper en die skepsel opmerk – hoe groot ook al – sonder om 'n nog groter verskil tussen hulle op te merk nie."⁵ Tot hoe 'n mate daar ook al op grond van die deelnemende wese van die skepping 'n ooreenkoms tussen God en die skepping aanvaar word, moet dit altyd bevestig word teen die agtergrond van 'n groter, onkwantifiseerbare verskil.

Dat die wêreld verstaan is as deelnemend in die wese van God het beteken dat daar ruimte was daarvoor om die misterie waar te neem en te waardeer. Gewone aardse dinge is meer as wat dit op die oog af lyk. Die dinge van die geskape bedeling het hulle eie integriteit, en tog is daar ook altyd meer.⁶ Dit het gegeld vir die verstaan van siklusse in die natuur, van menselewens, van die plek van tegnologie, van instellings soos die koningskap, en, natuurlik, het dit heel in die besonder ook gegeld van die kerk. So was die kerk in sy totale bestaan 'n liturgiese viering en verdigting van die kontingente, deelnemende en ekstatiëse gemeenskap wat die hele skepping was (of beter, veronderstel was om te wees, en nou weer in Christus waarlik kon wees.) Die kerk is 'n hemelse gemeenskap *in* hierdie aardse gemenebes. In die lig van die kruis en die opstanding word Jesus Christus verstaan as die hoof van sy liggaam, die kerk. Die hoof is aan die regterhand van die Vader, en tog is die hoof nie ver weg van die liggaam asof die hemel 'n gelokaliseerde *ander* plek is nie.⁷ Die liggaam kan alleenlik ware liggaam wees tot die mate waarin dit deel in die hoof. Hierdie is die sakramentele logika waarop in die laaste deel van die artikel teruggekom word.

Die teologies-filosofiese wêreldbeeld van transendensie in immanensie het 'n monumentale formulering gekry in die werk van die dertiende eeuse Dominikaanse teoloog, Thomas van Aquino. Die genialiteit van Aquinas het daarin gelê dat hy die filosofie van Aristoteles, waarvan 'n groot deel wat verlore was in die voorafgaande eeu, weer vir die Weste beskikbaar geword het, kon inkorporeer binne die raamwerk van 'n Christelik-Platonistiese wêreldbeeld. Volgens hierdie benadering het die natuur 'n mate van selfstandigheid, sodat dit met die menslike rede bestudeer kan word. Die natuur is nogtans nooit sonder God se genade nie – in die besonder soos wat dit in Christus gegee is – met die gevolg dat die ganse skepping verstaan moet word as ekstasies. In God se openbaring word aan ons gegee wat die bestemming is waarheen die skepping deur God se liefde en genade op pad is. Ons mense se kennis vanuit God se openbaring kroon en deurdring ons kennis wat opgedoen word deur middel van die relatief selfstandige werkinge van die rede (hierdie is 'n verhouding van transendensie in immanensie.) Die natuur kan dus selfstandig bestudeer word (sê maar deur gebruik te maak van die kategorieë van Aristoteliese logika en metafisika), maar hierdie beredenerings kan,

5. Uit kanonieke stelling 2: "quia inter creatorem et creaturam non potest similitudo notari, quin inter eos maior sit dissimilitudo notanda." Vgl. Medieval Sourcebook: Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215. Verkry by <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/lateran4.asp> Ook Betz, J.R. 2006. "Beyond the Sublime: The Aesthetics of the Analogy of Being (part 2)," *Modern Theology*, 22:1, p. 13.

6. Vgl. Boersema, *Heavenly Participation*, Kindle uitgawe plekmerker 263.

7. Ibid. Kindle plekmerker 98.

en moet geïnkorporeer word binne die groter raamwerk van die teologie, waar dit die rol speel van argumente daarvoor dat geloofskennis nie absurd is nie.⁸ 'n Belangrike element van die Aristoteliese filosofie wat deur Aquinas ontwikkel is in diens van sy teologiese projek, is die konsep van analogie.⁹ Hiervolgens moet daar oor die skepping se verhouding met God gepraat word nie in eenduidige (univokale) taal nie, want dit sou beteken dat God en sy skepping bloot dieselfde soort syn het. Daar moet ook nie oor die verhouding gepraat word in absoluut meerduidige of dubbelsinnige (ekwivokale) taal nie. Dit sou beteken dat daar geen deelnemende verhouding tussen die skepping en God is nie. Die taal wat geskik is vir die beskrywing van die wyse waarop geskape dinge deel in die syn van God is die taal van analogie.¹⁰

3. DIE ABSOLUTE SKEIDING VAN TRANSENDENSIE EN IMMANENSIE

Teen ongeveer die veertiende eeu het die wêreldbeeld wat hierbo beskryf is, in 'n krisis beland.¹¹ Hierdie krisis, wat momentum gegee het aan 'n proses van sekularisering waarvan die einde steeds vandag nie volkome bereik is nie, kan teruggevoer word na ontwikkelings binne die teologiese wêreld van die laat-Skolastiek. Op grond van die logiese beginsel van uitgeslote teenstrydigheid het Johannes Duns Scotus geargumenteer dat dieselfde eienskap nie gelyktydig van God bevestig en ontken kan word nie.¹² Die gedagte van analogie, waardeur God se nabyheid (immanensie), sowel as transendensie ten opsigte van die skepping bevestig kon word, het skynbaar al hoe meer onhoudbaar geword. Twee ontwikkelings het hieruit voortgevloei. Aan die een kant is die verhouding tussen God en sy skepping toenemend óf in volledig univokale terme óf in volledig ekwivokale terme beskryf. Enersyds: God en die skepping deel dieselfde syn; God is slegs oneindige syn terwyl die skepping eindige syn is. Andersyds: God en die skepping is totaal en al verskillend van mekaar. Die syn van die skepping het nie inherent iets met die Goddelike syn te make nie. Aan die anderkant het daar 'n ontwikkeling plaasgevind waarvolgens die menslike denke al hoe meer losgemaak is uit die weefsel van die skepping, en as't ware los van, en teenoor die res van die skepping gekonsepsualiseer is. Waar die "dinge" vroeër, vanweë die deelnemende wêreldbeeld, as "woorde" na die denke kon migreer en so eintlik ekstasies uitreik na God toe¹³, het die interaksie van die menslike siel en die wêreld buite die siel nou hopeloos problematies geraak. Algaande het die woorde van die

8. Vgl. Bv. Summa Theologia, I, Q.1, Art. 1, antw. op beswaar 2: "There is no reason why those things which may be learned from philosophical science, so far as they can be known by natural reason, may not also be taught us by another science so far as they fall within revelation."

9. Vgl. Ashworth, E.J. 1991. "Signification and Modes of Signifying in Thirteenth-Century Logic: A Preface to Aquinas on Analogy" In: *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, vol. 1. Ook: Ashworth, E.J. 2004. *Medieval Theories of Analogy*. In: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Verkry by: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/analogy-medieval/>

10. Hoewel die term *analogia entis* nie by Aquinas voorkom nie, is die gedagte wel aanwesig. Die gedagte van *analogia entis* is verder ontwikkel, en het byvoorbeeld in die twintigste eeu die hoeksteen uitgemaak van die filosofies-teologiese werk van Erich Przywara. Sien Thomas Joseph White, O.P. (red.) *The Analogy of Being – Invention of the Antichrist or the Wisdom of God?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).

11. Behalwe vir die werke waarna hierbo in voetnoot 2 verwys is, sien die bespreking in Eric Alliez se werk, *Capital Times*, p 197 e.v. "1300: The Capture of Being." Alliez, E. *Capital Times – Tales from the Conquest of Time*. vert. deur Georges van den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.)

12. Pickstock, C. 2005. Duns Scotus: his historical and contemporary significance. *Modern Theology*. 21(4).

13. Roberto Pellerey, *Thomas Aquinas: Natural semiotics and the epistemological process*, In: Umberto Eco & Costantino Marmo (reds.) *On the Medieval Theory of Signs* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1989), pp.81-105.

denke 'n eie bestaan gekry. Hulle representeer nou die dinge daarbuite, en is tot daardie mate waar of vals.

Hierdie twee ontwikkelings het op mekaar ingespeel, met die gevolg dat die wêreldbeeld wat uitgaan van 'n deelnemende verhouding tussen God en die skepping vernietig is.¹⁴ God is baie ver weg van die skepping af. Die eindige geskape wêreld is totaal anders as God. Geleidelik, deur die loop van die Renaissance en veral in die opkoms van die modernisme, het die fokus van die menslike gees verskuif na die ondermaanse wêreld toe. Dit is wat ondersoek en verstaan moet word. God se werksaamheid kan alleen maar verstaan word as 'n soort van 'n onderbrekende woord van buite af. Die goddelike openbaring val as't ware soos 'n klip uit die lug, en moet gewoon aanvaar word omdat dit gesagvolle openbaring is, nie op grond van enige resonansie met die ingeskape goddelike waarheid van die dinge nie. Daarmee saam word die groot vraag die vraag na die verhouding tussen die mens se binnewêreld en die wêreld daarbuite, oftewel die vraag na die verhouding tussen kennis en syn. Aangesien die syn van die skepping op geen wyse meer aanvaar kan word as dat dit natuurlik na God smag nie, moet die vraag na kennis eerste beantwoord word, voordat die vraag na die syn beantwoord kan word. En so vind, met die moderne tyd, daardie ontwikkeling plaas wat as die epistemologiese wending beskryf kan word. Voordat hoegenaamd oor die werklikheid gepraat kan word, moet klarigheid gekry word oor ons kennis *van* die werklikheid.

Die filosofies-teologiese ontwikkelings wat hierbo beskryf is, het ingrypende gevolge vir die denke oor en lewe van die kerk gehad. In sy boek, *Corpus Mysticum*, toon Henri de Lubac aan hoe dat die uitdrukking "die mistieke liggaam van Christus" tot ongeveer die agtste eeu juis op waarlik mistieke wyse kon verwys na Christus se liggaam wat gebore is uit Maria, na die kerk as die liggaam van Christus, en na die sakrament van die eucharistie.¹⁵ Geleidelik het daar egter 'n duidelik waarneembare verskuiwing plaasgevind in die manier waarop die uitdrukking *corpus mysticum* gebruik is. Terwyl daar enersyds in al hoe meer "realistiese" terme oor die sakramentele liggaam van Christus gedink is – die brood en die wyn is "regtig" die liggaam en bloed van daardie liggaam wat uit die maagd gebore is – is daar al hoe meer na die kerk as die mistieke liggaam verwys, maar dan in 'n bloot metaforiese sin. Hierdie ontwikkelings in die ekklesiologie en sakramentele teologie het nuwe momentum gekry in die absolute skeiding tussen transendensie en immanensie wat met die verlies van 'n deelnemende wêreldbeeld na vore getree het. Waar dit in 'n deelnemende wêreldbeeld, 'n wêreld van transendensie *in* immanensie, moontlik was om oor die brood en die wyn van die nagmaal as analogiese (waarlik sakramentele) tekens te dink¹⁶, noop die ontologiese en kenteoretiese ontwikkelings waarna hierbo verwys is daartoe dat die brood en die wyn enersyds as *blote* tekens verstaan word (veral in sekere reformatoriese kringe), of andersyds dat die brood en die wyn op feitlik magiese wyse verander word sodat daar geen teken-karakter meer in steek nie, maar dit die werklik fisieke liggaam van Christus is (sekere strominge binne die Rooms-Katolieke teologie na die Konsilie van Trent.)¹⁷

14. Vir 'n resente bespreking van hierdie ontwikkeling, sien Brad S. Gregory se werk, *The Unintended Reformation*. Gregory, Brad S. *The Unintended Reformation – How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012) – veral hfst. 1 "Excluding God."

15. De Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, pp. 21-24.

16. Vgl Boersema, *Heavenly Participation*, Kindle plekmerker 270 ev.

17. Vgl. Simon Oliver, "The eucharist before nature and culture" In: *Modern Theology* 15:3, Julie 1999. Ook Catherine Pickstock: "Truth and Language" In: John Milbank & Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas*, (London: Routledge, 2001) pp. 88-111.

Wat die kerk betref lei die ontruiming van die transendente uit die immanente, gepaardgaande met die teenoor mekaarstelling van die denkende menslike subjek en 'n materiële, objektiewe wêreld “daarbuite”, daartoe dat die institusionele, politiese en organisatoriese kante van kerkwees al hoe meer op die voorgrond tree, terwyl die “verhouding met God” al hoe meer 'n saak van die individuele innerlike lewe word. Die filosofies-teologiese ontwikkelinge wat hierdie verskuiving moontlik gemaak het, het, wat vir lank as 'n positiewe spanning beleef is, op 'n breuk laat afstuur: die verhouding tussen die pous en die keiser, oftewel die verhouding tussen kerk en staat.

De Lubac beskryf hoe dat die kerk al hoe meer sy karakter van transendensie in immanensie verloor het, en dienooreenkomstig al hoe meer toegetree het tot sekulêre politieke magstryde. Dit het ook gepaard gegaan met 'n groterwordende juridisering van die kerk.¹⁸ Die reformatore reageer hierteen deur die sigbare, beliggaamde kant van kerkwees as't ware prys te gee ten gunste van 'n onsigbare mistieke liggaam van Christus, waarvan elke plaaslike kerk 'n vergestaltung is.¹⁹

Die absolute skeiding van transendensie en immanensie het ook verreikende gevolge gehad vir die wyse waarop oor die verhouding tussen plaaslike kerke gedink is. Waar die verhouding tussen plaaslike kerke binne 'n deelnemende wêreldbeeld veel minder problematies was (almal deel in die een liggaam van Christus, en deel daarom ook in mekaar) het hierdie verhouding in die moderne tyd hoogs problematies geword. Filosofies gesproke was dit veral die opkoms van die nominalisme wat die verhouding tussen plaaslike kerke geproblematiseer het. 'n Nominalistiese benadering aanvaar geen inherente band tussen entiteite nie; elke entiteit is 'n partikuliere individu. Die enigste verband wat tussen dinge bestaan is wat deur die denke daaraan opgelê word (deur bv. die gebruik van soortname).²⁰ Ten opsigte van die invloed van die nominalisme op die eenheid van die kerk merk Boersema die volgende op:

“Nominalism subverted this medieval sense of unity, since the new philosophical approach was predicated on the notion that each person was, as it were, a self-subsistent entity, whose being was, in principle, unrelated to the being of other persons. In other words, nominalism was the seedbed for modern individualism. It is easy to see that it is much more difficult for a nominalist than for a realist to concern herself with ecclesiastical unity: fragmentation lies at the heart of a nominalist ontology”²¹

Die Reformasie reageer, aan die hand van die radikale skeiding tussen transendensie en immanensie, teen die institusioneel-organisatoriese magsmisbruik van die Katolieke Kerk van destyds. Die Reformasie reageer deur in die plek van een kerk waarin op sakramenteel-analogiese wyse bemiddel word tussen plaaslike parogieë en die kerk as geheel, te stel dat daar twee verskillende (ekwivokale) wyses is waarop die woord “kerk” gebruik word: as beskrywing van elke plaaslike gemeente, wat in sigself volledig kerk is, en as beskrywing van die universele kerk. Enersyds word bevestig dat die universele kerk die een liggaam van Christus is. Maar

18. De Lubac, pp 116, 117. Vergelyk in hierdie verband ook Brad S. Gregory, *The unintended Reformation*, hfst. 3 “Controlling the Churches”

19. De Lubac, pp 116 en 117. Gregory, p. 140.

20. Dit is duidelik dat die nominalisme van die Laat Skolastiek, soos bv. in die denke van Willem van Ockham, nou aansluit by die ontwikkelinge wat vroeër verduidelik is, waarvolgens die denke losgemaak is uit die deelnemende plek wat dit in die geskape syn gehad het, en as't ware teenoor die res van die natuur te staan gekom het.

21. Boersema, *Heavenly Participation*, Kindle plekmerker 1053.

andersyds word ook bevestig dat elke plaaslike kerk 'n volkome manifestasie van die liggaam van Christus is. Eksegetiese gronde word vir hierdie skeiding aangevoer.²² Die implikasies van hierdie siening is egter beduidenswaardig. Aan die een kant word die universele liggaam van Christus vergeestelik; dit is onsigbaar. Aan die anderkant word die individuele plaaslike kerk volkome selfstandig, en word die verhouding tussen plaaslike kerke eintlik 'n sekondêre saak. Van nou af rus die bewyslas as't ware by diegene wat wil aantoon dat plaaslike kerke iets met mekaar te doen moet hê.

Die uitdaging vir so 'n siening van kerkwees is die vraag hoe daar tussen die twee ekwivokale bevestigings ten opsigte van die begrip "kerk" bemiddel kan word? Hoe word daar in die moderne tyd tussen die eenheid van die kerk en die veelheid van plaaslike gemeentes bemiddel? Christus regeer sy kerk deur sy Woord en Gees. Maar onder die invloed van die modernisme word hierdie regering 'n onliggaamlike, virtuele en prosedurele regering. Dit kan ook in praktyk nie anders as om 'n soort kontraktuele verband tussen losstaande plaaslike kerke tot stand bring nie.

Sedert die tweede helfte van die twintigste eeu is die institusioneel-kontraktuele opvatting van kerkwees toenemend gekritiseer vanuit 'n perspektief wat 'n meer dinamies-kommunikatiewe verstaan van die kerk voorstaan. Sedert die laaste dekades van die vorige eeu staan hierdie nuwe benadering bekend as 'n missionale verstaan van kerkwees. Die kritiese vraag aan die missionale opvatting van kerkwees het te make daarmee of die negatiewe gevolge van die absolute skeiding tussen transendensie en immanensie werklik deur hierdie benadering aangespreek word. Word die ekwivokale interpretasie van ekklesia, waardeur daar 'n absolute skeiding gemaak word tussen die universele kerk en die plaaslike kerk, hierdeur aangespreek? Anders gestel, kontinueer hierdie opvatting nie maar steeds die nominalistiese ontologie waarmee ons gelaat is aan die begin van die moderne tyd nie? Elke plaaslike kerk is volwaardig kerk, en in stede van 'n kontraktuele verband word die verhouding tussen die plaaslike kerk nou meer in terme van 'n pragmatiese netwerk gesien.

4. SAKRAMENTELE KERKWEES

Die absolute skeiding van transendensie en immanensie in filosofies-teologiese sin het verreikende gevolge vir die eenheid en lewe van die kerk gehad. In die lig hiervan hou die herontdekking en herwinning, in een of ander vorm, van 'n deelnemende wêreldbeeld groot belofte in vir die ekklesiologie. Sodanige projek sou nie 'n blote nostalgiese hunkering na die verlede behels nie, maar sou 'n interpretatiewe en kontekstualiserende vormgewing moet wees van belangrike temas uit die tradisie van die Christelike geloof en kultuur voor die

22. Sien bv. Van Genderen en Velema, *Beknopte Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, pp. 616-622. Twee opmerkings kan oor hierdie benadering, wat tipies van 'n breër sentiment is, gemaak word. In die eerste plek word die Skrif hanteer op 'n wyse wat tipies is van 'n denkhouding wat spruit uit die epistemologiese wending waarvan hierbo sprake was. Die outonome denkende subjek word losgemaak uit die boesem van die kerk wat dit tradisioneel liturgies sou begelei na verstaan, en kom as't ware langs die kerk te staan, om die kerk "in die lig van die Skrif" te beoordeel en te plaas. Dit is 'n nominalistiese hermeneutiek. Die Skrif speel in die verband dan die rol van 'n objektiewe kenobjek wat deur die rede bestudeer kan word ten einde positiewe feite daaruit te abstraher. Dat die interpretasie van die Skrif plaasvind binne en aan die hand van die tradisie wat die liggaam van Christus is, daarvan is daar nie sprake nie. Vgl. J. Todd Billings, *The Word of God for the people of God – An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), Kindle plekmerker 52. In die tweede plek is daar in hierdie etologie van die begrip "kerk" feitlik geen band meer met die sakrament van die nagmaal, soos wat vir die grootste deel van die kerk se geskiedenis die geval was nie.

aanbreek van die moderne tyd.²³ Die belangrikste waaroor dit in hierdie verband sal moet gaan, is dat daar 'n hernieude sensitiwiteit sal moet kom vir die aanwesigheid van God in ons mense se ervaringswêreld. Hierdie hernieude sensitiwiteit, wat tegelyk 'n verwoestende kritiek op die hele epog van sekularisering sal behels, kan geen ander oorsprong as die kerk self hê nie. Hierdie sensitiwiteit sal dus eers in die kerk self herontdek moet word. In die woorde van De Lubac:

“The Church, the body of Christ, is a mystery and against the flat notion of it conceived in the Enlightenment and repeated by a few followers of liberal Protestantism, it should be maintained that a mystery is what continues to remain obscure, hidden and ‘mystical’, even once it has been described, signified and ‘revealed.’”²⁴

Die lyn wat deurlopend in hierdie artikel die basis van argumentasie vorm, is dat die verstaan van kerkwees wat die aanleiding kan gee vir 'n hernieude vorm van 'n deelnemende wêreldbeeld, ten nouste gekoppel behoort te wees aan 'n herontdekking van die sakramentele aard van die kerk. Daar moet met ander woorde 'n herontdekking plaasvind van die innerlike band tussen die ekklesiologie en die sakramentele teologie. Weereens in die woorde van De Lubac:

“From the beginning of Christianity, the Eucharist had always been considered in relation to the Church. The ‘communion of the body of Christ’ of which St. Paul spoke to the faithful of Corinth (1 Cor 10:17-18) was their mysterious union with the community, by virtue of the sacrament: it was the mystery of the Body formed by all those who shared in the ‘one Bread’. In the same way, from that time on the Church had never ceased to appear linked to the Eucharist.”²⁵

Vir 'n hernieude verstaan van hoe die kerk as 't ware uit die sakrament van die nagmaal gebore word, is dit nodig dat die sakrament self met hernieude waardering omhels word binne die kringe van die Protestantse kerke en teologie. 'n Kernvraag in hierdie verband het te make met die aanwesigheid of afwesigheid van die liggaam van Christus in die nagmaal. Wat is die strekking van die woorde “Dit is my liggaam” wat geuiter word in die viering van die nagmaal? Dit is juis 'n skreiende uitdrukking van die absolute skeiding tussen transendensie en immanensie dat die aanwesigheid of afwesigheid van die liggaam van Christus in die nagmaal in absolute en wedersyds uitsluitende terme bedink word. Aan die een kant word die liggaam van Christus as totaal afwesig geag tydens die viering van die nagmaal. Die nagmaal word in mimetiese terme²⁶ verstaan as 'n teken van die gebeure van Christus se kruisiging twee duisend jaar gelede, as 'n teken van die bruilofsmaal van die Lam wat in die toekoms voorlê, en as 'n seël van die geestelike voeding met die liggaam van Christus deur die Heilige Gees, terwyl die liggaam van Christus self elders geag te wees – in die hemel by die Vader. Op 'n ekwivokale – dit is op 'n totaal onverwante – wyse word die kerk dan ook as die liggaam van Christus geag wat tydens die viering van die nagmaal aanwesig is. Die uitdrukking “liggaam van Christus” word in bloot metaforiese sin van die kerk as gemeenskap van mense gebruik, terwyl daar geen inherente band bestaan tussen die liggaam van Christus wat “in die hemel” by die Vader is, en die kerk wat in ruimte en tyd lewe en die nagmaal vier nie. In die verbygaan kan opgemerk word dat die semiologie waarvolgens die betekenaar en die betekende radikaal van mekaar geskei is, maar die betekenaar die betekende tog op 'n wyse representeer in die

23. Vgl. voetnota 1.

24. *Corpus Mysticum*, p. 251.

25. *Ibid.* p. 248.

26. Oliver, *The eucharist before nature and culture*, p. 343

afgelope halfeeu uitvoerig gekritiseer is, ondermeer in die filosofie van Jacques Derrida.

Die teenoorgestelde beweging het egter ook in die glystroom van die absolute skeiding van transendensie en immanensie gebeur wat die opvatting van die nagmaal betref. Die tekenkarakter van die nagmaal, wat eie is aan die aard daarvan as sakrament of misterie, is ontken ten gunste van die bevestiging van die absolute aanwesigheid van die liggaam van Christus in die brood en wyn van die nagmaalviering. Die brood en die wyn is eintlik totaal vreemd en toevallig aan dit wat die eintlike liggaam van Christus is. In die woorde van Catherine Pickstock:

“The Eucharistic signs perforce become ... the site of an extrinsic miracle which stresses the alienness of bread from Body, and wine from Blood.”²⁷

In teenstelling hiermee is dit kardinaal dat die tekenkarakter van die nagmaal nie vanuit vreemde, moderne of postmoderne opvattinge van ’n teken verstaan moet word nie, maar vanuit die eie aard van die nagmaal as teken self.²⁸ Die liggaam van Christus in die nagmaal moet met ander woorde die paradigma vorm van waaruit ander opvattinge van ’n teken beoordeel word, en nie andersom nie.

Hoe is dit dan nou gesteld tydens die viering van die nagmaal? As daar in terme van die drie onderskeidings ten opsigte van die liggaam van Christus gedink word (die liggaam gebore uit Maria, die sakramentele liggaam in die brood en wyn, en die kerk as liggaam), dan moet dit benadruk word dat hierdie drie “liggame van Christus” wel te onderskei is, maar dat hulle nogtans nie radikaal geskei mag word nie. Dit is eenvoudig nie moontlik of wenslik om analities te sê waar die een ophou en die ander begin nie. Op ’n misterieuse wyse is elk daar in die viering van die nagmaal en gaan die een oor in die ander. So word op ’n sakramentele wyse gemanifesteer wat ’n teken is, in stede daarvan om vanuit ’n modernistiese of postmodernistiese siening van wat ’n teken is na die nagmaal te kyk. In hierdie opvatting van wat ’n teken is, is die transendente in die immanente: die Hoof is in die liggaam; die liggaam word gevorm vanuit die Hoof. Nogtans is die verhouding tussen die transendente en die immanente onkwantifiseerbaar. In hierdie verband, ten opsigte van die misterie as teken, kan die woorde van De Lubac weer genoem word: “... it should be maintained that a mystery is what continues to remain obscure, hidden and ‘mystical’, even once it has been described, signified and ‘revealed’” Die belangrike is egter dat die absolute skeiding tussen aanwesigheid en afwesigheid oorkom word.

Die nagmaal is ’n vormende gebeurtenis. Die kerk as liggaam word gevorm. Dit bring ons by die tweede opmerking: daar sal ’n herontdekking moet kom van die belang van tradisie. Reg verstaan is tradisie lewend. Dit is juis die liggaam van Christus. Dit is nie maar bloot representasie van dieselfde in ’n volgende iterasie nie. Dit is Christus self wat oorgelewer word, en hierdie oorlewering is beliggaamd. So verstaan is die tradisie van die kerk juis iets van die transendente in die immanente van hierdie wêreld. Die kerk is die liturgiese viering en verdigting van die nuwe in die oue. Maar hierdie nuwe word juis oorgelewer van geslag tot geslag, en daarom kan daar ook nie iets anders oorgelewer word as die liggaam van Christus nie. In die woorde van Hans Boersema:

“If the church today shares, by means of a real participation, in the church’s earlier

27. John Milbank & Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas*, p. 93.

28. Vgl Boersema, *Heavenly Participation*, Kindle plekmerker 278.

tradition, that earlier tradition genuinely lives on in us and we have a sacred responsibility to it. Earlier periods of the Christian tradition and our present time are connected via a common sacramental participation in the eternal Word of God.”²⁹

Die derde opmerking het te make met die skeiding tussen plaaslike kerk en universele kerk. Hoe kan daar in die skaduwee van die altyd repeterende breuk en versnellende verbrokkeling wat die kerk sedert die aanvang van die moderne tyd aantoes oor die liggaam van Christus gedink word? Hier kan nie maar bloot die weg van die minste weerstand gevolg word, waardeur verlief geneem word met die nominalistiese ontologie van ons tyd nie. Met ander woorde: dit kan nie maar so wees dat elke plaaslike kerk eintlik niks met ander kerke te doen het, behalwe tot die mate waarin daardie kerk homself pragmaties tuis voel binne ’n netwerk van eendersdenkendes nie. Die kerk is juis katoliek! Dit beteken dat die andersheid van die ander een saam met die gemaklikheid van die eie in een liggaam moet wees.

Aan die anderkant lyk dit op die oomblik feitlik onmoontlik om deur middel van bestuursmatige ingrype die groter kerkstrukture, veral in reformatoriese kringe, te rehabiliteer in die rigting van ’n sakramentele, deelnemende kerkwees. Hiervoor is die bestaande strukture te veel gekontamineer deur modernistiese kontraktuele denke. Wat egter wel kan gebeur, en met hierdie voorstel word die artikel afgesluit, is dat binne die kerk begin kan word met ’n herontdekking van ’n sakramentele en deelnemende wêreldbeeld. Dit kan gebeur deur die herontdekking van die nagmaal as die hart van die kerk, die herontdekking van die liturgiese jaar, as ’n simbool wat deur die kerk oor die algemeen onderhou word, en gepaardgaande daarmee, die herontdekking van ’n kurrikulum waarvolgens na die Woord geluister word deur die loop van die liturgiese jaar³⁰. Die deelname aan ’n leesrooster bind die kerk aan die groter liggaam van Christus. Vanuit ’n herontdekking van hierdie lewensvorme van die kerk mag daar moontlik in die toekoms gegroei word na ’n herontdekking van die waarlik sakramentele liggaam van Christus.

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A common pursuit: Paul Cilliers' and Wentzel van Huyssteen's epistemic attitudes

ABSTRACT

Paul Cilliers, late professor of complexity and philosophy of science at the University of Stellenbosch, argued that by acknowledging the complexity of particular systems, one is called beyond a foundationalist or relativist epistemology. He advocated for a modest epistemic attitude which recognises the provisionality of our knowledge claims. Advocating for a similar epistemic attitude, Wentzel van Huyssteen, extraordinary professor of theology at the University of Stellenbosch, argues that a postfoundationalist epistemic attitude moves beyond foundationalist and nonfoundationalist epistemologies. A postfoundationalist understanding of rationality facilitates interdisciplinary research by drawing on the concept of transversality and the shared resources of human rationality. This essay illuminates the common epistemic pursuit of both these highly respected scholars and illustrates the modesty of a postfoundationalist model of rationality. Furthermore, this essay proposes that by strengthening Van Huyssteen's postfoundationalist approach with the insights generated by Cilliers on complex systems, sustainable interdisciplinarity could be realised.

1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the world in which we live seems to be a straightforward process, but turning our focus to the way in which we understand our world – how we filter our information and how we construct the models and metaphors we employ – has illuminated the intricacy of understanding itself. Modern or foundationalist epistemologies, giving rise to positivism, objectivism, rationalism and fundamentalism by drawing on the work of Descartes, Kant, Husserl, Carnap, Habermas and early Wittgenstein has given way to postmodern or nonfoundationalist epistemologies (Cilliers, 2000b:8; Van Huyssteen, 1999:23). However, postmodern epistemologies have generated relativism, idealism and perspectivism by drawing on the work of Kuhn, Rorty, Derrida and later Wittgenstein. In recent years there have been some scholars who advocate epistemologies that move beyond these extremes and that draw on the insights from foundationalist and nonfoundationalist epistemologies. Both Paul Cilliers and Wentzel van Huyssteen advocate an epistemic attitude that critically draws on foundationalist and nonfoundationalist epistemologies simultaneously in its engagement with reality. However, while Cilliers discussed the implications of complexity for epistemology, Van Huyssteen developed a description of rationality that draws on foundationalist and nonfoundationalist models of rationality. The purpose of this essay is to illuminate the common epistemic pursuit of both these highly respected scholars and illustrate the compatibility of Cilliers modest attitude and Van Huyssteen's postfoundationalist description of rationality. Furthermore, this essay proposes that by incorporating the insights generated by Cilliers on complex systems in Van Huyssteen's postfoundationalist facilitation of interdisciplinarity, a sustainable interdisciplinary approach might be possible.

With this in mind, this essay is structured along three engagements between Cilliers and Van

Huyssteen. The first engagement follows the motivation for and purpose of the epistemic attitudes of both these scholars. The second engagement illuminates the commonalities in Cilliers' modest epistemic attitude and Van Huyssteen's postfoundationalist epistemic attitude. The third engagement illustrates the modesty of a postfoundationalist's rationality and suggests that sustainable interdisciplinary facilitation could be achieved by combining insights of both these scholars.

2. MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE

The epistemic attitudes advocated for by Cilliers and Van Huyssteen share a common pursuit, but the motivations behind their pursuits and the use of their attitudes are different. It is therefore important to give a short overview of both Cilliers' and Van Huyssteen's motivation for proposing their respective epistemic attitudes.

Since his earliest work on epistemology, Van Huyssteen has been searching for an understanding of epistemology that will render the theologian a respected partner in the wider academic conversation. In order to do this Van Huyssteen engaged philosophers of science on two fronts. Firstly, in developing an adequate model of rationality and methodology for theology, drawing on *critical realism*¹ (Van Huyssteen, 1986:172), Van Huyssteen uncovered the interdisciplinarity of theological reflection. In other words, Van Huyssteen recognised that theological reflection needs to acknowledge its interdisciplinary nature.

Secondly, Van Huyssteen realised that a shift has occurred within philosophy of science itself. The modern approach to knowledge has been revisited by scholars such as Karl Popper and Thomas S. Kuhn and shown to be inept (Van Huyssteen, 2003:647). Modernists were confident and proud, claiming that they had objective, universal truth and that they would be able to construct a theory of everything given enough time. Postmodernists have moved away from conceptions of scientific rationality with its closely aligned beliefs in linear progress, guaranteed success, deterministic predictability, absolute truths, and some uniform, standardized form of knowledge (Van Huyssteen, 1999:6). Instead postmodernists reject global interpretations of science and place their trust in local scientific practice (Van Huyssteen, 1999:10).

For this reason, Van Huyssteen engaged postmodernists and distinguished his approach within the postmodern project – a return to modern assumptions – as a postfoundationalist and ultimately detached his approach from what he calls foundationalism. He developed a postfoundationalist approach that drew on the positive aspects of both foundationalist and nonfoundationalist approaches and facilitates interdisciplinarity without assimilation (Van Huyssteen, 2006:19)

Hence, the purpose of Van Huyssteen's postfoundationalist description of human rationality is to facilitate interdisciplinary research between theology and the natural sciences specifically, but he also argues that a postfoundationalist's rationality is appropriate for any interdisciplinary conversation (Van Huyssteen, 2008b:494). However, it should not be understood as a meta-

1. Cilliers (2000b:8) comments that although advocates of critical realism argue that it is a position that moves beyond foundationalism and relativism, critical realists fall back on one or the other when applying it to theories of knowledge. Cilliers (2007a:84) argued that we are always dealing with ontological and epistemological issues simultaneously (cf. Osberg et al 2008:214). Van Huyssteen, however, moves beyond a critical realist position in his postfoundationalist understanding of rationality by developing what he calls the *shares resources of human rationality*.

narrative and the reasons for this will be explained in the second engagement.

Reflecting on complex systems, Paul Cilliers argued that a modern epistemology is not appropriate for rendering such systems intelligible. He explained that while the analytical method may have been adequate for understanding *complicated systems*, such as Jumbo jets and computers, this approach is inept to grasp the *workings of complex systems*, such as the brain, language and social systems (Cilliers, 1998:1). The reason for this is that complex systems are not merely constituted by the sum of their parts, but also by the intricate relationships between these components (Cilliers, 1998:2). Cilliers (1998:iix-ix) wrote:

In a complex system ... the interaction among constituents of the system, and the interaction between the system and its environment, are of such a nature that the system as a whole cannot be fully understood simply by analysing its components. Moreover, these relationships are not fixed, but shift and change, often as a result of self-organisation. This can result in novel features, usually referred to in terms of emergent properties.

Therefore, Cilliers argued that a rule-based approach is inappropriate for understanding complex systems. He suggested that connectionist networks share the characteristics of complex systems and are intrinsically more sensitive to complexity (Cilliers, 1998:37). Building on this, Cilliers argued that postmodern epistemologies would be appropriate in rendering complex systems intelligible, but recognised that some postmodern positions are too open and vague to really contribute to our knowledge of the world (Cilliers, 2005:256). He suggested that a post-structural approach would be more adequate in this respect. Cilliers, therefore, argued for a *modest* attitude that would be careful about the reach of knowledge claims and of the constraints that make these claims possible.

On the one hand, the purpose of Cilliers' modest epistemic attitude was to challenge a foundationalist epistemology that assumes to understand complex systems by taking them apart. On the other, a modest epistemic attitude also critiqued a relativist attitude which argues that limited knowledge implies that anything goes (Cilliers, 2005:260).

3. THE NECESSITY OF A NUANCED ATTITUDE

The shift from a modern epistemology, which provided "truth", to postmodern epistemologies, which offers only "contextual perspective", has simultaneously been celebrated and mourned. As seen above, both Cilliers and Van Huyssteen argue that a more nuanced epistemological approach is necessary if we are to reflect on reality appropriately. Cilliers argued for what he called a *modest* epistemic attitude and Van Huyssteen for a *postfoundationalist* epistemic attitude.

Van Huyssteen suggests that postmodern thought has placed rationality itself under the microscope and seriously challenged the way rationality is understood (Van Huyssteen, 1999:3). Postmodern thought, in both its constructive and deconstructive modes, seems to reject ideas such as unity, totality, identity, sameness and consensus. Instead it appeals to pluralism, heterogeneity, multiplicity, diversity, incommensurability and dissensus (Van Huyssteen, 1999:24). Van Huyssteen, in agreement with Calvin Schrag and Jean-François Lyotard, acknowledge postmodernists' greatest talent as their remarkable ability to recognize and demolish meta-narratives. He writes:

... it is important to view the postmodern challenge as an opportunity for an ongoing and relentless critical return to precisely the questions raised by modernity. From this perspective, postmodern thought is undoubtedly part of the modern, and not only modern thought coming to its end. Seen this way, the modern and the postmodern are also unthinkable apart from one another, because the postmodern shows itself best in the to-and-fro movement between the modern and the postmodern, i.e., in the relentless interrogation of our foundationalist assumptions in all our reasoning strategies ... (Van Huyssteen, 1999:58-59)

However, while postmodern thought helps us to move away from the dangers of foundationalism, it is still rooted in nonfoundationalism and therefore does not help us move beyond relativism (Van Huyssteen, 1999:11).

Van Huyssteen (1999:31) summarises some of the challenges posed by postmodern thought as the rejection of epistemic assumptions; refuting methodological conventions; resisting knowledge claims and; obscuring all versions of truth.

Taking cognizance of these interpretations of postmodern thought, Van Huyssteen suggests understanding postmodern thought as a critical return to modernist assumptions. His postfoundationalist approach to human rationality is then also such a return to modern assumptions, but fuses epistemology and hermeneutics together. As such, he asks:

... is there a way to talk about epistemology and rationality that would take very seriously the critical concerns of postmodernity without succumbing to its extremes? I believe there is, and this refigured notion of rationality is what I have called *postfoundationalist rationality*: a model of rationality ... where a fusion of epistemological and hermeneutical concerns will enable a focused (thought fallibilist) quest for intelligibility through the epistemic skills of responsible, critical judgement and discernment (Van Huyssteen, 1999:33).

A postfoundationalist approach, according to Van Huyssteen, is a positive appropriation of postmodernism (Van Huyssteen, 1999:112). It rejects all forms of epistemological foundationalism and all meta-narratives (Van Huyssteen, 1999:113). However, while modernist approaches try to remove humanity from rationality, postmodernist approaches tend to lead to relativism by overestimating the contextuality of human rationality. In contrast, the postfoundationalist adopts a nuanced attitude by acknowledging that human knowledge is contextually shaped, but recognising that the "tools" we use for gaining knowledge is not contextually bound.

Van Huyssteen remarks that because the postfoundationalist is in constant conversation with modern and postmodern thought, postfoundationalist rationality is not to be understood in fixed terms (Van Huyssteen, 1999:117). The postfoundationalist adopts a particular *attitude* towards the epistemic values that shape human reflection. It is a dynamic approach that is in constant conversation with all reasoning strategies regarding the epistemic values they employ. A postfoundationalist approach enables one to fully acknowledge the role of context; the epistemically crucial role of interpreted experience; the way that tradition shapes the epistemic and nonepistemic values that inform our reflections; and the need to point creatively beyond the confines of the local community, group, or culture toward a plausible form of cross-contextual and interdisciplinary conversation (Van Huyssteen 1999:113).

In explaining what a *modest* epistemic attitude entails, Cilliers (2007b:4) drew on the distinction Edgar Morin makes between *restricted* and *general* complexity which have different epistemological implications (Morin, 2007). Cilliers (2011:143) explained that *restricted* complexity developed along the lines of chaos theory and fractal mathematics. This approach is reductive in nature, because it focuses on underlying patterns and universal principles of complex systems. While this approach favours interdisciplinary potentialities, it still remains within a foundationalist epistemology. It is a hybrid between foundationalist rationality and complexity, because it searches for the “laws of complexity” and the logic of foundationalist rationality cannot keep up with the generative, flexible and pluralist nature of knowledge that is needed to describe complex systems (Cilliers & Nicolescu, 2012:713).

In contrast to this, *general* complexity rethinks the description of knowledge (Cilliers 2011:143). *General* complexity requires that one tries to understand the relation between the whole and the parts. Knowledge about the whole or the parts is not enough. It is necessary to think of both simultaneously. Drawing on the ideas of Morin (2007:5) Cilliers (2011:146) offered three principles that can help to think in these terms. The concept of *dialogic* helps in associating the complementary and antagonistic relationship between two terms. *Organised recursion* illuminates the self-constitutive, self-organising and self-producing characteristics of complex systems and the *holographic* principle recognises that the activities of the parts, as well as, the occurrences on the macro-level participate in producing the system.

This implies that there is a dialectical relationship between knowledge and the system within which it is constituted (Cilliers, 2000b:9), i.e. a fusion of epistemology and hermeneutics. Cilliers (2000b:10) wrote:

There are facts that exist independently of the observer of those facts, but the facts do not have meaning written on their faces. Meaning only comes to be in the process of interaction. Knowledge is interpreted data.

Morin (2005:23) also explains that it is necessary to link both of the conceptions of the history of science:

The internalist mode sees the development of sciences in isolation, only in function of their internal logic and their own discoveries. The externalist mode sees them in function of historical and social developments. I think that it is necessary to link both ...

Cilliers in (Heylighen, et al. 2007) concurred and explained that a *modest* position moves beyond the dichotomy of relativism and foundationalism which are two sides of the same coin. Moreover, he suggested that the intersection between *general* complexity and postmodern philosophy can lead to very useful research. One of the greatest rewards of a modest approach is that it allows insights from both the natural and social sciences without having to trump the other.

Most importantly, a *modest* attitude is a responsible attitude (Cilliers, 2005:261) and a necessary attitude from the view of complexity (Cilliers, 2005:265). Cilliers (2005:261) wrote:

We only have limited access to a complex world and when we are dealing with the limits of our understanding, we are dealing with ethics.

4. THE RESOURCES OF A MODEST POSTFOUNDATIONALIST RATIONALITY

The previous two engagements between Cilliers and Van Huyssteen discussed the broad issues and common pursuit of their epistemological arguments and epistemic attitudes. The purpose of this engagement is to illustrate the links between a *modest* epistemic attitude and *postfoundationalist* rationality in more detail. In order to facilitate this process these will be discussed moving between Cilliers' and Van Huyssteen's epistemic arguments.

4.1 Ethics and rational agents

A very important insight from modelling complex systems is that some form of ethics is unavoidable (Heylighen, et al. 2007). To gain knowledge from a complex system, the system has to be modelled and the model represents an interpretation of the system which will always be reductive (Cilliers, 2007a:83). Explaining this statement, Cilliers drew a distinction between *knowledge* and *information*. He explained that knowledge should be reserved for information that is situated historically and contextually by a knowing subject (Cilliers, 2007a:85). The interpretation of information leads to meaningful knowledge. However, for knowledge to exist we have to place limits in the information, which means that the complexity of a system needs to be reduced or interpreted in order to gain an understanding of it (Cilliers, 2007a:86). Thus, it is necessary to identify the boundaries of the system (Cilliers, 2007a:86), but these boundaries are simultaneously a function of the activity of the system, and a product of the descriptive strategy (Cilliers, 2008:47). Moreover, we have to make certain modelling choices when describing phenomena, because we cannot have complete knowledge of complex things (Woermann & Cilliers, 2012:404). We have to interpret and evaluate and the model is selected in terms of the aims of our description (Cilliers, 2000a:46). However, the choice of models is not arbitrary, because some models work better than others, but we cannot claim that this choice is an objective choice (Osberg, et al. 2008:218). Models are necessary, but always involve decisions and values. This is why we should not hold on to these models uncritically (Cilliers 2000b:12). Thus:

In this regard, ethics should be understood as something that constitutes both our knowledge and us, rather than as a normative system that dictates right action (Woermann & Cilliers, 2012:404).

Van Huyssteen also insists that ethics play an intricate role in generating knowledge (Reynhout, 2006:9). Van Huyssteen (1999:179) observes that:

Knowledge is situated: shaped, limited, and specified by the location of knowers, by their particular experiences, by what works for them and what society permits to work for them, by what matters to them and to other knowers with more (or less) power, by what they trust and value and whether their objects of trust and value carry any weight in their surroundings.

That being the case, Van Huyssteen explains that evaluation is very important to the postfoundationalist and entails:

... the ability to evaluate a situation, to assess evidence and then come to a responsible and reasonable decision without following any preset, modernist rules (1999:143).

However, the postfoundationalist's rational judgment is not arbitrary. It is always based on

quite specific information generated in a very particular context (Van Huyssteen, 1999:144). Nevertheless, responsible judgement is more than just the expression of private feelings. It is a process of intersubjective communication which is focused on the contextual, but transcends the personal through intersubjective communication. This means that responsible judgement always entails a rhetorical process.

Explaining this understanding, Van Huyssteen draws on Harold Brown who suggests that rational judgment should be understood as an epistemic skill and that learning to make appropriate decisions involves the development of intellectual skills that are in many ways analogous to physical skills (Van Huyssteen, 1999:144). With this in mind, Brown also argues that judgements should be made by a community of *experts* who participate in a process of intersubjective deliberation and collective assessment (Van Huyssteen 1999:144).

Interestingly, Brown illustrates that people can function effectively and successfully with a set of beliefs that they later modify or change for other beliefs (Van Huyssteen, 1999:144). Van Huyssteen explains:

There need be no incompatibility between accepting that set of fallible claims for a substantial period of time, and also being prepared to reconsider them when we have good reasons for doing so (1999:144).

Thus, postfoundationalists emphasise the evaluative dimension of rationality in their discussion of rationality by highlighting the prominence of critical judgement (Van Huyssteen, 1998:42). Instead of focusing on the general, judgment needs to focus on the particular and the contingent (Van Huyssteen, 1998:24). Judgement should not be made according to general rules, and neither should there be a search of such rules. Van Huyssteen explains that the search for rational beliefs ceases and refocuses on a search for rational people “...who can exercise good sense and good judgement in difficult and complex circumstances” (Van Huyssteen, 1998:26).²

Van Huyssteen (1999:146) regards this as a postfoundationalist move and explains that the rationality of a knowledge claim is determined by the way human agents deal with sufficient reasons or evidence in making a knowledge claim.

The focus now shifts away from *rational claims* to *the rational agent*. This is a move away from abstract thoughts towards acknowledging the contextuality of the embodied mind.³ Van Huyssteen (1999:145) explains that a rational knowledge claim is now understood as a

2. Brown (1988:185), however, makes an important distinction: “... we must distinguish between a rational *agent* and a rational *person*, for we will see that a single person may be capable of acting as a rational agent in some circumstances, but not others.” Furthermore, Brown (1988:186) points out: “We depend on our ability to be rational when we lack clear rules. When rules are available, an informed agent will recognize that it is the case, and will apply those rules; it is when rules are not available that we require rational assessment.”

3. This focus on the embodied mind is reminiscent of some existentialist scholars. Miguel de Unamuno stated: “Philosophy is a product of the humanity of each philosopher, and each philosopher is a man of flesh and bone who addresses himself to other men of flesh and bone like himself. And, let him do what he will, he philosophizes not with the reason only, but with the will, with the feelings, with the flesh and with the bones, with the whole soul and with the whole body. It is the man that philosophizes” (Macquarrie 1978:15).

knowledge claim arrived at by a rational agent.⁴ Furthermore, Nicholas Rescher argues that the ability to act as a rational agent is determined by the quality of the expertise on the subject (Van Huyssteen, 1999:146). This does not imply that only experts can be rational. However, it does imply that sometimes the only rational decision to be made is to seek expert advice. To some extent everyone already identifies rational agents in their day-to-day lives. We regard the opinions of some as being more valuable than others.

Shifting the emphasis to the rational agent automatically integrates the social dimension of decision-making (Van Huyssteen, 1999:146). Furthermore, all knowledge claims have to be submitted to a community of people with the necessary skills to exercise responsible judgment on the particular issue at hand. It should be a community possessing the necessary skill to make an appropriate judgement on the issue (1999:147). In other words, rational agents of a specific tradition are needed to evaluate the merit of specific reflections within the context it is offered.

What makes this suggestion attractive is its departure from Kuhn. Van Huyssteen explains that Kuhn argued that an agreement reached by the majority makes a knowledge claim rational (Van Huyssteen, 1999:148). Van Huyssteen agrees that one cannot be rational in a vacuum, but the agreement of the majority does not make a knowledge claim rational, because consensus is not a prerequisite for rationality (Van Huyssteen, 1999:148). Van Huyssteen explains that the knowledge claims of agents need only be submitted to their peers for evaluation as to their rationality. Interestingly, although one needs a community of experts to arrive at a rational knowledge claim, it is still the agent that holds the rational knowledge claim (Van Huyssteen, 1999:149).

This point is very important, because a rational agent is not someone who knows rational propositions (Van Huyssteen, 1999:149). A community may function on the knowledge claim of a rational agent, but this does not make the community rational. The rational knowledge claim is held by the rational agent and adopted by the community. However, a rational agent can only be rational within a community and therefore the rational agent is dependent on the community just as the community is dependent on the rational agent.⁵ Rational knowledge claims are *involved* knowledge claims. It is the fallibility of the rational agent's judgments and knowledge claims that leads to the requirement of ongoing critical evaluation by the community of experts. However, the question of relativity still persists.

Regarding relativity, Van Huyssteen (1999:147) explains that while the rational agent is conditioned by a historically specific context, the agent's reflection need not be completely determined by the context. There is a big difference between *context-determined* and *context-conditioned* knowledge claims, and the postfoundationalist argues for the latter. Rational agents' knowledge claims can transcend the particularities of their social and historical context. Cilliers reflected on the contextuality of knowledge claims in his discussion of *provisionality*.

4. This links with the distinction Cilliers makes between *information* and *knowledge*. Knowledge is generated by the knowing subject.

5. Brown (1988) explains: "...a rational belief or decision is one that an individual has arrived at through a two-step process (these steps need not be chronologically distinct). The belief is based on judgement – where possession of the relevant information and expertise is a necessary condition for a judgement, and this judgement has been tested against the judgements of those who are also capable of exercising judgement in this case."

4.2 Resources of rationality

Cilliers argued that we need to be sensitive to the levels and limits of our knowledge. This does not mean there is no knowledge to be gained:

Knowledge acquisition is not the objective pursuit of truth, but rather a process of working towards finding suitable strategies for dealing with complex phenomena (Woermann & Cilliers, 2012:406).

In order to facilitate this knowledge-gaining process, Woermann and Cilliers suggested four resources that strengthen and promote a critical and modest attitude in dealing with complex phenomena. These are provisionality, transgressivity, irony and imagination (Woermann & Cilliers, 2012:408-414; Preiser & Cilliers 2010:268-276).

Provisionality entails a reminder that the meanings of our knowledge claims are dependent on the context in which they function (Woermann & Cilliers, 2012:408). However, concepts can be repeated and understandable across contexts, but the meaning of the concept will shift every time. Furthermore, descriptions and meanings change as the interpretation of the context changes, because complex systems are open and therefore never finally settled (Woermann & Cilliers, 2012:409).

Transgressivity involves the recognition that a modest attitude can never re-enforce accepted and imposed boundaries (Woermann & Cilliers, 2012:409). However, whilst we recognise the diversity and provisionality of our knowledge, we have to take a position, even though it is a temporary one (Woermann & Cilliers, 2012:410).⁶ This is the irony of a modest attitude – simultaneously affirming and undermining our knowledge and experience (Woermann & Cilliers, 2012:412).

Imagination, “constitutes the ability to generate variety and options, and to break out of one’s closed or limited hermeneutical circles” (Woermann & Cilliers 2012:413). Furthermore, Woermann and Cilliers clarified that there are two types of diversity. *Requisite* diversity refers to the minimal level of variety needed for a complex system to cope with its environment. *Excess* diversity, generated by imagination, refers to the ability of a system to experiment internally thereby generating a variety of strategies for operating in its environment (Woermann & Cilliers, 2012:414). It implies that we should allow personal and social imagination to flourish, because it is the only way that we can productively engage our environment (Woermann & Cilliers, 2012:415). This is important for every individual, because the individual’s state depends on the state of others in the system (Woermann & Cilliers, 2012:416). It is an investment in the future of the system (Cilliers, 2010:63).

The resources Cilliers argues for links extraordinarily well with the *shared resources of human rationality* Van Huyssteen argues for – responsible judgement and progressive problem-solving. *Responsible judgement* has been discussed. *Progressive problem-solving* involves making the most progressive theory choice – choosing the theories that have the best problem-solving abilities while allowing for further development (Van Huyssteen, 1999:165). The postfoundationalist chooses the research strategy most appropriate to the specific problem within the specific context (1999:172). As such, the postfoundationalist acknowledges

6. This links with Browns notion of rational agents’ capability to function appropriately on knowledge and beliefs they later modify.

the contextuality of theories, but does not fall prey to relativism because *progressive problem-solving* is an epistemic "tool" shared by all (1999:173).

The most important link between Cilliers' and Van Huyssteen's resources is to be found in their arguments for intelligibility and its relation to truth. Cilliers (1998:13) wrote:

... we wish to model complex systems because we want to understand them better. The main requirement for our models accordingly shifts from having to be correct to being rich in information.

However, intelligibility does not warrant truth (Osberg, et al., 2008:220). In agreement, Van Huyssteen distinguishes between that which is rational and that which is true. Achieving truth does not mean one has achieved rationality, or vice versa (Van Huyssteen, 1999:158). This is why Van Huyssteen describes rationality as the pursuit of the best reasons for our knowledge claims. Pursuing the truth does not make one rational. Being rational means searching for the best possible reasons why one claims what one claims. Therefore, Van Huyssteen (1999:12) describes rationality as:

The epistemic quest for *optimal understanding* and *intelligibility*; and the epistemic skill of *responsible judgement* involving *progressive problem-solving*.

While *rationality* and *truth* are vital, Van Huyssteen concurs with Brown's, Rescher's and Michael Stenmark's argument for a weak link between the rationality and truth:

... we proceed rationally in attempting to *discover* truth, and we take those conclusions that are rationally acceptable as our best *estimations* of the truth (Van Huyssteen, 1999:158)

While recent theories may be regarded as better than previous theories, they should not be understood as "closer-to-the-truth" (Van Huyssteen, 1999:158). Moreover, what is achieved is not an *approximation* of truth, but an *estimation* of truth⁷ (1999:159). Truth could now be described as the best possible estimates we are able to make in the present moment.

The focus on intelligibility and its relation to truth by both Cilliers and Van Huyssteen brings forth a very exciting possibility of sustainable interdisciplinary reflection. As discussed above, Cilliers advocates for a modest epistemic attitude informed by complexity. This attitude involves an approach to knowledge that moves beyond the objectivist/subjectivist dichotomy by "thinking both", because understanding particular complex systems or aspects of such systems, sometimes requires the possibility of gathering and manipulating knowledge without the intervention of a subject (Cilliers, 2000b:8-9). However, the social sciences and humanities cannot work with the same methodology as the natural sciences (Cilliers, 2008:53).

In agreement, Van Huyssteen (1999:116) explains that because of the interpreted and interpretative nature of experiences, scholars are empowered to identify the rational integrity of their respective disciplines by offering their own resources of critique, articulation and

7. Van Huyssteen (1999:158) comments: "As far as scientific theories go, our present world picture thus represents a better estimate than our past attempts only in the sense that it is, comparatively speaking, more warranted than they are because a wider range of data has been accommodated." This is one of the reasons why Van Huyssteen argues for interdisciplinary research, because it will yield an even better estimation of the truth.

justification. He remarks that such a view responds appropriately to the postmodern argument that there are no universal epistemic systems (1999:116). This allows for methodology to be constructed contextually without forcing epistemic criteria onto it. Thus, scholars construct methodologies appropriate to their respective disciplines and contexts, according to what seems reasonable in pursuit of intelligibility and optimal understanding (1999:116). This means that all disciplines need not have similar methodologies. What is important is that they employ responsible judgement in constructing their methodologies. However, it is essential that all disciplines allow open discussion of their unique methodologies. This way the integrity of each discipline is protected, while allowing critique of its methodology and knowledge claims.

In this we find the exciting possibility of sustainable interdisciplinary reflection. Scholars from different disciplines are encouraged to develop models that would generate understanding of that which they mean to understand. These models may be different, but if they are developed by drawing on the shared resources argued for by Cilliers and Van Huyssteen, the knowledge generated in these disciplines can then be brought into interdisciplinary reflection by drawing on the shared resource, *transversality* (Van Huyssteen, 1999:136).⁸

5. CONCLUSION

The postfoundationalist acknowledges that our knowledge is contextually shaped, but argues that the resources we employ in coming to our knowledge is not contextually bound. In other words, while the knowledge that rational agents generate is shaped by their context, the “tools” they use for generating their knowledge are shared by all rational agents. This view celebrates postmodernists’ insistence on the contextuality of knowledge claims, but argues that this does not mean rationality itself is relative, because the resources of rationality are shared by all rational agents. Van Huyssteen (1999:113) explains that a postfoundationalist attitude frees us to acknowledge our strong commitments, whilst recognising the shared resources of human rationality in different modes of reflection. Moreover, a truly postfoundational attitude rediscovers the embeddedness of our rational reflection in the context of living, evolving and developing traditions.

This illuminates Cilliers’ and Van Huyssteen’s common pursuit. Although Cilliers’ and Van Huyssteen’s epistemic attitudes have different histories, they are both advocating for an epistemology that creatively moves beyond foundationalist and nonfoundationalist epistemologies. In pursuing such an epistemology they share resources of understanding and as such assist each other in developing a modest postfoundationalist description of human rationality.

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8. Van Huyssteen (2008a:518) explains: “Transversal reasoning ... is a pragmatic approach to the performative praxis of reason as we venture down the risky road of interdisciplinary dialogue. As such, it is not about arbitrarily opening ourselves up or closing ourselves off to other viewpoints. It is about discovering what it might mean to share an epistemic space that allows for the kind of interdisciplinary critical evaluation that includes a critical self-evaluation and optimal understanding.”

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“Imaging the Image of God”: David H. Kelsey oor die *Imago Dei*

ABSTRACT

The doctrine of the *imago Dei* has long functioned as a core theological affirmation in theological anthropologies. However, interpretations of what it means for human beings to be created in the image of God vary widely, which, in turn, has implications for the discourses on human uniqueness, human dignity, human rights and ecological sustainability, among others. This article traces four normative interpretations of the *imago Dei* – substantive, functional, relational and eschatological – and goes on to argue that these four interpretations need not be understood as mutually exclusive, as they are often treated, but could, within an unsystematic systematic whole, be held together. This article analyses David Kelsey’s understanding of the *imago Dei* within his recently published theological anthropology, *Eccentric Existence* (2009), to illustrate how these four interpretations could function together.

1. INLEIDING

Wat is h mens?

Hierdie vraag vorm die tradisionele kern van teologiese antropologie (Kelsey, 2009:895).¹ Die vraag na die aard van menswees waaier egter uit in vele ander vrae, en het daarom implikasies vir, onder andere, die verskillende diskoerse oor menslike uniekheid (Van Huyssteen, 126),² menswaardigheid (Huber, 1996:41), menseregte (Dalton, 1999:31-34), en ekologiese volhoubaarheid (Dalton, 1999:31-34).

Die leerstelling van die *imago Dei* is egter telkens deur verskillende teologiese denkers op verskillende maniere geïnterpreteer. Een so 'n interpretasie is David Kelsey se argument dat mense na die beeld van Jesus van Nasaret – of beelde van die beeld van God – geskape is. Hierdie artikel tree in gesprek met Kelsey se onlangs gepubliseerde boek, *Eccentric Existence* (2009), en ondersoek vervolgens hoe Kelsey se verstaan van die *imago Dei* 'n antwoord op die vraag na wat h mens is, skets.

1. Reeds vir Berkouwer, 50 jaar gelede, staan hierdie vraag aan die hart van teologiese en filosofiese denke (1962:9).

2. Die leerstelling van die *imago Dei* is een van die kerntradisies van die Christelike geloof, en nou verbind aan die religieuse oortuiging dat menslike wesens spesiaal is omdat hulle na die beeld van God geskape is (Van Huyssteen, 2004:112; 117; 121). Denkers soos George Newlands koppel Christologie selfs aan menseregte, en interpreteer vanuit die *imago Dei* 'n etiek van sorg en solidariteit binne menslike gemeenskappe wat menslikheid (en die moontlikheid daarvan om volle menslike kapasiteite uit te oefen, in ooreenstemming met die belofte van Jesus Christus om die lewe in oorvloed te skenk) bevorder (Van Huyssteen, 2004:158).

2. VERSKILLENDE INTERPRETASIES VAN DIE IMAGO DEI

Skriftuurlike verwysings na die *imago Dei* is beperk en yl versprei. Interpretasies van hierdie Skrifgedeeltes is ook uiters kontroversieel en betwisbaar. Daar is drie eksplisiete verwysings na die *imago Dei* in die Ou Testament, wat almal in Genesis 1 – 11 voorkom. Die belangrikste en mees uitdruklike verwysing na die *imago Dei* word in Genesis 1:26-28 gevind, waarin die eerste verhaal van die skepping van menslike wesens weergegee word. Twee ander tekste verwys uitdruklik na die *imago Dei* – naamlik Genesis 3:22, waarin daar verwys word na die kennis oor goed en kwaad, en Genesis 9:1-7, waarin die neem van menslike lewe verbied word op grond van die *imago Dei*. Buiten hierdie verwysings is daar een “poëtiese eggo” te vinde in Psalm 8:4-6, waar die glorie van die mens onder bespreking kom (Van Huyssteen, 2004:117-123; Middleton, 2005:16-17). In die Nuwe Testament is daar enkele verwysings na Psalm 8, maar hierin is dit Jesus van Nasaret, liever as die mensdom, wat die beeld van God weerspieël. Soos wat die eerste mens, Adam, as tussenganger tussen God en die mens optree, so definieer Jesus van Nasaret opnuut die verhouding tussen God en mens (sien Hebreërs 2:6-8, 1 Korintiërs 15:45, 1 Korintiërs 3:1-8, 2 Korintiërs 4:4) (Van Huyssteen, 2004:123-124; Middleton, 2005:16-17).

Wentzel van Huyssteen identifiseer vier normatiewe interpretasies van die *imago Dei* in die geskiedenis van Christelike interpretasie, naamlik substantief, funksioneel, relasioneel (of eksistensiële), en eskatologies (Van Huyssteen, 2004:126).

Substantiewe interpretasies hanteer die *imago Dei* as sinoniem met die kognitiewe, as verwysend na rede, rasionaliteit en intellek. Die betekenis van die beeld van God word meestal, hierdeur, in terme van 'n metafisiese ooreenkoms tussen die menslike siel en die wese van God verstaan (Middleton, 2005:18). Bekende voorstanders van hierdie posisie sou Filo, Augustinus, Thomas Aquinas (wat die beeld van God as die mensdom se mag tot rede sou interpreteer), Martin Luther, Johannes Calvyn en Richard Niebuhr wees (hoewel Van Huyssteen laasgenoemde se lees van die *imago Dei* liever as eksistensiële³ sou tipeer).⁴ Substantiewe interpretasies beklee egter, ten spyte van hulle oorheersende invloed op die geskiedenis van idees in die Weste (met hulle klem op rede, intellek, en verstand), nie meer 'n prominente plek binne hedendaagse werke en teoloë se denke nie, argumenteer Van Huyssteen (2004:126-134).⁵ Die mens as beeld van God is vir substantiewe interpretasies 'n

3. Van Huyssteen, wat vir Noreen Herzfeld in haar analise navolg, verwoord hierdie posisie as volg: “...[A]mong contemporary theologians it has been especially Reinhold Niebuhr who has followed Augustine most closely, and by finding the image of God in human reason or rationality, has significantly prolonged a more substantive interpretation of the *imago Dei*... At the same time, however, Niebuhr’s reading of the image of God in his Gifford Lectures can also be seen as distinctly existentialist... Rationality by itself is not enough to capture the dignity of humanity, and humans are in fact driven to something beyond reason, a self-transcendence, and it is the existential longing for a God who transcends the world that really sets human beings apart from other creatures” (2004:132-133).

4. Richard Middleton wys daarop dat die meeste patristiese, middeleeuse en moderne interpreteerders wat hierdie lyn van interpretasie sou voorstaan nie 'n eksegetiese vraag aan die Genesis-tekste sou vra nie, maar 'n spekulatiewe vraag: op watter maniere is mense soos God en nie soos diere nie? (2005:18-19) Middleton wys op die invloed van Platonisme op Christelike teologie binne die idee dat die rasonele, substantiewe siel die goddelike argetipe naboots (2005:19). Binne die Grieks Ortodokse tradisies is die substantiewe beeld van God dinamies verstaan naamlik as 'n verlossende deelname aan die goddelike natuur, wat as *theosis* of “vergoddeliking” bekendstaan (Middleton, 2005:20).

5. Sulke interpretasies is problematies op twee maniere, argumenteer Van Huyssteen: (1) weens die funksionering met 'n verstand/liggaam dualisme (en daarom 'n abstrakte verstaan van die *imago Dei*),

analogie van wese (Middleton, 2005:19): 'n mens se wese stem op sekere maniere met God se wese ooreen, in hierdie geval wat die mens se vermoë om te kan rasionaliseer betref. Substantiewe interpretasies sou die beeld van God in mense se vermoë om te (kan) *dink*, sien.

Funksionele interpretasies hanteer die *imago Dei* dikwels as verwysend na die "koninklike roeping" van menslike wesens om as God se agente en verteenwoordigers in die wêreld op te tree, en daarom koninklike of regeringsmag gegee word om te deel in God se regering of administrasie van die aarde se hulpbronne en wesens (Middleton, 2005:27). Die bekendste voorstander van hierdie posisie is waarskynlik Gerhard von Rad.⁶ Vir Von Rad sou die *imago Dei* nie so veel gevind word in wat menslike wesens is nie, maar in die doel waarvoor hulle geroep is. Hierdie interpretasies sou tot 'n groot mate substantiewe interpretasies van die *imago Dei* binne die Christelike tradisie vervang, en veral populêr wees onder Ou-Testamentiese eksegete, vir drie redes: (1) die holistiese beeld van menswees wat in hierdie interpretasie gehandhaaf word; (2) binne die konteks van die boek Genesis se *imago Dei* tekste maak dit die meeste sin om die beeld van God te verbind met die opdrag om te heers oor die aarde; (3) die erns wat gemaak word met die historiese en literêre kontekste van die priesterlike tekste (Van Huyssteen, 2004:134-136).⁷ Die mens as beeld van God is vir funksionele interpretasies 'n bemiddeling van mag, oftewel die verantwoordelikheid om as rentmeesters oor die aarde op te tree (Middleton, 2005:28). Funksionele interpretasies sou die beeld van God in mense sien in hulle verantwoordelikheid om sekere pligte te verrig of dinge te (moet) *doen*.

Relasionele interpretasies sou egter funksionele interpretasies toenemend begin vervang, argumenteer Van Huyssteen, met hulle klem op God se verhouding met die mens. Die bekendste voorganger van hierdie posisie is Karl Barth, wat die teologiese argument vir sy relasionele interpretasie konseptueel sou inbed in God se trinitariese aard.⁸ Hier behels die *imago Dei* nie alleen die kapasiteit vir verhouding nie, maar die verhouding self ook – eerstens in die verhouding met God, en daarna in die verhoudings met medemense en mensewesens. Barth stel voor dat die beeld van God verwys na die Godgegewe kapasiteit van menslike wesens in hulle medemenslikheid (as manlik en vroulik) om deur die Woord van God aangespreek te word en om op die Woord van God te kan antwoord (Middleton, 2005:22). Die beeld van God

en (2) weens 'n (soms implisiete) skeiding tussen mans en vroue, met die klem op die beeld van God wat sterker in mans na vore kom (binne die tradisionele assosiasie van Westerse manlikheid met rede en rasionaliteit) as in vroue (binne die tradisionele assosiasie van Westerse vroulikheid met emosie en irrasionaliteit) (2004:126-134). Hierdie interpretasies is ook op 'n derde manier problematies, naamlik deurdat hulle (3) eksegeties swak is, en sonder behoorlike eksegetiese staving vanuit Genesis moet funksioneer (wat ook Karl Barth se grootste kritiek teen die Hervormers se substantiewe interpretasies van die *imago Dei* sou wees, volgens Middleton (2005:21-22)).

6. Richard Middleton skaar nie net homself ook by 'n funksionele (of missionêre, voeg hy by) interpretasie van die beeld van God in Genesis 1:26-28 nie, maar benadruk telkens dat daar byna 'n konsensus in Ou-Testamentiese navorsing bestaan hieroor (2005:26-27).

7. Die grootste sterkpunt van hierdie interpretasies lê dus in die eksegetiese verantwoordbaarheid. 'n Moontlike punt van kritiek sou kon wees teen die gevaarlike implikasies wat 'n ongenueanseerde verstaan van "heers" sou kon beteken vir die ekologie, veral in vandag se ekologiese krisis (Van Huyssteen, 2004:134-136).

8. Gerrit Berkouwer word ook as 'n voorganger vir hierdie interpretasie gesien, en hoewel hy saam met Barth stem daarin dat menslike wesens nie ten volle geken kan word los van hulle verhouding met God nie, verskil hy met Barth rakende die eksegetiese maniere om by hierdie gevolgtrekking te kom. Verder het menslike uniekheid, vir Berkouwer, nie alleen te make met die kapasiteit vir verhouding nie – beliggamde liefde is 'n kernaspek van wat dit beteken om in verhouding te staan. Menslike wesens beeld God af op 'n konkrete wyse in hulle liefde vir mekaar (Van Huyssteen, 2994:138).

kom vir Barth die duidelikste na vore in Jesus Christus, wat alleen die beeld van God is. Barth sou egter steeds verder gaan met sy relasionele argument, en aanvoer dat menslike wesens geskep is om nie alleen te wees nie, maar om in gemeenskap met mekaar – geskape as man en vrou – te wees. Hy vind in die verhouding tussen man en vrou h ooreenstemming met die relasionaliteit van die Triniteit, waaruit hy verder argumenteer dat die mens slegs ten volle mens is – en daarmee saam die beeld van God uitbeeld – in verhoudings (Van Huyssteen, 2004:136-136).⁹ Kortweg, relasionele interpretasies sou die beeld van God in mense sien in die kapasiteit vir die *verhoudings* waarin hulle staan. Die mens as beeld van God is vir relasionele interpretasies daarom geleë in persoonlike ontmoeting (Middleton, 2005:23).

Eskatologiese interpretasies is nog h belangrike hedendaagse beskouing van die mens as beeld van God. Die vernuwing van eskatologiese denke in die twintigste eeu sou ook implikasies vir interpretasies van die *imago Dei* inhou. Dit sou in die besonder beteken dat die ideale verhouding van menslike wesens tot God nie geplaas word in die verlede of in die hede nie, maar in die toekoms. Die bekendste voorgangers van hierdie posisie is Wolfhart Pannenberg en Jürgen Moltmann. Pannenberg interpreteer die *imago Dei* met sy idee van “eksosentrisiteit”, wat behels dat menslike wesens oop is na buite – na ander, na die wêreld, en na h toekoms wat nog nie bereik is nie.¹⁰ Dit is dan ook hierin wat menslike wesens die duidelikste van diere verskil, naamlik deurdat “we humans by nature reach beyond everything we experience in the world in our search for fulfillment and meaning” (Van Huyssteen, 2004:140). Die menslike toekoms vind egter vervulling en h ware identiteit in Jesus Christus, en daarom is die ware identiteit van menslike wesens h relasionaliteit wat gesentreer is op God. Die *imago Dei* word daarmee verstaan as h bron vir rigting – God rig menslike wesens na hulle toekoms, wat daarom wys dat menslike wesens uiteindelik bestem is vir gemeenskap en lewe saam met God (Van Huyssteen, 2004:140).¹¹ Eskatologiese interpretasies sou die beeld van God in mense sien in hulle vermoë of kapasiteit tot selftransendering, oftewel die *oopenheid* waarmee hulle leef, rakende hulleself, medemens, medewesens, die wêreld en hulle toekoms.

Die meeste kritiek teen die verskillende interpretasies van die Genesis-tekste behels dat hulle dikwels eksegeties nie regverdigbaarheid is nie.¹² Telkens is interpreteerders afhanklik

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9. Die grootste swakpunt van hierdie interpretasies sou die grootste sterkpunt van die funksionele interpretasies wees – naamlik, eksegeese. In Middleton se woorde: “Although Barth certainly attempts to root his own interpretation of the *imago Dei* in biblical exegesis, it is not clear that he fares any better than the interpreters he critiques” (met verwysing na Barth se kritiek teen die Hervormers se substansiële interpretasies; sien voetnota 6) (2005:23). Van Huyssteen verwys na die werk van James Barr, wat in sy Gifford Lectures tot die slotsom sou kom dat Barth se interpretasie van die *imago Dei* gebaseer is op onverantwoordelike en onregverdigbare eksegeese, en waarskynlik liever 'n produk is van sy konflik met Emil Brunner oor natuurlike teologie as 'n deeglike en verantwoordbare eksegeese van Bybelse tekste. Ten spyte hiervan sou die relasionele interpretasie van die mens as beeld van God die mees dominante interpretasie in die twintigste en steeds in die een-en-twintigste eeu word (Van Huyssteen, 2004:136-138).
10. Van Huyssteen interpreteer Pannenberg se idee van “eksosentrisiteit” verder: “Exocentricity thus means that humans are always open beyond every experience and beyond any given situation, in fact beyond the world itself. We are even open beyond our own cultural constructions: as we transform nature into culture, and constantly replace earlier forms of culture with new ones, we are also open beyond culture to the future, and to our finding our ultimate destiny in the future. This restlessness of human nature forms an important root of all religious life” (2004:140).
11. Van Huyssteen se kritiek teen Pannenberg sou 'n waarskuwing behels, naamlik dat 'n oorbeklemtoning van die toekoms of van 'n abstrakte visie vir die doel van menslike lewe 'n Skriftuurlike, holistiese beskouing van die mens as beeld van God kon bedreig (2004:142).
12. Die beskuldigings teen spesifiek sistematiese teologieë – deur onder andere Hendrikus Berkhof, wat

van teologiese paradigmas en agendas wat van buite die Bybelse tekste verkry word om die Bybelse tekste self te interpreteer (Middleton, 2005:24).¹³ Dit is juis hierna wat David Kelsey verwys wanneer hy argumenteer dat kontrasterende interpretasies van Genesis 1:26-28 mekaar grootliks uitkanselleer (2009:922-936).¹⁴ Richard Middleton wys daarop dat wat veral problematies is in hedendaagse voorstelle vir hetsy substantiewe óf relasionele interpretasies – wat veral in die skrywes van sistematiese teoloë gevind word – is dat die enorme hoeveelheid Ou-Testamentiese navorsing oor die *imago Dei* wat oor die laaste eeu ontwikkel is, geïgnoreer word. Dit is vir hom problematies omdat (1) die interpretasie van die *imago Dei* deur sistematiese teoloë dikwels 'n dualistiese lees van menswees daarstel deur die menslike liggaam te ignoreer, en (2) 'n virtuele konsensus onder Ou Testamentici gebou is sedert die twintigste eeu oor die betekenis van die *imago Dei* in Genesis (wat, voeg hy by, onderskeibaar is van die tipiese verstane van die *imago Dei* onder sistematiese teoloë) (2005:24-25).

Daar blyk dus, volgens Richard Middleton se analises, 'n oorwegende verskil tussen sistematiese teoloë en Ou Testamentici te wees wat interpretasievoordeure betref. Waar eersgenoemde klaarblyklik 'n toegeneentheid vir substantiewe en relasionele interpretasies weerspieël, fokus laasgenoemde waarskynlik hoofsaaklik op funksionele interpretasies. Hierdie artikel argumenteer dat Kelsey se beskrywing van die *imago Dei*, binne die groter logika van sy projek, op 'n manier al vier hierdie interpretasies – substantief, funksioneel, relasioneel, eskatologies – sou kon reflekteer, en dat hulle, binne sy breër argument, nie noodwendig wedersydig eksklusief is nie.

3. DAVID KELSEY OOR IMAGO DEI

David Kelsey se magnum opus, *Eccentric Existence* (2009), is 'n teologiese antropologie wat drie vrae rakende menslike wesens ondersoek, naamlik: Wat is 'n menslike wese? Wie is ek/wie is ons? Hoe behoort ons te wees? Die oorkoepelende tema van Kelsey se projek, wat hierdie drie vrae aanspreek, is dat die realiteit en waarde en waardigheid van menslike wesens buite hulleself lê, in God wat met hulle verhouding tree op verskillende, konkrete wyses. Vir Kelsey bestaan menslike wesens, soos alles wat nie God is nie, daarom eksentriek, buite hulleself – en in God wat in verhouding met hulle tree deur hulle te skep, tot eskatologiese vervulling te bring, en te versoen (en, belangrik vir Kelsey, dié drie in daardie logiese volgorde). Wat sy

argumenteer dat hulle telkens betekenis in die tekstuele verwysings na die *imago Dei* sou ingiet, liever as om implisiete betekenis binne die tekste te ontgin (Berkhof, 1979:179 in Middleton, 2005:18) – behoort ingedagte gehou te word.

13. Hoewel Richard Middleton ook beklemtoon dat die kompleksiteit van hermeneutiek gerespekteer behoort te word, wat onder andere behels dat alle interpreteerders na 'n teks kom met hulle voorverstande en leesprioriteite (2005:24).
14. Wentzel van Huyssteen argumenteer daarom, saam met Michael Welker, vir groter beliggaming en kontekstualisering van die *imago Dei*, in 'n beweging weg van abstraksie en vaagheid. In sy herlees van klassieke skeppingstekste sien hy die beeld van God nie in mense as gespreksgenote, of eksklusief in die toekomstige eskatologiese lot, of in analogieë tot abstrakte trinitariese taalgebruik nie. Liever verstaan hy menslike wesens as beliggamde wesens. Uiteindelik vind hy aansluiting by 'n relasionele interpretasie van die *imago Dei*, mits die kompleksiteit en diversiteit van die tradisie van Christelike interpretasie hiervan inaggeneem word, en indien relasionaliteit dui op transformasie – geregtigheid, versoening en bevryding. (2004:145-158). Verder verstaan Van Huyssteen die “alleenheid” – of uniekheid – van menslike wesens in die wêreld in gesprek met die *imago Dei* as tweeledig: (1) alleenlik menslike wesens, van alle diere en van alle plante en van alle ander lewende wesens, is geskep in die beeld van God en uitgenooi om in 'n persoonlike verhouding met God te staan; (2) menslike wesens is in werklikheid die laaste van die hominiede op die planeet Aarde (Van Huyssteen, 2004:121).

teologiese antropologie besonders maak is nie alleen die fokus op die eksentriek aard van menslike bestaan en identiteit nie, maar ook dat hy vrae rondom menslike wesens ondersoek sonder enige verwysing na die *imago Dei*. In sy eie woorde, “the project makes all these moves without reference to the classical theological anthropological trope, ‘Human beings bear the *imago Dei*’” (Kelsey, 2009:1008).

Sy projek, erken Kelsey self, argumenteer teen die Christelike tradisie in (2009:897). Die verspreiding van verskillende tipes aansprake oor menslike wesens wat tradisioneel gemaak is en word in Christelike teologiese antropologie word bymekaar gehou deur die verbintenis met die sentrale tese van Genesis 1:26a, dat die mens volgens die beeld van God gemaak is, te handhaaf.

Die *imago Dei* is tradisioneel verstaan as h kern strukturele eienskap van menslike wesens, wat hulle onderskei van diere (wat, lei die argument, nie God se beeld uitbeeld nie). Die beeld van God in mense is verder ook geassosieer met die rasionaliteit en vryheid wat veronderstel word deur morele verantwoordelikheid (waaroor instink-gedrewe diere nie beskik nie), wat God se perfektheid uitbeeld.

Die sistematiese en konseptuele tuiste van teologiese antropologieë oor die eeue heen sou dikwels die leerstelling van die *imago Dei* wees. Kelsey toon oortuigend aan dat dit inderdaad die geval was, deur te begin met Ireanaeus van Lyons, deur Protestante sowel as Rooms-Katolieke teologieë heen, en wys daarop dat die sistematiese organisering van teologiese antropologie rondom die *imago Dei* dominant sou bly tot in die twintigste eeu (2009:895-896). Kelsey wys daarop dat, binne hierdie tradisies heen, “the ‘image of God’ serves as the principle of continuity that underlies the series of theologically significant changes that, according to traditional Christian anthropology, human being undergoes” (2009:896).

Die *imago Dei* is egter nie op hierdie manier beskikbaar aan Kelsey se projek nie, soos wat die afwesigheid daarvan in sy drie voorstelle vir hoe God in verhouding tree met mense ook duidelik toon. Daarom kan die verstaan van die mens as beeld van God nie as instrument om teologiese antropologiese aansprake in h sistematiese geheel te integreer dien nie. Die doel van sy Koda (reg aan die einde van sy twee-volume werk), waarin hy vir die eerste keer uitvoerige aandag bestee aan die konsep *imago Dei*, is om h alternatiewe wyse te skets waarin die tema van die *imago Dei* ingespan kan word om h teosentriese prent te skets van hoe die mens as eksentriek wese bestaan. Die alternatiewe interpretasie (waarmee hy veral naby aan Karl Barth funksioneer) wat hy voorstel is Christologies: die beeld van God is, vir Kelsey, nie h algemene eienskap van menslike wesens as God se skepsels nie, maar gekoppel aan die konkrete persoon van Jesus Christus, in sy eie onvervangbare persoonlike identiteit (2009:896-897). Kelsey maak in die besonder gebruik van die metafoer van h “driedubbele heliks” om die innerlike logika en onderlinge verhoudings tussen die verskillende narratiewe strome logika uit te beeld.

4. DAVID KELSEY SE “DRIEDUBBELE HELIKS”

Die hoofrede vir Kelsey se huiwering om die tradisionele denke en argumente in interpretasies van die *imago Dei* na te volg het te make met sy wantroue in h oorkoepelende, verenigende enkele narratief om menslike wesens te verstaan. In sy woorde (2009:897):

“The major reason that the traditional way of systematizing theological anthropology

around the theme of the *imago Dei* will not do is a formal reason. The problem lies in the conventional procedure's assumption that anthropological claims made in Christian practices of secondary theology are warranted by a single canonical narrative that has a single plot or narrative logic."

Liewer, sou hy argumenteer, behoort die praktyke van Christelike sekondêre teologie sistematies onsistematies te wees. Die alternatief wat hy voorstel is om menslike bestaan te verstaan by wyse van die beeld van 'n "driedubbele heliks", wat hy beskryf as 'n drie-dimensionele vorm wat soos 'n draad rondom 'n silinder gedraai is (2009:897). Juis omdat die drie dele van sy antropologie – skepping, eskatologiese vervulling, versoening – nie na 'n slotsom beweeg nie, maar oop bly in hulle oorvleueling, is die beeld van twee of meer helikse wat rondom mekaar draai meer gepas. Die drie voorstelle van hoe God in verhouding tree met mense, uitgedruk in twee "narratiewe logikas", behels 'n heelheid-in-diversiteit wat die beeld wat hy in gedagte het behoorlik vervat (2009:898). Hy argumenteer vir 'n eie narratiewe logika of lyn in die verhaal van God wat skep, en beskryf hierdie as 'n heliks. Hy sien 'n tweede, eie narratief-logiese lyn inherent in die verhale van God wat tot eskatologiese vervulling bring en versoen – naamlik, dat hulle albei verhale is van die drie-enige God wat met mense in verhouding tree in dieselfde konkrete historiese onderwerp, Jesus van Nasaret (2009:898). Elkeen van hierdie verhale – eskatologiese vervulling en versoening – het egter ook hulle eie, spesifieke interne logika. Terselfdertyd kan hulle egter nie van mekaar geskei word nie, omdat hulle albei radikaal Christosentries is. Kelsey sien in die verhouding van die twee verhale dat hulle in 'n spiraal, binne 'n dubbele heliks, om mekaar draai, met 'n vaste interne struktuur aan die verhouding tussen die twee. Uiteindelik draai die dubbele heliks (God wat tot eskatologiese vervulling bring en versoen, soos duidelik in die lewe en dood van Jesus van Nasaret) rondom die heliks (God wat skep) om 'n driedubbele heliks te vorm. Geeneen van die verhale kan egter in 'n ander opgeneem word nie, omdat elkeen van hulle se narratiewe logika hulle onverminderbaar twee spesifieke tipes verhaal maak (2009:899).

Die orde van die voorstelle en die narratiewe logika van die drie verhale is vir Kelsey van kardinale belang, nie net omdat hulle saam 'n teosentriese beeld skep van menslike eksentriek bestaan nie, maar ook omdat hulle drie aspekte van lewende menslike persoonlike liggame in gemeenskap – wat saam die afbeelding en gelykenis van die *imago Dei* uitbeeld – uitdruk. Die drie dele van sy projek draai rondom mekaar in die vorm van 'n driedubbele heliks.

Die implikasies hiervan, vir Kelsey, is dat dit kommentaar op wat elk te sê het oor wat die beeld van God in elke mens moontlik maak, verskerp, meer kompleks maak, en verdiep, in 'n nie-geslote wyse wat elke poging om menslike bestaan te sistematiseer teenstaan. Dit is belangrik omdat Kelsey menslike bestaan liewer as ('n oop, veranderbare) "misterie" wil verstaan as ('n geslote, voorspelbare) "stelsel" of eenheid.

Kelsey gee daarom voorkeur aan Nuwe-Testamentiese gebruike (liewer as Ou-Testamentiese gebruike) van "beeld van God" in verhouding tot Christelike teologiese antropologie. Een rede hiervoor is die problematiek rondom die interpretasie van die kerntekste in die Ou Testament, Genesis 1:26-28, deurdat die mees versigtige en invloedryke eksegeses mekaar hoofsaaklik uitkanselleer. In Kelsey se woorde, "[e]xegetical debates about Genesis 1:26-28 are simply too inconclusive to warrant giving 'image of God' the central, anchorlike role it has traditionally played in theological anthropology's accounts of what human being is" (2009:900).¹⁵ Kelsey

15. Linda Woodhead (2006:234) stem saam: "The difficulty in pinning down the meaning of Genesis 1:26 is apparent in the long, varied, and inconclusive tradition of interpretation that surrounds it."

self verkies daarom h Christosentriese verstaan van die *imago Dei*, waarin die Genesis-tekste nie so h sentrale rol speel om die inhoud van die verhouding tussen God en mens te bepaal nie, maar liever die Nuwe Testament se tekste.

5. CHRISTOSENTRIESE IMAGO DEI

Die “beeld van God” word vir Kelsey egter ook teologies ryker gebruik in Nuwe-Testamentiese tekste – ook deur die noue assosiasies met die uitdrukkings “glorie van God” en “Gees” – en daarom kies Kelsey om die Nuwe-Testamentiese interpretasies voorop te stel. Verder nog sou Nuwe-Testamentiese gebruike van die frase “beeld van God” nie onbehoorlike uitbreidings wees van die frase se gebruik deur die priesterlike redakteur(s) in Genesis nie (2009:901). In hierdie sin staan Kelsey se projek in die lyn van teologiese antropologieë wat onlangs verskyn het (cf. 2009:901), wat ook Christelike antropologiese denke liever koppel aan verwysings na die Nuwe Testament as aan Ou-Testamentiese gebruike van “beeld van God” (2009:901). Kelsey se projek, soos hierdie onlangse teologiese antropologieë, interpreteer die *imago Dei* Christosentries, omdat so h fokus die sistematiese verbindings tussen die verskillende aspekte wat normaalweg in teologiese antropologie gemaak word, aanspreek. In kontras hiermee wil Kelsey se projek egter die leerstelling van die skepping óók betrek – deur daarop te wys dat teologiese antropologie se sistematiese tuiste terselfdertyd binne die leerstelling van skepping, die leerstelling van eskatologiese vervulling én die leerstelling van versoening gesetel is, sonder dat enige van hierdie verhale in h ander opgeneem word. Anders gestel, Kelsey se projek wys daarop dat die uitdrukking “beeld van God” (Christosentries verstaan) tegelykertyd die antropologiese “Wat?”, “Hoe?” en “Wie?” vrae aanspreek (2009:902).

h Christosentriese verstaan van die *imago Dei* is verder vir Kelsey belangrik omdat dit te make het met die vraag na h bepaalde verstaan van God (wat hy ook verstaan as vrae rondom die “goddelike ekonomie”). Wat sy verstaan van die “beeld van God” bevestig, is nie alleen h trinitariese verstaan van God nie, maar ook h belangrike band tussen hoe God intern (binne die Triniteit) en ekstern (buite die Triniteit) in verhouding tree: dit karakteriseer God as “the triune God self-relating *in se* in the triune life, and not merely relating *ad extra* to all that is not God” (2009:917). Die betroubaarheid van God wat in verhouding tree met alles wat nie God is nie, is gesetel in die bevestiging van Jesus as die beeld van God. Trouens, vir Kelsey is dit Jesus wat vir God in sy menslikheid afbeeld. Indien die persoon van Jesus in sy menslikheid vir God afbeeld, dan is God *in se* dieselfde God *ad extra* waarin en waardeur Jesus van Nasaret bestaan in wat hy doen en beleef (2009:918). In sy woorde (2009:918):

“In short, in traditional theological jargon, identification of Jesus as the image of God warrants a move from accounts of the economic Trinity to accounts of the immanent Trinity, to accounts of God *in se* whether God relates to reality other than God or does not.”

Die ekonomiese (God wat in verhouding tree *ad extra*) en die immanente (God wat in verhouding tree *in se*) werking van God is onseibaar omdat, volgens kanoniese Christelike verhale, God in vrye en liefdevolle selfbepaling toegewyd is om in verhouding te tree met realiteit wat nie God is nie. God bly getrou aan God se karakter en selftoewyding, en daarom verstaan Kelsey God as Drie-enig in die immanente sowel as die ekonomiese aspekte van God wat in verhouding tree met alles wat nie God is nie (2009:919). Kelsey se beskrywing van God as trinitariese misterie, binne so h verstaan van hoe God in verhouding tree met alles wat nie God is nie, behels dat Jesus h misterie is (2009:920), omdat Jesus die beeld van God uitbeeld:

"If Jesus in his humanity is the image of God *and* disclosive of God's mystery, then not only is the image of God in some way as much mystery as that of which it is the disclosure, but the God of which Jesus is the image is in some way as much mystery as Jesus is."

Kelsey se argument vir 'n Christosentriese verstaan van die mens as beeld van God word daarom beskryf aan die hand van die titel van sy groot werk, "eccentric existence." Die antwoord op wat 'n mens is, op wat dit beteken om mens te wees, lê vir Kelsey in die eksentriese bestaan van menslike wesens. Mense is diegene wat, sonder hulle eie toedoen of bydrae, geskape is, tot eskatologiese vervulling gebring word en versoen is, en wat hulle ware identiteit en bestaan in Jesus van Nasaret, die beeld van God, vind.

6. EKSENTRIESE BESTAAN AS "IMAGING THE IMAGE OF GOD"

Christosentriese interpretasie van die beeld van God staan gevolglik in die hart van Kelsey se projek oor hoe God in verhouding tree met alles wat nie God is nie. Vir Kelsey dra mense nie in hulleself die beeld van God nie, maar beeld hulle die beeld van God af (2009:1009). Die kern voorstel wat Kelsey maak vir hoe menslike wesens verstaan behoort te word sentreer rondom menslike wesens as sterflike lewende misteries. Jesus van Nasaret is die glorie van God in sy eie geskape menslike liggaamlikheid, as beeld van God. Menslike wesens beeld Jesus af, wat, as die paradigmatische menslike wese, die glorie van God in sy menslikheid weerspieël. Menslike wesens wat Jesus afbeeld, en daarom beeld van die beeld van God is, beeld die trinitariese lewende misterie op hulle eie sterflike wyse uit, en is daarom self sterflike lewende misteries (2009:1010).

Soverre Jesus die paradigmatische menslike wese is, is alle ander menslike wesens beelde van die beeld van God juis in die vryheid van keuse, vryheid van self-transendensie, vryheid van nie-verdelende liefde aan God en medemens, en vryheid van behoorlike óf onbehoorlike reaksie op God wat hulle beoefen in hulle konkrete lewens (2009:1024-1025). Kelsey dring egter daarop aan dat menslike wesens alleen vry is as eksentriese wesens – as diegene waarmee die drie-enige God op drievoudige wyse in verhouding tree. God se drie maniere om in verhouding te tree met menslike wesens begrond hulle as wat hulle is, wie hulle is en hoe hulle behoort te wees. God se maniere om in verhouding te tree met menslike wesens is nie in kompetisie met menslike wesens se agentskap of vry beoefening van hulle kapasiteite, vaardighede en kragte nie. Liewer word hulle in staat gestel om in vryheid op te tree deur God wat in verhouding met hulle tree (2009:1025). Wat mense as sterflike lewende misteries begrond is die wyse waarop die ryke kompleksiteit van wat hulle is (deur God wat in verhouding met hulle tree om hulle kreatief te seën om te lewe en lewe voort te bring en om hulle eskatologies te seën om in/deur transformasie en bevryding te leef) funksioneer (2009:1026).

As die paradigmatische menslike wese is Jesus se uitbeelding van praktyke wat uitdrukking gee aan behoorlike reaksie op God wat in verhouding met hulle tree – geloof (2009:309-330), hoop (2009:501-523) en liefde (2009:695-735) – aanduidend van hoe alle menslike wesens op God se verskeie maniere om in verhouding te tree met mense behoort te reageer. Deur hulle behoorlike response op God – geloof in God wat skep, hoop op God wat tot eskatologiese vervulling bring, liefde vir God wat versoen – word hulle waarlik sterflike misteries wat die beeld van die drie-enige onsterflike misterie afbeeld.

Wat van hulle sterflike misteries maak is die ryke kompleksiteit van konkrete maniere waarop hulle Jesus se voorbeelde navolg – op hulle eie manier, in hulle eie kontekste, deur die beoefening van hulle eie stel magte en kapasiteite, deur hulle eie spesifieke vorme van

liggaamlike aksie te neem wat geloof, hoop en liefde tot uitdrukking bring. Die kompleksiteit van menslike wesens is daarom eerstens ontologies, deurdat die reeks menslike magte en kapasiteite wat uitdrukking van geloof, hoop en liefde moontlik maak onverduidelikbaar is. Die kompleksiteit van menslike wesens is tweedens epistemologies, deurdat die maniere waarop onderskeiding van behoorlike reaksies – in geloof, hoop en liefde – op God uiteindelik netwerke van verduidelikende teorieë ontwyk (2009:1033-1034).

Vir Kelsey word hierdie kompleksiteit uiteindelik beskryf as “misterie”. Jesus is epistemologies geheimsinnig deurdat dit onmoontlik is om hom geheel en al te ken in sy geskape, verheerlikte en versoenende menslikheid, of om daardie menslikheid van hom in een koherente en omvattende stel voorstelle te verstaan. Jesus is ook ontologies geheimsinnig deurdat sy spesifieke konkrete aktualiteit as geskape, verheerlikte en versoende uiteindelik onverduidelikbaar is. In sy geskape, opgestane en versoenende lewende liggaam is Jesus paradigmaties van wie alle aktuele lewende menslike persoonlike liggame is, asook van wat hulle is en hoe hulle behoort te wees. Menslike wesens is epistemologies geheimsinnig deurdat dit nie moontlik is om in totaliteit te weet wie hulle is in hulle geskape, verheerlikte en versoenende menslikheid nie, of moontlik is om menslikheid in een koherente en omvattende stel voorstelle te beskryf nie. Menslike wesens is ontologies geheimsinnig deurdat hulle spesifieke konkrete aktualiteit as geskape, verheerlikte en versoende wesens uiteindelik onverduidelikbaar is (2009:1050-1051).

David Kelsey se onlangs gepubliseerde teologiese antropologie, *Eccentric Existence* (2009), argumenteer baie spesifiek vir die verstaan van die *imago Dei* vanuit die teologiese idee dat God in verhouding tree met alles wat nie God is nie. Die mens is, vir Kelsey soos vir König (1993:1), 'n verhoudingswese. Vir Kelsey beliggaam mense nie direk self die beeld van God nie, maar is hulle beelde van Jesus van Nasaret, die beeld van God. Mense, daarom, beeld nie self die drie-enige God af nie, maar is beelde van die beeld van God. Jesus is 'n sterflike lewende misterie wat die drie-enige lewende misterie afbeeld. Mense, as beelde van die beeld van God, is sterflike lewende misteries wat die beeld van die beeld van God afbeeld. Dáárom staan die misterie – die onverklaarbare, die onverduidelikbare, die onvoltooide, die onbegrypbare – vir Kelsey sentraal binne gesprekke oor die mens. Die misterie van God se bestaan word gereflekteer in die misterie van die bestaan van menslike wesens. Juis hierdie geheimsinnige, eksentriek bestaan van menslike wesens vorm die basis van hulle identiteit en waarde as lewende wesens wat in verhouding tot God staan.

7. OPSOMMEND

David Kelsey se fassinerende werk oor die eksentriek bestaan van menslike wesens beweeg teologiese antropologiese denke weg van die sentraliteit van die *imago Dei* en na die moedige tese dat God in verhouding tree met alles wat nie God is nie. Die Bybelse konsep van die *imago Dei* is nie onproblematies om in publieke gesprekvoering vandag oor wat 'n mens is te gebruik nie. Trouens, soos ander Bybelse konsepte, het dit eens op 'n tyd oriënteringsmag gehad – 'n mag wat nou grootliks ontsê word deur hedendaagse sekulêre denke en wat herhaaldelik uitgedaag word deur die merkwaardige prestasies van die wetenskappe (Van Huyssteen, 2004:116). Vir sommige, soos Michael Welker, funksioneer hierdie konsepte nou slegs as simbole vir 'n wêreld wat lankal reeds ophou bestaan het.¹⁶ Tog vorm hierdie simbool

16. In Wentzel van Huyssteen se woorde (2004:116): “For religious believers, and for theologians concerned about theology’s voice in contemporary culture, this is a rather fatal development, because it robs our

vir ander weer, soos Paul Riceour, 'n onuitwisbare basis vir nadenke oor wat dit beteken om mens te wees (Riceour, 1965:110 in Middleton, 2005:18).

Johan Heyns onderskei drie maniere, wat saamhang met Wentzel van Huyssteen se vier interpretasies, waarop die beeld van God moontlik geïnterpreteer kan word (1964:253). Die eerste fokus op die mens as skepsel van God, oftewel “produkt van sy Goddelike bemoeiing”, wat beteken dat die mens aan God behoort. In hierdie sin is menslike wesens egter nie uniek nie, aangesien alles wat nie God is nie (en wat God geskep het) gevolglik aan God behoort. Die tweede argumenteer dat die mens identies met God is, wat wil fokus op die belangrikste ooreenstemminge tussen God en mens. Die derde volg 'n soort middeweg, en het te make met die mens wat analoog met God is, waarin die ooreenstemming én die verskille tussen God en mens aandag verdien. Heyns self staan 'n analogiese verstaan van die beeld van God voor.¹⁷ Hiermee bedoel hy dat die drie belangrikste interpretasies van die *imago Dei* – wat deur Van Huyssteen as substantief, funksioneel en relasioneel beskryf word – in 'n eenheid bymekaar gehou word (1964:253-254).

Die simbool van die *imago Dei*, hoe dit ook al geïnterpreteer word, is veral merkwaardig daarin dat dit wil handhaaf dat (1) die aard van die mens verstaan behoort te word in terme van God; (2) die goedheid van mense ten nouste verbind is met verantwoordelike verhoudings met ander wesens; (3) die beeld van God alleen in Jesus Christus gevind word, en dat die mens, daarom, inherent georiënteerd is tot lewe met God in die Gees (Van Huyssteen, 2004:124-125).

Kelsey se verstaan van mense wat geskape is in die beeld van (die beeld van) God lewer waarskynlik drie interessante bydraes tot die breër gesprek oor verskillende interpretasies van die *imago Dei*.

Eerstens wil Kelsey wegbeweeg van enige vaste, geslote sisteem wat mense beskryf, en probeer daarom om 'n mate van openheid binne sy argumente te behou. In so 'n skema is daar geen finale woord oor wat die beeld van God in mense moet wees nie, maar is die gesprek oor wat 'n menslike wese is altyd oop en ontvanklik vir nuwe insette en insigte.

Tweedens kombineer Kelsey waarskynlik verskillende interpretasiemoontlikhede in sy gebruik van “misterie” om die verband tussen God en mens te skets, sodat nie net substantiewe, of funksionele, of relasionele of selfs eskatologiese interpretasies met sy werk sou kon identifiseer nie, maar daar moontlikhede sou wees vir 'n meer komplekse, gekombineerde verstaan van wat 'n mens is uit sy groter projek.

Derdens wil Kelsey die fokus verskuif vanaf kwaliteite of optrede of vermoëns binne 'n mens wat dalk ooreenstem met die kwaliteite of vermoëns binne God, na God wat in verhouding tree met mense en die refleksie van die beeld van God hierin. In Kelsey se werk funksioneer die mens hoofsaaklik as verhoudingswese, maar die inisiatief vir die verhouding word geneem deur God:¹⁸ God tree in verhouding met alles wat nie God is nie, en hierin vind menslike

cultures, our societies, and our churches of fundamental sources of spiritual orientation and important opportunities for self-criticism.”

17. Adrio König argumenteer ook vir 'n analogiese verstaan – 'n “bepaalde ooreenkoms” – van die verhouding tussen God en mens, waarin die mens as verantwoordelike verteenwoordigers van God optree en reageer (1993:94).

18. Kelsey begin, met ander woorde, by God, en lei alles wat hy van menswees wil sê daarvan af. Hierdie is nie dieselfde as waar die mens se verhouding met God die beginpunt van teologiese antropologie is nie (soos Johan Heyns skryf oor Barth se hantering van teologiese antropologie (1964:337)), maar wil juis in

wesens hulle beeld in God.

David Kelsey se interpretasie van die mens as beeld van God kan nie bloot tipeer word as substantief, óf funksioneel, óf relasioneel, óf eskatologies nie. By Kelsey, soos waarskynlik by Calvyn¹⁹ en Barth²⁰ is daar 'n komplekse wisselwerking tussen 'n substantiewe interpretasie en 'n relasionele interpretasie, wat op sekere maniere aangevul word deur 'n funksionele interpretasie. Kelsey se verstaan van die mens as beeld van God reflekteer ook in 'n sekere sin 'n eskatologiese verstaan, deurdat hy juis die punt wil maak met sy argumente vir die eksentrisiteit van menslike bestaan dat die vermoë tot self-transendensie per implikasie 'n integrale aspek is van mense as beelde van die beeld van God.

Kelsey se hantering van die *imago Dei* kan waarskynlik ten beste as 'n analogiese verstaan getipeer word, waarin hy argumenteer dat menslike wesens floreer as sterflike lewende misteries (2009:1034). Tog sou al vier interpretasies van die *imago Dei* – substantief, funksioneel, relasioneel, eskatologies – in sy werk ingelees kon word, hoewel binne die groter logika van sy werk as sistematiese onsistematiese geheel.

8. SLOT

Kelsey antwoord op die vraag na wat 'n mens is deur 'n komplekse beeld te skets van menslike wesens wat eksentriek – buite hulleself, en in God wat in verhouding met hulle tree – bestaan.

Vir Kelsey mond hierdie uit in veral drie verhale van hoe God in verhouding tree met alles wat nie God is nie, waarby menslike wesens ingesluit is: om te skep, om tot eskatologiese vervulling te bring, en om te versoen. Verskillende interpretasies van hoe die beeld van God in mense verstaan behoort te word is pogings om die mens se analogie of verhouding met God te verwoord (wat ook al die einddoel daarvan sou wees, hetsy om die onvervreembare waardigheid van mense te bevestig of om die uniekheid van menslike wesens uit te lig).²¹

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- God wat in verhouding tree met alles wat nie God is nie – waarby die mens ingesluit is – om te skep, in eskatologiese vervulling te bring en te versoen die waardigheid en wese van mense vind.
19. Johannes Calvyn kan waarskynlik nie bloot binne die substantiewe groep geplaas word nie, aangesien sy verstaan van die beeld van God meer kompleks is deurdat hy 'n weergawe van die substantiewe interpretasie met 'n relasionele, etiese interpretasie bymekaar wil hou, argumenteer Middleton. Dit sou lei tot die klassieke gereformeerde onderskeiding tussen die breër aard en nouer aard van die beeld van God in mense (Middleton, 2005:21). Verder sou so 'n onderskeiding noodsaaklik raak toe die sondeval in berekening gebring is, en die beeld van God in die mens voor die sondeval (of die oorspronklike skepping van die mens) onderskei moes word van die beeld van God in die mens na die sondeval (Berkouwer, 1962:37). Berkouwer beskryf die verskil tussen die breër aard en nouer aard van die *imago Dei* as volg: die breër aard word ingespan om te bevestig dat die mens, ten spyte van die sondeval en korrupsie van die menslike natuur, nie verdierlik of gedemoniseer moes word nie, maar mens sou bly. Die nouer aard word ingespan om te beklemtoon dat die mens egter tog gemeenskap met God ontbeer het, waarmee Berkouwer verwys na die mens se geloofskennis, geregtigheid, heiligheid en konformiteit aan God se wil (1962:38). Hoewel Calvyn die beeld van God hoofsaaklik binne die siel plaas, verwys hy tog ook daarna dat daar geen deel van die mens is waarin die vonke van God se beeld nie gloei nie (*Institutes*, 1.15.3 in Middleton, 2005:21).
20. Karl Barth se verstaan van die beeld van God is, soos dié van Calvyn, kompleks. Johan Heyns wys daarop dat Barth enersyds die beeld van God suiwer relasioneel interpreteer, maar andersyds ook “die openheid vir die ontmoeting met God” beklemtoon. In Barth kan ook 'n komplekse kombinasie van relasionele en substantiewe interpretasies gevind word. In Heyns se woorde: “Dat God inderdaad tot die mens kom en hy tot Hom nader, kan egter plaasvind alleen op grond van die feit dat die mens geskape is na die *beeld van God*” (1964:252; oorspronklike skuinsdruk).
21. Sien my bespreking van Kelsey se hantering van menswaardigheid in die artikel “Eccentric Existence”

Kelsey se aandrang dat die mens vanuit God se verhouding met alles wat nie God is nie verstaan behoort te word verskuif die gronde vir so 'n analogie of verhouding weg van die mens af en uit enige kwaliteit waaroor die mens mag beskik, na God wat die verhouding met mense bepaal. Dit is hierin en hierdeur wat die mens as beeld van God verstaan moet word, argumenteer Kelsey, en nie alleen in enige iets wat die mens (kan) dink of (moet) doen of in die kapasiteit vir verhouding of selfs die oopheid waarmee hulle leef nie. Hierdie alles – wat die mens (kan) dink en (moet) doen en in die kapasiteit vir verhouding en in die oopheid waarmee hulle leef – is gevolg van God wat die inisiatief neem om in verhouding te tree met die mens. Menslike bestaan is daarom gesetel in hulle eksentrieke bestaan as lewende, sterflike misteries wat Jesus, die lewende sterflike misterie, afbeeld omdat Jesus die drie-enige onsterflike lewende misterie afbeeld.

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(nog ongepubliseerd). Vir Kelsey lê die onvoorwaardelike en onmeetbare waarde en waardigheid van mense in die volle kompleksiteit en rykheid van hulle lewe oor tyd en onmiddellike kontekste heen, omdat hy menslike persone verstaan as konkrete, lewende menslike persoonlike liggame wat in verhouding staan met God op drie spesifieke maniere – deur God wat hulle skep, tot eskatologiese vervulling bring, en versoen (2009:379).

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KEY WORDS

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Preaching as self-categorisation: analysing a Beyers Naudé-sermon by making use of Social Identity Theory²

ABSTRACT

“Obedience to God” was the title of a sermon delivered by dr Beyers Naudé on Sunday 22 September 1963 at Aasvoëlkop Congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Scripture reading was taken from Acts 5:29 which reads: “We must obey God rather than men.” On that same occasion he announced his decision to accept the directorship of the Christian Institute of Southern Africa. These events introduced a new phase in the narrative of Naudé and his relationship with his people. In this article notions like self-categorisation as part of Social Identity Theory were used as heuristic tools to explore in what ways this sermon-event played a significant role in a new phase of self-definition in Naudé’s life story. At the same time the role of preaching as a process of social identity formation (self-categorisation) comes under the spotlight. In conclusion some pointers were given for reflection on the reformation of preaching within the context of the Twenty First Century by making use of the Confession of Belhar as a framework for interpretation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The title of the conference *Viva Vox Evangelii: Reforming Preaching Today* created an opportunity to go back in history and revisit important sermons to see how the *living voice of the gospel* contributed to the *reforming of preaching*. One of the preachers who kept the voice of the gospel alive and contributed to the reforming of preaching during the apartheid years in South Africa was the respected Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) minister and ecumenical theologian dr Beyers Naudé. Besides many other documents, articles and books, 1 500 of Naudé’s sermons were also preserved.³

The purpose of this contribution is to analyse one of Naudé’s sermons in the light of the title of the conference. He delivered this specific sermon on Sunday 22 September 1963 in the DRC Aasvoëlkop in Johannesburg, on the occasion of his resignation from the Dutch Reformed Church and the beginning of his full-time directorship at the Christian Institute. Naudé (1995:68) himself described it as a life changing moment in his career, thereby emphasising the importance of this specific sermon and moment in his life story.⁴

1. Associate professor in practical theology.

2. Paper delivered at the 10th biannual meeting of the *Societas Homiletica*, Wittenberg, Germany, 10-15 August 2012. The theme of the conference: *Viva Vox Evangelii: Reforming Preaching Today*.

3. Interview with two researchers at the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology, prof. Robert Vosloo and dr. Murray Coetzee. The Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology houses Naudé’s sermons, which are available for research.

4. In his own words: “Op Sondag 22 September het ek ná nagte van intense gemoedsworsteling my antwoord aan Aasvoëlkop gegee in ’n preek met die titel “Gehoorsaam aan God” (Naudé, 1995:68).

After paying attention to specific aspects of the sermon, the researcher will look at the sermon through the lenses of Social Identity Theory as a heuristic instrument as he believes that this theory from social psychology can help open new perspectives on the interaction of the personal and social circumstances Naudé found himself in during that phase of his career. These circumstances were part of a process of identity formation and played an important role in keeping the voice of the gospel alive, contributing to the reforming of preaching. In the light of the results of this analysis, possible markers for the progressive reformation of preaching within a new context will be discussed in the last section of the contribution.

2. SERMON: "OBEDIENCE TO GOD"

On the morning of 22 September 1963 Naudé announced his decision to accept the directorship of the Christian Institute of Southern Africa. The theme of his sermon was "Obedience to God". The scripture reading was taken from Acts 5:29 which reads: "We must obey God rather than men."⁵ Naudé's exegesis of the Bible text consisted of highlighting the roles of the different characters in the story, including that of the central character, Jesus Christ. Thereafter Naudé concluded: "The Apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for their Master, and they continued with their teaching – disobedient yet at the deepest level obedient, unfaithful, yet faithful at the deepest level."

He went on to explain the implications of this decision of the apostles for his own life, for the community of the DRC as well as for the ministers in the church. His prophetic words for the ministers still ring true (2005:29):

"Very many ministers are deeply concerned about the course of events in our Church. Many are concerned because it appears that the Church is not free to act solely on the authority of God's Word because of other influences and powers are playing the dominant role. Many are convinced that great changes will have to take place in our ecclesiastical and race relations on many levels. But for various reasons they suppress these convictions: the fear that if they speak, the Church will be harmed, the fear that our members are not yet ready to accept these truths, the possible repercussions in our congregations. In such a situation we are called to act with the utmost responsibility, but certainly not to remain silent. The proclamation of the truth of the Gospel cannot harm the Church of Jesus Christ! And if our members are not influenced by all sorts of powers but are enlightened fully and fearlessly as to just what the Word of God requires of all people (white as well as nonwhite), then will the Spirit of God not lead them into all truth? Why then do we fear? Has the time not arrived for us to proclaim clearly and with joy: Thus said the Lord?"

These words were uttered a mere 15 years after the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 (where after they ruled for a further 27 years as a minority government). When one takes this into account, the prophetic quality (living voice) and implication of this uttering (reforming preaching) by Naudé are startling.

In the next section Social Identity Theory will be discussed and then used as heuristic lenses to analyse the sermon of Naudé.

5. The sermon was translated and published in *The Legacy of Beyers Naudé*, LD Hansen (ed.) 2005:25-29, Beyers Naudé Centre Series on Public Theology.

3. SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

3.1 Introduction

The origins of Social Identity Theory are to be found in the pioneering work of two European researchers namely Henri Tajfel and John Turner (Haslam, Reicher & Platow, 2011:45-64). At the heart of this approach to the study of social groups we find the notion of “social identity”. This refers to an individual’s internalised understanding of participation in a group. “It is a sense of self associated with an awareness that one belongs to a particular social group and that this group membership is important and meaningful” (Tajfel, Turner, Austin & Worchel, 1979:35).

It is social identity that allows human beings to refer to themselves as “we” (for example, as “believers” or as “reformed believers”). One can start the process of determining why social identity is important for this study, by asking the question: What is it that turns any collection of human beings into a social group? Why do people become part of a group?

Research in social psychology over the past three decades has shown that the answer cannot only be found and described in individualistic terms (personal advantages). Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherell (1987) for example, found that people become part of groups because the group itself matters to them; both because they have a choice to become part of it but also because they commit themselves to the group. It seems that human beings become part of a group on a personal level because they really want to and on a group level because they reckon that it is the right thing to do.

It was precisely the latter that lead Tajfel et al. (1979) to resolve the belonging of social identity to the functioning of groups. They came to the conclusion that the group is more than the sum of its parts. “Groups have higher order emergent properties and these transform the individual, while at the same time allowing individuals to engage in group processes that are capable of transforming the world” (Tajfel et al., 1979; Turner et al., 1987).

3.2 Phases in theory forming

According to Haslam et al. (2011:50) theory forming around social identity has developed through two phases. In the *initial phase* Tajfel et al. (1979:36) attempted to find a better explanation for the results of their experiment with so-called “minimal group studies”. They found that when human beings accept a certain group identity as their own in terms of their own subjective self-definitions, they attempt to find the meaning and social appearance of the group in terms of comparisons between their own so-called “in-group” and relevant “out-groups”. Furthermore, they tend to introduce the own group favourably by positively distinguishing it from other groups in terms of their own values. The latter is the search for the so called “positive distinctiveness”.

Many factors come into play with positive distinctiveness. These include whether the “boundaries” between groups are visible and how permeable or impermeable those boundaries may be, how safe or unsafe the intergroup relationships are and what brings cognitive and social competition to the fore. This all depends on the norms and values by which the groups define their social identity.

This leads to the conclusion that there is always a connection between the nature of the group and group processes, and the social context. Also, that the meaning of social identity can shift

(thus it is fluid) depending on who the group compares itself to.

This brings us to the second phase in the theory forming of social identity, namely, *self-categorisation theory*.

3.3 Self-categorisation theory

For Turner et al. (1987:38-39), the basis of their research was simply that inviting individuals to categorise themselves as group members (thus self-definition in terms of social identity) was already enough reason for their group action. This study clearly shows that the cognitive processes of self-definition play the biggest role in group attendance. Thus we participate in group activities to the extent that it is possible for us to think of ourselves as “we” and not just “I”. “Social identity is the cognitive mechanism which makes group behaviour possible.”

Turner developed the self-categorisation theory with colleagues from the University of Bristol and the Australian National University (Haslam et al. 2011:52). Along with the acknowledgement of the importance of social identity theory as the basis for the action of the group, self-categorisation theory emphasises the psychological process that underlies the transition of behaviour. Transition of behaviour here refers to behaviour that is informed by a person’s understanding of his or her social identity.

To express the idea that the self is no longer seen in terms of personal terms (the “I”), Turner (1987) makes use of a process known as *depersonalisation*. The latter is a process of self-stereotyping, through which the self is seen in terms of a category membership shared with other “in-group” members. This depersonalisation process leads to human beings not acting as unique persons towards themselves and others but as psychological representatives of the groups they belong to. Depersonalisation thus reflects a higher order, a more inclusive and more abstract level of self-categorisation. But according to Haslam et al. (2011:53), depersonalisation not only has a connection with the way in which we react to one another, but also with the way in which we act towards the world in general. Through the process of depersonalisation, the group becomes the criterion according to which we measure everything.

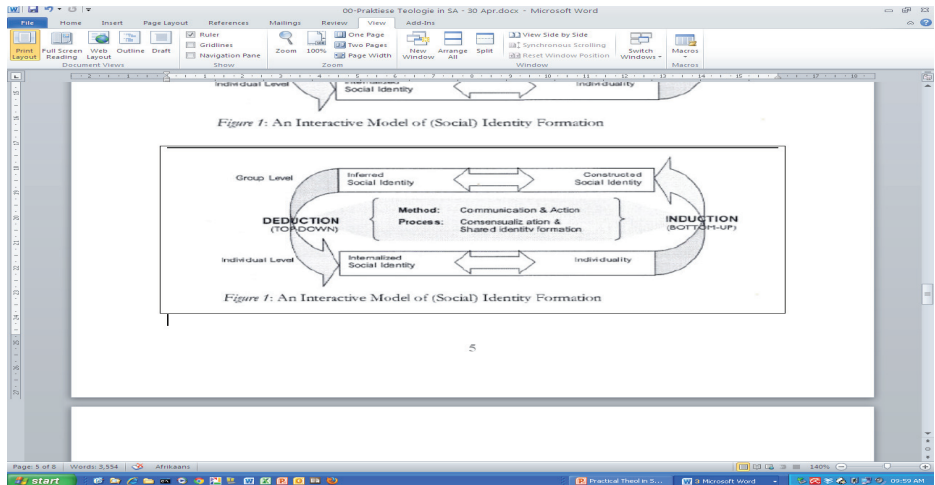
The norms and values that determine our actions are the norms and values of the group that we currently associate ourselves with and it varies from group to group. As I for example move between the community to which I belong and the sport club where I am a member, the values between the two differ significantly. It can also happen that I will on occasion be prepared to sacrifice myself to promote the common wellbeing of the group – like we see in times of war.

According to Hogg (2001:184), depersonalisation not necessarily means a loss of the self but rather a redefining of the self. This means that the depersonalised self is just as psychologically and morally valid as the personalised self to feel, to think and to act. But now self-esteem is determined by the values of the group, and the “self” of “self-interest” is to a greater extent stipulated by the interests of the group.

However, the self-interest of the group cannot always be defined in advance, as for some groups it may mean money or material things and for others perhaps rather respect, love and service to others. Thus, the importance of depersonalisation is of vital importance for social action and social identity, as it helps to coordinate the activities, to identify who is on which side and what goals are being pursued.

According to Adair (2007:97), this is especially important when addressing the role of leaders in the groups, thus persons who take responsibility for the guidance and cooperation of the group. He writes: "Leadership means [...] the understanding and sharing of a common purpose – without that there can be no effective leadership." Without a shared experience of "us", no leadership or followers are possible.

Postmes, Haslam and Swaab (2005:23) give a graphic illustration of the factors involved in the formation of social identity in the following figure:



Based on historical and ideological aspects of understanding, embedded in the narrative of groups, group members make assumptions (deduction in Figure 1) about certain attributes of social identity – thus what it means to be a member of this group at this given moment. At the same time, the action or behaviour of certain individual group members can also have an impact (induction in Figure 1) on the action or the behaviour of the group – this is particularly relevant to the role of leaders in groups. It is clear that what happens on a group level and what happens on an individual level constantly influence one another, hence the description of an "interactive model" in social identity formation (Postmes et al., 2006:23).

Social Identity Theory comprises two movements: the way in which social reality forms social identities; and the way in which social identity gives form to social reality. To be more specific, Social Identity Theory is related to the way in which individuals attempt to define social identities with the goal to mobilise collective action and to ultimately be able to exercise an influence on the social reality. This leads to the argument that because definitions about identity have such important social and political consequences, leaders search for ways in which to use these definitions for their own purposes, rather than accepting it as a given. So the leader is searching for a definition of the self and the group as prototypes. Furthermore, there is a search for a definition of *group boundaries* to include as big a part of humanity as possible with a view to mobilisation. And lastly, there is a search for a definition of the content of group identity and suggestions about the concrete manifestation of shared beliefs and values (Haslam et al., 2011:146).

Thus leaders are not just interpreters of identity for a wider public who work with a self-evident understanding of the group only, they often have to work hard to determine a specific version of identity. That is why leaders are often referred to as “entrepreneurs of identity” rather than as “interpreters of identity” (Haslam et al., 2011:146).

4. APPLICATION OF SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY ON NAUDÉ’S SERMON

In the light of the concepts from Social Identity Theory as a heuristic instrument, it is possible to make some remarks about the role of Naudé’s social context, his personal story and his interpretation of that story. The focus will also be on the way that all this contributed to keeping the voice of the gospel alive and helped with the reformation of preaching.

4.1 The formation of social identity

We have seen that “social identity” is described as: “[...] a sense of self associated with an awareness that one belongs to a particular social group and that this group membership is important and meaningful” (Tajfel et al., 1979:35). Naudé (2005a:25) starts his sermon by describing a “group of men and women busy preaching God’s name” from the Acts 5 text. This group is not viewed positively by the other groups namely the Sanhedrin and the Sadducees because they were disobedient to an order of the high priest. This group of believers disrupted the peace of Jerusalem (Acts 5:28) with the “heresy” they were preaching. Peter, as a representative of this group, talks on behalf of the group and says: “A human being should rather be loyal to God than to people!” (5:29). Peter then explains something of the history of this God with his people (5:30-39).

In the next part of the sermon, Naudé applies this to his own situation and confesses how God, through his Spirit, time and again brought him back to this text (2005a:27). Based on this text, he was persuaded that the Synod decision (of the Dutch Reformed Church) was very problematic, namely “that the God-given right and freedom of ministers and members to witness to the truth of God’s Word in the spirit of the prophets and the reformers is so restricted that the minister of the Gospel in principle no longer enjoys the freedom to declare his deepest Christian convictions in the way or at the place and time given him by God to speak through his Word and Spirit” (2005a:27).

This brought Naudé to a choice (2005a:27): “Consequently the choice facing me is not primarily a choice between pastoral work and other Christian work or between the Church and *Pro Veritate*, or between the Church and the Institute. No, the choice goes much deeper: it is a choice between obedience in faith and subjection to the authority of the Church. And by unconditional obedience to the latter, I would save face but lose my soul.”

He continues by motivating this choice: “By joining the Christian Institute, I am not leaving the Church. On the contrary, I wish, through the Institute, to serve my church and the wider ecumenical context, even if my church today does not officially see it in this light, or so desire it” (2005a:27). What is important from a social identity perspective is his reference to his *Afrikanerskap*: “And every true Afrikaner is deeply in sympathy with his people in this anxious time (and I associate myself with them as an Afrikaner who, just as in the past, today still wishes to serve his people with the same love and faithfulness)” (2005a:28).

In terms of Social Identity Theory, this is a deliberate move; you can even call it a deepening of social identity: not the Church or the Institution or the Nation, but obedience to the Word

of God is of central importance here. The dialogical interaction between social and personal aspects of identity formation is at work. The latter could also be described as a “group”, just like in Acts 5, namely, the group that wants to be “loyal to God”. Naudé (1995:16) describes the self as part of the group (self-categorisation) that “stands with God” where the “Kingship of Jesus Christ” gets preached to all nations. It is the “living voice of the gospel” that determines identity here.

Apart from belonging to this group that “stands with God”, it is also quite clear that Naudé’s membership of the Christian Institute and participation in *Pro Veritate* provided other groups to which he belonged with their own boundaries, group definitions and underlying values. In this regard one can also see the importance for him of belonging to the Afrikaner people and serving his people albeit with the reservations he later explains (2005a:28). It is apparent that his membership of these groups greatly influenced his social identity in the sense of his awareness that he belonged to these particular social groups and that his membership of these groups was important and meaningful to him.

4.2 A cognitive and psychological process

Social Identity Theory furthermore makes us aware that there is a combination of cognitive and psychological processes in the formation of identity as part of this self-categorisation. In the sermon of Naudé it is obvious that his understanding of Scripture (interpretation and exegesis) played a decisive role as seen in his use of Acts 5:29 as a core text. The loyalty that is mentioned here is thus related to a deliberate decision that would ask enormous sacrifices from him. One can sense different psychological processes at work here.

What is of vital importance in this regard is the way in which he reflects on what happened to him towards the end of his career as described in the last page of his autobiography. He writes: “Thirty two years after I said farewell with such sorrow in my heart, I had the wonderful privilege to ascend that pulpit once again and preach in that church again” (1995:152, translation IAN). In his “cognitive” reflection about that day (13 August 1995), he writes about strongly charged “emotions” that find expression in embrace, joyful re-encounters, tears, excuses, amazement, joy and expectancies. One can sense his overwhelming emotional response to re-joining a group to which he previously belonged, but had been “banned” from for many years.

The remark Turner et al. (1987:21) made that “social identity is the cognitive mechanism which makes group behaviour possible” and the psychological processes underlying the transition of behaviour, interplay. The transition of behaviour in question in Naudé’s conduct is transition of behaviour that is informed through his understanding of his personal identity (in Christ) to behaviour that is informed through his understanding of his social identity as part of a group of people that wants to be obedient to God. In the process we see a broadening of identity taking place through self-categorisation.

This brings us to the last two concepts of the Social Identity Theory that I would like to address in this study, namely depersonalisation and self-stereotyping.

4.3 A process of depersonalisation and self-stereotyping

As discussed previously, where the self is no longer seen only in personal terms (the “I”), Turner (1987) refers to a process known as *depersonalisation*. The latter is also a process of *self-stereotyping* where the self is seen in terms of a category membership shared with other

“in-group” members. Hogg (2001:184) takes the argument a step further – according to him depersonalisation does not necessarily mean a loss of the self but a *redefining* of the self. This means the depersonalised self is just as psychologically and morally valid and meaningful as the personalised self. But now the self-image is determined by the values of the group, and the “self” of “self-interest” is stipulated through defining these values.

In answer to the question: “With whom are we in solidarity?” Taljaard (2006:98) demonstrates how Naudé lived in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed and how, according to notions of social identity, he redefined the “self” through *depersonalisation* and *self-stereotyping*. She motivates her argument: “The Afrikaner community has often been described as a pietistic community. The inherent danger of such an identity is that, in the extreme, it can focus too strongly on the salvation of the individual soul and can give very little, if any, attention to the broader context of relationships with others.”

This of course is based on what Luther in *Concerning Christian Liberty* (1910:353) describes as our “human participation in Christ” and where he emphasizes that salvation stands apart from any human merit, and also argues against a narrow understanding of salvation as only the redemption of souls. Naudé links his argument to this broad (social) understanding of salvation and it becomes clear how this leads to a redefining of the self, where his self-image is determined by who he is “in Christ” and thus by the values of the group that wants to be obedient to Christ. From a theological perspective all of this contributes to the description of his ministry as a “prophetic ministry” in the true sense of the word.⁶

I want to conclude with some thoughts on the importance of Naudé’s prophetic sermon as *living voice of the gospel* that can also inspire the *reformation of preaching* in the future. For this purpose I want to make use of the structure of the Confession of Belhar to show how his sermon focuses on unity, reconciliation and justice. This demonstrates that the sermon is not only important in terms of social identity formation, but also that his preaching is indeed “prophetic preaching” contributing to social transformation.⁷

5. Preaching with Beyers Naudé in the words of Belhar

Social Identity Theory has made us aware of the importance of the social context in the formation of identity. The social context in the time of Naudé was one of apartheid that gave impetus to a redefining of the self. In the meantime this social context has changed significantly. I believe Naudé’s prophetic preaching in the light of the Confession of Belhar provides a framework of interpretation for the on-going reformation of preaching. In following Taljaard’s argument (2006:91-104), I want to look at the future reformation of preaching in terms of three questions:

5.1 What is it that we resist? Preaching about unity

6. Brueggemann (1978:13) defines prophetic ministry as follows: “This I contend that prophetic ministry has to do not primarily with addressing specific public crises but with addressing, in season and out of season, the dominant crisis that is enduring and resilient, of having our alternative vocation (as Christians) co-opted and domesticated.”

7. Tubbs Tisdale (2010:9-10) describes seven hallmarks of prophetic preaching inter alia that it “is rooted in the biblical witness, counter cultural and challenges the status quo, concerned with the evils and shortcomings of the present social order, offers hope of a new day to come and the promise of liberation to God’s oppressed people, incites courage in its hearers and empowers them to work to change the social order, a passion for justice in the world [...]”.

In the case of Naudé, his resistance was to a false gospel where he specifically warned the Dutch Reformed Church that its interpretation of Scripture was erroneous and therefore a heresy. From the perspective of Social Identity Theory, it is important to understand that this interpretation linked the Biblical theme of a “chosen nation” to a specific ethnic group, namely the Afrikaner, and thus not to the whole family in Christ (Naudé, 2005b:57-59).

It is clear that an ideology of exclusion was at work here. According to Taljaard (2006:93), the collective identity here is based on an anthropologist understanding of race and thus not on believer’s identity in Christ. In this identity group the members are loyal to each other and see outsiders (out-group) as a threat.⁸

“Resistance” in our current circumstances in South Africa can still be related to the way in which processes of group formation daily contribute to the exclusion of people based on race, class, gender or whatever distinctions we want to use. In a recent investigation by Cilliers & Nell (2011), they demonstrate in what ways new processes of “enclavement” are taking place in the Dutch Reformed Church. It is especially noticeable in the three concepts of stabilization, emigration and separation. All three unravel the notion of “enclavement” and all of them are directly opposed to the quest for unity.⁹

Thus Naudé’s sermon (and many of his other writings) is in line with the need for prophetic preaching on the unity of the church and is still very relevant for the reformation of preaching. The incorporation of a new ethos and structure in society asks for on-going attention to new attitudes and persuasions in both church and society. Social Identity Theory makes preachers aware of the danger of an identity where the interests of one group have priority and where we ultimately obey people rather than God. A recent investigation by the *Institute of Justice and Reconciliation* known as *The Transformation Audit* proves this point.¹⁰

Preaching on the unity of the church ought to be high on the agenda of the reformation of preaching. But this kind of preaching won’t have a significant impact if it is not accompanied by a change in attitudes and specifically a conversion of underlying prejudices, normally starting in the preacher’s own heart and life. This must also include endeavours for structural unity and active involvement in the unity processes of the family of churches to which Naudé belonged.

5.2 With whom are we in solidarity? Preaching on reconciliation

Beyers Naudé was in solidarity with the “other” brothers and sisters in Christ who were not part of the Afrikaner people and who formed part of the oppressed and marginalised. In this deed

8. In Naudé’s own words (2005b:59): “I would like to mention in explaining the Afrikaner’s traditional attitude to race is *fear* [...] for the ordinary Afrikaner his traditional enemy always had a black face or included one – and it is this fear which determined so much of his attitude and policy towards his non-white neighbour in this country.”

9. Cilliers & Nell (2011) came to the following conclusion: “We will have to move beyond *denominationalism*, if we hope to have any impact on society. We will have to revisit the ‘hermeneutical space of the ecumenical church’ in order to address societal ills in our country. For it is exactly within this hermeneutical space that we may discover not a self-destructive ‘stability’, but rather our true identity; not a misleading introversion, but rather vocation (to help transform society); not stigmatisation of, and separation from, the other, but rather the experience of facing the other and, in doing so, facing ourselves – and in the end, hopefully, the Other. It seems as if the ‘safest’ haven indeed lies outside ‘our’ haven.”

10. Hofmeyer, J (ed.) 2009. *Recession and Recovery*. 2009 Transformation Audit. Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Cape Town.

of solidarity we find a broadening of his identity to that of an ecumenical identity. In terms of Social Identity Theory it also served as an enrichment of his life and theological thinking and led to a new self-definition.¹¹

According to Taljaard (2006:94), they “with whom” we are in solidarity do have important implications in answer to the question of what the face of the God we are seeking, looks like. The identity of those “with whom” we are in solidarity serves as a challenge to our identity in Christ; a notion we find prominent in Naudé’s sermon with its emphasis on obedience. Once again Social Identity Theory helps us with the notions of self-categorization and self-stereotyping to find clarity about the “with whom” we are in solidarity.

The third article of the Belhar Confession is about reconciliation, teaching us that it is only through reconciliation in Christ that it is possible for us to live in solidarity with other people. Here we once again find a redefinition of identity in terms of embracing the other, challenging our notions of identity. “Through Christ’s reconciliatory act on our behalf, we are able to learn to confess our guilt, to ask, receive and grant forgiveness and grow into a deeper understanding of living together as brothers and sisters in Him” (Taljaard, 2006:99).

Preaching on reconciliation as part of the reforming of preaching helps us to reject any form of discrimination that obstructs the experience of Christ’s reconciling act. In this regard the third article of the Confession of Belhar also challenges us to broaden our sense of identity in Christ and compels us to take our relations with “the other” very seriously.

5.3 What do we hope for? Preaching on justice

It is no coincidence that Beyers Naudé named his autobiography *My land van hoop* (My country of hope). With this title he provided a clue to his deepest persuasion namely that through the power and grace of the living God change in church and society is indeed possible and worthwhile struggling for. With these convictions he not only constructs the argument for a new social order but he also challenges all South Africans to imagine an alternative and better South Africa and to start to work towards accomplishing that dream.

The content of this hope was a hope built on justice for all people living in this country and all over the world. He writes: “Because this earth is God’s earth, such rights must be accorded to all God’s children everywhere on this globe” (Naudé, 2005c:115). In this regard Naudé was not only interested in an eschatological hope at the end of history but in God’s involvement in the here and now of our everyday existence.

The fourth article of the Confession of Belhar encourages us to keep our faith alive through our preaching by reminding the faithful that this God is in a unique way the God of the poor and the marginalised. It is for this reason that the Confession rejects all injustice and specifically any ideology that defends injustice on Biblical principles.

It is also in this regard that preaching on hope and justice is in essence prophetic preaching.

11. “While most of the Western nations were experiencing the changes inherent in situations of increased communications, of rapid social and economic change, causing violent spiritual and intellectual upheaval, the Afrikaner community, through its secluded and often self-imposed isolation, was largely unaware of all these forces which were changing the outlook and relations of millions of people, including the relations between white and non-white” (Naudé, 2005b:59).

Tubbs-Tisdale (2010:10) summarises it as follows: “Prophetic preaching offers hope for a new day to come and the promise of liberation to God’s oppressed people. Prophetic preaching incites courage in its hearers and empowers them to work to change the social order.”

6. Conclusion

In my argument I tried to show how the living voice (*viva vox*) of the gospel as part of the ongoing reformation of preaching found a comprehensive example in the life, work and preaching of dr. Beyers Naudé. I demonstrated that notions such as self-categorisation, depersonalisation and self-stereotyping are useful heuristic instruments from a social psychology perspective, and more specifically Social Identity Theory to illustrate in what ways Naudé reached a new self-definition in the light of his difficult circumstances during the time of apartheid.

The analysis of his sermon on Acts 5:29 further exposed the underlying conviction of Naudé’s reformed roots. It was his emphasis on the *Sola Scriptura* of the Reformation that resulted in his persuasion that “we must obey God rather than men”. Again the lenses of Social Identity Theory helped us to develop new perspectives for the reformation of preaching by reflecting on group norms and values.

Lastly, we saw how the Confession of Belhar can play a prophetic role to keep the living voice of the gospel on the track of reformed preaching by asking attention for preaching on the unity of the church, reconciliation amongst people and seeking justice for all people.

In 2013 it will be 50 years since Naudé preached his sermon from Acts 5:29. Half a century has passed and one is amazed by its continued relevance, not only of the words of this sermon, but also of the way in which the act of preaching is still reforming and keeping alive the voice of the gospel with an enduring influence on our social identity.

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KEY WORDS

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Mission among nomads: the case of the Ovahimba

ABSTRACT

Karl Barth poignantly argues that the essence of the Christian message is that God “makes time for” humanity. Nomads are people on the move. Although in tune with nature, they have a limited understanding of the God of nature. Many nomads do not recognise that the God of nature has time for them, and long to walk their cattle trails with them. In this article, the focus falls on the value of mission communication. It is argued that such communication must use the nomadic genre and recognise the oral worldview of nomads. In this way, the mission practitioner will communicate God’s message more effectively. It will also be argued that immersion is necessary in order to be able to gain such knowledge. However, this immersion is not aimed at converting people; rather, its purpose is to demonstrate that God is one with nomads in their quest to connect with him. This suggests that God redeems the culture and the individual, so that, although the individual lives in the world, he is protected from the evil one. Thus, in this article, we contend that the messenger is the message that God is one with humanity – or, to quote Barth: “God makes time for man”.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a globalised world, nomads¹ are sometimes regarded as a curiosity. They are very often not taken seriously. However, there are still many nomadic groups left in the modern world. Little attention is given to their needs and aspirations. The gospel of Jesus Christ is relevant to all people – and no less to nomads. The manner in which this gospel is presented to them is crucial. This article contends that nomads can experience God as being one with them, when this possibility is demonstrated through the life of the messenger, who lives as one redeemed by God in the nomadic context.

2. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Christian mission, in general, has struggled to share the gospel with nomads. The question on which this article will focus is: How are nomadic people to hear the gospel and be disciplined? In essence, the article asks the question as to whether the Christian God is indeed Immanuel, the God who comes to His people; and furthermore, whether God’s missionary people are, in fact, reaching the nomadic world. The hypothesis is that what is really needed is a method focused on immersion in the nomadic culture, understanding the nomadic worldview, and using nomadic communication styles – and on achieving all this by focusing on God’s goal.

1. In this article, the term “nomad” refers to a member of the original nomadic group, the pastoralists. Salzman (2004:17) explains that the original Greek term from which the concept is derived means “to raise livestock on pasture”. The later, additional groups, namely the hunter-gatherers and peripatetic people, are not included.

3. WHAT IS GOD’S GOAL?

Knowing one’s goal is crucial for living in this world. The challenge facing the Christian mission is to define the end goal (*telos*). However, there is no general consensus among mission agencies and denominations with regard to this issue. It is not enough to define it in terms of a Western reading of the Bible. In this section, it is contended that knowing the goal from God’s perspective will transform the way in which we engage in mission work.

To be effective in fulfilling the Christian mission, it is important for the mission practitioner to focus on the *telos*. Christopher Wright (2006:23) defines the concept, “mission”, as the “long-term purpose or goal that is to be achieved through proximate objectives and planned actions”. If the *telos* is out of focus, there is a tendency to focus on the objectives or action plans themselves. For example, mission agencies focus on reaching unreached peoples (see the U.S. Center of World Mission – www.uscwm.org). This emphasis is aimed at ensuring that all the ethnic groups (*ethne*) are reached, and not merely geo-political nations. This is a significant goal, and it is measurable. However, reaching the unreached does not, in itself, comprise the end goal of the Christian mission. Rather, it is a strategic objective on the basis on which action plans can be developed to achieve the *telos*.

Bosch (1991:349) points out that God’s people do not live in a vacuum. He argues that every generation reflects the surrounding society in some way. Thus, he admonishes the present generation not to judge previous generations. He asks the pertinent question: Under the same circumstances, what would they – the current generation – have done differently (Bosch 1991:366)?

Today, the former Christian nations are moving towards a post-Christian outlook. Kraemer (1956:27) calls this “the shattering of Corpus Christianum”. In the current environment, Christians are no longer in the majority; rather, Christianity has become one religion among many. Thus, Newbigin (1995:5) argues that Christians “bear witness to the gospel from a position not of strength but of weakness.” It is as a result of this position of weakness that Christianity cannot afford to lose sight of the end goal.

What, then, is the *telos* of the Christian mission? Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu states it succinctly: “God has a dream”. The beloved apostle says it thus: “Behold, God’s dwelling is with his people ...” (Rev. 21:3). This, Karl Barth (1956b:4-8) argues, is the essence of what God wants to achieve – to be with mankind. He always comes to humanity. Barth (1956a:45) refers to this as “God having time for us”. This is his mission – *missio Dei*. From the beginning, God wanted to make his dwelling place with humanity. He is a God who longs to be involved in the lives of his people. The “coming” to which Barth refers, means that God wishes to be with humanity through the daily struggles of life today, and also throughout eternity. In the nomadic context, this means that he desires to walk the cattle trails with nomads. This is the Christian mission – to demonstrate that God is dwelling, and will continue to dwell, in the life of human beings – both today in a tumultuous world, and in a peaceful world to come. This is God’s dream.

If it is God’s mission to be involved in the life of a human being, then the Christian mission entails inviting others into his presence. The presence of God is so awe-inspiring that the one entering into it will worship him. As a result of this experience, the worshipper will want others to participate in the experience, too. Thus, the worshipper is transformed; and although he lives in the world, he is connected to God and does not belong to the world (John 17:15 & John

15). John Piper makes an appeal to Christians to place worship above the task of conducting missions. He states: "Missions exist because worship does not" (Piper 1993:11). What Piper is suggesting is that worship should be a response to God, and that, as Christians experience God, they should be filled with awe, and inspired to bring others into his presence. This is in stark contrast to merely adopting strategic objectives or engaging in mission projects because we feel compelled to fulfil a commission. In the latter case, it becomes a duty. Piper proposes that the Christian mission should become a lifestyle, so that it becomes who we are. This would mean a lifestyle of worship, played out as an invitation to join the Creator around his throne.

It is for this reason that humanity is a witness to the universe that God has restored the broken relationship. Wenham (1987:5) argues that God desired a relationship with humanity, but that this relationship was fractured. When the relationship is restored, it brings peace (*shalom*) and joy. Thus, Christianity must keep God's goal in sight, if Christians are to be effective workers together with God.

Thus, the true Christian mission participates with God in the achievement of his goal. If this mission belongs to God, and it is his desire to connect with humanity, then *immersion* is an essential principle, since one's immersion in the world (while being connected to God) comprises a model of God's desire to connect with all humanity. Furthermore, such a goal suggests that culturally appropriate communication styles should be used, rather than Western-Christian methods. When this is achieved, Christ's prayer in John 17:15 will be brought to fruition.

3. MISSION BY IMMERSION

Hunter and Phillips (2000) argue that nomads are the final mission frontier. They have remained on the margins of the Christian mission because they live in such inaccessible places; or they are overlooked, because they are so different from settled people. Van der Walt (2006) argues that the only way to come close to a people is by learning about them. Besides identifying nomads as an "unreached" people, it is important to understand who they are. This section proposes that the missionary should immerse him-/herself in the culture and community of the people whom he/she wishes to reach.

The Christian crusades were conducted with the aim of planting the Christian flag in new communities. This missionary method rippled into the 20th century in new ways. Missionaries moved from using swords to using reason as a means to persuade people of their need to choose Christianity. Here the emphasis lay in the superiority of reasoning, forgetting that different community's reason in different ways. Hiebert (2008:310) argues that such methods only address the cognitive aspect of culture – they are not holistic. This missionary method portrays God as superior, vengeful and forceful, and is not in keeping with the message that God desires to be present. God is indeed a superior being. He is also stern and powerful. However, he is a God of love. He does not use such methods to persuade people to believe in him. Rather, his aim is to remind humanity that he watches jealously over them, revealing his love and mercy. Thus, he sent his son into the world, so that humanity would not flee from his presence. God became a man in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, to enable humanity to experience God as one who identifies and connects with humanity.

Samuel Escobar (2003:99) argues that there is only one who can rightfully be described as "God's best missionary" and a "true model for Christian mission". Escobar identifies this "true

model” as Jesus of Nazareth, the son of God. Jesus never cajoled people into discipleship. Ellen White (1905:143, emphasis added) states: “The Saviour mingled with men as one who **desired their good**”. Christian missionaries need to follow the model provided by Jesus. He came with an attitude of humility and love.

Jesus modelled an important mission principle: the ability to identify closely with the people while retaining his connection with God. Thus, he could love those who hated him. He had compassion on those who were suffering. When people reviled him, he demonstrated peace. He lived in the world; but, being connected to God, he could live a different kind of life in a world of oppression and suffering. It is this example that is of great value to the missionary when working among nomads.

4. REDEEMING THE WORLDVIEW

Nomads are a contented people. They do not desire an alternative lifestyle (Phillips 2001:38). Their lifestyle is in keeping with their worldview. As a missionary, Jesus did not address people through power, i.e. he did not attack them (Escobar 2003:107 & 110). Rather, he demonstrated that a life connected to God can be fulfilling and complete, regardless of the culture. That is, humanity can be connected to God even while living in the land that has been usurped by the devil.

A worldview can be defined as “an integrated, interpretive set of confessional perspectives on reality which underlies shapes and motivates and gives direction and meaning to human activity” (Van der Walt 1994:39). The interpretive perceptions are assumptions that are made by an individual. The concept of a “worldview” is often explained by means of a comparison to a pair of glasses through which one views the world. Van der Walt argues that the “glasses” are embedded in reality (one’s lived world); and one’s interpretation of this lived world is what gives shape to how one interacts with, or views that reality. The “glasses” will be tinted by the interpretation one gives to reality; and this interpretation is based on the assumptions (or perceptions) one makes. Thus, one’s worldview shapes one’s values. Values in turn shape one’s thinking and behaviour – and these shape one’s culture. This description is commonly referred to as the “onion model” of the worldview. In peeling the layers off, the core is discovered – comprising the worldview assumptions. (See figure 1, below, for an adaptation of the Trompenaars model of culture.)

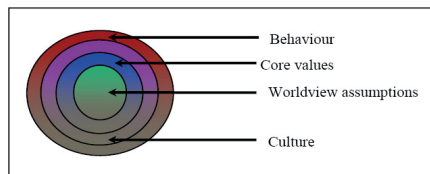


Figure 1: Worldview onion model

(Source:http://www.grin.com/object/document.56045/44bf19676360127675713893f14a6456_LARGE.png)

The worldview assumptions lie at the heart of an individual, and of society. These assumptions direct the path that people take to seek fulfilment in reaching their purpose as a people, or as individuals. Jesus demonstrated the importance of addressing worldview assumptions. He used many diverse illustrations and communication styles when addressing his audience. He

sought to address the underlying “heart need”. If the worldview is to be addressed, it must be redeemed, for missionaries are agents of redemption. Thus, the missionary’s message must challenge the individual at the core of his/her being; and the response must be one of wholehearted change. Khazanov discovered that there are few similarities across the nomadic world. Nomads differ from region to region (Khazanov 1983:15). Knowing a specific people becomes important with a view to redeeming their worldview.

Redeeming the nomadic worldview implies that a Christian worldview exists. It is important that the mission practitioner should define the latter. Besides the cultural worldview – for example, the Korean culture – the missionary must also clearly define his/her Christian worldview. In defining his/her Korean-Christian worldview, for instance, the mission practitioner needs to identify the biblical assumptions on which this worldview is based. He or she should then highlight these assumptions, and allow the convert to redefine his/her nomadic worldview from a biblical perspective. Thus, the convert forms a nomadic-Christian worldview of life. It was for this reason that Father Donovan felt the need to share the gospel and then depart, in order to open the way for the Holy Spirit to teach the Masai the essential Christian principles pertaining to their own particular context (Donovan 1982).

The worldview redemptive model challenges nomads about their own worldview assumptions, enabling them to respond in appropriate ways to their environment (physical, social, mental and spiritual). This approach is aimed at redeeming the heart of the people and, through the resulting connection to God, allowing the Holy Spirit to teach his principles of truth so that the host culture can be redeemed. This comprises a slight departure from Hiebert’s (2008) proposal for a worldview transformation. Hiebert is cautious in his approach towards defining transformation. He states: “We need to return to a biblical view of transformation, which is both a point and a process; this transformation has simple beginnings but radical, lifelong consequences” (Hiebert 2008:310). The theological term, “to redeem”, means to reclaim something. The term therefore implies that the worldview has an original that has been distorted. Thus, the premise of this study is that God comes to people in their specific context. God never uproots a people with a view to inducing them to change their identity. Rather, he enters a person’s world and grafts him or her to himself (John 15 & Rom. 11:16-24) for building and developing those around (Eph. 4). Thus, when God comes to a people, he seeks to make them his own, while retaining their identity as an individual. This can be illustrated as follows:

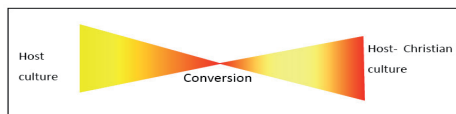


Figure 2: Worldview redemption model

The worldview redemptive model proceeds from the premise that sin has distorted all cultures. Hence, the assumptions that nomads make about life are distorted, and redemption is a necessity – as in the case of all people. This redemption entails the sharing of the gospel in packaging that is familiar to the people. The presentation of the gospel cannot bring about salvation from sin if the people have no understanding of sin. The good news must address their core underlying perceptions of life. These perceptions are to be challenged in such a way that the gospel of Jesus can be presented as the appropriate response to life’s perplexing

challenges. Once this is achieved, a conversion takes place, in which the convert places God at the centre of life. In so doing, the convert seeks to listen to God's answers to life's challenges, as opposed to traditional answers. For the nomad, this entails a choice between self-sufficiency and realising that God can provide for all his/her needs. Thus, the convert moves towards a Christian culture in the context of his/her lived world. This enables him/her to bear witness that God can transform a life in that context.

5. COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL IN A NOMADIC ENVIRONMENT

Basic communication theory (of which the fundamental elements are the speaker, message and audience) suggests that communication is about good oration (see Søgaaard 1993:30). Mission communication must transcend this understanding, for it must be "rooted in God's nature" (Søgaaard 1993:11). Yet Hesselgrave's (1991:536) warning, namely that the missionary should be careful regarding the technology that he/she introduces, has significance, since foreign technology has implications for the host community. Mission communication entails more than technology or media – it is about relationships. This aspect appeals to nomads, since communication in their life context is based on experience in a relationship, rather than on words per se. In terms of their worldview regarding communication, the sender and the messenger have as much value as the message. The value and application of the message will depend on the relationship between the recipient and the sender. In mission communication, the missionary is the messenger. God sends the message through the messenger. God is, therefore, the sender. The question is, what relationship, if any, exists between God and nomads? Secondly, what is God's message to nomads? Thirdly, how is that message to be shared? Some answers to these questions will be provided in the following paragraphs, in the context of the Ovahimba² of Namibia.

Christian missionaries need to earn the right to be heard. The missionary cannot enter a community as one who knows and understands life in the nomadic context. Rather, he/she must enter as a learner. This is especially true among nomads. There is a vast difference between a sedentary person and a nomad. Therefore, entering the nomadic community as a learner is vital. It requires interaction, and not mere book knowledge. Taking the time to be with the people, in order to learn about their world and who they are, has value. This entails immersing oneself in their culture so that one can be an adopted member. This will demonstrate humility.

In a nomadic environment, immersion entails learning new ways to understand concepts such as climatology. Familiarity with weather patterns enables nomads to make judicious decisions in terms of where to move their animals. Understanding the important role that biology plays in the life of a nomad is a significant factor. Biology provides nomads with their food and medicine. Thus, learning to *know* from a nomadic perspective – rather than coming with prior knowledge – will demonstrate a connectedness to the people (see Donovan 1982:16). Neither should one's experience be centred in the nomads' religious world. Rather, a holistic understanding of the people will allow a bond to develop between missionary and nomad. This is achieved through immersion, which, in turn, gives the missionary the opportunity to be heard.

2. The Ovahimba are a nomadic people living in northwest Namibia. ("Ovahimba" is the plural form; the singular "Himba".) Dr Gideon Petersen ministered to the Ovahimba in Opuwo for 16 years. The references to their worldview and culture are based on his experience.

Father Vincent Donovan modelled this approach as he worked among the Masai. He desired to be “cut off” from the mission station and Western influence (Donovan 1982:16). To achieve this, he went on “safaris”. He distanced himself from the mission station and adopted a nomadic lifestyle as an itinerant preacher. Phillips (2001:46-47) confirms that following a nomadic lifestyle is the only way to earn the right to be heard in this context. It was only as he immersed himself in the context that Donovan succeeded in connecting with the people. Thus, his lifestyle allowed him to communicate the gospel meaningfully to the Masai. It is this kind of immersion that is being proposed here – an immersion that allows the missionary to connect with nomads in all aspects of their lives, so that he/she can understand the nomadic worldview (or heart).

5.1 What is the relationship between God and nomads?

In the Himba worldview, God is distant from humanity. The worldview assumption here is that God is spirit, while humanity is flesh and blood. These cannot come together. For the Himba, only the “living dead” or ancestors (who are spirit) can know God. This implies that the Ovahimba cannot know (*uazu*)³ God, because he does not interact with humanity. It is this perception of God that must be questioned; and the way in which God is involved in the life of a Himba person needs to be demonstrated. The coming of God to the Ovahimba so that they can experience him will be a significant factor.

According to the Himba worldview, it is simply not possible for a person to be connected to God. As pointed out above, the worldview assumption or perception is that God is a spirit and cannot be approached by humanity. Addressing worldview perceptions such as this one will entail the demonstration of a different way to respond to life’s challenges. Jesus addressed people’s hearts, rather than focusing on issues, doctrine or lifestyle (John 4:7-15 & 8:3-11). He challenged people’s worldview perceptions and introduced a God who desired to connect with humanity in a personal way. Through this unique view of God, Jesus redeems the whole person – including his/her worldview.

It is important to understand that the Ovahimba view God as the Creator. However, they believe that he is uninvolved in the world. Therefore, their trust in God is very low. A nomadic world is based on experience; and thus, there is a need for God to enter the nomads’ world to demonstrate his trustworthiness, making it part of their experience. God, however, chooses to send a human representative as a demonstration of what he can and wants to do. Thus, the messenger becomes an important medium for God to communicate his will.

5.2. What is God’s message for nomads?

To understand God’s message for the Ovahimba, it is imperative to be familiar with the Himba worldview. In this regard, the word *uazu* (“to know”) reflects the Himba understanding of the concept of knowing. One of the characteristics of the Himba worldview, as I came to understand it, is that there seems to be an endless cycle of adding value to one’s life, but always within the context of an acknowledgement that life was better in the old days – *katjitwaenda*. The term *katjitwaenda* means: “Life is not what it used to be” – i.e., life is not as good as it was in the past. Although there seems to be a striving to be all that one can be, on the one hand, there is also a yearning for the past, on the other – because life is different today. If one reflects

3. According to the Himba understanding, to “know” means to experience first-hand. One cannot hear about something and say one knows about it.

on this saying, it seems to be indicative of a deeper concern that the culture is changing. This understanding of *katjitwaenda* points to a need to preserve as much of the culture as possible.

Since the Ovahimba are an oral society, their collective memory does not go back very far. The furthest point in their history that they can remember is the time when the people separated at Okaronda Kambeti. This story is somewhat analogous to the story of the tower of Babel in the Bible, which relates how people separated and went in different directions. However, in the case of the Ovahimba, the people from whom they separated were – and still are – people whom they know, such as the Ovathemba and Ovambo. In sharing God’s message, it is important to acknowledge that there was once a time when all people lived in harmony. It is to this time that the Ovahimba long to return; and it is this experience that God longs to give them.

A second important worldview principle for the Ovahimba is that of inheritance. The Ovahimba have a double descent, one branch of which is spiritual and the other material. The spiritual legacy is passed down through one’s father. This inheritance is concerned with ways of living. It guides one in living as a member of the *omuhoko* (family) or community. The material descent is passed on through one’s mother. Here, the primary inheritance is cattle. God’s message transcends the material and the spiritual inheritance. However, it links up with the idea that life is not the same as it once was. God wants to give the Ovahimba an inheritance that is lasting, and restore them to a state where harmony reigns among humanity, as it did at a particular time in the past. This time refers back to when humanity had a connection with God; that is, when no barrier separated humanity from God. The message for the Ovahimba, then, is that God wants to be reconciled with humanity, so that they can receive their true inheritance, which will lead to the harmony and togetherness that they long for.

5.3 A medium for the message

In oral societies, the medium used by the sender is significant. Often, the message will be delivered by a messenger, who chooses the way in which the message is to be conveyed or delivered. The content of the message will determine the delivery style. However, the recipient will also determine the style. Here, two mediums are identified: the messenger and the delivery.

According to McLuhan and Fiore (1967), “the medium is the message”. For nomads, the messenger is an extension of the message. This is reflected in the value that the sender places on the message. If a child is sent, the message has minimal value. (The messenger is a medium). It is at this point that a mission of immersion becomes valuable. This is because immersion is a form of communication – it is a message. One cannot communicate the coming of God to a people without being one with them. This entails knowing and understanding what it means to walk their cattle trails, for example. Here, the message and the life must demonstrate God’s desire to be connected with people. The messenger, as a person reconciled to God, communicates the value of being a human being in a degraded world. Through immersion, the degree of interference in the communication process is significantly reduced. This approach to communication can be illustrated as follows:

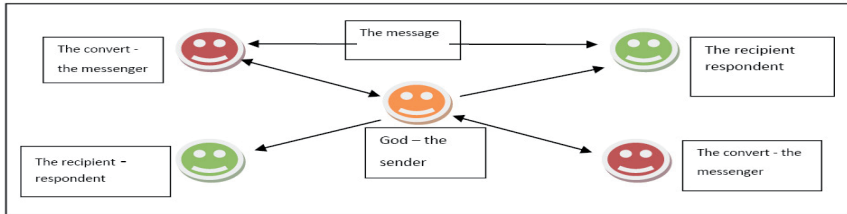


Figure 3: The messenger as medium (adapted from Hesselgrave 1991:108)

Throughout God's communication with the world, he applies this principle. He communicates his love through a messenger, making it known that he wants to reconnect with people. Thus, the messenger becomes the medium. When humanity turned away from God in the Garden of Eden, it was God who came and sought after them (Gen. 3:8ff). The medium demonstrated God's desire to reconnect with humanity. When Jesus came to earth, he came as God incarnate. Again, the medium is the message. When Jesus returned to heaven he instructed his disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit so that they could receive power to be witnesses of God's redeeming power. The Holy Spirit works through the messenger as a demonstration of the power of God to redeem the life of a human being. The messenger's role is to introduce another human being to God, who will redeem that person.

As people with an oral tradition, nomads place a high value on experience and modelling, since it is through these aspects that learning takes place. Thus, the life of the messenger is the greatest testimony of what God can – and desires to – achieve. The messenger is the medium; and the message is a redeemed life connected to God.

To complete the communication delivery, the medium is important. In the Western Christian tradition, preaching has, for the most part, comprised the medium. Preaching challenges nomads, as it means stepping outside of their habitual space and entering a new space – the church building. Where buildings are not used, a tree is often used to represent the church building. Preaching also implies that a monologue comprises communication, whereas nomads usually engage in dialogue. To preach implies reading from the Bible. But nomads are oral people. Preaching itself is a style of delivery that is unfamiliar to nomads. It is not a genre common to their experience.

This raises significant challenges. These challenges can only be met as the missionary immerses him-/herself in the culture. Learning the local communication styles should be a priority. The genre must be understood. Moreover, the places of sharing must be understood, as well as the appropriate time for sharing. Bruce Olson highlights these aspects meaningfully in his discussion of his experience among the Motilone Indians. Although he was anxious to share

the gospel, he had to wait for his first convert to lead the way in this regard. After a year, the time was right and the place was right (Olson 2006). The messenger used the appropriate genre, at the appropriate time, at the appropriate place, with the appropriate people. As a result of his sharing, the tribe accepted the story of Jesus.

In working among the Ovahimba, it was difficult, at first, to master the Himba genre. Poetry is said to be an important genre for oral people. Often, poetry (*omiimbo*) is chanted. The Ovahimba have other genres as well. They use praise songs (*ombimbi*), which are reserved for heroes or brave men. They also engage in *ondjongo* (a dance), mainly in order to share stories. Initially, *ongano* (fairytales) seemed to be an appealing genre for mission work. These are used by older people when communicating important values to children around the family hearth at night. After further research had been conducted, however, it was realised that *ongano* would not fit the message, and would, in fact, reduce the value thereof. An initial recording was made, in which Bible stories were related, using *omiimbo* and *ondjongo*. The responses from Christian leaders included the following: "I did not know that Christians can use tradition... I thought to be Christian meant to be Western ..."; and: "This is how our parents will hear the gospel..." After a second recording was made, using drama, *ombimbi* and *omiimbo*, a Himba man commented: "You really want to reach the hearts of our people, don't you?" Using a local genre touches the heart of those whom one wishes to reach. It indicates that the sender values the message... and also that the sender values the audience.

Although the use of a familiar genre speaks to the heart, the message is also important and must be communicated. At this point, I would like to share some steps that form part of the delivery process. I have already pointed out the importance of immersing oneself in the culture and becoming familiar with it. From the usual Christian perspective, the next step would be to share the gospel story. In terms of a worldview redemptive model, however, this would be a mistake. Using a familiar genre, one must challenge the worldview assumptions first. Jesus did this. When Nicodemus visited him, Jesus did not answer his question; rather, he addressed the underlying question that he did not verbalise (John 3:1-21). It is at this worldview level that nomads must be jolted and allowed to feel a little uneasy. Once a nomad has been challenged regarding his/her worldview, an appropriate answer must be presented with a view to restoring the broken trust in God. This entails an invitation to enter God's presence. In doing so, one's human frailties will be recognised; yet God will open one's eyes to see the human potential that can be released when one is connected with him. Thus, God's call for humanity to enter his presence is aimed at making them complete – for, in God, human beings exist, move and have their being. The traditional worldview assumptions give a false peace and sense of assurance, even though they appear to provide the answers to life's pressing questions.

Once the convert has made a decision to be reconciled to God, it becomes important to share ways to connect with God. This will be a new experience for the convert – connecting with someone whom he/she does not know. It is thus important to share spiritual habits that will help the convert to make the connection. Prayer is an important practice among the Ovahimba. Usually it entails talking to an ancestor, who in turn speaks to God. Now the convert can speak directly to God without a mediator. This will be a new experience that will need some guidance. Bible study, as a spiritual practice, is an important Western way of connecting with God. Christian doctrine, however, reminds us that God speaks through nature, as well as through the written text. Connecting with God through nature should not be difficult for nomads, who are totally immersed in their natural environment. Helping them to see God in

nature will thus be a significant factor. Finally, new converts will need to be nurtured. They need to mature as people reconciled to God. This must happen in the context of their worldview. Biblical principles must be shared by addressing and challenging worldview assumptions. There may be some premises that are common to both biblical principles and worldview assumptions; for example, the idea of community is an important biblical principle. However, other worldview assumptions may be in conflict with biblical principles; for example, that of including the dead as part of the community. The right choice in terms of how to deal with such assumptions will need to be impressed upon the converts by the Holy Spirit.

In the light of the foregoing, it is clear that the gospel needs to be presented to nomadic peoples within their own familiar context. Donovan (1982:16), when sharing with the Masai, did not wish to use his preconceived biblical teaching to interpret the Bible for the people. It is this attitude that needs to be embraced. The steps in the process of communication delivery are illustrated in Figure 4 below.

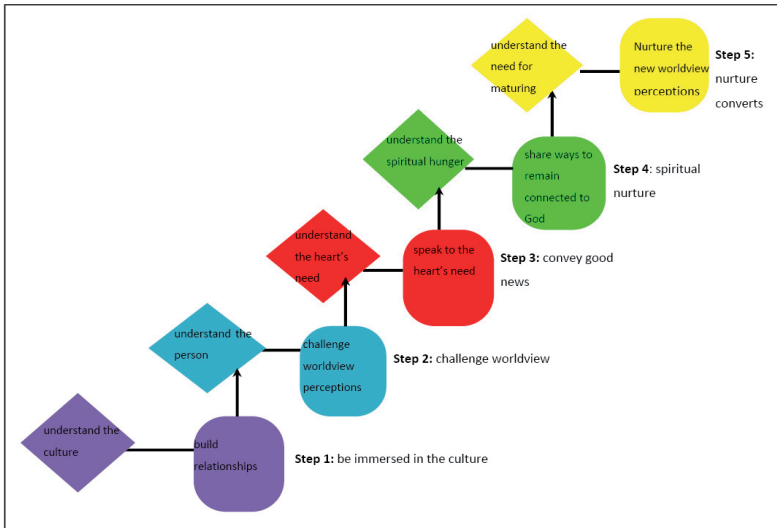


Figure 4: Steps in communication delivery

Mission communication in a nomadic environment must speak the “heart language” of the people, and address their worldview assumptions. This will give value to the message, while also according value to their culture and lifestyle. Thus, the medium used demonstrates God’s *telos* – his desire to connect with humanity.

6. CONCLUSION

Søgaard (1993:12) correctly states that “God is by nature a communicator”. This article argued that God wants to communicate with nomads through his messengers, using nomadic communication styles. He wishes to do this so that nomads can know that he desires to relate to them personally. The article proposes a worldview redemptive approach. Such an approach

is focused on enabling nomads to experience God as being one with them.

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Die pop-Bybel vandag¹

Die popularisering van die Bybel, die pop-Bybel, is vandag 'n algemene verskynsel. In die analisering van die pop-Bybel kan op verskillende wins- en gevaarpunte gewys word. Die belang van 'n dialogiese verstaan van die verhouding tussen Bybel en populêre kultuur is geleë daarin dat die impak van albei na waarde geskat kan word.

1. INLEIDING

Bybelse temas is teenwoordig in verskillende populêre media-vorme. *Joan Osborne* se bekende lied "If God was one of us"; Simon & Garfunkel wat vir "Mrs Robinson" vertel "Jesus loves you more than you will ever know"; Dan Brown se kan-nie-neersit-boeke oor samesweringsteorieë (veral *Da Vinci Code*, en *Angels and Demons*); die Kanadese popgroep Crash Test Dummies met hulle "God shuffled his feet"; die tydlose Leonard Cohen se talryke verwysings na God en Bybelse temas in liedere soos "Hallelujah"; fliks² soos *The Matrix*-trilogie met sterk Messiaanse temas en die kruissimboliek; en gruwelfilms wat op apokaliptiese temas van die Nuwe-Testamentiese Openbaringboek inspeel, is enkele voorbeelde van 'n skynbaar groeiende tendens van 'n Bybelse teenwoordigheid in die populêre media. Dit lei tot 'n interessante gevolgtrekking. In ons hedendaagse konteks waar talle vrae oor tradisionele gelowigheid gestel word, is die teenwoordigheid en dalk selfs die invloed van die Bybel in populêre kultuur opvallend én waarneembaar!³ Die vraag van hierdie bydrae is, hoe verreken ons die Bybel in teenwoordigheid en invloed in vandag se populêre kultuur, in kort, die pop-Bybel?⁴

2. DIE BYBEL IN ALLEDAAGSE KULTUUR: WAAR EN HOE?

Die opvallendheid en waarneembaarheid van die Bybel in populêre kultuur word verskillend geëvalueer. Op die keper beskou, is die Bybel nie dalk vir diegene wat 'n direkte belang daarby het veel meer in die oog as vir ander vir wie die Bybel irrelevant is nie? Dalk nie alleen omdat "beauty in the eye of the beholder" is nie, maar omdat herkenbaarheid tog afhanklik

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1. Verwerkte weergawe van 'n voordrag gelewer by die Teologiese Dag van die Fakulteit Teologie, SU, 6 Februarie 2012. 'n Vroeëre weergawe van die voordrag is beskikbaar op die Sol Iustitiae webwerf (<http://www.soliustitiae.co.za>).
 2. Naas talle fliks wat direk inspeel op Bybelse temas en narratiewe, soos by *Jesus of Nazareth*; of *Jesus of Montreal*; of *Passion of the Christ*; of selfs die ouer *Ben Hur* en *Spartacus* (Ig. is intussen in nuwe gedaante weer vrygestel). Heelwat literatuur hieroor het in die onlangse verlede verskyn, sien o.a. Aichele & Walsh (2002); Jewett (1993; 1999); Kreitzer (1999); Marsh & Ortiz (1997) – maar uiteraard met onderlinge groot verskille. Bv. waar Jewett Paulus laat buikspreek in dialoog met films, wil Kreitzer films as invalshoek vir die Paulus-briewe aanwend (as omgekeerde hermeneutiese vloei; kyk ook Merlau-Ponty oor die wedersydse vloei van tyd te wete verlede-hede en hede-verlede).
 3. Een aspek t.o.v. die popularisering van die Bybel in die breë media is natuurlik om politieke munt daaruit te slaan, maar dit is 'n tema opsigself en hier laat ruimte nie die bespreking toe nie.
 4. Hierdie bydrae is 'n evaluerende analise eerder as 'n statisties-gerigte opname; uiteraard sluit die twee mekaar nie uit nie. Dit sal in onderstaande ook duidelik blyk dat die verwickelde aard van die pop-Bybel meer inhoud as om die teenwoordigheid en impak van die Bybel op populêre media-vorms aan te teken. Hierdie bydrae wil probeer om iets van hierdie meer gekompliseerde aard van die pop-Bybel te skets.

is van vorige blootstelling of bestaande belange.⁵ Wanneer daar gekyk word hoe Bybelse temas dikwels eerder op indirekte wyse ter sprake kom in die media vandag, selfs deur ooreenvoudigde en onakkurate gebruik daarvan, wat is die reikwydte of selfs impak van h Bybelse teenwoordigheid in populêre kultuur? Word dit raakgesien en as sodanig erken (sien Clines 1997:41-42)? Sonder om die belang van die “of-vrae” te ontken, is die fokus hier op die aard van die Bybel se teenwoordigheid in populêre media, op die pop-Bybel.

Met die kulturele nalatenskap van die Bybel in gedagte (Brenner 2000:7-12; Sugirtharajah 2003:81), is die popularisering daarvan nie ongehoord nie, en allermins h nuuttjie. Dit is vandag eerder die skaal en die frekwensie van h pop-Bybel wat aandag trek. Dit is verstaanbaar dat die Bybel telkens en soms opnuut gelowiges en selfs ander mense se aandag trek: die Bybelse tekste lê aan die hart van die Christelike gemeenskap en vorm h klankbord vir baie mense, binne en buite die geloofsgemeenskap, vir verskillende redes.⁶ Nietemin, in samehang met h wydverspreide bekendheid met en affiniteit vir die Bybel, beteken die informasie-eeu met allerlei tegnologiese innovasies en hulpmiddels asook met openbare media en sosiale netwerke dat media in verskillende vorms in elk geval, willens of wetens, op mense se lewe inspeel.

Veral in Suid-Afrika was die Bybel, oftewel die aanspraak op Bybelse tekste, nog altyd intiem verweef met die materiële konteks van ons land en samelewing: naas die kerk, is Bybelse tekste gebruik op politieke, sosiale, ekonomiese en ander terreine. In daardie opsig is die situasie vandag nie veel anders nie wanneer sake soos homoseksualiteit, aborsie, MIV en vigs, xenofobie en so meer aan die orde kom.⁷ Dit is egter nie slegs in populêre debatte in die openbare media waar aansprake op en verwysings na die Bybel ter sprake is nie; h groeiende pop-Bybel kultuur kan juis bespeur word in “ontspanningsmedia”, soos films, musiek, en kuns.⁸

Ongemak oor die voorkoms en gebruik van Bybelse verwysings en temas in die hedendaagse popkultuur word soms uitgespreek. Aan die een kant is dit geen verrassing dat die pop-Bybel in ons verbruikerskultuur genestel is met gepaardgaande kommersialisering nie – maar daar is aan die ander kant heelwat meer te sê oor die Bybel in populêre kultuur.⁹ h Bekende Bybelwetenskaplike van Sheffield, Engeland, het onlangs h boek geskryf met as titel die vraag, “Whose Bible is it anyway?”¹⁰ In die boek bevraagteken Davies wat hy sien as die monopolie

5. “[W]e must admit that for many people today the Bible is largely viewed as an irrelevancy, a worthless trinket of a bygone era” (Kreitzer 1999:29).

6. Redes wissel van kinderlike nostalgie, geloofstoewyding, tradisionele verwysingsraamwerk, ernstige navorsing, en talle ander.

7. Ook nie nêr in SA nie. Clines suggereer juis dat die samelewing nie gesag aan die Bybel toeken nie, tensy dit blyk dat die Bybelse sentiment met die samelewing akkoord gaan. “I think it is bad for the morals of the society to think that they can have Scripture’s backing when it suits them – and not buy the whole package” (Clines 1997:53-54).

8. Dit is ’n lysie wat verder uitgebrei kan word: TV-programme (in verskillende vorms soos by “sepies” en reekse); rekenaarspeletjies; internet; strokiesprente (“cartoons”); ens (vgl by Roncace & Gray 2007). Copier, Kooijman & Vander Stichele (2010:189-195) sluit nie films onder die rubriek “populêre kultuur” in nie.

9. Die verbruikersmentaliteit kan selfs Bybelse hermeneutiek en akademiese diskoers beïnvloed, tekenend by in Clines se gevaarlike voorstel van ’n “end-user theory of interpretation” (Clines 1997:91-98).

10. Miskien is die ander kant van die munt, die sterk betoog van Smart met sy boek, *The strange silence of the Bible in the Church* (1970). Sy besorgheid is dat kontemporêre religieuse filosofie, dikwels in die vorm van een of ander versnit van kulturele nasionalisme met Christelikheid die “essential message of the Scriptures” verplaas (Smart 1970:10). Juel (1997) neem die argument van Smart op, en is gewoon (maar

van die kerk in die breë ten opsigte van die gesagvolle interpretasie van die Bybel. Die pop-Bybel is egter nie primêr, trouens dalk hoegenaamd nie, gerig op die ontseteling van kerklike aansprake op en oor die Bybel nie.

3. 'N EVALUERING VAN DIE POP-BYBEL

Die Bybel se aanwesigheid in populêre kultuur kan op verskillende maniere geëvalueer word, soos inderdaad ook gebeur. In Kort opgaaf van positiewe en negatiewe elemente ten opsigte van pop-Bybel tendense – sonder enige aansprake op volledigheid – sou soos volg daar kon uitsien

3.1 Belangrike winspunte van pop-Bybeltendense (of nie)?

Bewus van die kultuurskat van die Bybel

Soos die Afrikaanse spreekwoord “onbekend maak onbemind” suggereer, is die pop-Bybelkultuur in manier waarop mense deurgaans herinner word aan die Bybel. Presies waaraan hulle herinner word en die wyse waarop dit geskied is in ander saak, maar die media-teenwoordigheid van die Bybel verseker dat die Bybel in die oog bly. Nie noodwendig bemind of geliefd nie, helaas! Dit is interessant hoe verskillende kunstenaars en regisseurs by tye hulle inspirasie uit die Bybel kry, uit die bekende en gewilde tekste van die Bybel, verhale oor liefde, selfs vir vyande; opoffering; omgee vir ander mense; en talle ander mooi gedeeltes. Ook vanuit minder mooi gedeeltes: Miskien verwoord die Bybelse gru-verhale soos die verkragting van Tamar (Gen 38) of die kindermoord (Matt 2) van die vrese en bekommernisse wat mense vandag ook mee leef? Dalk vind mense juis aansluiting by die emosies en verlange wat uitgespreek word vir God (Psalms), vir die Ander (Hooglied), vir die lewe (Jesus in die tuin van Getsemane)? Het ons wêreld vandag nie weer nodig om die krag van diep emosies te ervaar te midde van die alledaagse sleurgang nie? (sien Clines 1997:53).

Geloof bly in die oog

Nie net die Bybel bly in die oog deur die pop-Bybelkultuur nie, maar ook die (Christelike) geloof. Die Bybel duik soms op die vreemdste plekke, in die mees onwaarskynlike liedjies en films op en meestal is daar nie in (doelbewuste) poging om die Bybel van die geloof te skei nie. Is dit miskien ook so vir die Bybel en kerk, soos daar dikwels in die vermaaklikheidswêreld gesê word, dat enige publisiteit goeie publisiteit is?

Aanknopingsmoontlikhede en ruimte vir gesprek

Dit is duidelik dat die pop-Bybel vandag dikwels die eerste, en soms enigste kennismaking is wat mense met die Bybel het. Dit kan selfs gebeur dat ook binne die Christelike geloofsgemeenskap, die pop-Bybel die geleentheid skep vir gesprek oor die Bybel en geloof.

Nuwe oë van veel meer deelnemers

Die pop-Bybel verskynsel is al deur sommige bestempel as die “demokratisering” van die Bybel, wat op ten minste tweërlei wyse verstaan kan word. Eensyds beteken die deelname van soveel meer mense aan die interpretasie van die Bybel dat een groep alleen nie op die Bybel of op die interpretasie daarvan beslag kan lê vir daardie groep se eie doeleindes nie. Andersyds

waarskynlik onnodig) bekommerd oor die huidige swygsaamheid of afwesigheid van die Bybel.

beteken dit ook dat die interpretasie aan die kontrole van die kerk sowel as die akademie ontworstel word (Punt 2012). Mens kan lank debattee oor die sinvolheid of implikasies van hierdie ontwikkelings, maar dit is duidelik 'n onomkeerbare proses.¹¹

Nuwe moontlikhede vir spiritualiteitsbelewenis

Die pop-Bybel is tekenend van 'n nuwe spiritualiteit, dikwels vervleg met ander belangrike en dikwels aktuele temas ten opsigte van ekologiese bewustheid, sosiale betrokkenheid, en sosio-politieke werksaamheid. Die pop-Bybel kan waarskynlik nie los van 'n onvergenoegdheid met sekere kerklike patrone, maniere van doen gesien word nie; ook nie van 'n nuwe maar dalk tog andersoortige fokus op spiritualiteit nie. Die uitbeelding van Rowen Atkinson as predikant en veral van Grace (Maggie Smith) in *Keeping mum* is nogal 'n goeie voorbeeld van hierdie soort dinamika en tendense.¹²

3.2 'n Lysie gevare van pop-Bybeltendense (of nie?)

'n Grenslose, wye verskeidenheid

Een van die mees kompliserende aspekte van die groeiende pop-Bybelkultuur is daardie element wat tipies aanwesig is in populêre tendense: 'n grenslose verskeidenheid, wat dit moeilik maak om 'n greep daarop te kry. Dit gaan nie net om die (miskien tipies akademiese?) versugting of strewe na kontrole en beheer deur middel van klassifikasie en evaluering nie. Dit is eerder die byna fatalistiese erkenning dat die kompleksiteit van die omvang en karakter van die pop-Bybelkultuur dit moeilik maak om dit sorgvuldig te kan beskryf, wat die bewussyn van 'n byna onmoontlik-om-te-verstaan-verskeidenheid onderstreep.

Oppervlakkige interpretasie

Sekere manifestasies van die pop-Bybelkultuur kan nie ontsnap aan die beskuldiging van oppervlakkigheid en sensasie nie. Albei films soos *The Passion of the Christ* en *The Da Vinci Code* – weliswaar met verskillende style – is voorbeelde van hoe die Bybelse lydensverhale (!) van Christus en die ontstaansgeskiedenis van die Bybel op simplistiese manier aangebied en op sensasionele wyse oordryf word. Tog is versigtigheid hier gepas, aangesien dit die oppervlakkig-sensasionele mense nietemin op 'n dieper vlak kan aanspreek, en tot nadenke en ondersoek kan stem! Na *Passion* was Jesus vir talle mense nie maar net "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild" nie; *Da Vinci Code* het die Evangelie van Filippus (en selfs die Evangelie van Maria Magdalena) in die openbare oog laat verskyn soos nooit tevore nie. Die punt is, soms kan téén bedoelings en verwagtings in, die pop-Bybel juis dieper, toepaslike, selfs grensverskuivende resultate tot gevolg hê. Nogtans, omdat die sekulêre oog nie veel het aan die goddelike nie, is die gevaar dat God eenvoudig uit die pop-Bybel uitgeskryf word. Dit is immers God wat die Bybel die dokument maak wat dit is. Wanneer die Bybel maar net nog 'n boek word, is dit nie meer die Bybel nie. Soos TS Elliott (in Clines 1997:54) geskryf het, diegene wat die Bybel as 'n monument van Engelse prosa beskryf, toon hulle bewondering vir 'n monument op die graf van die Christendom.

11. "[P]opular culture not only influences biblical interpretation but also opens up new perspectives and challenges and confronts the conventional, stylized hermeneutical frameworks of the 'industry' of the academic study of biblical texts" (Culbertson 2010: 71).

12. "[P]opular culture is more than simply entertaining; it not only reflects but also engages philosophical, theological, and political concerns in its own rewriting of scripture" (Runions 2010:201).

Fragmentasie en gebrek aan koherensie

Die versnippering van langer poëtiese gedeeltes, breër diskoerse en groter narratiewe in die Bybel is dikwels h probleem, aangesien h enkele metafoer, frase of gedagte op geïsoleerde wyse in h fliek of popliedjie ingespan word (Copier, Kooijman & Vander Stichele 2010:189-190).¹³ Die konteks van die betrokke geïsoleerde aspek gaan verlore ten gunste van die aanwending van tekste op pragmaties-voordelige wyse.¹⁴ Wat is die effek wanneer h gruwelliek een Bybelvers uit Openbaring siteer; wat word daarmee te kenne gegee, oor die fliek sowel as die Bybel? h Verbruikersmentaliteit kan die pop-Bybel se fokus eerder op “verpakking”, op maksimale “impak”, op “verkoopswaarde” en dies meer laat val.

Verdraaiings, aanpassings en verstellings

Die gebruik van Bybelse temas in populêre media beteken dikwels dat daar aanpassings en verstellings gemaak word, sommige mense sal dit eerder verdraaiings wil noem. Soos Bruce Springsteen sing,

Jesus was an only son; As he walked up Calvary Hill; His mother Mary walking beside Him;
In the path where his blood spilled; Jesus was an only son; In the hills of Nazareth; As He
lay reading the Psalms of David; At his mother's feet.

is daar behalwe vroe oor historiese akkuraatheid, duidelik sprake van h aanpassing van die Evangelie-verhale oor Jesus. Dat die moeder van Jesus volgens die Evangelies by die kruis teenwoordig was,¹⁵ beteken nie dat sy die kruisweg saam gestap het nie; die beeld van Jesus wat die Psalmboek lê en lees by sy ma is h geromantiseerde aanpassing wat nie in die Evangelies voorkom nie; en les bes, ons lees immers van Jesus se broers (Matt 12:46-50).

Hier raak die saak tog meer ingewikkeld: om van verdraaiings te praat beteken dat daar van die gedagte uitgegaan word dat daar in h teks eintlik net een, altyd-geldige betekenis opgesluit lê. Beteken die beskuldiging van verdraaiing dan nie eintlik maar dat daar van die ooreengekome wyse van verstaan van h teks afgewyk word nie? Betekenis is egter h dinamiese *gebeure* wat plaasvind wanneer lesers die teks lees, eerder as wat dit die inherente eiendom van die teks is. Meer nog, dit wat skyn h verdraaiing te wees, kan potensieel juis h kreatiewe en positiewe vorm van interpretasie wees – soos h karikatuur-afbeelding h spesifieke eienskap van iemand kan beklemtoon (Clines 1997:49-51). Stem Springsteen se “Jesus was an only son” nie ook tot nadenke oor die uniekheid van Jesus sonder allerlei teologiese finesse nie? Met ander woorde, die meriete van interpretasies kan kwalik op grond van nuutheid en kreatiwiteit alleen as negatief (of positief) afgemaak word.¹⁶ Dan kan selfs die moontlikheid van misverstand nie uitgesluit word nie. Wanneer toegewyde gelowiges die interpretasie van

13. “It [popular culture] thinks it knows the Bible, but it knows the Bible mainly as a book of quotes” (Clines 1997:53).

14. David Clines (1997:48) verwys hierna as “plunder”: “[I]t [cultural use of the Bible] is ‘use’ in the most pragmatic sense, ‘use’ almost in the sense of ‘plunder’”.

15. Soos in Joh 19:25. In Luk 23:49 het “die vrou wat hom gevolg het” die kruisgebeure van h afstand gade geslaan, sonder aanduiding van Maria se teenwoordigheid; Mark 15:40 en Matt 27:55-56 dui wel Maria, moeder van Jesus se teenwoordigheid, op h afstand, aan.

16. Dat Bybelse invloede in populêre media nie deurgaans voldoende erken word nie, sou ook negatief geëvalueer kon word. Maar beide omdat die waarneming daarvan by outeur en leser lê, en ook aan die hand van die oortuiging dat enige publisiteit goeie publisiteit is, reken Clines (1997:48-49) dat skalkse (of ontbrekende) erkenning van Bybelse invloed in popkultuur nie problematies is nie.

die Bybel as ingewikkeld ervaar en sukkel om te begryp, is die moontlikheid dat interpretasie-misverstande in die pop-Bybelkultuur aangetref kan word, natuurlik ook groot.

Om die kort bestekopname af te sluit, kan na twee ander, breër negatiewe tendense verwys word, wat as piëtistiese toe-eiening en chauvinistiese bevestiging beskryf kan word. Een tendens is h maklike “wat-my-die-beste-pas” narsissistiese en kommersialiseerbare patroon van spiritualiteit en geloof. Wanneer populêre media h terapeutiese rol moet vervul, en Bybelse temas inspan om daarmee te help, word die Bybel dienstig aan die hedendaagse selfbehepte en kommersiële dwang in die media. Die gewildheid van Mel Gibson se *Passion of the Christ* is waarskynlik ten dele aan die afgryslieke, grafiese geweld toe te skryf, maar ten dele waarskynlik ook aan h sekere (noem dit dan h piëtistiese) vorm van spiritualiteit wat dit aangebied het. Alhoewel Osborne se “If God was one of us” een van my gunstelingliedere is, wonder mens soms of die waarskynlike aanpassing van Immanuel, God met ons, nie dalk h moderne behoefte aan tuis voel in h wêreld gekenmerk deur vervreemding, verwoerd nie?

h Ander tendens is die gevaar om die Bybelse tradisie, veral ten opsigte van sake soos onder andere geweld of genderrolle klakkeloos na te praat, sonder insig in die sosiokulturele ontkieming- of ontwikkelingskontekste. Die keersy van h piëteit wat op die spits gedryf word, h piëteit waarvan die diepte nie altyd die toewyding ewenaar nie, is die bevestiging van geykte, chauvinistiese praktyke. Hieroor is David Clines se vraag toepaslik: “Is the Bible, in the way it is used, good for the culture or not?” (Clines 1997:51). Behalwe die wyse waarop talle populêre films en popmusiek byvoorbeeld geykte genderrolle bevestig, ook in die “chick-flick”-genre, bly h sekere stereotipe soms sit ten opsigte van ander temas ook. Wat is die impak van *The Matrix* waarin die verband tussen die Messias-figuur en geweld op grafiese en byna uitbundige manier bevestig word?¹⁷ Die eerste-eeuse konteks was gekenmerk deur geweld, wat grotendeels aan die Romeinse Ryk en gepaardgaande invloed ontspring het. Sonder om die verband tussen Messias en geweld in die Bybelse Evangelies te ontken, sal die inagneming van die Bybelse sosiopolitieke konteks dalk vir h meer genuanseerde verstaan daarvan kon sorg.

In kort, vir diegene vir wie die Bybel meer as h interessante, klassieke boek is, kan die pop-Bybel naas talle positiewe aspekte, nogal onrusbarend voorkom. Dit roep die vraag op oor die verstaan van ontmoeting tussen Bybel en kultuur, oor hoe die interaksie ge-“plot” kan word?

4. WAT GEBEUR WANNEER DIE BYBEL EN KULTUUR ONTMOET?

Die popularisering van die Bybel is natuurlik nóg nuut nóg ongehoord, soos die Wirkungsgeschiede en Rezeptionsgeschiede van die Bybel en interpretasie getuig, met sigbare en hoorbare popularisering oor baie jare – alhoewel die definisie van “populêr” oor die eeue heen uiteraard sal verskil. Die Bybel se invloed oor h lang periode in verskillende wêrelddele en kulture, en met name die Westerse kultuur, is nietemin onbetwisbaar. Dit is moeilik om die literêre kultuurskatte te verreken sonder om die rol wat die Bybel op skrywers se gedagtes gemaak het, in ag te neem.

Mary Hess (2004:208-219) maak die punt dat die waarde van die popularisering van die Bybel

17. Die bevestiging van geykte sosiale en genderrolle is natuurlik nie tot Bybels-geïnspireerde rolmodelle beperk nie. By, in die film *Pleasantville* waarin die doodsvervelige maar intens-veilige (omdat dit so voorspelbaar is) “pleasant” samelewing op sy kop gedraai word, word genderrolle mettertyd omgekeer (bv die mooi tienermeisie kies vir boeklees bo pret en plesier), maar bevestig in die proses eintlik die rolle (boeklees weeg steeds nie op teen pret en plesier nie).

daarin geleë is dat dit die uitdaging bied om dit opnuut te bekyk en te bedink, maar nou deur die oë van die Ander! Sy bedoel met die Bybel “bedink” nie net die kognitiewe en rasonale nie, maar sluit ook die affektiewe én fisiese elemente in. Bybelverhale van Jesus wat oproep tot saamleef, saamdoen en die lewe te deel met mense, is (en word soms steeds) helaas in die kerk maar ook in die algemeen gebruik om “Andere” te skep, dikwels as ’n poging om die eie identiteit te versterk¹⁸ – in ras, klas, gender, seksualiteit, en so meer. Moet alle Moslems terroriste wees sodat Christene vredemakers kan wees? Is heteroseksuele, “straight” mense nog so selfvoldaan oor hul seksualiteit as daar nie lesbigs is om af te kraak nie? Weet mans nog wat hul manlikheid beteken sonder om dit noodwendig in kontras met vroue, as anti-vrouwees te sien?

Gestel dat die Bybel en populêre kultuur as teenpole gesien word, en mense hulleself en hulle lewensuitkyk liever met die een as met die ander identifiseer, dan is die vraag hoe die verhouding tussen die twee verstaan kan word? Des te meer ook indien mense hulleself met gemak in albei tuis vind! Die kultuur-antropoloog Richard Schweder se gebruik van vier kategorieë om die wyse te beslyf waarop antropoloë vreemde kulture bestudeer, kan vir die hedendaagse verstaan van die pop-Bybelkultuur ook van waarde wees. Hierdie vier maniere om met die Vreemde (dikwels) op eie terrein om te gaan is deur die Self sowel as die Ander beter te leer ken. Schweder pleit om nie een van die vier wyses van interaksie meer belangrik as die ander te verstaan nie.

As ’n eerste manier, reken Schweder dat mens leer dink deur middel van die Ander, waardeur mens deur middel van ’n sekere aspek van die Ander onself beter leer ken (soos as ons vra, “het jy al die nuutste flik van ABC gesien?”; “die nuutste song van XYZ gehoor?”; “het jy gelees wat op so-en-so se Facebook staan?”). Trouens, dieselfde gebeur ook ten opsigte van die Bybel (soos as ons vra, “dink jy dominee So-en-So het Sondag die teks sinvol hanteer in sy of haar preek?”). So word normaalweg verskuilde dimensies van ons lewe ontbloot, ontdek ons dikwels sake in onself (emosies, gevoelens, ensovoorts) wat ons andersins nie van bewus is nie. Popkultuur en die pop-Bybel is dikwels die Ander in mense se lewe wat nuwe perspektiewe op hulle lewe bied.

Dit is tweedens belangrik dat mens *die Ander reg verstaan*, op eie terme verstaan, om ’n sistematiese weergawe van die interne logika van die dinamika van die Ander te konstrueer. Hier gaan dit oor meer as net die aanbied van ’n opsomming van die hoofelemente van die Bybel, of populêre kultuur, maar juis om die dieper dimensies van die Ander te verstaan. Hoe kommunikeer die Bybel in terme van verskillende genres, in ’n konteks van ander tydperke en ander plekke as wat vir ons bekend is? Eweneens, wat is die impak van verskillende genres binne die popkultuur? Hoe kommunikeer die media in die verskillende vorms daarvan?

Kritiese refleksie, *om verby die Ander te beweeg* is ’n derde belangrike aspek: “om deur Ander te dink” beteken om die Ander te dekonstrueer en krities te benader. Die probleem is dat hierdie aspek soms die eerste en ongelukkig selfs die enigste aspek kan wees, albei gevrees deur kerklike gesagsliggame en geliefd deur teologiese studente wat hul eie stemme ontdek; geliefd ook onder diene wat nie kan wag om alles wat sleg en negatief is aan popkultuur of byderwetsheid toe te skryf nie! Om “verder as die Ander te gaan” beteken dikwels egter juis

18. Soos die sosiale identiteitsteorie aantoon, bestaan daar ’n nou verwantskap tussen die funksionering van die menslike psige en grootskaalse sosiale prosesse en gebeure wat eersgenoemde beïnvloed en ook daardeur beïnvloed word (Tajfel 1982:2; Turner 1996:4). Mense se selfbewustheid en siening van hul sosiale en fisiese omgewing word beïnvloed deurdat hulle aan sekere groepe behoort (Tajfel 1982:2).

om verder as die Self ook te gaan, om eie vooropgesette idees oor die Ander en oor die Self krities te evalueer, te herkonstrueer, en selfs eenkant te laat.

Om na te dink oor die Ander behels om oor mens self na te dink, en daarom, in die vierde plek, impliseer die bestudering van die Ander 'n nie-afgeslote (open-ended), self-reflekerende, dialogiese ingesteldheid: *interaksie met die Ander!* Soos dikwels met verhale, of dit nou Bybelse narratiewe of populêre stories, fliëks, rekenaarspeletjies of watter media-vorm ook al is, trek verhale mense in, mense raak deel daarvan. Hier is twee aspekte ter sprake: aan die een kant bied die verhale 'n nuwe wêreld of 'n herinterpretasie van mense se belewenis van hulle eie wêreld en laat hulle toe om daarin te lewe. Aan die ander kant, laat verhale mense ook toe om 'n wêreld te ontdek en te verstaan *wat mense toelaat om met hulleself te lewe*. In 'n sekere sin skep mense hulleself deur 'n wêreld te skep, die wêreld rondom hulle (sien Anderson & Foley 1998:5). Die verhale van die Bybel sowel as dié van die popkultuur is vandag dikwels belangrike meganismes waarmee mense die werklikheid ontsluit, sin maak van die lewe – mense die wêreld vir hulleself konstrueer!

Die interessante is natuurlik nie net dat die Bybel en popkultuur mense se lewe noemenswaardig beïnvloed, en “ons wêreld” help skep nie – hierdie twee aspekte is vir verskillende mense uiteraard in wisselende mate. Jurie le Roux skryf onlangs aanlyn oor die verwantskap tussen kerk en kuns, “Sonder die kerk was daar geen kuns nie. Of in elk geval nie soos ons dit vandag ken nie. Dit was die kerk wat skilders en komponiste in diens geneem, hulle betaal en talle opdragte gegee het. Hulle moes die kerk se boodskap vir gewone mense ‘hoorbaar’ en ‘sigbaar’ maak”.¹⁹ Dit is boonop van groot belang dat die teenwoordigheid van die Bybel, juis hier ook met inagneming van verskillende maniere en “volumes” van invloed en wisselende grade van sukses, in die popkultuur verreken word. Hierdie verrekening is belangrik, enersyds, omdat die verskynsel op sigself belangrik is; andersyds, omdat dit die interpretasie van die Bybel beïnvloed. Raak 'n kerklik-ingesetelde raamwerk van lees nie toenemend beïnvloed en selfs verplaas deur popkultuur-raamwerke nie

5. DIE HANTERING VAN DIE BYBEL IN POPULÊRE KULTUUR VANDAG

Naas die beoordeling (en te oordeel na sommige reaksies, ook die veroordeling) daarvan, leen die pop-Bybel sigself tot meer as net interessante ondersoeke in die akademie. Le Roux (2011) sluit sy teologiese nadenke oor die waarde van klassieke musiek af met die volgende woorde: “Teologie kan dus moeilik sonder die kuns oor God, mens en wêreld praat. Kuns help ons waar ons greep tekort skiet. Kuns gee ons die woorde, die perspektiewe en die insigte wat ons nie andersins sou gehad het nie.” Miskien is dit nie geregverdig of selfs geoorloof om klassieke musiek en kultuur met popmusiek en populêre kultuur gelyk te stel nie, en dit is ook nie die argument nie. Eerder, indien daar nie óók gelet word hoe die Bybel ter sprake kom in die populêre media nie, loop ons die gevaar om belangrike aspekte van en ontwikkelings in mense se verstaan van die Bybel oor die algemeen mis te loop of verkeerd te verstaan. Trouens, 'n summier negatiewe beoordeling van die pop-Bybel sou onnodig ander, nuwe maniere om oor God, mens en wêreld te dink en te praat en te doen, beperk en afsluit. Daarom is 'n finale reeks vrae ter sake, al ontbreek die antwoorde nog grotendeels.

19. Le Roux (2011) se toespitsing is op “klassieke musiek”, as “Kuns [wat] probeer [om] iets van die misterie en die grootsheid van God sê wat ons nie kan sê nie; musiek probeer iets van die onuitspreeklike God verwoord wat ons nie kan verwoord nie. Intense bemoeienis met kuns kan dus ‘n mens se geloof versterk en jou teologie verdiep. Anders gestel: die estetiese ervaring van kuns en religieuse ervaring kan dus op ‘n gegewe oomblik saamval’”. (<http://teo.co.za/artikel/articles/437/1/Kersfees-musiek-en-n-dieper-teologiese-verstaan/Bladsy1.html>)

5.1 Wat is die impak van die pop-Bybel op die verstaan van die Bybel?

Wat gebeur wanneer, byvoorbeeld, die *Crash Test Dummies* nie alleen die skeppingsverhaal met eietydse oë besing nie, maar wanneer die dagtelling verander, en die agste dag 'n dag van pieknieks word? Verder ook, wat maak ons van 'n nuwe gelykenis (of is dit nou inderdaad 'n goddelike grappie) wat aan God toegedig word? Én, wanneer God dan, in die voetspore van Markus 4:10-12, nie gehoor gee aan oproepe om die gelykenis uit te lê nie? Terwyl ons kan aanvaar dat niemand skielik hulle kalenders gaan aanpas na ag dag weke nie, het so 'n lied byvoorbeeld nie tog 'n impak op ons verstaan van God, ons Godsbeeld, nie?²⁰

5.2 Watter maatstawwe kan gebruik word om oor die pop-Bybel te besin?

Die pop-Bybel en wat daarmee saamgaan het grotendeels natuurlik ander motiewe, in elk geval ander prioriteite, as die opbou van die geloofsgemeenskap. Hoe kan daar verhoed word dat mense deur die pop-Bybel op sleeptou geneem word? Hoe word geoordeel oor die pop-Bybel, watter maatstawwe word gebruik vir die evaluering daarvan?²¹ Die vraag, die normatiewe, is natuurlik die vraag wat moeiliker is, veral by die interpretasie van die pop-Bybel – soos menige teologie-dosent kan getuig oor die soveelste e-pos met 'n aaneengerygde en ineengestremgelde lys Bybelversies oor temas wat wissel van die morele korruptheid van die wêreld, die voortgaande kettery van die kerk (in die besonder en in die algemeen) en dwalings van teologie fakulteite, tot die dag en datum van die apokaliptiese einde van die wêreld.

5.3 Is daar sprake van omgekeerde hermeneutiese vloei?

Miskien moet daar tog ook breër gekyk word, en dan kan daar (versigtig, natuurlik) gevra word of die verskillende pop-Bybel weergawes nie 'n bedekte seën is nie? Is dit nie enersyds, 'n manier waarop talryke Bybelse verhale, temas en spanninge nie verlore gaan nie, maar (op ten minste subtiel wyse en min of meer) deel van baie mense se lewe bly nie? Andersyds, bied die pop-Bybel nie moontlikhede om opnuut oor geëkte tradisies van interpretasie te besin, vanuit ander oogpunte, nuwe betekenis te genereer, met ander oë na dieselfde tekste te kyk nie, by tye 'n gevestigde, keurslyf-interpretasie los te wikkell nie? Dink byvoorbeeld hoe die klassieke *Blade Runner*-film vroeë vroeë oor wat menswees beteken, en vroeë oor interpersoonlike verhoudings aan die orde bring. Hoe die uitbeelding van die androïede (“replicants”) se hereniging met die ingenieur wat hulle ontwikkel en vervaardig het op patroon van die gelykenis van die Verlore Seun plaasvind – maar nou met 'n nuwe kyk na konflik en versoening, na 'n herwaardering van geëkte interpretasies van die rolle van “Vader” en “Seun”, en veral die betekenis en uitwerking van weerloosheid (“vulnerability”) in verhoudings tussen mense (kyk Punt 2007).²²

20. “[N]o matter how well we teach the exegesis of Scripture and the hermeneutics of culture, there will still be people who actively resist what we are trying to teach because they have uniquely individual reasons for hanging on to some alternative meaning that better serves their personal needs, values, and life experience” (Culbertson 2010:63). En veral as dit kom by godsbeelde: “One of pop scripture’s chief interventions is to negotiate with an understanding of the divine” (Runions 2010:199).

21. Naas die evaluering van die populêre gebruik van die Bybel, is dit ook interessant om ondersoek in te stel oor hoe die Bybel in populêre kultuur aan die orde kom. Clines se steekproef in Britse dagblaaie het 'n wye reeks sulke eienskappe waarmee die Bybel vereenselwig word, aangetoon: die Bybel as yker van grootte; aanduiding van populariteit; styl-arbiter; yker van morele waardes; teken van normaliteit; vergestaltung van moraliteit; ensovoorts (Clines 1997:68-79)

22. Wanneer die omgekeerde hermeneutiese vloei verder loop, noop dit om verder te vra: Wat sê die gebruik van die Nuwe Testament in die popkultuur van “die Bybel”? Wat sê die gebruik van die Nuwe Testament

5.4 Wat is die implikasies vir die Bybel in soverre dit as boek van die kerk verstaan word?

Wat is die moontlike impak van die skynbaar toenemende aanwesigheid van die Bybel in verskillende vorms in populêre kultuur? Beteken dit dat die Bybel nou eintlik niks meer is as maar net nog een van daardie Groot Boeke van die verlede nie? Soos Shakespeare of Chaucer of dalk nader tuis, Langenhoven of Van Wyk Louw? Vir baie mense is die Bybel steeds 'n boek van die kerk, 'n geloofsdokument wat met gesag deur dominees en geestelikes van verskillende oortuigings op 'n verskeidenheid maniere hanteer word. Geloofsgemeenskappe en gelowiges vind eweneens groot waarde in die Bybel. Tog is en word die Bybel nie deurgaans en op dinamiese wyse deel van populêre kultuur nie? Nie net oop vir nuwe interpretasies nie maar self ook deurgaans besig om te verander nie (Perkinson 2010)? Veral wanneer die Bybel die populêre kultuur beïnvloed eerder as bepaal?²³

6. SLOT

Soos blyk uit die dekades lange popularisering van die Bybel in die media, is dit duidelik dat dit nie maar net 'n tydelike modegril is nie. Trouens, indien die stelling "In the new century, the media are likely to become the most decisive factor in shaping human consciousness and reshaping language" (Kysar 2005:223) reg is, sal daar ernstig besin moet word óók oor die Bybel in populêre media. Hoe lyk die pop-Bybel se toekoms, en wat is die gevolge en ook impak daarvan, in die breër samelewing en ook in die kerk? Net so min as wat populêre kultuur bestuur en gekontroleer kan word, net so onmoontlik is dit om die voorkoms of gebruik van die Bybel en verwante temas in die verskillende vorms van populêre kultuur te probeer stuit.

Miskien is die opname van Bybelse elemente in populêre kultuur glad nie so sleg as wat dit soms uitgebeeld word nie. Nie vir die Bybel en nie vir die breër populêre kultuur nie. Ten minste, nie nêr sleg nie! Natuurlik is gevare nie uitgesluit nie, maar die teenwoordigheid van die Bybel in die media bied die moontlikheid tot groter, breër perspektiewe, ontdaan van allerlei pogings tot en vorms van kontrole daaroor. Die ontmoeting, die interaksie tussen die Bybel en populêre kultuur is 'n kreatiewe een (Culbertson & Wainwright 2010). Impliseer die teenwoordigheid en invloed van 'n pop-Bybel vandag nie dalk 'n verstaan van gelowiges, miskien selfs van "kerk" wat oor verskillende dogmatiese, rituele, kulturele en ander opvattings en gebruike heen sny nie? Is die evaluering van die Bybel se teenwoordigheid in populêre kultuur 'n toets van nie soseer 'n demokratiese ingesteldheid nie, maar eerder van hoe ernstig die Bybelse gedagte van die gemeenskap van alle gelowiges opgeneem word nie?

BRONNE

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in die popkultuur van "kultuur", vandag? Van sekulêre kultuur?

23. "Pop scripture is, at the end of the day, far more complex in its dynamism and engagement with important issues of contemporary justice than is any notion of a fixed, unchanging, canonically bound Word of God" (Runions 2010:201-202).

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Bio-etiek sonder grense: 'n Verkenning en Christelik-etiese beoordeling van die UNESCO universele deklarasie van bio-etiek en menseregte (2005)

ABSTRACT

Bioethics without boundaries. An exploration and Christian ethical assessment of the UNESCO Universal Declaration of Bioethics and Human Rights (2005).

It is clear that the world community realized the need for a Declaration on bio-ethics and human rights. It led to an assignment given by the member states to UNESCO to develop a declaration. During the development of the declaration many stakeholders were involved in a transparent process, which led to the approval of the declaration unanimously by all 191 member states, in 2005. The strength of this declaration is found in the fact that for the first time in human history, mankind is united regarding bio-ethical principles as a form of human rights and is therefore morally committed to compliance with the ethos of the declaration. This declaration may be particularly valuable in developing countries because in general a bio-ethical infrastructure is lacking. Christians do not need to feel uncomfortable about global or universal ethical principles, because there is enough evidence in their writings to support universal ethics, as long as the principles do not clash with principles found in Scripture.

“The UN was not created to take humanity to heaven but to save it from hell.” (Former United Nations (UN) Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld).

INLEIDING

UNESCO is op 16 November 1945, kort na die Tweede Wêreldoorlog, tot stand gebring. Die breë doel van die organisasie was die skep van hoop dat solidariteit en waardigheid in die wêreld moontlik is (Ten Have, 2006:333). Die UNESCO-konstitusie beskryf sy doelwit as “to contribute to peace and security by promoting *collaboration* among the nations through education, science and culture *in order to further* universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms” (UNESCO TEXTS, 2012, article 1.1). Hieruit is dit duidelik dat die internasionale gemeenskap van mening is dat wêreldvrede (en -veiligheid) alleenlik moontlik is, eerstens, indien samewerking tussen lande op die gebied van onderwys, wetenskap en kultuur bevorder word, en tweedens, wanneer alle vordering in wetenskap en tegniek binne die raamwerk van geregtigheid, die wet, menseregte en vryheid plaasvind. Laasgenoemde impliseer dat die etiese aspekte van die wetenskap voortdurend ondersoek moet word (Ten Have, 2006:333). Twiss (2011:206-207) maak in die verband die volgende belangrike opmerking:

One of the main points of morality – in a functional sense – is to enable human cooperation in the *solution of practical problems*, and one initial step toward developing a normative *ethical strategy* – of the sort involved in developing a *global ethic* – is to ask: what do the peoples of the world already share in terms of important moral values and norms, even if contested in some of their specifics?”

In 2004 maak Vorster (2004:85) die volgende opmerking: “New generations of human rights are still being developed” en sy rede daarvoor is: “History is on the side of human rights.” In die jaar 2005 is ’n deklarasie van bio-etiek en menseregte eenparig deur al die lidlande van UNESCO aanvaar as ’n globale etiek met doel as etiese strategie om bio-etiese probleme wêreldwyd onder die loep te neem.

In hierdie artikel gaan die ontstaan, kritiek, inhoud en moontlike uitkomst van die deklarasie kortliks verken word met die doel om tot ’n waardeoordeel van die instrument te kom, waarna die deklarasie as ’n ontwerp van globale etiek Christelik-eties beoordeel gaan word. Hierdie beoordeling vind plaas vanuit ’n gereformeerde geloofsparadigma wat beslis nie insigte uit ander geloofstradisies en die sekulêre omgewing uitsluit nie (vgl. punt 5.2).

ONTSTAAN VAN DIE DEKLARASIE

Wenslikheid

In 2001 (31ste sessie) het die algemene konferensie van lidlande die direkteur-generaal (van UNESCO) uitgenooi om die *wenslikheid* (uitvoerbaarheid) van ’n universele instrument (norm) in bio-etiek te ondersoek (Ten Have, 2008:32; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:25).¹ Die direkteur-generaal het aan die Internasionale Bio-etiese Kommissie (IBC)² die versoek gerig om ondersoek te doen na die *wenslikheid* of uitvoerbaarheid van die ontwikkeling van universele bio-etiese norme (Andorno, 2007:150; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:25). Hierdie verslag is in Junie 2003 gefinaliseer en het duidelik aangetoon dat daar ’n behoefte aan (noodsaaklikheid vir) so ’n instrument bestaan (Ten Have, 2008:32-33). Die IBC kom tot die volgende gevolgtrekking: “The initiative of the Director-General of UNESCO in favour of a universal instrument on bioethics deserves support” (IBC, 2003:12).³

Opdrag

Die algemene konferensie het in Oktober 2003 (32ste sessie) aan die direkteur-generaal die versoek gerig om voort te gaan met die *voorbereiding* van ’n *konsepdeklarasie* van universele bio-etiese norme of regte (UNESCO, 2003c; Ten Have, 2008:33; Levitt & Zwart, 2009:369; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:26). Die opstel van die *konsepdeklarasie* is toevertrou aan die IBC en moes geskied in deeglike konsultasie met die lidlande en ander nasionale en internasionale

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1. Hierdie opdrag is voorafgegaan deur ’n vergadering bekend as die *Round Table of Ministers of Science* (in Oktober 2001) waar ministers van wetenskap van verskeie lande tot die gevolgtrekking gekom het dat ’n universele instrument in bio-etiek nodig is (UNESCO, 2002, 2003a; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:25)
 2. Die IBC is ’n permanente liggaam van 36 kundiges uit verskillende dissiplines, lande en kulture, wat in 1993 tot stand gebring is deur UNESCO met doel om direkteur-generaal van UNESCO te adviseer. Hierdie liggaam verteenwoordig nie die lidlande nie (Levitt & Zwart, 2009:369; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:21; Trotter, 2009:198) en funksioneer as ’n onafhanklike adviseurende liggaam (Ten Have, 2006:334).
 3. Die *Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee* (IGBC) het die IBC verslag bestudeer en ondersteun die die gevolgtrekking van die IBC (UNESCO, 2003b, Ten Have & Jean, 2009:26)

organisasies (Andorno, 2007:150; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:26). Verder moes die konsepdeklarasië opgestel word met inagneming van menswaardigheid, menseregte, fundamentele vryhede en in die gees van kulturele pluralisme (Ten Have, 2008:33). Hierdie konsepdeklarasië moes binne twee jaar afgehandel wees.

Die konsultasie en opstel van hierdie deklarasie het oorsigtelik soos volg verloop:

Al die *lidlande* is deur middel van 'n vraelys van Januarie tot Maart 2004 gekonsulteer rakende die skopus, doelwitte, struktuur en inhoud van 'n universele instrument (UNESCO, 2004; Levitt & Zwart, 2009:369; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:27). Die IBC het in April 2004 'n beplanningsgroep (draft group) saamgestel wat begin het met die opstel van 'n voorlopige konsepdokument (UNESCO, 2004b; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:29).

Intussen het die IBC om en by April 2004 openbare vergaderings begin belê met *tussenregeringsorganisasies*, *nasionale bio-etiese* en *internasionale nie-regeringsorganisasies*. Daarbenewens, in die tydperk tussen April 2004 en Januarie 2005, het die nasionale kommissie van UNESCO, die sekretariaat van UNESCO en IBC 'n verdere konsultasieproses geïnisieer bekend as "Ethics around the world": roterende konferensies is gereël waar konsultasies met *streekskundiges* gehou is. Die waarde van hierdie konsultasieproses is dat die menings van mense uit verskillende kulture kontekste verkry is (Ten Have & Jean, 2009:29). Konsultasie is ook in Julie 2004 met die Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC)⁴ gevoer (Andorno, 2007:150; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:30-31). In Augustus 2004 het die IBC openbare verhore gehou waar godsdienstige verteenwoordigers (uit Boeddhistiese, Katolieke, Confucius, Hindoe, Islamitiese en Joodse tradisies) geestelike perspektiewe gestel het (IBC, 2004; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:31). Met betrekking tot die godsdienstige gesprek maak Ten Have en Jean (2009:31) die volgende opmerking:

"One lesson from the presentations and discussions was that although there are differing moral views common values can be identified".

Uiteindelik, in die tydperk Oktober tot Desember 2004, is 'n konsepteks (derde weergawe) weer aan al die *lidlande*, *tussenregeringsorganisasies*, *nie-regeringsorganisasies*, *nasionale bio-etiese kommissies* en ander hoogwaardige persoonlikhede vir kommentaar gestuur.

In Januarie 2005 is die konsepdeklarasië nog 'n keer aan die Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC) vir advies gestuur. Die konsepdeklarasië is in April en Junie 2005 deur die direkteur-generaal, in twee afsonderlike vergaderings, aan ander regeringskundiges (nie IGBC verteenwoordigers nie) van al die *lidlande* vir bespreking en oordeel voorgelê (UNESCO, 2005; Ten Have, 2008:33; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:36). Gedurende die opstel en uitbreiding van die teks was die ontwikkelende teks voortdurend op die webwerf van UNESCO beskikbaar (Ten Have & Jean, 2009:43). Die werk van die IBC-formuleringsgroep was so openbaar en *deursigtig* moontlik gedoen met die doel om die groots moontlike konsensus te fasiliteer, asook die vroeë identifisering van sienings wat standpunte opponeer. Gedurende die algemene vergadering van 2005 het baie *lidlande* hulle waardering uitgespreek vir die gehalte van die konsultasieproses in die daarstel van die deklarasie (Ten Have, 2008:33-34).

4. Die IGBC is deur UNESCO se algemene konferensie in 1998 verkies, en bestaan uit 36 regering geselekteerde beleidskundiges wat die standpunte van hulle onderskeie regerings verteenwoordig (Ten Have & Jean, 2009:22; Trotter, 2009:198). Die IGBC bestudeer die aanbevelings van die IBC en maak hulle eie aanbeveling aan die Direkteur-generaal van UNESCO (Ten Have, 2006:335).

Aanneming

Op 19 Oktober 2005 in Parys (tydens die 33ste sessie) het die algemene vergadering van UNESCO bestaande uit verteenwoordigers van 191 lidlande die Universele deklarasie van menseregte en bio-etiek eenparig goedgekeur (Andorno, 2007:150; Ten Have, 2008:31).

In die lig van bogenoemde bespreking gee die volgende beskrywing deur Ten Have (2006:342) die beste opsomming van die ontstaan en afhandeling van die deklarasie:

“Furthermore, characterized by the transparency and active participation of all the actors concerned, the elaboration process of the declaration, involving extensive consultations, and linking science and policy, already has contributed greatly to the renown of the text and its general acceptance” (vgl. ook saam met Levitt & Zwart, 2009:373).

KRITIEK OP DIE DEKLARASIE

Inleiding

Alhoewel die deklarasie gekritiseer word, is Todorovska (2010:57) heel waarskynlik korrek as sy aanvoer dat “The declaration gets more praised than criticized, however.” Vervolgens sal aandag geskenk word aan die kritiek op die deklarasie met die doel om te beoordeel of die kritiek oortuigend is.

Noodsaak vir instrument

Volgens sommige geleerdes *bestaan daar reeds soortegelyke* dokumente wat vroe laat ontstaan oor die werklike bydrae van of noodsaaklikheid vir hierdie deklarasie (Macklin, 2005:244-245; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:42). Die *behoefte* aan ’n universele bio-etiese instrument het internasionaal om verskeie redes al hoe groter begin word. By elke tussenregeringsdebat is uitgewys dat verreweg die meeste van die 191 lidlande van UNESCO geen of *beperkte bio-etiese infrastruktuur* het nie; daarom het veral *ontwikkelende lande* hulle nood en behoefte aan ’n internasionale instrument besonder sterk uitgespreek. Daar is ’n gebrek aan kundigheid, opvoedingsprogramme, bio-etiese komitees, juridiese raamwerke en openbare debat (Ten Have, 2006:338-339). Levitt en Zwart (2009:370) wys op die potensiele waarde van die deklarasie wanneer hulle aanvoer: “... for instance when a country is devising a national system for ethical review of medical research for the first time.”

’n Internasionale norm kan ook vir *ontwikkelende lande* verder van belang wees. Ontwikkelende lande het aangedui dat hulle deel wil hê aan die voordele van ontwikkeling in die wetenskap en tegnologie en wil nie net voorsieners wees van data en menslike hulpbronne nie. Hulle het ook aangedui dat hulle seker wil wees daarvan dat die voor- en nadele van wetenskaplike en tegnologiese ontwikkelings gelyk en regverdig tussen alle nasies gedeel sal word (Ten Have, 2006:338). Voorts wil die lande die versekering hê dat bio-etiese standaarde en regulasies ’n globale perspektief moet weerspieël wat verder as streeks- en nasionale belange strek. So ’n deklarasie kan ’n dubbele of verskillende moreel vir verskillende wêrelddele voorkom (Ten Have, 2008:32, Ten Have & Jean, 2009:22-23,42-43, Todorovska, 2010:55). Ten Have en Jean (2009:22-23; vlg. ook Todorovska, 2010:58) stel die doel van die deklarasie in die verband soos volg:

“This is precisely what UNESCO aims at promoting. Since it provides a global platform to

identify shared values and to assert universal principles, it can give guidance to Member States that up to now lack the ethical infrastructure, particularly legislation to deal with present-day bioethical challenges.”

Mediese navorsing vind al hoe meer oor internasionale grense heen plaas en al hoe meer navorsingssubjekte word in ontwikkelende lande gebruik (Ten Have, 2006:338; 2010:8). Al hoe meer farmaseutiese maatskappye toets hulle medisyne in ontwikkelende lande (UNESCO, 2008:59). Dit is byvoorbeeld nie aanvaarbaar dat navorsingsinstitute en farmakologiese maatskappye kliniese toetse in ontwikkelende lande uitvoer sonder dieselfde standaarde van ingeligte toestemming en risiko-assessering soos gebruikelik in die ontwikkelde lande nie (Ten Have, 2008:32; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:22-23). Die globalisering van mediese navorsing vereis ook ’n universele waardesisteem (Ten Have, 2008:32; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:22-23, Todorovska, 2010:55).

Wetenskap en tegnologiese vooruitgang in gesondheidsorg lei tot bio-etiese dilemmas in sowel meer ontwikkelde lande as die minder ontwikkelende lande (Ten Have, 2008:32; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:22-23; Todorovska, 2010:55). So verwys Ten Have (2006:338) byvoorbeeld na orgaanplanting, handeldryf met organe, asook die kommodifisering van orgaanplantingspraktyke waarvoor daar verskillende reëls in verskillende lande bestaan of geensins bestaan nie en wat misbruik tot gevolg het (vgl. ook Ten Have, 2010:8). So kan ’n ryk man in Singapoer ’n nier van ’n arm persoon in Indonesië bekom, of ’n Indiese dokter kan organe by medeburgers verwyder met die verskoning van mediese sorg en aan ryk mense van ander lande verkoop (UNESCO, 2011:40).

Globalisering lei daartoe dat nie alleen wetenskaplike en tegnologiese vordering oor die wêreld heen versprei nie, maar ook *bio-etiese dilemmas*. Neem byvoorbeeld kloning wat daarop wys dat alhoewel die tegnologie in een land ontwikkel word, dit in enige land gebruik word, al wil sommige lande kloning verban (Ten Have, 2008:32; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:22-23).

Bio-etiese probleme ontstaan ook as gevolg van *ongelykheid en ongeregtheid*. Medisyne vir siektes soos MIV en vigs, malaria en tuberkulose kan in een land oorvloedig beskikbaar wees, terwyl dit eties problematies is wanneer pasiënte in armer lande aan hierdie siektes sterf as gevolg van ’n gebrek aan hulpbronne of mediese vordering (Ten Have, 2008:32; 2010:8; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:22-23). Waarskynlik som Ten Have (2010:8) die noodsaak van die deklarasie die beste op as hy skryf: “With this new declaration, UNESCO strives to respond in particular to the needs of developing countries, indigenous communities and vulnerable groups or persons”.

Krag van die instrument

Die deklarasie word van ’n verskeidenheid sake beskuldig wat die instrument in werklikheid *kragteloos* maak. Die deklarasie word verwyt dat die *druk op regerings* om die deklarasie na te kom, uitgeskakel word deur “shall” met “should” te vervang (Williams, 2005:211, Ten Have, 2008:36). Dit moet egter in gedagte gehou word dat alle deklarasies wat deur die VN-agentskappe aanvaar word, deel uitmaak van die “soft law”-instrumente en dat hierdie instrumente swakker is as konvensies omdat hulle, volgens internasionale reg, nie lande kan bind nie (Trotter, 2009:200; Ten Have 2010:8). Die bedoeling van hierdie deklarasies is om lande aan te moedig om in wetgewing en uitvoering die inhoud van die deklarasie te eerbiedig (Macklin, 2005:246; Andorno, 2007:151; Ten Have, 2008:36). Die deklarasie gebruik twee begrippe in hierdie verband, naamlik dat die deklarasie “are to be respected” en “should

be given due regard" (UNESCO, 2006; Levitt & Zwart, 2009:370) en vorm so 'n kragtige bron om lidlande te oriënteer en bio-etiese sensitiviteit te kweek (Todorovska, 2010:59). Die besonder innoverende dimensie van hierdie deklarasie is dat dit regerings moreel tot 'n stel bio-etiese beginsels verbind (Ten Have, 2010:9).

Die waarde van hierdie deklarasie word gevind in die feit dat die deklarasie deur 'n VN-organisasie gemaak is, en dat dit *histories die eerste en enigste bio-etiese normgewende instrument is*, wat deur *al die lidlande se regerings* aanvaar is en hulle tot die nastreef daarvan verbind het (Ten Have, 2006:342; 2010:8; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:42). Dit is uiters betekenisvol dat 191 lidlande van UNESCO in staat was om met mekaar saam te stem oor al die beginsels in die deklarasie (Andorno, 2007:150) en sodoende 'n besondere prestasie vir internasionale bio-etiek te behaal (Trotter, 2009:200). Die eenparige aanvaarding van die dokument deur die lidlande gee morele gesag aan die dokument en skep 'n morele verpligting om die deklarasie te eerbiedig (Ten Have, 2006:341-342; 2010:8). Baie ander belangrike en invloedryke dokumente is deur nie-regeringsorganisasies aangeneem, soos byvoorbeeld die Helsinki-deklarasie wat aanvaar is deur die World Medical Association wat 'n professionele organisasie is, maar gewoonlik verbind regerings hulle nie sterk tot hierdie dokumente nie omdat dit deur nie-regeringsorganisasie geskep is. Aansluitend hierby kan ook genoem word dat die Deklarasie die eerste internasionale regs-kundige (nie-bindende) instrument is wat omvattend handel oor bio-etiek, asook oor die verbinding tussen menseregte en bio-etiek (Andorno, 2007:150; Ten Have, 2008:37,45).

In 2002 het die lidlande besluit dat bio-etiek een van UNESCO se vyf prioriteite moet wees (Ten Have, 2010:7-8). Die besondere krag van die deklarasie word gevind in die feit dat die deklarasie *globale perspektiewe* op bio-etiek *weerspieël* wat voortspruit uit die gesprekke van verskeie kulture, tradisies en denkskole binne die lidlande. Die Verenigde Nasies is die enigste bestaande platform waar al die nasies saam oor bio-etiese waardes kan eksploreer, bespreek, onderhandel en so saam tot 'n normatiewe universele instrument kan kom (Andorno, 2007:150; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:19,42). So kan die deklarasie help ter uitbouing van toekomstige internasionale wetgewing wat wetenskap, medisyne en genetica reguleer (Levitt & Zwart, 2009:369; Trotter, 2009:200).

Aard van instrument

Die deklarasie word verdag gemaak deur daarop te wys dat dit ontwikkel is deur kundiges wat *nie regtig akademiese kundiges* is nie (Ten Have, 2008:36; Levitt & Zwart, 2009:368). Volgens sommige kundiges is bio-etiek 'n akademiese dissipline en behoort dit nie tot die terrein van politieke gesaghebbendes nie (Landman & Schüklenk, 2005:vi). Ten grondslag van hierdie kritiek teen die deklarasie lê die feit dat daar meningsverskil bestaan oor hoe bio-etiek tans funksioneer. Verder weerspieël hierdie kritiek ook 'n *wanbegrip van die rol (doel) van bio-etiek*. Het bio-etiek slegs ten doel die akademiese bestudering, interpretasie en beoordeling van bepaalde fasette van die werklikheid, of het bio-etiek ook ten doel die moontlike beïnvloeding en verandering van sommige dimensies (en dus betrokke by beleidmaking? (Ten Have, 2008:36). In hierdie verband wys Levitt en Zwart (2009:371) daarop dat UNESCO deur kapasiteitsontwikkeling gesonde beïnvloeding en verandering deur die deklarasie wil bewerkstellig. Op drie maniere wil bio-etiek (deur middel van UNESCO en die deklarasie) verandering tot stand bring, naamlik deur Global Ethics Observatory (GEObs), The Ethics Education Programme (EEP) en The Assisting Bioethics Committees (ABC) project (vgl. Ten Have & Jean, 2009:45-47). Om hierdie moontlike beïnvloeding, verandering en

aanmoediging te bewerkstellig sal 'n internasionale normdokument van groter waarde wees as 'n verskeidenheid artikels in 'n wetenskaplike tydskrif.

Laastens word die aard van die dokument ook verdag gemaak deurdat beweer word dat die deklarasie 'n *sterk Westers ideologiese basis* vertoon en word daar verwys na die aspek *waardigheid* (dignity) as voorbeeld (bv. Artikel 2; Landman & Schüklenk, 2005:iv). Hierteenoor meen Levitt & Zwart (2009:369) dat hierdie argument nie geldig is nie en verwys na die groot aantal individue, organisasies, dissiplines en kulturele agtergronde wat betrokke was by die skep, ontwikkeling en aanvaarding van die dokument. Tydens die eerste konsultasieproses moes die lidlande aandui watter fundamentele beginsels hulle in die deklarasie bevestig wil sien. Van die 67 reaksies, was 11 uit Afrika, 8 uit Asië en die Suidsee-eilande, 10 uit die Arabiese lande, 6 uit Latyns-Amerika en die Karibiese Eilande, 10 uit Sentraal- en Oos-Europa en laastens 21 uit Europa en Amerika. Almal het in hulle reaksie aangedui dat waardigheid, gelykheid, nie-diskriminasie en respek vir privaatheid daarin moet voorkom (UNESCO, 2005). Dit dui tog daarop dat sekere beginsels so te sê universeel aanvaar word, sonder dat die oorsprong daarvan relevant is. Adorno (2007:152) wys ook daarop dat al hoe meer nie-Westerse lande aan die formulering van menseregte *modus vivendi* begin deelneem.

Menseregte en die instrument

'n Volgende *punt van kritiek* teen die deklarasie is die aanname dat menseregte nie werklik 'n prominente deel van bio-etiese diskoeers uitmaak nie (Andorno, 2007:153; Ten Have, 2008:36). Hierdie aanname word nie deur die feite gerugsteun nie. Die meeste resente internasionale beleidsdokumente wat met bio-etiek verband hou, was sterk menseregtegeoriënteerd, waarin die gedagte van menswaardigheid baie sterk gefigureer het (Andorno, 2007:153). In dié verband kan die European Convention On Human Rights and Biomedicine (1997) en die WMA Helsinki-deklarasie (1964/2000) genoem word waarin na menseregte en menswaardigheid verwys word. Die verband met menseregte is in 1997 reeds gemaak met UNESCO se universele deklarasie oor die menslike genoom en menseregte (Ten Have & Jean, 2009:43-44). Die deklarasie gaan voort in hierdie spesifieke beroep op menseregte deurdat in artikel 3.1 gestel word dat "[h]uman dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms are to be fully respected".

Waarom het UNESCO juis menseregte as sy vertrekpunt geneem in die daarstelling van 'n universele norm in die bio-etiek? (Vgl. Andorno, 2007:153.) In die woorde van Todorovska (2010:56) was daar 'n internasionale vraag na 'n koppeling tussen bio-etiek en menseregte as sy skryf:

"Bioethics, despite its concern with issues that have profound implications for human life and welfare, has not often been thought of in a human rights context. By the same token, human rights theory has rarely been concerned with bioethical issues. This disconnection has recently been heavily criticised by many health activists, and we are beginning to see some convergence between the two, and the Declaration certainly helps in this."

Biomediese aktiwiteite handel ten diepste oor menslike lewe wat die reg op lewe en die reg op fisiese integriteit veronderstel en daarom maak dit sin om toevlug te neem tot internasionale menseregte (wet) om menslike lewe teen vergrype te beskerm. Daar is nie werklik ander (internasionale) instrumente beskikbaar wat kan dien of gebruik word vir 'n globale etiese fondasie of *Weltethik* nie.

Universele en kulturele fasette

Die laaste punt van kritiek bevestigte die verhouding tussen universele en kultuurverwante waardes. Daar word geredeneer dat daar in Artikel 3⁵ voorkeur aan individuele belange gegee word, en volgens Landman en Schücklenk (2005:v) sal niemand artikel 3 ernstig opneem nie. Tog voer Ten Have (2008) aan dat die bewoording van Artikel 3 ook in ander soortgelyke dokumente gevind word (byvoorbeeld die Helsinki Deklarasie, vgl. ook Andorno, 2007:153). Die kernwoord in Artikel 3 is die woordjie “sole” wat impliseer dat indien die gemeenskap ernstig bedreig word (deur ’n epidemie), kan individuele regte beperk word, soos uitgedruk in artikel 27 (Ten Have, 2008:36). Verder moet daar ook voor oë gehou word dat die deklarasie wel ’n groep beginsels geformuleer het wat breër as die individuele waardes is. ’n Hele verskeidenheid morele objekte is geïdentifiseer, van die individuele mens (bv. outonomie), tot ander mense (bv. toestemming), menslike gemeenskappe (bv. respek vir kulturele diversiteit), die mensheid as geheel (bv. sosiale verantwoordelikheid), alle lewende wesens en die omgewing (bv. die beskerming van die omgewing (Ten Have & Jean, 2009:44). Tyd sal leer of die deklarasie ’n regte ewewig tussen individuele menslike waardes en sosiaal kulturele verskille bereik het, en die gebruikswaarde van die deklarasie in die verskillend bio-etiese praktyke moet nog getoon word (Ten Have, 2008:36).

Verder word die gedagte van universele beginsels ook veroordeel omdat dit ’n bepaalde visie aan ander mense wil opdring. Daar word van bio-etiese kolonisering of morele imperialisme gepraat: die morele visie van een spesifieke kultuur of gebied (Christelike Weste) word op verskillende maniere aan ander kulture en omgewings opgedring. Universalisering van beginsels gaan vir die kritici om mag. In plaas van respek vir kulturele diversiteit en morele pluralisme, word aan die (ontwikkelende) lande voorgesê om hulle te onderwerp aan die universele beginsels.

Volgens Ten Have (2011:129-130) is hierdie verwyting om verskeie redes nie geldig nie. *Eerstens* word van die vooronderstelling uitgegaan dat die universele beginsels wat “opgedring” word, tot ’n bepaalde kultuur (van die opdringers) behoort. So word die toestemmingsbeginsel (Art. 6) byvoorbeeld as ’n tipiese Europese bio-etiese beginsel beskou en wanneer die beginsel in ’n Arabiese land gepropageer word, word ’n kultuurvreemde beginsel opgedring. Met watter reg kan Europeërs hierdie beginsel as hulle besit beskou, selfs al is dit vir die eerste keer in Europa geformuleer? Diegene met die verwyting dat beginsels opgedring word, worstel moontlik met ’n groter superioriteitsgevoel as die persone wat beginsels wil universaliseer. Die onderskeid tussen oorsprong en toepassing, in die *tweede plek*, leer dat etiese beginsels hulle oorsprong altyd in ’n kulturele konteks het, maar dit beteken nie dat die toepassing daarvan noodwendig tot die konteks beperk bly nie. Etiese beginsels beweeg by hulle konteks verby en word elkeen se eiendom. Die proses van diffusie en oornaming is kenmerkend van die menslike beskawing. Die mensdom deins nie daarvoor terug om syfers te gebruik omdat dit in die Arabiese kultuur sy oorsprong het of om papier te gebruik omdat dit in die Chinese kultuur ontstaan het nie.

In die *derde plek*, word die argument dat etiese beginsels nie as universele beginsels aan ander kulture voorgedring mag word nie, as morele proteksionisme beskou. So word aan ander kulture die reg ontsê om bepaalde (universele) etiese beginsels aan te hang omdat dit moontlik Westers of uit ’n ander kultuur is. Neem die toestemmingsbeginsel waar die mens se binnewetenskaplike ondersoek toegepas word. Binne ’n Westerse omgewing word

5. “The interests and welfare of the individual should have priority over the sole interest of science or society.”

die beginsel streng toegepas, maar hoe kan dit op grond van die argument van respek vir kulturele diversiteit regverdig word dat hierdie beginsel nie in ontwikkelende land sou geld nie? (Sien Marokkaanse voorbeeld by 5.2.)

‘N UITEENSETTING VAN DIE DEKLARASIE

skopus van die instrument

Een van die kontensieuse sake in die ontwikkeling van die deklarasie was die *skopus* van die deklarasie. Die skopus van die aanvaarde teks is om verstaanbare redes uiteindelik ‘n kompromie tussen verskillende sienings (Ten Have, 2008:34). Die skopus van die deklarasie word uiteengesit in Artikel 1.1 met die woorde: “This Declaration addresses ethical issues related to medicine, life sciences and associated technologies as applied to *human beings*, taking into account their social, legal and environmental dimensions” (UNESCO, 2006; Ten Have, 2006:340-341, 2008:34).

Die skopus van die deklarasie strek wyer as tradisionele mediese etiek. Veral uit die ontwikkelende lande het die druk gekom dat die deklarasie oor meer as net die tradisionele “sexy” temas soos genetika en stamselnavorsing moet handel en dat die deklarasie aandag moet gee aan sake soos gesondheidsorg, noodsaaklike medisyne, toegang tot genoegsame voeding en water asook die vermindering van armoede en ongeletterdheid (Ten Have, 2006:341-342).

Doel van die instrument

Die *doel* van die deklarasie is veelvuldig. Volgens Ten Have (2008:34) word die *belangrikste doel* van die deklarasie gevind in Artikel 2(a) waar gestel word dat die deklarasie “a universal framework of principles and procedures to guide States in the formulation of their legislation, policies or other instruments in the field of bioethics” voorsien (vgl. ook Levitt & Zwart, 2009:375). Een van die eienskappe van die moderne bio-etiek is dat dit nie meer net ‘n akademiese dissipline is nie, maar deel geword het van openbare debat en beleidvorming deur regerings; daarom dat hierdie deklarasie primêr gerig is op *die staat* (UNESCO, 2006; Ten Have, 2008:34; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:39).

Die deklarasie is egter nie net gerig op die staat nie, maar is ook gerig op *elke individu* wat op die een of ander wyse betrokke is by die bio-etiek; daarom dat die deklarasie in Artikel 2(b) sy doel stel, naamlik “to guide the actions of individuals, groups, communities, institutions and corporations, public and private” (UNESCO, 2006; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:39).

Kern van die instrument

Dit is belangrik om op te merk dat in die deklarasie die vier bio-etiese beginsels (autonomy, justice, beneficence, en nonmaleficence) uitgebrei het tot ‘n samehangende versameling van 15 beginsels (Ten Have, 2010:9). Die kern van die deklarasie word gevind in die *15 geformuleerde substantiewe beginsels* (Artikels 3-17). Hierdie beginsels is geanker in respek vir menswaardigheid, menseregte en fundamentele vryhede (Art. 1; UNESCO, 2006; Ten Have, 2008:35) en staan in ‘n noue verband met die Universele Deklarasie van Menseregte (Ten Have, 2006:341). Hierdie beginsels bepaal die verskillende verpligtinge en verantwoordelikhede van die morele subjek (moral agent) in verhouding met verskillende kategorieë van morele voorwerpe of pasiënte (moral patiënt, Andorno, 2007:151; Ten Have, 2008:34-35).

Die beginsels is gerangskik ooreenkomstig h *graduele verruiming* in die reikwydte van morele objekte: individuele mense (menswaardigheid, voordeel en nadeel; outonomie), ander mense (toestemming, privaatheid, gelykheid), menslike gemeenskap (respek vir kulturele diversiteit), mensdom as h geheel (solidariteit, sosiale verantwoordelikheid, deel in voordele) en alle lewende wesens en hulle omgewing (beskerm toekomstige generasies en beskerming van die omgewing, die biosfeer en biodiversiteit, Ten Have & Jean, 2009:40).

Sommige van die beginsels word algemeen en wyd aanvaar (outonomie en toestemming). Ander beginsels is goedgekeur (aanvaar) in vorige deklarasies (bv. "deel in voordele" in die Helsinki Deklarasie). Wat *oorspronklik* in die deklarasie is, is die wyse waarop balans tussen individuele en gemeenskapwaardes of morele perspektiewe bereik is. Die deklarasie erken aan die een kant die beginsel van outonomie (Art. 5) maar aan die ander kant word die beginsel van solidariteit (Art. 13) aanvaar. Verder word die beginsel van sosiale verantwoordelikheid en bevordering van gesondheid beklemtoon (Art. 14, Ten Have, 2008:35). Laasgenoemde beginsels is gerig op die oorweging van besluitneming ten opsigte van sake wat vir sommige lande van groot belang is (soos die toegang tot kwaliteit openbare gesondheid, gesondheidsorg, noodsaaklik medisyne, genoegsame voeding en water, vermindering van armoede en ongeletterheid, verbetering van lewensomstandighede sowel as van die omgewing, Ten Have & Jean, 2009:40).

Toepassing en uitkoms

Die gedeelte in die deklarasie wat handel oor die *toepassing* van die bio-etiese beginsels (Artikels 18-21) is h nuwigheid, in die sin dat dit *die gees* waarin die beginsels toegepas moet word, voorsien en beskryf (Ten Have, 2008:35). Die deklarasie eis professionalisme, eerlikheid, integriteit en deursigtigheid in die basiese bio-etiese besluitnemingsprosesse, die oprig van etiese komitees, toepaslike assessering en bestuur van risiko- en transnasionale praktyke wat voorkom dat lande wat nie etiese infrastruktuur het nie, uitgebuit word (Ten Have & Jean, 2009:40).

Wat die *moontlike uitkomst* van die deklarasie betref, skryf Levitt en Zwart (2009:375): "Its value can only be judged by its influence". Die geskiedenis van menseregte dui aan dat h deklarasie wat as nie-bindend (soft law) begin (bv. die 1948 Universele Deklarasie van Menseregte) kan later as bindende gedragskode deur die wêreldgemeenskap aanvaar word. Sommige kundiges meen dat die UNESCO-verklaring van bio-etiese regte in die toekoms kan lei tot die opstel van h globale bio-etiese gedragskode wat as internasionale wet aanvaar sal word (Faunce, 2005:173-178; Nys, 2005:8; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:44). Hierdie deklarasie kan ook (in die toekoms) dien as h aanmoediging vir ander juridiese inisiatiewe, soos die opstel van streekgerigte gedragskodes en wetgewing. h Voorbeeld word gevind in die aanvaarding van die Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine deur die Council of Europe in 1997 (Ten Have & Jean, 2009:44).

Dit is ook belangrik om op te merk dat die Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights alreeds as h belangrike internasionale teks deur die Europese menseregtehof (2006) in die saak van *Evans teen Verenigde Koninkryk* aangehaal is (Ten Have, 2008:37; Ten Have & Jean, 2009:44-45). Lidlande wat tot die beginsel van hierdie deklarasie ingestem het, het daarmee saam tot die toepassing daarvan asook die bevordering van die deklarasie ingestem. Lidlande het hulle verbind tot die tot stand bring van etiese komitees, die koester van inligting en verspreiding van inligting, opvoeding en opleiding op alle vlakke en die bevordering van

bio-etiese opleiding (Ten Have & Jean, 2009:45). State wat dit nog nie gedoen het nie, moet aangemoedig word om bio-etiese kommissies te vorm, moet ingeligte pluralistiese debatte voer, bio-etiese opvoeding en onderrig bevorder, en moet die nodige stappe doen om transnasionale studie te fasiliteer (Ten Have, 2008:37).

BEOORDELING

Algemeen

Samevattend kan die deklarasie in die lig van bogenoemde beredenering om *die volgende redes* as 'n kragtige en uiters waardevolle en geloofwaardige dokument beoordeel word: In die opstel van die dokument is eerstens na verskeie geestelike perspektiewe geluister, waaronder 'n Christelike standpunt. *Tweedens* is die deklarasie eenparig deur al die lidlande aanvaar wat beteken dat 191 lande morele gesag aan 'n stel bio-etiese beginsels en regte gegee het, en hulle tegelyk verbind het tot die nakom van 'n universele etos soos gevind in die deklarasie. *Derdens* kan die deklarasie veral van besondere waarde wees in die ontwikkelende Afrika-konteks.

In die lig van die algemeen positiewe waardering van die universele deklarasie ontstaan die vraag: Hoe moet vanuit 'n Christelike oogpunt oor globale bio-etiek of universele etiese beginsels geoordeel word? (Vgl. ook D'Costo, 2012:169.) Die bedoeling van die deklarasie is om universeel te wees, soos die titel dit duidelik stel (Ten Have, 2006:341). Die deklarasie het globale bio-etiese norme geformuleer wat deur alle lidlande wêreldwyd aanvaar en toegepas moet word (Ten Have 2010:9).

Christelik

Sonder twyfel kan menseregte as 'n vorm van globale etiek beskou wanneer word. Twiss (2011:207)⁶ stel dat "...there is a broad consensus or normative agreement on many human rights – one needs only to ask the oppressed and suffering to see this is so. Speaking practically therefore we have much to work with in developing a global ethic." 'n Globale of wêreld-etiek is die minimum gemeenskaplike (gedeelde) waardes, norme en basiese gesindhede. Dit is 'n basiese *konsensus* oor gedeelde bindende waardes, onherroepbare norme en basiese gesindhede, deur alle mense ongeag hulle godsdienstige en dogmatiese verskille, waardes waartoe die nie-gelowige ook kan bydra. 'n Etiese konsensus dien as die kleinste moontlike basis vir die saambestaan as wêreldgemeenskap. 'n Globale etiek is nie 'n nuwe ideologie of superstruktuur nie en wil ook nie die spesifieke etiek van verskillende godsdienste oorbodig maak nie. 'n Globale etiek wil nie die Torah, tien gebooie of die Bergrede (die Quran, Bhagavadgita, gesprekke van Boeddha, wysshede van Confucius of filosofieë) vervang nie. Verder beteken globale etiek ook nie 'n enkele globale kultuur of godsdiens nie.

Hefner (2003:188) voer aan dat alle godsdienste die moontlikheid vir 'n globale etiek bied:

"I simply suggest that religion's activity of organizing consciousness through myth, ritual, praxis, and doctrinal interpretation, as well as its effort to negotiate the waters between exploration and memory, are resources for fashioning a global ethic..."

6. "In a very real sense, then, human rights project a cross-cultural moral vision of conditions necessary for a good life for all" (Twiss, 2011:212).

Volgens VanDrunen (2009:29-30) het gelowiges, anders gelowiges en nie-gelowiges in 'n liberale demokrasie 'n gemeenskaplike taak om in gesondheid geregtigheid na te streef en sê in dié verband: "Christians may therefore participate freely in the secular health-care system with people of many different religious beliefs".

In sommige Christelike kringe word die moontlikheid van universele beginsels bevaagteken omdat etiek (eksklusief) geografies of kultureel bepaal word en slegs in daardie domeine van krag is. Volgens Tristram Engelhardt het universele norme geen toekoms nie en is dit 'n manier waarop 'n etiese sisteem op die mensdom afgedwing word. Hierteenoor verwys Ten Have (2011:127) na die standpunt wat deur die Parliament of the World's Religions ingeneem is. Meer as 150 verteenwoordigers van verskillende godsdienste en religieuse organisasies het in 1993 'n verklaring oor 'n universele etiek onderteken. Die teks is deur die bekende teoloog Hans Küng opgestel. Die standpunt wat in die dokument ingeneem is, is dat alle godsdienstige en religieuse tradisies die mees fundamentele etiese waardes met mekaar deel⁷ (Declaration Toward a Global Ethic, 1993). Die nadruk word gelê op sake wat godsdienste met mekaar gemeen het, en nie op die verskille nie.

In samehang met die standpunt van Ten Have hierbo, kan myns insiens vanuit 'n gereformeerd Christelike sienswyse gunstig oor 'n globale etiek geoordeel word en wel om die volgende redes:

Die *eerste vertrekpunt* is dat, ongeag die ingrypende nasionale, kulturele en godsdienstige verskille, die feit bestaan dat almal wat by die moontlike konsensus betrokke is, *mense* is. Dit is 'n onbetwisbare feit en vorm duidelik 'n gemeenskaplike of gedeelde "waarde". Hefner (2003:192) stel dit soos volg:

"The basis for a global ethic lies in the fact that we are one human species, living in an interconnected network of distinct communities, within one global ecosystem that provides both resources and constraints for human life, facing the same fundamental problems."

Tweedens het 'n stelsel soos apartheid getoon dat tallose mans en vroue wêreldwyd hulle kon identifiseer met veronregte mense en *solidariteit spontaan kon betoon*, ongeag nasionaliteit, kultuur of godsdienste. Die rede daarvoor was die feit dat almal met moeitelose vriendelikheid kon saamstem oor byvoorbeeld die (byna ongedefinieerde) waardes van waarheid en geregtigheid (Twiss, 2011:212). Almal wat 'n betoging gehou het, het nie betoog vir die verdediging van 'n koherente teorie van die waarheid nie, maar slegs vir die waarheid dat apartheid mense verneder. Hiermee saam het mense ook nie betoog in verdediging van die humanis Johan Locke se siening van die gelykheid van mens nie, maar bloot vir die feit dat apartheid onregverdig is omdat dit mense ongelyk behandel. 'n Christen moet hierdie "waarheid" van gedeelde waardes erken.

Derdens word in die Christelike geloof waardes gevind wat met ander geloofstelsels byna woordeliks gedeel word. Anders gestel, die Christelike geskryfte maak gebruik van waardes wat ook in buite-Bybelse (godsdienste en eties-filosofiese) stelsels voorkom (Douma, 1997:55), en so word in die Skrif 'n erkenning van die bestaan van (globale) *gedeelde waardes* gevind. Hier kan spesifiek verwys word na die goue reël van mensliewendheid, naamlik "Alles wat julle wil

7. "We affirm that a common set of core values is found in the teachings of the religions, and that these form the basis of a global ethic." (Declaration Toward a Global Ethic, 1993)

hê mense aan julle moet doen, moet julle ook aan hulle doen” (vgl. ook Twiss, 2011:207, 212; Declaration Toward a Global Ethic, 1993). Hierdie optrede teenoor die ander mens as waarde kom byna *verbatim* voor by Thales (624 – 545 v.C., Douma, 1997:55), Confucius vyfhonderd jaar voor Christus, Rabbi Hillel (60vC-10nC), Jesus (Matt. 7:12), Islam, Jainism, Boeddhisme, Hindoeïsme (vgl. Küng, 1997:98-99). Die goue reël kom ook voor by die Zoroasterisme, Taoïsme, Baha’ en Sikhisme.

Een van die groot foute, volgens König (2010:113), wat Bybelwetenskaplikes begaan, in die *vierde plek*, is dat hulle nie die betekenis van die hele Genesis 1 – 11 raaksien nie en van mening is dat hierdie gedeelte oor universele menslike geskiedenis handel. Die besondere *boodskap* van hierdie gedeelte is dat dit aan die hele mensdom gerig is. König (2010:114) maak twee opmerkings oor die betekenis van hierdie gedeelte: *Eerstens*, dat God van die begin af universeel betrokke is en, *tweedens* handel die gedeelte oor sake wat die mensdom gemeen het. Wat König nie eksplisiet noem nie, word deur VanDrunen (2009:31-32) duidelik:

“Genesis 4:15 en 9:6 are particularly relevant. In both of these texts God ordained a system of human justice not as the sole possession of those who believed in him but as the common possession of the human race.”

In die lig van bogenoemde beredenering kan afgelei word dat Genesis 4 en 9 ’n universele deklarasie van bio-etiese beginsels en regte vorm, wat impliseer dat die mens besondere waarde het, en sy lewe dus optimaal versorg moet word.

In die *vyfde plek* kan met dank aanvaar word dat God Hom in die Skrif, asook deur die natuurwet (natural law) openbaar. Die Skrif leer dat die skepping in die algemeen en die gewete in besonder sekere sake oor God en sy waardes aan alle mense bekend maak (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:18-32, 2:14-15). Dit beteken dat die (anders gelowige en nie-gelowige) mens as beeldraer van God wel morele waarheid kan ken (Rom. 1:19-21, 32) en dit inderdaad ook doen (Rom. 2:14). Op voetspoor van Calvyn redeneer Vorster (2012) dat so ’n rasonale ontsluiting van die natuurreg meebring dat morele norme gevind kan word wat vir alle mense geld. Die Rooms-Katolieke kerk huldig dieselfde standpunt maar motiveer dit vanuit die koningryksgedagte (en pneumatologies) wanneer Pous Johannes Paulus II die volgende skryf (vgl. ook D’Costa, 2012:166; IOANNES PAULUS PP. II, 1990, par. 20):

“The Church serves the kingdom by spreading throughout the world the “gospel values” which are an expression of the kingdom and which help people to accept God’s plan. It is true that the inchoate reality of the kingdom can also be found beyond the confines of the Church among peoples everywhere, to the extent that they live “gospel values” and are open to the working of the Spirit who breathes when and where he wills (cf. Jn 3:8).”

In die lig van bogenoemde maak VanDrunen (2009:35) die volgende opmerking:

“For such reasons Christians can have genuine moral conversations with non-Christians. Secular bioethics can be bioethics.”

In die *sesde plek*, in aansluiting by bogenoemde gedagte, wys Waldron (2010:227-233) daarop dat die mens as beeld van God (*imago Dei*; Gen. 1:26-27) ook daarop dui dat die menslike rede (denke) ooreenkom met God in die sin dat die mens in sy vryheid ook kan weet en onderskei (be-rede-neer) wat die reg-te optrede teenoor die ander mens moet wees. Omdat alle mense na die beeld van God geskape is, kan alle mense God se orde (in die vorm van menseregte)

vir die samelewing ken of uitdink (vgl. ook Seiple, 2010:328-329). “But *imago Dei* seems so privilege not reason as such, but a particular form and orientation of reason” skryf Waldron (2010:228). Vanuit h ander hoek verbind Waldron (2010:229-230) die mens as beeld van God met die gedagte dat die mens die opdrag en vermoë ontvang het om oor die aarde te regeer (dominion) en skryf in dié verband: “*Imago Dei* connotes powers of self-mastery and autonomy (in the literal sense: our ability to give law to ourselves)”.

Dit is die roeping van die Christen-gelowige, in die *sewende plek*, om in vrede (wat die doel van die deklarasie is) met *alle* mense (ongeaag nasionaliteit, kultuur of godsdiens) te lewe (Rom. 12:18; Heb. 12:14) en om laasgenoemde te bewerk moet daar gedeelde waardes bestaan. In hierdie verband is die opmerking van Hans Küng (1997:92) besonder betekenisvol, naamlik dat daar geen vrede tussen mensegemeenskappe sal wees sonder vrede tussen godsdienste nie. Daar sal geen vrede tussen godsdienste wees sonder dialoog nie. En daar sal ook geen vrede wees sonder die bestaan van h konsensus (na dialoog) oor basiese waardes nie.

In die *laaste instansie* kan daarop gewys word dat, binne die gereformeerde etiek, die *beskerming van die weerlose mens* h belangrike tema is. So voer König (2001:141-142) die volgende aan:

“Veral Deuteronomium 12 – 26 toon h tendens wat aan menseregte herinner en veral die reg op beskerming van lewe. Trouens, alle wette oor die samelewing in Deuteronomium beskerm die armes, swakkes, onderdrukte en minderbevoorregtes teen die sterkes en rykes en mense wat mag misbruik”

Dit is deel van die boodskap van die koninkryk van God om aan die verdruchte reg te laat geskied, die armes te help, jou oor die swakkes en behoeftiges te ontferm, en die lewe van arm mense te beskerm (Ps. 72:2, 4, 12-14; König, 2001:42). God verwag van die kerk om aan *alle* (weerlose) mense goed te doen, hulle lief te hê en hulle belange te bevorder (Rom. 12:17; 1 Tess. 3:12, 5:15). h Besondere manier om uitdrukking te gee aan die liefde vir die weerlose mens is deur die ondersteuning van die deklarasie vir bio-etiek en menseregte wat juis ten doel het om aan die weerlose mens goed te doen deur hom te beskerm.⁸

Om bogenoemde punt te illustreer vertel Ten Have (2011:128-29) van h gebeurtenis wat deur h Marokkaanse kollega aan hom meegedeel is. h Etiekkommissie in h hospitaal moes oordeel oor die gebruik van h eksperimentele voorbehoedpil by h vrouepasiënt. Byna al die (manlike) lede van die kommissie het benadruk dat die eggenoot van die proefpersoon om toestemming genader moes word. Dit is gebruikelik in hulle kultuur wat daarop aandring. Die UNESCO-deklarasie vir bio-etiek en menseregte, wat ook deur Marokko onderteken is, stel uitdruklik dat die individu op grond van voldoende inligting self moet besluit of sy die risiko wil neem ter wille van die ontwikkeling van die wetenskap. Op hierdie wyse styg die beginsel van Artikel 6⁹ bo tradisie en kultuur uit en dra by tot die waardigheid en welstand van die betrokke vrou – op hierdie wyse word liefde en die belange van alle mense bevorder.

8. “Article 8 Respect for human vulnerability and personal integrity In applying and advancing scientific knowledge, medical practice and associated technologies, human vulnerability should be taken into account. Individuals and groups of special vulnerability should be protected and the personal integrity of such individuals respected.” (UNESCO, 2006).

9. “Article 6. Consent. 1. Any preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic medical intervention is only to be carried out with the prior, free and informed consent of the person concerned, based on adequate information.” (UNESCO, 2006).

D'Costa (2012:166) wys daarop dat die Pous se erkenning van die teologiese waarde van ander gelowe se etiese sisteme as 'n vorm van “gospel values”, beteken nie dat die *sui generis* karakter van die Christendom ontken of verwerp word nie. Uit 'n Christelike standpunt beskou, moet globale etiek nie verwar word met die gedagte dat norme eksklusief rasioneel uitgeredeneer word nie. Betrokkenheid by sekulêre bio-etiek beteken nie dat Christelike aannames opgegee word of noodwendig moet lei tot die ontkenning dat die Skrif die hoogste gesagsbron is nie (VanDruen, 2009:35). Universele norme word beoordeel in die lig van norme wat uit die Christelike bronteks of transendente grond afgelei word, wat dan later deel uitmaak van 'n minimum etiese konsensus (Küng, 1997:105). 'n Besondere voorbeeld van 'n Christelike beoordeling word gevind in die boek van JM Vorster met die toepaslike titel *Ethical perspectives on human rights* (2004).

SLOT

Uit hierdie artikel is dit duidelik dat die wêreldgemeenskap die noodsaaklikheid vir 'n deklarasie rakende die bio-etiek besef het. Dit het daartoe gelei dat die lidlande UNESCO die opdrag gegee het om 'n deklarasie te ontwikkel. So 'n deklarasie is tot stand gebring wat uiteindelik in 2005 deur die 191 lidlande eenparig goedgekeur is. Die krag van hierdie deklarasie word gevind in die feit dat vir die eerste keer in die mens se geskiedenis is die mensdom verenig rondom bio-etiese beginsels en is daarom moreel tot die nakoming van die deklarasie verbind. Die Christengelowige hoef nie vreemd teenoor universele etiese beginsels te staan nie en vind genoeg getuienis in hulle geskrifte om universele etiek te ondersteun, solank hierdie beginsels nie bots met beginsels wat in die Skrif gevind word nie.

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KEY WORDS

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TREFWOORDE

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Vervreemding en gawe – Sleutelmotiewe in die *Heidelbergse Kategismus*?¹

ABSTRACT

Alienation and gift – Key motifs in the Heidelberg Catechism?

The paper deals with two forms of contemporary criticism widely directed against the three-fold logic of the Heidelberg Catechism, namely against the so-called pessimistic anthropology and moralism presupposed by the focus on human sin in the first part of the Catechism, according to popular accusations, and the so-called legalistic use of the category of gratitude as motivation for Christian life and worship in the third part of the Catechism, according to other popular accusations. In a first section, the thrust of these forms of critique is briefly explained. A second section responds to the first accusation by considering the first part of the Catechism and the way it deals with human misery as alienation. The third and final section responds to the second accusation by considering the last part of the Catechism and the way it deals with gratitude as an integral part of the comfort, not merely as reciprocal human response to the comfort.

MISERIA ET MISERICORDIA?

1. Die *Heidelbergse Kategismus* het van meet af sowel groot waardering as skerp kritiek ontvang. Die *waardering* het onder andere te make gehad met die pastorale aanslag, wat op talle maniere duidelik word, vanaf die diep persoonlike eerste vraag en antwoord, maar ook uit die bekende drieliding waarin dié eksistensiële troos dan uiteengesit word.² In 1938 sou Karl Barth nog dié waardering verwoord as hy sê: “The outline human misery – human redemption – human gratitude is in its simplicity an ingenious restatement of the essence of

1. Hierdie voordrag is oorspronklik gelewer as openingstoespraak tydens die teologiese dag van die fakulteit teologie, Stellenbosch, op 4 Februarie 2013. Die titel was ook die oorkoepelende tema van die teologiese dag. Dit is gewy aan 'n herdenking van die *Heidelbergse Kategismus* se 450-ste bestaansjaar.

2. Vir 'n baie verhelderende bespreking van die *Heidelbergse Kategismus* as Protestantse belydenisskrif, teen sy historiese agtergrond en met sy teologiese beslissings, insluitende sy struktuur en pastorale opbou, sien W. D. Jonker, *Bevrydende Waarheid*, Wellington: Bybelmedia, 1998. Daar bestaan uiteraard 'n oorvloed materiaal oor die *Kategismus*, sowel historiese studies as kategetiese en homiletiese uitlegte. Vir een bekende voorbeeld, sien Th. L. Haitjema, *De Heidelbergse Catechismus als Klankbodem en Inhoud van het actuele Belijden onzer Kerk*, Wageningen: H. Veenman en Zonen N.V., 1962. Vyftig jaar gelede het heelwat goeie studies byvoorbeeld verskyn rondom die 400-jarige herdenking, in 1963. Vir 'n effens ouer maar steeds waardevolle bundel opstelle, sien daarom Bard Thompson, Hendrikus Berkhof, Eduard Schweizer & Howard G. Hageman se bundel uit dié tyd, *Essays on the Heidelberg Catechism*, Philadelphia: United Church Press. Met die oog op die herdenking vanjaar gebeur dieselfde weer, sien reeds Georg Plasger, *Glauben heute mit dem Heidelberger Katechismus*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012 en Martin Heimbucher, Christoph Schneider-Harpprecht & Aleida Siller (Hrsg.), *Zugänge zum Heidelbergser Katechismus. Geschichte – Themen – Unterricht*, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2012.

the whole Reformation.”³

2. Die *kritiek* teen die *Kategismus*, hoewel ook gemik teen kleinere aspekte van die inhoud,⁴ sou meermale juis óók gerig word teen hierdie driedeling. Van die verbreide hedendaagse kritiek is dat dié driedeling nie langer relevant is nie, dat dit nie langer die lewensgevoel van mense aanspreek nie, dat dit nie meer sinvol verkondig en geglo kan word gegee die tydsgees vandag nie. Dié kritiek teen die opbou van die *Kategismus* sluit meerdere verwyte in en word by geleentheid gerig teen ál aspekte van die *Kategismus* se logika en daarmee teen ál drie die onderdele. Ons tydsgees ken nie meer só ’n sondebefes en skuldgevoel nie. Die lewensgevoel vandag het nie meer behoefte aan dié soort vergiffenis, vryspraak en regverdiging nie. Hedendaagse mense ervaar die oproep tot dankbaarheid – wat boonop tot uiting kom in gebod en gebed – as wetties en in stryd met hulle eie behoefte aan individuele vryheid.

3. Op al dié verwyte sou noukeuriger ingegaan moes word, sowel om die eintlike besware beter te verstaan as om te oorweeg of hulle inderdaad oortuigend is, maar tyd en ruimte laat dit nie vandag toe nie. Hier word slegs aandag gegee aan spesifieke maniere waarop die kritiek teen die *eerste* en die *laaste* dele van die *Kategismus* dikwels vandag geformuleer word, omdat albei dié soort formulerings inderdaad fundamentele vrae rig aan die diepste veronderstellinge waarop die hele logika van die *Kategismus* berus.

Die eerste beskuldiging is dat die *Kategismus* ’n *pessimistiese mensbeeld* veronderstel, wat nie pas by ’n hedendaagse, optimistiese siening van die mens nie. Mense word hier voorgestel as van nature geneig tot alle kwaad, wat eenvoudig empiries nie waar is nie. Dit is sielkundig net nie meer moontlik, verstandig of verantwoordelik om mense eers te probeer oortuig van hulle sonde en skuld, alvorens die evangelie as goeie nuus aan hulle gebring sou kon word nie. Ten einde die evangelie geloofwaardig, oortuigend en suksesvol te kan verkondig moet mense anders benader word, moet op ander behoeftes in mense appelleer word, moet die inhoud van die evangelie ook anders voorgestel word as troos en vryspraak, word beweer. Mense is vandag eerder op soek na geluk, welbehag en welvaart, vervulling en sukses, en daarom moet die evangelie eerder verkondig word in terme van *happiness-, well-being-, prosperity-*

3. Karl Barth, *Learning Jesus Christ through the Heidelberg Catechism*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964, 122. Dié bundel bevat Barth se bekende twee geskrifte oor die *Kategismus*, te wete sy *Einführung in den Heidelberger Katechismus* aan Switserse predikante in 1938, waaruit hierdie aanhaling kom, asook sy langer *Die christliche Lehre nach dem Heidelberger Katechismus*, sy reeks voorlesings in Bonn, direk na die Oorlog in 1947. Albei is vertaal deur Shirley C. Guthrie en die publikasie val ook saam met die 400-jarige herdenking in 1963. Vir ’n informatiewe opstel oor Barth en die *Heidelbergse Kategismus*, sien die kerkhistoriese studie van Hanna Reichel, onder leiding van Christoph Strohm by Heidelberg, “Was ist dein einziger Trost im Leben und im Sterben? Karl Barths kontextuelle Interpretation des Heidelberger Katechismus,” somersemerster 2010, beskikbaar by <http://www.heidelberger-katechismus.net/7316-0-227-50.html>.

4. Die kritiek op die temas en die detail hang uiteraard saam met die sienings van die betrokke kritici. Sommige van die sake wat dikwels aandag kry is byvoorbeeld die verwerping van die mis in Vraag 80, wat egter later en om polemiere redes ingevoeg is, nie regtig in die logika pas nie en daarom ook deur baie gereformeerde kerke nie as deel van die teks hanteer word nie, omdat hulle die oorspronklike weergawes benut; die siening van die werking van die sakramente, wat weer deel was en bly van die groter konfessionele meningsverskille daaroor; die voorsienigheidsleer met sy oënskylik kousale formulerings; die tipies gereformeerde leer van die *extra Calvinisticum*, oor Jesus na sy menslike natuur; en die sterk Anselmiaanse rasionaal waarom ons ’n Middelaar benodig wat tegelyk God en mens is. Sien byvoorbeeld die reeks radiopraatjies wat A. F. N. Lekkerkerker in 1963 in Nederland oor die *Kategismus* gehou het en waarin hy op vele besware vanuit die destydse tydsgees ingaan, *Gesprekken over de Heidelberg*; Wageningen: N. V. Gebr. Zomer & Keunings Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1964.

en *flourishing*-taal as in terme van sonde en skuld. Vanaf populêre tot akademiese, vanaf sielkundige tot politieke, vanaf ekonomiese tot kerklike diskoerse word dié soort taal daarom inderdaad vandag met groot entoesiasme en gevolg benut – en in die lig daarvan is die pessimistiese veronderstellings en voorstellings van die *Kategismus* net nie langer houdbaar en relevant nie, volgens vele.⁵

Die tweede beskuldiging is dat *dankbaarheid* nie kan dien as *motivering* vir die Christelike lewe *nie*. Ook dié beswaar is uiteraard oud en het die verkondiging van die evangelie as kritiek begelei vanaf die eerste oomblikke – by Paulus, soos by Augustinus, soos tydens die Reformasie. Dis belangrik om te onthou dat ook die Lutherse tradisie nie dié oortuiging van die gereformeerde lewensgevoel deel nie, en dat selfs Karl Barth aan die einde van die vierde deel van sy *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, wanneer hy bedink watter term die implikasies van die versoening in Christus vir die Christelike lewe die beste kan saamvat, ook dankbaarheid oorweeg, en dan tog daartéén besluit, om te kies vir aanroep van God, in sy nadoods gepubliseerde *The Christian Life*.⁶ Die verbrede hedendaagse kritiek is egter van 'n ander aard en kom op vanuit 'n ander wortel.

Dalk kan hierdie hedendaagse besware die beste saamgevat word in die bekende kritiese vraag: *Can a gift be given?* Is daar hoegenaamd iets soos 'n gawe, 'n geskenk, denkbaar, voorstelbaar, moontlik? Dié vraag boei geleerdes toenemend deur die 20ste eeu, in vele akademiese dissiplines, vanaf antropologie tot ekonomie, vanaf sielkunde tot sosiologie. Die Franse antropoloog Marcel Mauss het dié vroeë begin oproep met sy studies wat sou aantoon hoe fundamenteel die gee van geskenke is in vele verhoudings. Hulle konstitueer as 't ware ons lewe in gemeenskap en daarmee alle sosiale en ekonomiese verhoudings. Meesal is gawes 'n vorm van ruilhandel, iemand skenk iets of doen iets vir iemand anders en verwag daarvoor iets terug, al word dié verwagting van wederkerigheid na die verre toekoms verplaas of al neem dit slegs die vorm aan van 'n sekere verhouding tussen dié partye wat daarmee tot stand kom of daardeur beïnvloed word.⁷ Ook wanneer daar nadruklik géén verwagting aan

5. Sien as enkele voorbeeld van die vele teoloë wat deesdae op hierdie vroeë ingaan, Ellen T. Charry, *God and the Art of Happiness*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010.

6. Karl Barth, *The Christian Life. Church Dogmatics IV/4. Lecture Fragments*, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1981, 3-46, veral 39. Sy keuse vir “aanroep van God” kom natuurlik eweneens vanuit die *Heidelbergse Kategismus*, soos wat hy dan ook aantoon, 43-44.

7. Marcel Mauss se invloedryke *The Gift* verskyn oorspronklik in 1925, sien *The Gift. Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, London: Cohen & West, 1966. Sedertdien word dit 'n vloedgolf van literatuur, in vele akademiese velde en interdisiplinêre gesprekke. Van die bekendste werke wat dikwels ook in teologiese gesprekke 'n rol speel sluit byvoorbeeld in John Caputo & Michael Scanlon (eds.), *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism* (met onder andere bydraes van Richard Kearney en David Tracy), Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999; Caputo, Mark Dooley & Scanlon (eds.), *Questioning God*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001; Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money*, translated by Peggy Kamuf, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992; Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, translated David Willis, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996; Robyn Horner, *Rethinking God as Gift: Marion, Derrida and the Limits of Phenomenology*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2001; Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being*, translated Thomas A. Carlson, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991; Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, translated Jeffrey L Kosky, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002; Marion, *Prolegomena to Charity*, translated by Stephen E. Lewis, New York: Fordham University Press, 2002; Calvin O. Schrag, *God as Otherwise than Being. Toward a Semantics of the Gift*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002; Alan D. Schrift (ed.), *The Logic of the Gift. Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, London: Routledge, 1997 (met baie gesaghebbende opstelle, insluitende een van Mauss self); Edith Wyschogrod, Jean-Joseph Goux & Erci Boynton (eds.), *The Enigma of Gift and Sacrifice*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2002.

gekoppel word nie, en sommige sinici sal sê juis dan, skép dit eweneens 'n soort verhouding, te wete een van *I owe you*, van afhanklikheid, van eensydige erkentlikheid, wat 'n stempel laat op die een wat ontvang het en niks mag of kan terug doen nie.

Vir ons verstaan van die evangelie is dié gedagtes uiteraard van ingrypende belang. *Kan genade of vrye guns werklik gedink word?* Indien dit inderdaad vrye guns is – laat dit werklik die ontvangers onveranderd, of eerder afhanklik, verskuldig en verplig? Meer nog, indien dankbaarheid verwág word, gevra word, selfs vereis word, was dit dan werklik vrye guns, genade alleen? Kán genade gekoppel word aan enige verpligting tot dankbaarheid, en nog steeds genade wees? Meermale word Calvin en by name die *Kategismus* voorgedhou as klassieke voorbeelde van dié onaanvaarbare praktyk om dankbaarheid as morele motief te benut – as aansporing tot gehoorsaamheid, selfs tot gebed en aanbidding.

4. Teen die agtergrond van dié twee wyd verbreide openbare diskoerse vandag is ten minste twee baie populêre *kritiese vrae* aan die adres van die *Kategismus* gevolglik heel begryplik. Is 'n negatiewe en pessimistiese antropologie inderdaad 'n sleutelmotief in die *Kategismus* se verkondiging van troos? En is 'n wettiese vorm van dankbaarheid inderdaad 'n sleutelmotief in die *Kategismus* se motivering vir die Christelike lewe? Uitgedruk in die Latyn van die eerste vertaling van die *Kategismus* (reeds ook in 1563), is die *miseria* waarop die logika van die *Kategismus* berus vandag nog geloofwaardig en is die *misericordia*, die barmhartigheid, wat die *Kategismus* verkondig inderdaad vrye guns?⁸

OOR DIE ELLENDE VAN DIE MENS

5. Dis opvallend dat die opskrif van die eerste deel nie praat van “sonde” nie, maar van “ellende” (in Ursinus se oorspronklike Duits: *von des Menschen Elend*; in die eerste Latynse vertaling: *hominis de miseria*). Hoewel daar in die antwoord op Vraag 2 twee maal van “sonde en ellende” gepraat word (hoe ek van my “sonde en ellende verlos word”), is dit merkwaardig dat die opskrif van deel twee slegs van “ellende” praat en dat Vraag 3 direk en persoonlik vra waaruit ken ons ons *ellende* ken – en nié ons sonde nie.

Dalk is dit egter éerder merkwaardig dat daar vertalings is (soos die een wat in *This We Believe* van die NGK opgeneem is) wat die opskrif van die tweede deel aangee as “Sin and Misery” en dat dit in die spreektaal eintlik algemeen is om die driedeling van die *Kategismus* weer te gee met sonde-verlossing-dankbaarheid. Daar bestaan waarskynlik min twyfel oor die feit dat die populêre opvatting oor die logika van die *Kategismus* inderdaad is dat die eerste deel handel oor sonde, eerder as oor ellende – wat 'n fundamentele misverstand en verskraling van die *Kategismus* se eie bedoeling beteken.⁹

8. Vir die oorspronklike Duitse teks, in handige parallelle kolomme gepubliseer saam met die eerste Latynse vertaling en die eerste Nederlandse vertaling, sien J. N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, *De Nederlandse Belijdenisgeschriften in Authentieke Teksten met Inleiding en Tekstvegelijkingen*, Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Ton Bolland, 1976, 149-224, en vir agtergrond op die tekste en vertalings, 29-40. Eweneens vir 'n weergawe van die oorspronklike Duits met gedokumenteerde kommentaar op die teks, sien Wilhelm H. Neuser, “Heidelberger Katechismus von 1563,” in die reeks *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften, Band 2/2, 1562-1569*, Hrsg. Andreas Mühlhng & Peter Opitz, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009, 167-212. Vir 'n nuwe vertaling in hedendaagse Duits, sien *Heidelberger Katechismus. Revidierte Ausgabe 1997*, 4. Auflage 2010, hrsg. von der Evangelisch-reformierten Kirche, von der Lippischen Landeskirche und vom Reformierten Bund, Neukirchen: Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2010.

9. Die formulering, die “eie bedoeling” van die *Kategismus* is uiteraard 'n metafoor wat misverstand kan bevorder. Die *Kategismus* self het geen eie bedoeling nie en dis boonop onmoontlik om die spesifieke

6. “Sonde en ellende” beteken óók nie – soos wat vele dit opneem – dieselfde as “ellendig” sondig, asof ellende eintlik h byvoeglike naamwoord of bywoord is wat sonde en sondig net verder versterk nie, of selfs h oortreffende trap van sondig nie, intedeel. Ook oor die *Kategismus* se verstaan van *sonde* – en daarmee van die blywende noodsaak en relevansie van skuld, vergiffenis, regverdiging en vryspraak – sou dieper nagedink en verder gepraat kon word, want ook die kritiek op sonde- en skuld-taal is nie so oortuigend as wat meermale geglo word nie. Sonde word egter sélf ook só misverstaan en misbruik dat die *Kategismus* se eie bedoelings daarmee – en gevolglik die moontlike relevansie vandag – nie genoegsaam aandag kry nie, maar dit is h tema vir h ander dag. Selfs afgesien daarvan, egter, is dit eweneens nodig om die *Kategismus* se verstaan van ellende van nader te bekyk, ten einde te kan oordeel of dié lewensgevoel vandag nog mense kan aanspreek, of nie.

7. Menslike ellende, sou h mens kon begin, is volgens die *Kategismus* meer toestand as handeling, meer iets wat ons is as wat ons doen, meer *Sein* as *Akt*, of in ander terminologie, dis meer objektief as subjektief, dit het meer te make met wat en wie ons is en wat ons ondergaan, oorkom en aan uitgelewer is as met wat ons ervaar, belewe en voel. Ellende is wat van ons geld, ongeag óf en hóé ons dit gewaar word, of nie. Met vele uitdrukkings beskryf die *Kategismus* op vele plekke dié toestand waarin ons onself bevind en waaruit ons bevryding benodig, ongeag of ons so voel, of nie.

8. Ons ellende is daarom iets waaroor ons bejammer eerder as van beskuldig kan word. Dis ons *nood*, ons magteloosheid, ons uitgelewerdheid. Dit het te make met liggaam en siel. Dit het te make met lewe en dood. Dit het ten diepste te make met die vraag aan wie of wat ons behoort, aan welke mag en magte ons uitgelewer is.

9. Ons ellende is gevolglik *nié primêr empiries* waar te neem en fenomenologies te beskrywe nie, wat beteken dat ons ellende nié geken word op grond van h pessimistiese narratief oor mens-wees, die lewe, die samelewing en die tydsges nie. Vir die troos wat die *Kategismus* wil verkondig is dié insig van uiterste belang, daarom word dit so nadruklik deur die *Kategismus* self gevra en beantwoord. Die menslike nood en behoefte aan verlossing hang dus nie af van die

bedoelings van die skrywers na te gaan. Die *Kategismus* het ontstaan in 'n historiese, sosiale, politieke en kerklike maalkolk waarin vele faktore, kragte, akteurs en motiewe 'n rol gespeel het. Daar was selfs 'n span van medewerkers, alhoewel baie onlangse navorsing oortuigend aantoon dat dit grootliks die werk van Ursinus was, meer as wat voorheen besef is, en dat die rol van Olevianus kleiner was en ook van 'n ander aard, te wete om die ontvangs van die *Kategismus* agterna te bevorder. Dis natuurlik egter eweneens onmoontlik om Ursinus se bedoeling volledig na te vors, asof hy slegs 'n enkele bedoeling sou gehad het. By die uitleg – en dit sal altyd 'n onderlinge konflik van interpretasie moet bly – moet die historiese faktore dus allereers in ag geneem word, die *Kategismus* moet gelees word as 'n dokument van sy eie ontstaanstyd. Daarvoor is studies nuttig soos Walter Hennis, *Der Heidelberger Katechismus im konfessionpolitischen Kräftespiel seiner Frühzeit*, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1983, asook verskeie bydraes in die uitstekende resente bundel van Heimbucher et al, *Zugänge* (sien voetnoot 2). Daarby behoort die teologiese vorming en eie oortuigings van Ursinus ernstig geneem te word, waarby werke soos *Der Heidelberger Katechismus und vier verwandte Katechismen*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969 (oorspronklik Leipzig, 1907), met 'n inleiding van A. Lang, steeds waardevol bly, omdat 'n mens die *Kategismus* met Ursinus se eie vroeëre pogings kan vergelyk. Uiteindelik help die vele beskikbare studies, insluitende bydraes wat tans verskyn, dat 'n mens die struktuur, aksente, oorgange en temas van die dokument tog beter kan verstaan – en dit is al wat bedoel sou kon word met “eie bedoeling”, in kritiese afstand dan van vorme van uitleg wat dalk in die resepsie-geskiedenis invloedryk geword het maar wat nie reg laat geskied aan wat ons vandag van die dokument self kan weet en verstaan nie.

beskrywing van meer positiewe lewensgevoelens in meer optimistiese tye en meer negatiewe lewensgevoelens in meer pessimistiese tye nie. Daar kom (vir sommige) tye van voorspoed en vooruitgang en daar kom (vir ander) tye van teenspoed en dreigende apokaliptiese ondergang, maar die menslike ellende waarvan die *Kategismus* praat word nie daardeur minder of meer nie. Trouens, tye van optimisme en voorspoed kan tye van diepe nood en ellende wees – sonder dat ons dit subjektief beleef en aanvoel – en tye van pessimisme en swaarkry kan tye van bewaring en bevryding wees – sonder dat ons dit subjektief so beleef en aanvoel.

10. Daar is – interessant genoeg – vandag *wel vele narratiewe van ellende* in omloop, en meermale van diégene van wie h mens dit nie sou verwag nie, omdat hulle nié noodwendig die beoordeling van die menslike kondisie van die *Kategismus* deel nie. Dis maklik om lyste van bekende figure en hulle invloedryke werke op te noem as voorbeelde van dié litanieë van die nood van ons tyd.

h Mens dink byvoorbeeld aan die Britse regsgeleerde en etikus, Jonathan Glover, se *Humanity. A Moral History of the Twentieth Century* (2001), wat h aangrypende, diep beskuldigende weergawe is van die onmenslikheid en die gruwel van die tyd waarin ons lewe en van die mense van ons tyd.¹⁰ Daar is Peter Watson se fassinerende *A Terrible Beauty*, waarin hy die wonderbare rol van tallose wetenskaplike ontwikkelings op ons daaglikse bestaan beskrywe, maar tog deurentyd bewus van die groter verhaal en atmosfeer van verskrikking.¹¹ Daar is die sielkundige Daniel Haybron se ontmaskerende studie oor die kultuur van *happiness, The Pursuit of Unhappiness. The Elusive Psychology of Well-Being*, waarin hy toon hoe juis die ideale en drome wat ons najaag só onbereikbaar is dat hulle nie anders kán as om vir ewig gevoelens van onvuldigheid, afguns, frustrasie en onbehae by ons te skep nie.¹² h Mens dink aan die populêre kultuur-filosoof Alain de Botton se meesleurende *Status Anxiety*, waarin hy vertel hoe die groot storie van die Christelike geloof, soos wat dit ook in die *Heidelbergse Kategismus* neerslag sou vind, in ons tyd vervang is met h nuwe groot storie, maar een waarvan stres, mededinging, afguns en sosiale vrees die bittere alledaagse gevolge is.¹³ h Mens onthou die New Yorkse filosoof Simon Critchley se snydende *Infinitely Demanding*, waarin hy argumenteer dat nihilisme, leegheid, sinloosheid dié uitdaging, ja, bedreiging van ons tyd is, omdat mense niks meer het om waarlik voor te lewe, geen roeping, geen aanspraak, geen verbintenis van werklike waarde nie.¹⁴ Daar is Jan Philip Reemtsma, die invloedryke Hamburgse sosiaal-wetenskaplike, se ontstellende en soms siniese *Vertrauen und Gewalt*, waarin hy van vele kante uitspel hoe die moderne tyd en die moderne lewe integraal verweef is met, ja, berus op die alomteenwoordigheid van geweld en dreiging van geweld.¹⁵ Daar is die ontboesemende erkenning van die gevierde Duitse skrywer Martin Walser dat hy, dat álle mense, regverdiging nodig het, maar dat die oppervlakkige kultuur van ons tyd,

10. Jonathan Glover, *Humanity. A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

11. Peter Watson, *A Terrible Beauty. The People and Ideas that Shaped the Modern Mind. A History*, London: Phoenix Press, 2002.

12. Daniel M. Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness. The Elusive Psychology of Well-Being*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

13. Alain de Botton, *Status Anxiety*, London: Penguin, 2005.

14. Simon Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding*, New York: Verso, 2007.

15. Jan Philip Reemtsma, *Vertrauen und Gewalt. Versuch über eine besondere Konstellation der Moderne*, Hamburg: Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, 2008.

met literatuur, kuns, media, politiek alles daarmee saam, alles wat moontlik is doen om dié diepe nood te verdryf en te ontken en te probeer vervang deur self-regverdiging en beteweterigheid – waarvan net ’n radikale religie ons kan bevry, soos by Paulus, Augustinus, Luther, Calvyn, en Barth, sê hy, in sy opspraakwekkende *Über Rechtfertigung, eine Versuchung*.¹⁶ Daar is ingrypende besinning oor lyding in ons tyd, soos van die Franse psigoanalitikus Julie Kristeva, byvoorbeeld in haar *This Incredible Need to Believe*.¹⁷ Daar is ’n oplewing aan studies oor die bouse in ons tyd, oor kwaad en boosheid, soos in Terry Eagleton se *On Evil*.¹⁸ Daar is selfs die apokaliptiese denkbeelde van vele hedendaagse filosowe, waar onder Slavoj Zizek, soos in sy *Living in the End Times*.¹⁹

Al hierdie werke is van vandág, en óór vandag, en nie van skrywers wat juis bedoel om as gelowiges te skryf nie. Indien ’n mens teoloë sou byvoeg word die lys nóg langer, as ’n mens dink aan Cornelius Plantinga se *Not the way it's Supposed to Be*, aan Christof Gestrinch se beskrywing, in *Die Wiederkehr des Glanzes in der Welt*, van ’n lewe “when things no longer have any splendor” of aan Serene Jones se *Trauma and Grace*, oor wat sy ’n gebroke wêreld noem, *ruptured*, vol geweld, trauma en rou.²⁰

En as ’n mens van die beskrywings onthou wat verder agter dié tekeninge lê, dink ’n mens aan Alasdair MacIntyre se wêreld *After Virtue*, waarvolgens ons tyd ons morele sensibilliteit en woordeskat verloor het,²¹ en nog verder terug aan Hannah Arendt oor *the banality of evil*, die alledaagsheid, die gewoonheid, die bekëndheid van die bouse,²² aan Walter Benjamin se bittere beskrywing van die katastrofe wat ons vooruitgang noem²³ – of nóg verder terug aan Emile Durkheim se analises van *anomie*, van die belewenis van mense dat hulle nie tuis is in hulle eie gemeenskap en samelewing nie, nie hier hoort of pas

16. Martin Walser, *Über Rechtfertigung, eine Versuchung*, Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2012.

17. Julia Kristeva, *This Incredible Need to Believe*, translated Beverley Bie Brahic, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

18. Terry Eagleton, *On Evil*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

19. Slavoj Zizek, *Living in the End Times*, London: Verso, 2010.

20. Cornelius Plantinga, *Not the way it's Supposed to Be*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996; Christof Gestrinch, *Die Wiederkehr des Glanzes in der Welt*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1996; Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace. Theology in a Ruptured World*, Westminster John Knox, 2009.

21. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

22. Hannah Arendt gebruik die term “banality of evil” in haar beskrywing van die verhoor van Adolf Eichmann, in haar opspraakwekkende boek *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 1963. In ’n sin word haar gebruik van dié term juis die fokus van die skerp kritiek wat sy veral vanuit Joodse kringe ontvang, omdat hulle verwagting was dat sy hom as veel erger en meer grusaam moes uitbeeld as wat sy doen.

23. Walter Benjamin gebruik dié formulering in sy aangrypende “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” die laaste werk wat hy ooit geskryf het, en wat eers na sy dood deur vriende gepubliseer is. Vir die teks van die teses, sien Benjamin, *Illuminations*, New York: Schocken Books, 1977, 253-264. Vir ’n inleiding tot sy lewe en werk, sien die bundel opstelle onder redaksie van Gary Smith, *On Walter Benjamin, Critical Essays and Recollections*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991 en vir bondige inleidings tot sy afsonderlike werke, sien Uwe Steiner, *Walter Benjamin. An Introduction to his Work and Thought*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

nie,²⁴ aan Kierkegaard se *sickness unto death*²⁵ en aan Hegel se vervreemding, *alienation*.²⁶ Elkeen van hierdie beskrywings van die *conditio humana* vind vandag nog wye en invloedryke nawerkinge – by vele voorste kultuur-kritici van ons dag.

Die punt is dat hierdie nié die denkpatroon van die *Kategismus* is nie. Die *Kategismus* het hierdie soort empiriese argument nie nodig nie. Dit mag vir predikers wel verleidelik klink om sulke gesaghebbende stemme te hê wat wél klink na pessimistiese antropologiese narratiewe, en dit mag dalk in sekere kommunikatiewe en selfs retoriese waarde hê, maar uiteindelik is die *Kategismus* nie geïnteresseerd in 'n is/is-nie debat oor hoe goed of hoe sleg mense, die tydsges en die samelewing is nie. Die *Kategismus* vra nadruklik, waaruit ken ons ons ellende?, en antwoord: uit die wet van God (Vraag 3) – nié deur die uitkyk by die venster (Ernst Bloch), die luister na nuusberigte, die lees van Glover, Walser of Zizek nie, hoe aangrypend en ontstellend al dié verhale ook al mag wees.

Dié wet hoor ons in die samevatting van die wet wat Jesus volgens die Evangelies gegee het (Vraag 4). Ons is goed en na Gods eie beeld geskape, in ware geregtigheid en heiligheid (Vraag 6), maar ons is van hierdie gawes beroof (Vraag 9) en daarom, tensy ons weer deur Gods Gees opnuut gebore sou word (Vraag 8) is ons nié self in staat (Vraag 5) om God en ons naaste lief te hê (Vraag 4) soos wat ons eintlik as mense gemaak en geroepe is om te wees nie. Dit is ons ellende – wat ons sien in die spieël van die evangelie, van wie ons eintlik is en kan wees en moes wees. Ons is nie onself nie, ons is vervreem van onself. Ons weet dit, nie omdat ons dit waarneem of voel nie, maar omdat dit vir ons gesê word en ons dit hóór.

11. Dis daarom nie verrassend dat die *Kategismus* die woord ellende, *Elend*, gebruik om ons toestand, ons *miseria*, mee te beskryf nie. Die stam van ellende is dieselfde as dié van *alien* en *alienation*, van vreemd, vreemdeling, vervreemd wees, in 'n vreemde wêreld, ontuis. Ons ellende is dat ons aan onself behoort – en daarmee aan allerhande ander magte.²⁷ Dwaarsdeur die *Kategismus* word dié magte aan wie ons behoort op verskillende maniere benoem.²⁸ Ons troos is dat ons aan Jesus Christus behoort, bevry van hierdie magte én van onself.

12. In die lig hiervan is dit bevreemdend dat ons die logika van die *Kategismus* so maklik kon herlei tot vergiffenis van sonde alleen – en dié dan boonop kon uitlê op 'n individualistiese en

24. Die Franse sosioloog Emile Durkheim, die grondlegger van die sosiologie as akademiese dissipline, het die konsep van anomie bekend gemaak as beskrywing van 'n lewensgevoel, karakteristiek van moderne samelewings, dat mense ontuis is; vir 'n bespreking van die breër tema, sien byvoorbeeld my “Gemeenskap wat kan standhou? – Nagedink oor vorme van saám-leef in die wêreld vandag,” *Geloof en Openbare lewe. Versamelde Opstelle 2*, Nico N. Koopman (red), Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2008, 35-66.

25. Soren Kierkegaard is bekend vir sy beskrywing van die menslike *sickness unto death*, ook die titel van een van sy werke, uit 1849, onder die skuilnaam Anti-Climacus. Hy bedoel dit as 'n Christelike analise van sonde, wat hy as wanhoop tipeer, *despair*; deur drie verskillende gestaltes van eksistensiële wanhoop te beskryf.

26. Veral sedert Hegel word die term vervreemding, *alienation*, deur verskillende denktradisies gebruik om die menslike toestand mee aan te dui, waaronder Marx en sy volgelinge, wat dit egter anders gebruik as Hegel self.

27. Sien Eberhard Busch, *Drawn to Freedom. Christian Faith Today in Conversation with the Heidelberg Catechism*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010, 63-91.

28. Byvoorbeeld alle heerskappy van die duiwel (Antwoord 1), ons verdorwe natuur (Antwoord 6), die aanhitsing van die duiwel (Antwoord 9), alles wat met ons gebeur (Antwoord 27), alle heerskappy van die duiwel (Antwoord 34), alle vyande (Antwoord 51), al sy en my vyande (Antwoord 52), die werke van die duiwel, magte, kwaadwillige planne (Antwoord 123), ons doodsvyande, die duiwel, die wêreld en ons sondige natuur (Antwoord 127).

moralistiese wyse. *Barth se verbasing* geld ook hier. Wanneer hy in sy *Kirchliche Dogmatik* die Christologie bedink in sy versoeningsleer en hy by Jesus se wonderbare wonderdade in die Evangelies kom, merk hy op:

“(W)e may well ask with amazement how it was that the Reformation, and (apart from a few exceptions) the whole of earlier and especially more recent Protestantism as it followed both Luther and Calvin, could overlook this dimension of the Gospel which is so clearly attested in the New Testament - its power as a message of mercifully omnipotent and unconditionally complete liberation from $\phi\theta\omicron\rho\alpha$, death and wrong as the power of evil. How could Protestantism as a whole, only too faithful to Augustine, the ‘father of the West,’ orientate itself in a way which is so one-sidedly anthropological (by the problem of repentance instead of by its presupposition - the kingdom of God)?

In other words, how could it become such a moralistic affair - so dull, so indifferent to the question of humanity itself, and therefore so lacking in joy? How could it possibly overlook the fact that it was depriving even its specific doctrine of justification and sanctification of so radiant a basis and confirmation by not looking very differently at the character of the self-revelation of God in the Son of Man as it emerges in the miracles of Jesus, in these works of God; by not considering the freedom of the grace which appeared in Him? And ... there is nothing much to be learned in this respect from Western Catholicism ... From the Reformers we can at least know what free grace might be, and therefore learn, perhaps, to recognise its radicalism as revealed in the miracles of Jesus.”²⁹

Kortom, hy verbaas hom dat Protestantisme wel die vrye aard van Gods guns gesien het, maar nie die reikwydte en radikaliteit daarvan nie. Hulle het nie gesien dat genade nie slegs met sonde te make het nie, maar ook met die mens, met dié menslike vraag, naamlik die vraag na lyding onder die geweld van die magte van kwaad en dood. Protestantisme het toegelaat dat hulle eie vooroordeel, hulle *particular bias*, hulle verhinder om te sien wat so oop en bloot is in die evangelie. Hulle het self toegelaat dat hulle *a moralistic affair* word en daarmee – *so indifferent to the question of humanity itself*. Sonde het feitlik iets verdiensteliks geword, iets wat mense nodig het, omdat dit ons waardig maak vir die verlossing.

“To whom does Jesus turn in the miracles?, vra Barth, en antwoord self “The answer is obvious. It is the person with whom things are going badly; who is needy and frightened and harassed ... The picture brought before us is that of suffering ... We may turn away from this aspect of human existence. We may close our eyes to it. We may argue that human life as a whole is not really like a great hospital. But apart from this aspect the miracles of Jesus cannot be brought into proper focus and genuinely seen and understood. For human life as it emerges in this activity of Jesus is really like a great hospital whose many departments in some way enfold us all ... *His action is always in response to human misery* ... He finds and sees people in the shadow of death. His miraculous action is to bring them out of this shadow, to free them from this prison, to unburden them, to release them. They can be people again - whole people in the most elemental sense ...

29. Sien Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV/2*, 154-264, veral 233. Vir 'n bespreking van die breër samehang by Barth, sien my “Paradigms of Radical Grace,” in *On Reading Karl Barth in South Africa*, Charles Villa-Vicencio (ed.), Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988, 17-44, ook opgeneem in my *Essays on Being Reformed. Collected Essays 3*, Robert Vosloo (ed.), Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2009, 275-292.

The fact that God takes people seriously in this direct divine way finds concrete realisation when Jesus' proclamation of his kingdom, his coup d'état in the miracles, takes the form of this direct comforting of the sad, this free liberation of the poor, these benefits which come so unconditionally to people; when in this form it consists quite simply in the fact that oppressed and therefore anxious people can breathe and live again, can again be people ...

It is in this that God is glorious, making known God's will, and in God's will God's nature... The God who is operative and revealed in the acts of Jesus self-evidently places Godself at the side of people in this respect - that which causes suffering to people is also above all painful and alien and antithetical to Godself ... God does not will that which troubles and torments and disturbs and destroys people ... The sorrow which openly or secretly fills the heart of people is primarily in the heart of God. The shame which comes on people is primarily a violation of God's own glory. The enemy who does not let people breathe and live, harassing them with fear and pain, is primarily God's enemy ...

The activity of Jesus, and revealed in it Godself and God's kingdom, are a defiance of the power of destruction which enslaves people, of $\phi\theta\omicron\rho\alpha$ in all its forms. They are not a neutral force or omnipotence, but the omnipotence of mercy - not quiet and passive mercy, but a mercy which is active, and therefore hostile to that power on behalf of poor people ... It is on the side of suffering people that God, Godself, sets Godself. It is to the help of the sufferer that God comes.³⁰

Die wondere help ons sien dat Gods genade radikaal en onvoorwaardelik gerig is op mense in ons ellende, nie net as sondaars nie, maar ook as skepsele. In die woorde van Jaap Durand, hulle dien as paradigmas van Gods genade,³¹ van Gods barmhartige ontferming, Gods *misericordia*, van die troos van Gods radikale en omvattende vrye guns.³²

13. Dit is hierdie omvattende nood, hierdie ellende, hierdie behoort-aan-die-magte en hierdie-uitgelewer-wees-aan-onsself wat die *Kategismus* in die oog het as dit praat van ons *miseria*, van ons *alienation*, van ons vervreemding. Dit is hierdie radikale vrye guns van Gods barmhartigheid en genade wat die *Kategismus* verkondig as enigste troos, vir liggaam en siel, in lewe en sterwe. Juis om dié rede staan alles egter op die spel indien die tweede aanklag gelyk sou hê, te wete dat die *Kategismus* se klem op dankbaarheid beteken dat die genade juis nie genade is nie en die vrye guns nié vrye nie.

30. Barth, *CD IV/2*, 233 e.v.

31. J. J. F. Durand, *Die Lewende God*, Pretoria: NGKB, tweede uitgawe 1986, 109-110.

32. Die term *misericordia* kom meermale in die 1563 Latynse vertaling voor, byvoorbeeld Vraag en Antwoord 10: is God dan nie *misericors* nie? met die antwoord God is sekerlik barmhartig, *est ille quidem misericsors*. By die sleutelvraag en -antwoord 21, oor wat 'n ware geloof is, word gesê dat al die gawes ons uit louter genade, *ex Dei misericordia*, geskenk word. In Antwoord 122 word *misericordia* ingesluit in die lang ry hoedanighede van God waarom ons in die eerste bede van die Onse Vader bid dat ons dit sal ken en prys vanuit Gods werke in die skepping. Eindelik, in die belangrike Vraag 86 waarom deel drie oor die dankbaarheid aanvang, word sowel *miseria* as *misericordia* in één asem gebruik. Dis merkwaardig dat die Latynse vertaling reeds hier "sonde" invoeg by die oorspronklike Duitse teks wat net "ellende" het (*ausz unserm elend; ab omnibus peccatis et miseriis*) en ewe merkwaardig dat die Latyn dan die Duitse "genade" (*ausz gnaden*) met "Gods barmhartigheid" weergee (*sola Dei misericordia*).

OOR DANK VIR GENADE

14. Die *verwyf* dat dankbaarheid nie kan funksioneer as motivering vir die Christelike lewe en dus vir die etiek nie kom van vele kante. Meesal word dié beskuldigings aan die adres van Calvyn gerig, wat met sy logika van *Grace and Gratitude* – die titel van Brian Gerrish se gesaghebbende Calvyn-studie³³ – dankbaarheid tot h motivering verhef het wat juis die genade sy genade-karakter ontneem, lui die kritiek. As dankbaarheid verweg, erger nog, vereis word, was dit van die begin af geen ware genade gewees nie. In sommige kringe word selfs verder gegaan en word die vraag gestel of egte genade hoegenaamd denkbaar en voorstelbaar is, en weer eens is Calvyn dikwels die hoof-aangeklaagde – soos by verskeie verteenwoordigers van die Radikale Ortodoksie, soos John Milbank,³⁴ maar ook by teoloë soos Stephen Webb en Graham Ward en ander.³⁵ In die latere Calvinisme sou dié misplaaste motief dan rype neerslag gevind het in verregaande wettisme, moralisme, werkheiligheid en onvryheid, lui die klag meesal verder.

15. Dikwels word dié beskuldiginge egter ook uitdruklik teen die *Heidelbergse Kategismus* gerig, soms al vir sy eie (doelbewuste) strekking en logika, soms vir sy (dalk onbedoelde?) bydrae tot misverstande en misbruik in die tradisie sedertdien.

Só skryf Bernd Wannewetsch byvoorbeeld: “Darum hat der Heidelberger Katechismus durchaus zu einer problematischen Traditionsbildung beigetragen, indem er die Dankbarkeit als erste Antwort auf die Frage nach dem moralischen Sollen einführt: ‘Warum sollen wir gute Werke tun?’ (86. Frage). Zwar ist die Abwehr des verdienstlichen Denkens im Zusammenhang der Werke als primäres Motiv anzuerkennen. Und doch kommt im Gedanken der Gründung der christlichen Ethik auf die Dankbarkeit ein Zungenschlag ins Spiel, der – ungewollt – das vorbereitet, was dann in Kants radikaler Gesinnungsethik in seiner reinen Form zutage treten sollte: die Funktionalisierung des gottesdienstlichen Geschehens ... Kinder äussern spontanen Dank. ‘Dankbarkeit’ hingegen verrät eine knechtische Gesinnung. Sie gehört zur ‘Sklavenmoral’, zum Habitus derer, die sich ... in Dankbarkeit üben müssen, weil sie keinen freien Zugang ... haben.”³⁶

16. Daar kan min twyfel bestaan dat die *latere Calvinisme* in vele gestaltes h spiritualiteit beoefen het – en dalk steeds beoefen – wat inderdaad as wettisme en moralisme beskryf moet word nie. Daar kan ook min twyfel oor bestaan dat h sekere manier van omgang met die driedeling van die *Kategismus*, gereduseer tot h formule-agtige skema van sonde-verlossing-

33. Brian Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude, The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin*, Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1993.

34. Verskeie van John Milbank se opstelle behandel direk die gereformeerde logika, waar onder “Can a Gift be Given? Prolegomena to a Future Trinitarian Metaphysic,” in Gregory L. Jones & Stephen E. Fowl (eds.), *Rethinking Metaphysics*, London: Blackwell, 1996, 119-161; “The Ethics of Self-Sacrifice,” *First Things*, March 1999, 33-38; en “The Soul of Reciprocity” in twee aflewings, in *Modern Theology*, 17/3 July 2001 en 17/4 October 2001; sien ook Milbank, *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon*, London: Routledge, 2003.

35. Stephen Webb, *The Gifting God: A Trinitarian Ethics of Excess*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996; Graham Ward, *Cities of God*, London: Routledge, 2000; Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge. Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

36. Bernd Wannewetsch, *Gottesdienst als Lebensform – Ethik für Christenbürger*, Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1997, 48-52; sien my bespreking in “Politieke erdiens? Vrae oor liturgie as lewensvorm,” *Geloof en Openbare Lewe. Versamelde Opstelle 2*, Nico N. Koopman (red), Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2008, 175-190.

dankbaarheid, dié spiritualiteit grootliks help bevorder het. Maar was dit die bedoeling van die *Kategismus* self? Of eerder, is dit al manier om die logika van die *Kategismus* te verstaan?

Skerp gestel, is die derde deel van die *Kategismus* 'n reaksie op die troos, met die troos dan verstaan as inhoud van die middelste deel? Of is die derde deel self déél van die troos? Is dankbaarheid die eis tot menslike reaksie óp die vrye guns, of is dankbaarheid self déél van die werking van die vrye guns? Is dankbaarheid die gepaste handeling van menslike kant in die lig van die voorafgaande genadige Goddelike handeling – in die gees van dit het Ek alles vir jou gedoen, wat doen jy nou vir My? Of is dankbaarheid die integrale en spontane werking van die Goddelike handeling self? Indien die vraag wat op die spel is só gestel word, word die *Kategismus* se antwoord eintlik merkwaardig duidelik. Of die uitlegtradisie in prediking, lering, kategeese en toepassing getrou gebly het aan dié antwoord is uiteraard 'n volgende vraag.

17. Die *Kategismus* se eie bedoeling blyk al glashelder – en waarskynlik verrassend, vir vele – uit die bekende Antwoord 1. Die probleem is waarskynlik dat die tradisie meesal halfpad opgehou het by die lees van hierdie antwoord. Wat is jou enigste troos in lewe en sterwe, vra die *Kategismus*, en antwoord self:

Dat ek met liggaam en siel in lewe en in sterwe nie aan myself nie, maar aan my getroue Verlosser, Jesus Christus behoort. Hy het met sy kosbare bloed vir al my sondes ten volle betaal en my uit alle heerskappy van die duiwel verlos. Hy bewaar my op so 'n wyse dat sonder die wil van my hemelse Vader geen haar van my kop kan val nie. Alles moet inderdaad tot my saligheid dien. Daarom verseker Hy my ook deur sy Heilige Gees van die ewige lewe en maak Hy my van harte gewillig en bereid om voortaan vir Hom te lewe.

Die troos is dat ons aan nie aan onself behoort nie, maar aan ons getroue Verlosser Jesus Christus – in lewe en sterwe, met liggaam en siel. Wat hou dié behoort alles in? Die lys met merkwaardige werkwoorde, waarin Jesus Christus se werksaamheid uitgespel word, maak dit duidelik. Hy betaal ten volle vir ons sonde, ja, en volgens baie in die uitlegtradisie hou die antwoord eintlik daar op, maar Jesus Christus verlos ons ook (uit alle bese heerskappy), Hy bewaar ons ook (die hare op ons hoof), Hy verseker ons deur sy Heilige Gees en, merkwaardig, Hy maak ons deur die Heilige Gees bereid om voortaan vir Hom te lewe, ja, “van harte gewillig en bereid” daartoe.

Dis sonder meer duidelik dat die troos volgens die *Kategismus* álles insluit wat hierna uitgewerk gaan word – vir seker óók deel drie. Die troos strek uit óók oor die dankbaarheid, die dankbaarheid is nié ons reaksie op die troos wat bloot daaraan voorafgaan nie. Alles is ingesluit by die troos dat ons aan Christus behoort. Christus doen álles aan ons, deur sy Heilige Gees – en wel op só 'n wyse dat ons ontdek dat ons van harte gewillig en bereid, dankbaar, gemáák word.

18. Wie die *uitdrukkings* volg wat in die res van die *Kategismus* gebruik word, sien inderdaad *hiérdie logika* aan die werk, só duidelik dat dit eintlik verrassend, bevreemdend, word dat die uitlegtradisie dit so dikwels kon miskyk en anders aanwend.

Die troos veronderstel dat ons “deur die Gees van God weergebore word”, anders het ons geen hoop nie (Antwoord 8). Integraal deel van die ware geloof, waardeur mense gered word, is die “vaste vertrouwe wat die Heilige Gees deur die evangelie in ons hart werk” (Antwoord 21) – en later gaan nog uitgespel word hóé die Gees dit doen.

Integraal deel van die inhoud van dié geloof is die derde deel van die *Apostoliese Geloofsbelijdenis*, wat handel oor “die Heilige Gees en ons heiligmaking” (Antwoord 24). Dat Jesus die Christus is hou óók in dat Hy as Koning “ons met sy Woord en Gees regeer en ons by die verlossing wat verwerf is beskerm en bewaar” (Antwoord 31) – die uitdrukking “sy Woord en Gees” vervul h belangrike funksie en bundel saam hóé Jesus Christus met ons werk.

Ons word Christene genoem, omdat ons deur die geloof “lede van Christus is en daardeur deel aan sy salwing het, sodat ons sy Naam kan bely, onself as lewende dankoffers aan Hom kan toewy, in hierdie lewe met h vrye gewete teen die sonde en die duiwel kan stry en hierna met Christus kan regeer” (Antwoord 32) – hierdie gemeenskap met Jesus Christus en hierdie déél in Hom, wat dan al hierdie ander aktiwiteite aan ons kant insluit en moontlik maak, is waarskynlik *dié enkele sleutel* tot die denke onderliggend aan die *Kategismus*.

Deel van die nut van sy kruisdood is dat deur “sy krag” ons ou mens “saam met Hom” gekruisig, gedood en begrawe word, sodat “die sonde gevolglik nie meer oor ons heers nie, maar ons onself as dankoffers aan Hom kan toewy” (Antwoord 43). Deel van die nut van sy opstanding is dat ons nou ook “deur sy krag” tot “nuwe lewe opgewek word” (Antwoord 45). Deel van die nut van sy hemelvaart is dat Hy sy Gees na ons stuur deur wie “se krag” ons nou soek wat daar bo is (Antwoord 49). Deel van die nut van sy sit aan Gods regterhand in heerlijkheid is dat van daar “regeer” word (Antwoord 50), “gawes uitgestort” word en ons “teen alle vyande beskerm en bewaar word” (Antwoord 51).

Sentraal in die geloof in die Heilige Gees is die troos dat dié Gees “ons deur h ware geloof deel laat kry” aan Christus “en al sy weldade”, dat die Gees ons “troos” en “ewig by ons bly” (Antwoord 53). Deel van die troos van die belydenis aangaande die kerk is dat Jesus Christus “deur sy Woord en Gees” die gemeente “vergader, beskerm en onderhou” en boonop nog dat “ons daarvan lewende lede is en ewig sal bly” (Antwoord 54). Die belydenis van die gemeenskap van die heiliges beteken dat ons “almal saam en elkeen afsonderlik as lede met die Here Christus gemeenskap het en aan al sy skatte en gawes deel het”, wat inhou “dat elkeen verplig is om ons gawes gewillig en met vreugde tot nut en saligheid van die ander lede aan te wend” (Antwoord 55) – kortom, die “gawes” waarin ons deel omdat ons deel van Christus is behoort ons ook met ander te deel, en wel “gewillig en met vreugde”. Deel van die troos van die vergiffenis van sonde is dat God op grond van Christus “ook aan my sondige aard waarteen ek my lewe lank moet stry nooit meer wil dink nie” (Antwoord 56).

As die *Kategismus* uiteindelik opsom wat dié geloof ons baat, word die bekende woorde van 1 Kor 1:30 twee maal gebruik, om duidelik te maak dat die “heiligheid” van Christus ons ook “geskenk” word en wel “uit louter genade” en “sonder enige verdienste aan ons kant”, en net om totaal seker te maak dat dit nie misverstaan word nie, word bygevoeg dit word ons “toegereken” asof “ons self al die gehoorsaamheid volbring het wat Christus vir ons volbring het” (Antwoorde 60 en 61; sien ook reeds baie uitdruklik Antwoord 18). Ons goeie werke verdien absoluut niks nie, omdat alle beloning “uit genade” gegee word (Antwoord 63).

Waar kom hierdie geloof vandaan? Nou maak die *Kategismus* seker dat daar geen twyfel kan wees nie, alles kom van Christus deur sy Woord en Gees. Die Heilige Gees

werk die geloof in ons harte deur die verkondiging en versterk dit deur die gebruik van die sakramente (Antwoord 65) – en dis nodig om te sien, nie deur die (elemente van) die sakramente nie, maar deur die gebruik daarvan, wat inderdaad ons handeling is, nes die geloof óns kennis en vertrouwe is, maar deur die Heilige Gees gebruik word. Deur die gebruik van die sakramente (Antwoord 66) word ons beter laat verstaan, beseël (Antwoord 66), gewys, geleer, verseker, (Antwoord 67, 69, 71, 73), beloof, gewas (Antwoord 70), trouens, “vernuwe en as lede van Christus geheilig om al hoe meer die ou mens af te sterwe en godvresend en onbesproke te lewe” (Antwoord 70).

Die gemeenskap met Christus wat in die nagmaal versterk word, het veral duidelike implikasies vir ons lewe. Om Christus se liggaam te eet en sy bloed te drink “beteken boonop om *deur die Heilige Gees*, wat tegelyk in Christus en in ons woon, *al hoe meer* so met sy geseënde liggaam *verenig* te word dat ons vlees van sy vlees en been van sy gebeente is, al is Christus nou in die hemel en ons op die aarde. Dit wil sê dat ons *deur een Gees* - soos die ledemate van die liggaam deur een siel – ewig lewe en *geregeer word*” (Antwoord 76). Die gebruik van die nagmaal is gevolglik vir dié wat “ook begeer om hulle geloof hoe langer hoe meer te versterk en hulle lewe te verbeter” (Antwoord 81).

Dáármee breek die derde deel “Oor die Dankbaarheid” aan (Ursinus: “*Von der Dankbarkeit*”; 1563-Latyn: “*De Gratitudine*,” dus nié oorspronklik “Die dankbaarheid wat ons aan God vir die verlossing verskuldig is,” soos wat die huidige Afrikaanse vertaling lui, na aanleiding van die oudste Nederlandse vertaling nie).³⁷

Teen dié tyd kan daar egter eintlik geen twyfel meer wees oor die *Kategismus* se eie bedoeling nie. Die dankbaarheid is nie ’n los, derde deel wat volg as menslike reaksie op die troos van die eerste twee dele nie, inteendeel. Die dankbaarheid is integraal déél van die troos, dis sêlf die vrug van die werk van Jesus Christus deur sy Woord en Gees, dis die spontane en onmisbare déél van die geloof wat aan ons geskenk word en in ons gewerk word deur die Gees. Daar is geen manier waarop die *Kategismus* nou sal wil oorgaan in ’n wettiese logika van werkheiligheid of verdienstelikheid nie. Trouens, in Vraag 64 het die *Kategismus* self reeds uitdruklik hierop ingegaan.

Vraag 64: Maar maak hierdie leer nie mense onverskillig en roekeloos nie?

Antwoord: Nee, want dis onmoontlik dat mense wat deur ’n ware geloof in Christus ingeplant is nie vrugte van dankbaarheid sal voortbring nie.

Feitlik elke uitdrukking hier is swanger aan betekenis, binne die logika van die *Kategismus*. Die “ware geloof” (deur die Gees gegee én versterk) “plant” ons “in Christus” in, gee ons déél aan Christus, sodat ons aan Hom behóórt, en in dié geméénskap met Christus volg die dankbaarheid “soos vrug” en kan dit onmoontlik anders wees. Dit álles is deel van die inhoud van ons troos.

Kortom, die “onmoontlik” van die *Kategismus* is baie duidelik nié die onmoontlik van “dis tog onmoontlik dat mense só ’n gawe ontvang en dan nie dankbaarheid daarvoor toon nie, dit sou darem net te skandalig vir woorde wees.” Dis nié die onmoontlik van ’n ruiltransaksie wat een

37. Vir ’n uitdruklike bespreking van die plek van die Christelike lewe in die *Heidelbergse Kategismus* deur ’n vooraanstaande etikus, sien Allen Verhey, *Living the Heidelberg: The Heidelberg Catechism and the Moral Life*, Faith Alive, 1986.

party in morele skuld laat by h' ander nie. Die "onmoontlik" van die *Kategismus* is die onmoontlik van "dis tog ondenkbaar dat mense wat aan Christus behoort, wat in Christus is, wat deel is van Christus, wat deel het aan sy eie salwing deur die Gees, wat in gemeenskap leef met Christus, wat daarom déél het aan al die genadige werkinge van Christus deur sy Woord en Gees, wat deur Hom weergebore is, geheilig is, wat deur sy krag gekruisig is, wat deur sy krag tot nuwe lewe opgewek word, wat deur sy krag nou soek wat daarbo is, wat deur Hom gereger word, wat deur Hom versterk word, wat deur Hom vernuwe en geheilig word, wat al meer met Hom verenig word, ja, wat déél in al sy skatte en gawes – dat hulle onveranderd sal bly lewe." Die lewe van dankbaarheid, dié lewe van gebod en gebed, van dien en aanroep, is daarom "vrug," "vrug van dankbaarheid" (Antwoord 64) en "vrug van die geloof" (Antwoord 86), dit is "hartlike vreugde;" "lus en liefde;" (Antwoord 90), dit geskied "gewillig en met vreugde" (Antwoord 55), dis die lewe van mense "van harte gewillig en bereid" (Antwoord 1) gemaák.

19. Reg aan die begin van die derde deel verduidelik die *Kategismus* dan ook presies só.

Vraag 86: Waarom moet ons nog goeie werke doen, terwyl ons tog sonder enige verdienste van ons kant alleen uit genade deur Christus uit ons ellende verlos is?

Antwoord: Omdat Christus ons, nadat Hy ons met sy bloed gekoop het, ook deur sy Heilige Gees tot sy ewebeeld vernuwe sodat ons met ons hele lewe bewys dat ons God dankbaar is vir sy weldade en Hy deur ons geprys word: Verder, sodat ons vir onself uit die vrugte van ons geloof sekerheid kan kry en ons deur ons godvresende lewe ons naaste ook vir Christus kan wen.

Waarom dan nog goeie werke, vra die *Kategismus*, as ons "sonder verdienste" "alleen uit genade" uit "ons ellende" verlos is? Omdat Christus ons deur sy Heilige Gees vernuwe, tot sy ewebeeld – dis ons troos.

20. Dis uiteraard h' volgende vraag of die *Kategismus* se logika oortuigend is en inderdaad volgehou kan word teenoor die kritiek, verwyte en beskuldigings – en hóé dit gedoen sou kon word.³⁸ In onlangse jare het verskeie teoloë inderdaad – sowel krities as konstruktief – ingegaan op hierdie soort logika van Calvin (en daarmee ook die *Kategismus*), waar onder byvoorbeeld J. Todd Billings, Kathryn Tanner³⁹ en Catherine Pickstock,⁴⁰ benewens die name wat reeds voorheen genoem is. Billings verdedig dit byvoorbeeld deur klem te lê op die deelname aan Christus, in sy *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ*.⁴¹ Eberhard Busch lê op sy beurt weer uit hoe die *Kategismus* h' boodskap van egte

38. Dit is meermale die taal, formuleringe en uitdrukkings van die *Kategismus* wat tot kritiek lei. In die gesprekke oor die vraag of 'n gawe wel denkbaar is, speel temas soos ver-giffë-nis, soos gasvryheid, soos offer, op-offer, self-opoffering, self-verloëning en diensbaarheid meermale ook sleutelrolle, en om begryplike redes is hulle vir vele hedendaagse denkers almal onaanvaarbare terme en handelswyses. Om dié rede is die *Kategismus* se gebruik van sulke uitdrukkings gevolglik ook meermale uiters omstrede, sien byvoorbeeld die "behoort" van Antwoord 1 (inderdaad dié sleutel tot die hele *Kategismus*), "onself as lewende dankoffers aan Christus kan toewy" (Antwoord 32), "onself as dankoffers aan Hom kan toewy" (Antwoord 43), "verplig om ons gawes tot nut en saligheid van ander aan te wend" (Antwoord 55). Sien die werk van Robert R. Vosloo oor gasvryheid, *Engele as Gaste*, Wellington: Lux Verbi, 2006.

39. Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001; Tanner, *Economies of Grace*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005.

40. Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

41. J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Hy werk implikasies van dié gedagtes vir die kerk daarna verder

vryheid bring, in sy *Der Freiheit zugetan* (in Engels vertaal as *Drawn to Freedom*).⁴²

Wat egter wel duidelik behoort te wees is dat daar 'n beduidende verskil is tussen die *Kategismus* se eie logika en die populêre maniere waarop die *Kategismus* in die geskiedenis meermale uitgelê, verstaan en gebruik is. Die werkingsgeskiedenis was meermale inderdaad verantwoordelik vir die soort wettiese en moralistiese sienings wat vandag allerweë gekritiseer word as 'n soort uitrui-logika, in stryd met die gedagte van genade, vrye guns en egte gawes.⁴³

Miskien kan 'n mens selfs sê dat die uitleg-tradisie en die werkingsgeskiedenis ons self van die *Kategismus* se eie troos *vervreem* het – en dat dit dalk as 'n verrassende *gawe* en welkome geskenk in vele Gereformeerde kringe beleef mag word indien ons oë in hierdie jaar van die 450ste herdenking opnuut geopen word vir die geestelike logika van die *Heidelbergse Kategismus* self.

KEY WORDS

Heidelberg Catechism
Alienation
Gift
Sin and misery
Gratitude

TREFWOORDE

Heidelbergse Kategismus
Vervreemding
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Sonde en ellende
Dankbaarheid

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uit in 'n meer populêre studie, *Union with Christ. Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.

42. Busch, in sy *Drawn by Freedom* (oorspronklike Duitse titel: *Der Freiheit zugetan*, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1998) toon aan hoe fundamenteel die motief van vryheid in die *Kategismus* is, teenoor opvattinge van vryheid wat beweer dat die boodskap van die *Kategismus* verslawend of wetties sou wees. Hy verduidelik dat die uitdrukking *der Freiheit zugetan* van Zwingli stam en beteken “God favors freedom.” Hy gebruik dan die beeld van Lasarus wat deur Jesus uit die graf na buite geroep word en sê dat die evangelie mense só roep en trek, mense in verbande en doeke en berooft van die lig, word na buite geroep en getrek, om waarlik vry te kan lewe. “This is how a person becomes ‘drawn’ to freedom and its right use. The title of this book intends to indicate the sum of the message with which the Christian movement is entrusted, and which it is the task of its theology to think through,” xi.

43. Onder die gesaghebbende studies van die wet by Calvin tel I. John Hesselink se *Calvin's Concept of the Law*, Allison Park: Pickwick Publications, 1992. Hy verdedig ook die diepste motiewe van die Gereformeerde geloof teen die beskuldiging van wettisme in sy populêre studie, *On Being Reformed: Distinctive Characteristics and Common Misunderstandings*, Servant Books, 1983. Sien ook sy “Law and Gospel or Gospel and Law? Karl Barth, Martin Luther and John Calvin,” NGTT Deel 51, Vol 1, 2012, asook sy “Sovereign Grace and Human Freedom,” NGTT Deel 53, Vol 3 & 4, 2012, 130-143.

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Die narratologiese analise van randfigure: Die siekes as groeps-karakter in die Johannes-evangelie

ABSTRACT

The narratological analysis of background characters: The ill as group character in the Gospel according to John

Since the first narratological/narrative critical studies of the Gospel of John were published several decades ago, much effort has been put into the analysis of characterization in this Gospel, and the value of such approaches has been proved. A survey of such studies indicates that scholars usually focus their narratological analyses on the main and minor characters in the Gospel. Thus far background characters have not been considered from such a perspective. In this article this issue is addressed and an example of a narratological analysis of such a group of characters, namely the ill (John 5:2-3 and 6:2), is offered. Aspects that are considered include the classification of this group character, the settings within which it appears, and the role of the reader in its construction.

1. INLEIDING

Een van die vrugbaarste ontwikkelings in die uitleg van Bybeltekste die afgelope paar dekades was die belangstelling in die narratologiese/narratief-kritiese lees van tekste, waarvan een van die fasette die ondersoek van die manier is waarop karakters in Bybeltekste uitgebeeld word. In die geval van die Johannes-evangelie was dit *Alan Culpepper* (1983) wat die eerste volledige narratologiese ondersoek van die Johannes-evangelie gepubliseer het. In die gedeelte waarin hy die karakterisering in die Johannes-evangelie behandel, bespreek hy al die belangrike karakters in dié Evangelie – in totaal nie minder nie as 24 karakters!

Sedertdien het daar talle studies oor Johannese karakters verskyn en is die nut van sulke benaderings al male sonder tal aangetoon. Wanneer karakterisering in die Johannes-evangelie ondersoek word, fokus navorsers gewoonlik óf op 'n groep karakters óf op een of twee van die hoofkarakters in die Evangelie.

Om enkele voorbeelde te noem: 'n Groep karakters: Margaret Davies (1992:316–349) bespreek 20 karakters, Peter Dschulnigg (2002) 21 karakters, Craig Koester (Koester 1995:33-77) 14 karakters en Cornelis Bennema (2009) 23 karakters; Sandra Schneiders (1993) en Adeline Fehribach (1998) fokus slegs op die vroulike karakters in die Johannes-evangelie terwyl Colleen Conway (1999) die karakterisering van vyf manlike en vyf vroulike karakters bespreek. Individuele karakters waarvan die karakterisering gereed aandag in die navorsing kry, is die Moeder van Jesus, byvoorbeeld David Beck (1993:143-158) en Judith Hartenstein (2007:269-294); Petrus, byvoorbeeld Helen Bond (1998:174-193) en Timothy Wiarda (2000); Pilatus, byvoorbeeld Martin de Boer (2000:141-158) en Christopher Tuckett (2000:131-140); "die Jode", byvoorbeeld Gérald Caron (1997) en Tobias Nicklas (2001); en Maria Magdalena, byvoorbeeld Susanne Ruschmann (2002), Reimund Bieringer (2005:34-41) en Andrea Taschl-Erber (2007).

Soos uit hierdie lys voorbeelde blyk, is dit gewoonlik hoofkarakters en/of kleiner karakters (die sogenaamde “minor characters”) wat aandag kry wanneer karakterisering in die Johannes-evangelie aan die bod kom. Daar is egter een groep karakters wat sover ek kon vasstel, nog nooit aandag in sulke studies gekry het nie. Dit is die groep karakters wat ek “randfigure” noem. (Later meer oor die benaming “randfigure.”) Daarmee verwys ek na karakters wat as’t ware net vir ’n vlietende oomblik in die narratiewe wêreld van die Johannes-evangelie verskyn – karakters op wie die kollig nie langer as ’n enkele moment val voordat die verhaal voortsnel na die finale ontknoping nie.

Die feit dat sulke randfigure gewoonlik nie baie aandag in narratologiese studies kry nie (gewoonlik ook nie in kommentare nie!) het waarskynlik primêr daarmee te doen dat navorsers van mening is dat daar nie veel vanuit narratologiese perspektief oor sulke karakters gesê kan word nie, en dat dit dus nie die moeite werd is om die narratologiese rol wat hulle vervul, verder te verken nie. Die bedoeling van hierdie artikel is om hierdie aanname krities te ondersoek en verkeerdt te bewys, deur die kollig op een so ’n groep randfigure te laat val, naamlik die siekes in die Johannes-evangelie. In narratologiese terme kan van hierdie groep as ’n groeps karakter gepraat word.¹

Hierdie studie probeer ’n leemte in die Johannese narratologiese navorsing te vul en die bruikbaarheid van narratologiese benaderings te demonstree in gevalle waar dit moontlik met die eerste oogopslag minder belowend lyk. Die vraag wat dus gestel word, is hoe ’n groep randfigure soos die siekes in die Johannes-evangelie vrugbaar vanuit narratologiese perspektief ondersoek kan word. Een verdere belangrike opmerking moet hier aan die begin van die studie gemaak word. Die fokus in hierdie studie val spesifiek op ’n groeps karakter, naamlik die siekes wat as randfigure in die Johannes-evangelie verskyn en nie op die individuele siekes wat as kleiner figure (“minor characters”) in dié Evangelie optree nie, byvoorbeeld die blindgeborene, die verlamde man en die blindgeborene nie.

2. DIE SIEKES IN DIE JOHANNES-EVANGELIE

Eksegete wys dikwels daarop dat daar ’n verskil is tussen die manier waarop geneasing in die Johannes-evangelie uitgebeeld word en die manier waarop dit in die Sinoptici uitgebeeld word.² Uitgedruk in narratologiese terme: In die verhaalwêreld van die Johannes-evangelie vind die leser geen duiwel-uitdrywings, geneasing deur handoplegging of die geneasing van melaatses nie (Hogan 1992:277). John Pilch (2000:119) stel dit treffend:

Terms for healing appear twenty-five times in Luke, seventeen times in Matthew, and eight times in Mark. By contrast, there are only three healing stories in the entire Gospel of John (4:46-54; 5:1-20; 9:1-41). Moreover, none of these healing stories actually underscores Jesus’ reputation. Rather, healing in John reveals Jesus’ true identity, and the focus of the interaction surrounding the healing report rests on controversy with opponents. This controversy is always revealing since it makes even clearer who Jesus really is. The healing event itself fades into the background.³

1. Voorbeelde van ander groeps karakters in die Johannes-evangelie is die dissipels, die “Jode”, die Samaritane, die Grieke en die groep vrouens by die kruis van Jesus.

2. Kyk byvoorbeeld Howard (2001:171).

3. Let daarop dat ’n mens die Lasarusverhaal ook as ’n geneasing sou kon klassifiseer, wat beteken dat daar dan vier geneesingsverhale in die Evangelie is. Pilch (2000:138) verwys ook self na hierdie moontlikheid.

Daar word twee keer in die Johannes-evangelie na die siekes as 'n groeps karakter verwys, naamlik in Johannes 5:2-3 en in 6:2:

Die eerste voorkoms is in die verhaal oor die genesing by die Bad van Betsata⁴ (Johannes 5:1-47). Dié verhaal begin met 'n situering (5:1-5), gevolg deur die genesing (5:6-9), 'n gesprek tussen die "Jode" en die man (5:10-13), 'n kort gesprek tussen Jesus en die man (5:14), die man se terugvoer aan die "Jode" (5:15), en word afgesluit met 'n lang gedeelte waarin vertel word hoe die "Jode" teen Jesus te velde trek oor die feit dat die genesing op die Sabbat plaasgevind het, en hoe Jesus Homself teen hulle verweer (5:16-47). Die verwysing na die siekes as groeps karakter kom dus voor heel aan die begin van die verhaal (in die situering in 5:1-5) en die verteller verwoord dit as volg: ἐν ταύταις κατέκειτο πλῆθος τῶν ἀσθενοῦντων, τυφλῶν, χωλῶν, ξηρῶν. Hierna verskuif die fokus na 'n spesifieke individu in die groep, naamlik die man wat vir 38 jaar lank siek was, en die groep siekes verdwyn van die toneel.

Die tweede verwysing na siekes as 'n groep kom in Johannes 6:2 voor, en wel in die inleidende gedeelte van die verhaal oor die vermeerdering van die brood. In 6:1 word vertel dat Jesus na die oorkant van die See van Galilea gegaan het. In die volgende vers word gesê dat 'n groot klomp mense Hom gevolg het, en die rede wat daarvoor aangegee word, is dat hulle die wondertekens gesien het wat Hy aan die siekes gedoen het: ἤκολούθει δὲ αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς, ὅτι ἐθεώρουν τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίει ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσθενοῦντων. Daarna gaan die situering voort en word vertel dat Jesus die berg opgegaan het en met sy dissipels daar gaan sit het. In die geval van Johannes 6:2 verskyn die siekes dus nie self in die narratiewe wêreld nie, en word daar net op 'n indirekte manier na hulle verwys.

Allereers word gefokus op die *terminologie* wat gebruik word om hierdie groeps karakter te beskryf. In beide gevalle word die begrip ἀσθενοῦντες gebruik, 'n beskrywing van mense wat siek is. Louw en Nida (1988:23.144) plaas die woord in Semantiese Domein 23 ("Physiological processes and states") en vertaal dit as "ill", en in BDAG (ἀσθενέω) word dit verduidelik as "to suffer a debilitating illness, be sick." In Afrikaans kan die begrip dus as "siekies" vertaal word.⁵ In 5:3 word die begrip ἀσθενοῦντες verder gespesifiseer⁶ as τυφλοί, χωλοί, ξηροί,⁷ dit wil sê blindes, kreupeles en lammes.

Hoe word die verwysing na die siekes gewoonlik deur Johannese eksegete hanteer? In die geval van 5:3 is daar feitlik geen belangstelling in die groep as sodanig nie. Die enigste

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4. Wat die naam van die bad betref, volg ek die lesing in Nestle-Aland²⁸: Βηθζαθά. Ander opsies is Βηθεσδά ("Betseda", soos wat dit in die meeste Afrikaanse vertalings vertaal word) en Βηθσαιδα ("Betsaida"). Kyk die volgende vir goeie besprekings van hierdie komplekse teks-kritiese aangeleentheid, en ook vir die manier waarop die res van Johannes 5:2 geïnterpreteer kan word: Barrett (1978:251-253), Brown (1984:207-208) en Thyen (2005:297-298).
5. In Nuwe-Testamentiese navorsing word daar dikwels 'n onderskeid getref tussen "illness" en "disease", en daarmee saam tussen "healing" en "treatment", byvoorbeeld soos wat John Pilch (2000:24-25) doen. In hierdie artikel gebruik ek die Afrikaanse begrip "siekies" as 'n sambreelterm vir alle menslike ervaring van siekte (beide "illness" en "disease"). Die begrip "genesing" word eweneens in hierdie breër sin gebruik – soos wat dit deur Pilch (2000:25) verduidelik word:

Healing is directed towards illness, that is, the attempt to provide personal and social meaning for the life problems created by sickness. Treatment, of course, can be concerned with one of the other aspect of a human problem (disease or illness), and either or both can be successfully treated.

6. So tereg Newman en Nida (1980:145).

7. Sommige manuskripte (byvoorbeeld D a b) voeg παραλυτικοί by, wat Barrett (1978:253) lakonies laat opmerk: "... a good example of the Western text's inability to know when to stop."

aspek wat gewoonlik ter sprake kom, is die desperate situasie waarin sulke mense hulle in die antieke tyd bevind het. Enkele voorbeelde: Thomas Brodie (1993:235) beskryf die toneel as 'n situasie van "swarming suffering", John Christopher Thomas (1995:6) verwys na hulle as "society's abandoned", en John Pilch (2000:128) as "the socially expendable, the unclean 'throw-away' peoples that could be found in every pre-industrial city". In die geval van 6:2 is daar gewoonlik net een aspek wat die aandag van eksegete trek, naamlik verbasing oor die feit dat daar skielik so 'n groot skare in die verhaal verskyn. So argumenteer Ernst Haenchen (1980:300) byvoorbeeld dat hierdie aspek nie logies voortvloei uit die verhaal soos wat dit tot op hierdie punt in die Johannes-evangelie vertel is nie, en stel dan voor dat dit eintlik 'n aspek is wat uit die Sinoptiese tradisie kom waarvolgens 'n wye genesingsbediening deur Jesus in Galilea gereflekteer word – iets wat nie in die Johannes-evangelie uitgebeeld word nie. Hierdie aspek kan ook in narratologiese terme verwoord word, soos wat Steven Hunt (2011:241) doen: "John's narrative forces the reader to assume that Jesus has healed many others in addition to those mentioned in chapter 4 and 5".

Is daar enigiets meer wat vanuit 'n narratologiese raamwerk gesê kan word? Ek dink dat daar drie addisionele sake is wat aandag verg:

Eerstens, as groeps-karakter is die siekes in die Johannes-evangelie 'n voorbeeld van 'n tipe karakter wat "net-net" in die narratiewe wêreld bestaan. Vanuit teoretiese oogpunt kan 'n mens hierdie aspek die beste verduidelik deur gebruik te maak van die werk van die bekende narratoloog, Uri Margolin. In een van sy bydraes oor karakterisering (Margolin 1987:107-124), het hy die aandag gevestig op die minimum voorwaardes waaraan 'n karakter moet voldoen om in die narratiewe wêreld te "bestaan". Hy het vyf sulke voorwaardes geïdentifiseer, naamlik die eksistensiële dimensie (Kan 'n mens die karakter sonder twyfel as 'n individu of as 'n groep in die narratiewe wêreld identifiseer?); intensionele dimensie (Besit die bepaalde karakter 'n karaktereienskap, of, in Engels, "a trait"?⁸); uniekheid (Kan 'n mens die karakter duidelik onderskei van ander karakters in die verhaal?); paradigmatische eenheid in beskrywing (Kan 'n mens die soort karakter wat ter sprake is, identifiseer?) en sintagmatiese kontinuïteit (Tot watter mate is daar sprake van verandering of ontwikkeling in die karakter?). Die siekes voldoen net-net aan hierdie minimum voorwaardes: Wat die eksistensiële dimensie betref: hulle word in die Evangelie as 'n aparte groep geïdentifiseer deur die feit dat hulle as ἄσθενοῦντες beskryf word; wat uniekheid betref: hulle word in die verhaal as 'n aparte groep karakters uitgebeeld en daar bestaan nie 'n moontlikheid dat die leser hulle met ander karakters sal verwar nie; wat die intensionele dimensie betref: hulle beskik oor slegs een karaktereienskap, naamlik die feit dat hulle siek is; wat paradigmatische eenheid in beskrywing betref: hulle is deurgaans karakters wat hulp nodig het en op soek is na genesing; en wat sintagmatiese kontinuïteit betref: hulle behoort tot die groep karakters wat Margolin tipeer as karakters wat geen verandering (zero change) in die verhaal ondergaan nie. Die feit dat hierdie groep karakters net-net in die narratiewe wêreld bestaan, blyk uit die minimale wyse waarop hulle aan al vyf die genoemde voorwaardes voldoen, maar veral uit die feit dat hulle oor slegs een karaktereienskap beskik.

Dat hierdie groeps-karakter net-net in die narratiewe wêreld bestaan, kan ook op 'n ander manier in terme van narratologiese raamwerke aangetoon word. Een van die belangrike aspekte wanneer karakterisering in verhalende tekste ondersoek word, is die *klassifikasie* van

8. Een van die maniere waarop karakterisering in verhalende tekste ondersoek word, is deur karakterisering te verstaan as die stelselmatige opbou van 'n versameling karaktereenskappe ('n sogenaamde "paradigm of traits"): Tydens die leesproses stel die leser vir elke karakter 'n lys van karaktereenskappe saam wat tydens die leesproses aangevul of verander word. Kyk byvoorbeeld Chatman (1978:119-133).

karacters in terme van die verskillende kategorieë van karacters wat 'n mens in sulke tekste kan verwag. Die bekendste hiervan is die tweedeling wat wyd gebruik word, naamlik die onderskeid tussen hoofkaracters en kleiner karacters (die sogenaamde “minor characters”). In terme van hierdie onderskeid kan 'n mens die siekes in die Johannes-evangelie as kleiner karacters klassifiseer. 'n Mens voel egter dadelik aan dat so 'n onderskeid nie werklik sinvol is nie, want dit sou beteken dat hulle in dieselfde kategorie as karacters soos Andreas, Filippus, die Samaritaanse vrou, Lasarus, en so meer, geplaas word – almal karacters wat nie as hoofkaracters geklassifiseer sou kon word nie omdat hulle slegs enkele kere in die narratiewe wêreld hulle verskyning maak, maar wat tog 'n heelwat belangriker rol in die verhaal speel as wat waar is van die siekes. Dit lyk dus beter om van ander klassifikasiesisteme gebruik te maak wat met meer as bloot twee klasse karacters werk. Ek kies drie sulke sisteme en toon telkens aan hoe die siekes in terme van die bepaalde sisteem geklassifiseer sou kon word:

W.J. Harvey (1965:52-57) onderskei tussen verskillende tipe karacters in verhalende tekste deur van 'n kontinuum gebruik te maak. Aan die een kant van die kontinuum plaas hy die protagoniste (die belangrike karacters in die verhaal) en aan die ander kant agtergrondkaracters (wie se enigste rol in die verhaal is om 'n klein rol in die “plot” van die verhaal te vervul). Tussen hierdie twee uiterstes onderskei hy nog twee tipe karacters, naamlik “cards” (karacters wat nie werklik protagoniste in die verhaal is nie, maar wel 'n belangrike rol speel) en “ficelles” (karacters wat meer volledig as die agtergrondkaracters uitgebeeld word, maar nogtans net bestaan om sekere funksies in die verhaal te vervul). In terme van hierdie klassifikasie is dit duidelik dat die siekes in die Johannes-evangelie as agtergrondkaracters geklassifiseer moet word, want hulle word baie skraps gekarakteriseer, en bestaan slegs om 'n agtergrondrol in die verhaal te speel.

Adele Berlin (1983:23-42) gebruik 'n drievoudige sisteem. Sy onderskei tussen karacters wat volledig ontwikkel word (sy noem hulle “full-fledged characters” of dan ook “ronde karacters”), tipes (karacters met enkele karaktereienskappe, gewoonlik beskryf as “plat karacters”), en “functionaries” (karacters wat glad nie gekarakteriseer word nie, maar net bestaan om 'n bepaalde rol of funksie in die verhaal te vervul). In terme van hierdie klassifikasie sal die siekes in die Johannes-evangelie as “functionaries” geklassifiseer moet word.

James Resseguie (2005:122-125) onderskei tussen vyf tipe karacters in verhalende tekste. Hy gebruik die bekende onderskeiding tussen “ronde” en “plat” karacters,⁹ maar voeg nog drie kategorieë by: “stocks”, “foils” en “walk-ons”. Vir die definisie van “walk-ons” maak hy gebruik van Chatman (1978:141) se definisie waarvolgens sulke karacters nie volledig gekarakteriseer word nie, maar in der waarheid deel uitmaak van die agtergrond en situering van die verhaal is. In terme van die kategorieë wat Resseguie onderskei, sal die siekes in die Johannes-evangelie dus gekategoriseer word as “walk-ons”.

Om saam te vat, uit bogenoemde bespreking is dit duidelik dat die siekes in die Johannes-evangelie wel op tegniese vlak as karacters in die verhaal geklassifiseer kan word, maar hulle bestaan net-net binne die verhaalwêreld. Afhangende van die klassifikasiesisteem wat 'n mens gebruik, is hulle “agtergrondfigure”, “functionaries” of “walk-ons”. Dalk is die beste beskrywing om hierdie minimalistiese rol binne die narratiewe wêreld in Afrikaans te beskryf die begrip “randfigure” – die begrip wat ook vir die titel van hierdie artikel gekies is.

9. Die bekende onderskeid tussen “ronde” en “plat” karacters is reeds dekades gelede deur E.M. Forster (1927:67-78) getref, maar word nog steeds wyd gebruik. Vir kritiek op hierdie onderskeiding, kyk Beekman en Fontijn (1971:406-413).

'n Tweede belangrike faset wat verdere ondersoek verg, is die *situering* ("setting") waarbinne die siekes in die Johannes-evangelie geplaas word, want soos Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (1983:66-67) tereg in haar teoretiese raamwerk vir narratologiese analise aandui, speel situering dikwels 'n belangrike rol in die uitbeelding van karakters.

In die geval van Johannes 5:2-3 word die siekes langs die Bad van Betsata geplaas, dus langs 'n groot bad met water. Soos wat John Christopher Thomas (1995:6-7) reeds tereg uitgewys het, is hierdie situering van die siekes langs water baie belangrik, aangesien water tot op hierdie stadium 'n besondere rol in die Johannes-evangelie gespeel het: die doop van Johannes (Johannes 1:25-28, 33; 3:23), die wynwonder waar water in wyn verander word (Johannes 2:1-11), die klem op die noodsaaklikheid van geboorte uit water en Gees (Johannes 3:5), die feit dat Jesus se dissipels mense gedoop het (Johannes 4:2) en die gesprek oor die lewende water tussen Jesus en die Samaritaanse vrou (Johannes 4:19-25). Thomas (1995:6) merk tereg op dat die situering van die siekes langs water daartoe sal lei dat sekere verwagtinge by die leser by voorbaat geprikkel sal word. Myns insiens is daar 'n verdere moment in hierdie situering wat belangrik is, naamlik dat daar moontlik ook 'n moment van ironie in die situering kan wees. As 'n mens in gedagte hou dat water dikwels op simboliese manier in die Johannes-evangelie gebruik word om die oorfloed van die lewe wat deur die Seun van God gebring word, aan te dui, is die skerp kontras tussen die situering langs water en die hooplose toestand waarin hierdie mense hulle bevind, opvallend.

In die geval van Johannes 6:2 (ἡκολούθει δὲ αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς, ὅτι ἐθεώρουν τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἔποιε ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσθενούντων) skep die verteller 'n ander situering: anderkant die See van Galilea, teen 'n berg, waarheen die groot skare vir Jesus gevolg het omdat Hy die siekes genees het. Hierdie situering verwys egter net na die plek waarheen die skare vir Jesus gevolg het, en dui nie die situering aan waar die genesing van die siekes plaasgevind het nie, want volgens die verteller het die genesing van die siekes reeds vroeër in die verhaal plaasgevind. Om die waarheid te sê, presies waar hierdie genesing plaasgevind het, word nie vertel nie; dit moet as een van die "leë plekke"¹⁰ in die teks beskou word wat deur die leser gevul moet word, aangesien dié inligting nêrens anders in die verhaal gegee word nie. Dit kan op meer as een manier gedoen word. 'n Leser sou kon aanvaar dat 'n hele groep genesings op verskillende plekke in Galilea plaasgevind het waarvan nie in die Evangelie vertel word nie. 'n Ander manier om die leë plek te vul, is om te dink aan genesings in sowel Judea as Galilea, en dan te aanvaar dat die twee genesings waarvan wel in die Evangelie vertel word (die genesing van die amptenaar se seun in Kana en die genesing van die verlamde man by die Bad van Betsata) hierby ingesluit word en partes pro toto as voorbeelde dien vir al die genesings wat in 6:2 veronderstel word.¹¹ Enige van hierdie twee opsies is moontlik. Wat egter baie belangrik is om te besef, is dat daar een diskrepansie tussen die vermelding van die siekes in 6:2 en die vermelding van siekes by die genesing by die Bad van Betsata in 5:2-3 is, naamlik dat slegs een van die siekes wat langs die Bad van Betsata gesitueer word, genees is (die verlamde man), en dat die res nie genees is nie. Om dit anders te stel: die siekes wat in 6:2 genoem word en die siekes wat in 5:2-3 genoem word, kan nie dieselfde groep mense wees nie, aangesien die meeste van die siekes wat in 5:2-3 genoem word, nie genees is nie terwyl al die siekes wat in 6:2 genoem word, genees is.

Dit bring my by die derde aspek, naamlik *die manier waarop die teks gelees word en die tipe leser*

10. Kyk Iser (1976:257-355) vir die teoretiese aspekte rondom die vul van "leë plekke" ("Leerstellen") in tekste.

11. Dit is hoe Thyen (2005:335) dit interpreteer.

wat veronderstel word. Die soort lees van die teks wat in die vorige paragraaf beoefen is, kan as 'n lees téén die grein van die teks beskou word. Die bedoeling van die noem van die siekes (as randfigure) in Johannes 5:2-3 was waarskynlik net om 'n situering te skep vir die wonder wat kom. As randfigure moes hulle dadelik weer plek maak vir die verlamde op wie die fokus eintlik val. Dieselfde is waar van die siekes wat in Johannes 6:2 genoem word. Hulle word nie soseer ter wille van hulleself genoem nie, maar is eintlik net daar ter voorbereiding van dit wat volg, naamlik om 'n rede te bied vir die groot skare wat vir Jesus gevolg het. Ook in hulle geval is die bedoeling waarskynlik dat hulle dadelik uit die narratiewe wêreld verdwyn nadat hulle genoem is. Nietemin, die feit dat die begrip ἀσθενοῦντες in albei gevalle gebruik word, kan maak dat 'n leser die twee gedeeltes aan mekaar verbind en probeer om daaruit sin te maak. Dit kan op een van twee maniere gebeur:

'n Leser kan die feit dat die eerste groep ἀσθενοῦντες (met uitsondering van die verlamde man) nie genees is nie, ignoreer, en bloot konsentreer op die tweede groep ἀσθενοῦντες wat genoem word. Dit kan dan gelees word as 'n verdere bevestiging van Jesus se identiteit, en as 'n verwysing na die baie ander wondertekens wat Hy gedoen het waarvan nie in die Johannes-evangelie vertel word nie (vgl. hieroor ook Johannes 20:31).

'n Tweede opsie sou 'n weerstandige lees van die teks wees waarin 'n leser beide verwysings na ἀσθενοῦντες in balans probeer bring, deur nie aan een van die twee groepe ten koste van die ander voorrang te gee nie. So 'n leser sal dan in die geval van Johannes 5:2-3 begin om addisionele vrae te opper wat die leser wat in die vorige paragraaf veronderstel word, nie sou vra nie. Byvoorbeeld, vrae soos: "Wat het gebeur met die siekes by die Bad van Betsata wat nie genees is nie?", "Moes hulle die res van hulle lewens daar langs die bad slyt, sonder enige moontlike heling?" En miskien die belangrikste (ironiese) vraag: "Het hulle, wat langs die water gelê het, toe die Water van die Lewe misgeloop?"

Of is dit 'n geval dat lesers wat sulke tipe vrae vra, verkeerde vrae aan die teks stel? Moet 'n mens dalk vir jouself 'n heeltemal ander tipe leser voorstel? 'n Tipe leser vir wie genesing – die herstel van mobiliteit en sig, en so meer – nie die eintlike belangrike saak is nie. Dalk die tipe leser wat John Pilch (2000:138) in gedagte het as hy as volg skryf:

For persons in John's group whose relatives are ill or who themselves suffer from forms of immobility and blindness, the experience of the living Jesus in midst of the group brings restoration. It is access to the resurrected Messiah of Israel in altered state of consciousness (ASC) that enables results such as those reported in the significant healing interactions of Jesus?

3. SAMEVATTING

Die bedoeling van hierdie kort studie was om 'n gaping in die navorsing oor die narratologiese interpretasie van die Johannes-evangelie te probeer vul. Ek vertrou dat ek hiermee aangetoon het dat dit nie nodig is om die toepassing van narratologiese benaderings te beperk tot die hoof- en kleiner karakters in die Johannes-evangelie nie. Randfigure soos die siekes kan inderdaad ook met sukses vanuit so 'n benadering ondersoek word! In hierdie spesifieke geval is aangetoon hoe die volgende narratologiese fasette met vrug gebruik kan word: klassifikasiesisteme vir karakters, 'n bespreking van die situering van karakters, asook 'n kritiese besinning van die manier waarop lesers sin kan maak van die (skrapse) inligting wat oor sulke karakters gebied word. In die geval van die ander randfigure in die Johannes-evangelie sou 'n

mens dieselfde aspekte kon ondersoek, maar is dit dalk ook moontlik dat ander narratologiese aspekte (byvoorbeeld plot, fokalisasie en tyd) met vrug ondersoek sou kon word.

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Church and agapocracy: The rule of love

ABSTRACT

At the heart of Christian faith and the life of the Church lies the conviction that God is love and that this is the rule by which the Christian community and indeed all of humanity is to be guided and judged. However, responding to the Scriptural witness of love as *agapè* – as practical faithfulness and self-giving to “the other” – is challenging and quite often very problematic. What is involved in “loving the Lord your God”? What is asked of us in the command to “love one’s enemy as oneself”? How is the church called to manifest *agapè* in society? This contemplative essay reflects on these questions, revealing what is at stake in current debates in ecclesiology, ethics and the Christian life where love is claimed to rule.

1. GOD IS LOVE

“God is love.” This phrase from the letter of John is one of the best known texts of the Bible. This is the core of what Christians confess of God: love. And it is within this paradigm that we must develop Christian theology and Christian ethics. Christianity and love belong intrinsically together, so much so that it does not even seem interesting at all to write about it once again.

In this article I will argue that love is problematic. This is crucial, not so much because people speak more easily about love than live it. That too, is well known. It is more about the concept of love as such, and about the fundamental dilemmas we face if we want to implement it. The problematic nature of love is not due to our weakness and lack of love, but rather to the inner conflicts which the concept of love evokes for Christian faith and Christian life. Christian love is not something romantic. Rather, it is hard labour, a struggle on unpaved roads through thorny bush, where we cannot find our way.

2. EROS AND AGAPÈ

The discussion on Christian love has been strongly influenced by Nygren’s famous book *Eros och Agapè* (Nygren, 1930; 1936). The Greek language has two major words for what western languages label as ‘love’. The most common word in Greek is *eros*. In modernity this is almost exclusively related to sexual love, but in classic Greek this is different. It is best rendered with notions like ‘desire’. What is your desire? What are you longing for? Where does your interest lie? What is the object of your love? That might be money, honour, sexual lust, food. It might also be the happiness of your children, the wellbeing of your partner, the highest good that calls for ultimate ethics and thus is the object of ultimate love. Love for the ultimate good is love par excellence. Eros is desire and its fulfilment expresses the identity of the person who loves. Tell me what satisfies you, and I will tell you who you are.

The other word is *agapè*. According to Nygren, *agapè* is not related to desire but to giving. It is love without any self-interest. Only the interest of the other is in focus, and I sacrifice my own

desires and interests on behalf of the other one. It is this love about which the New Testament speaks. *Eros* does not occur once in the New Testament, while *agapè* and related words are used frequently. This is the kind of love that Christian faith is all about.

The influence of Nygren's study has been enormous. Though it has been much contested as well, the framework has been dominant: the opposition of *eros* and *agapè*. Those who do not follow Nygren usually argue that we should not make this opposition absolute. Desire for the good is not wrong. It belongs to true love and relationships. Even the desire for the good of the other one is a desire and its satisfaction is the result of true love. Divine love is also desire. Pope Benedictus argues likewise in his encyclical *Deus est Caritas* (Benedictus XVI, 2005). I think it is right to combine both desire and unselfish giving in love, if we put it into this framework. I can understand Nygren against the background of nineteenth century liberal theology with its focus on self-loving in the development of personhood, but his opposition is too simple and does not take into account that self-sacrifice can also be used to call young boys to the battlefields of Verdun on behalf of the fatherland (cf. Van de Beek, 2006).

3. THE CHOICE OF THE TRANSLATORS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The word *agapan* is very rare in Greek. Nevertheless, the translators of the Old Testament opted for it. It is generally agreed that there are two reasons why they did so. The first is the similarity in sound with the Hebrew 'ahab, the Hebrew word for love.¹ The main reason however will be its meaning. *Agapè* has no specific meaning in Greek (Stauffer 1964:38; Wallis 1973:110). It is a low level word of practical life. It is not a word that calls on deep emotions like *eros* or higher feelings as the other Greek word for love, *philia*, does. "In the word *agapan* the Greek finds nothing of the power or magic of *eros* and little of the warmth of *philein*" (Stauffer, 1964:38).

By choosing this word, the translators of the Old Testament contributed a different approach to Greek thought on love: its focus is not on feelings, either of desire or of intimacy and friendship, but on concrete actions. It is this meaning that made *agapè* the fitting word for love according to the Old Testament. Love is first of all keeping to the rules you have to obey. Other aspects are not excluded, but they are not the core of love. A covenant can be made because the participants like each other (e.g. 1 Sam. 20:16v; 23:18), but the implementation of the covenant is first of all that they keep to its agreements and clauses (2 Sam. 21:7). God's love for Israel is that He keeps to the covenant and He requires the same from his people. Even in the case of love between partners in marriage, it is not only about feelings, but even more on being faithful and trustworthy. 'Der Ausdruck 'ahb und dessen Ableitungen weisen im AT eine auffällig pragmatischen Zug auf. Liebe setzt nicht nur reine konkrete innere Disposition voraus, die durch Erfahrungen oder Erlebnisse aufgebaut wird, sondern sie schliesst von sich aus ein bewusstes Handeln um des geliebten Menschen oder der bevorzugten Sache willen ein. In diesem Sinne ist Liebe schliesslich soziologisch, ja sogar sozial-ethisch bestimmt' (Wallis, 1973:112).

1. One could imagine that the word *agapè* is borrowed in Greek from Semitic 'ahab because Phoenician merchants used the word. It thereby became a word in those circles and not of literature and philosophy. This is, however, not plausible, because the root 'ahab is hardly present in Semitic languages other than Hebrew. So it might be considered as a specific semantic field for expressing righteous relations in the sphere of the religion that is embedded in that tradition in Israel which is represented in present canonical literature, and its "etymology is obscure" (Stauffer, 1964:21). It might even be that the word entered the Greek from the Jewish diaspora, because Jews preferred a Hebraism for expressing their opinion about love rather than using a Greek word with a different character. This would fit the late occurrence of *agapè* in Greek texts (Stauffer, 1964:37f).

God is love and the God of Israel should be loved. The core text about loving God, the *shema*: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Dt. 6:5) is not about feelings and desires, but about commandments; not as an arbitrary law but as the rule for good living. It has to do with your acting in obedience to God’s directions for life. It does not ask: “Do you have deep feelings for me or are you longing for me?”, but: “Can I trust you? Are you, as a servant, obedient to the commands and do you keep to the agreement we made?” *Agapan* is about concrete actions in obedience to the law: “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?” (Dt. 10:12f; cf. 11:1, 13, 22; 30:16,20). This is the way we must deal with other people also, not only with our friends, but also with foreigners: “He loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing” (Dt. 10:18).

The New Testament adhered to the language of the canonical books of the Septuagint. It does not use *eros* once, probably because of the increasingly sexual connotations of lust in the word. *Philein* occurs sometimes, especially if it is about friendship, for instance of Jesus and Lazarus (Jn 11:3). The normal word is *agapè*.² Do you keep to what is expected of you? Are you trustworthy? In the New Testament too, love is focused more on actions than on feelings.³ *Agapè* is the core of Christian life and its basis is not that we have good feelings about others, but that we keep to the commandments. *Philein* is even used in this meaning by Jesus himself: “You are my friends if you do what I command.” That is not the way we usually speak about friendship. If my friend should say: “You are my friend if you do what I command” I would not feel this to be the highest expression of friendship. I would rather prefer the classic connotations of *philia*. But this is the way Christian love is structured.⁴ *Philia* must be interpreted from the basic meaning of *agapè* and not *agapè* from the understanding of classic *philia*. And if it is about *philein*, then it is about the verb, about action, and not about the substantive *philia*. The latter occurs only once in the New Testament – and there in a negative connotation: friendship of the world (Jm 4:4).⁵

2. The root *phil-* occurs 55 times, while *agapa-* is 321 times present.

3. You can see this e.g. in the chain: godliness, brotherly kindness (*philadelphia*), love (*agapè*) in 2 Peter 1:7. *Agapè* is the apex of Christian life.

4. The meaning of *pistis* is similar to this. Though the word is often translated by ‘faith’ it is better rendered by ‘faithfulness’. A characteristic verse is Romans 1:17: “For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed – a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’” It is a core text in the Lutheran tradition and in Protestantism as a whole: Christians are not saved by works but by faith. We should, however, relate verse 17 to verse 4: “who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.” Christ is risen from death because He was faithful, keeping to the commandments of the Father, obedient to death (Php. 2:9) and He is the righteous one who lives by his faithfulness (*pistis*). This is a congenial reference to Habakkuk 2:4 and not at all against Luther’s drive, but rather even more in line with him: it is not our own faith that saves us, but only Jesus’ faithfulness. See also Theron, 2010.

5. I will not enter here into the debate about *agapan* and *philein* in John 21:15-17. Though it is not tenable that both words cannot be used synonymously, and John often prefers using synonyms I agree with McKay... that the meaning of words must be derived of their use in the context. “Like” and “love” in English can be used as synonyms, but these words keep their own colour and, when used together, we must see whether synonymy is probable or distinctive. In the case of John 21 there might be arguments for distinction, but even then the question is: “Which distinction?” See Ray 2002: 392f.

4. DEUTERONOMY

Love is problematic. The *shema* says: "Love the Lord your God" (Dt. 6:5). That is the love to which Israel is called. It sounds, almost obviously, just like: "and your neighbour as yourself", as Jesus continued (Mt. 22:39) with reference to another verse of the torah (Lv. 19:16). This also includes the foreigners (Lv. 19:34). However, after the *shema* in Deuteronomy 6, follows Deuteronomy 7. This chapter orders Israel to totally annihilate all the people in the land of Canaan, all men, women and children – even to erase any memory of their culture. It is an order for absolute genocide, without any exception. It commands a total destruction of people and their culture. So doing, Israel will demonstrate its love to God.⁶ You are my friends if you will do my commandments. Tell me who your friends are, and I will tell who you are.

Only in the fulfilment of the Old Testament in Christ can we understand its meaning. Without Christ it is not only an incomprehensible mystery, but also a curse for all people – certainly not a blessing as God promised in Genesis (12:3). The Good Shepherd gives his life for his sheep (Jn 10:11). He died on behalf of them – also for the sheep that did not belong to the stable of Israel (Jn 10:16). It is only in the death of Christ on behalf of humanity that we can understand the *shema* and its subsequent chapter – and all chapters of the Old Testament.⁷

Therefore, we can only think about love in the remembrance of the death of Christ. Jesus encounters Peter after his denial at a meal (Jn 21:11-14). It is only at the Eucharist that we will understand such love, where the fish (*ichthus*) is eaten: Jesus, who gives himself as a source of eternal life. Without Christ, biblical love is a dark mystery. At the Eucharist it becomes the mystery of faithfulness unto the very end – as it was Jesus who loved his own until the very end. It is the love of Him who gave Himself when we were enemies (Rm. 5:10). Love is based on the love of God, who, "if we are faithless, remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself" (2 Tim. 2:13).

5. LOVE FOR THE ENEMIES

Now we come to another hard aspect of Christian love: you must love your enemies (Mt. 5:44; 6:27, 35). If it is about romantic love or friendship this would be a square circle – an utopian ideal, which is so idealistic that it can only be eschatological in a future sense – and thus not relevant for now. Love has to do with being trustworthy. Can your enemy trust you in the market place? Can he trust you just the same as your friend can trust you? And as much as you want to trust another person? Love your enemies. Can your enemies trust you in negotiations? Can your enemy trust you in the way you speak about him or her to your friends? Do you give correct information? Is your judgment well-balanced?

These are not questions for a future utopia of straw-eating lions, but for concrete social and political life. Do you abstain from prejudices toward your enemies and do you earnestly attempt to get to know them personally?

6. The connection in the Hebrew Bible is even stronger than in the chapter arrangement of modern Bibles.

The Masoretic text keeps 6:4-7:11 together in one *sefer*; not even interrupted by a *petochah*. It is thus read in one and the same lecture. By the strong break, even of a *parash*, after 7:11 the beginning of the present chapter 7 gets emphasis with its apex in 7:11 as a conclusion of the commandments about the extinction of the people in Canaan.

7. See about this topic extensively Van de Beek, 2002, esp. pp. 321-397.

“Love your enemies” is not about fine feelings for them, but about doing right by them and speaking truthfully about them. That implies sincere enquiry, and fathoming what is really at stake. For that reason, loving your enemies is much more difficult than loving your friends. This is not because your feelings for your friends are positive and those for your enemies negative. It is because it is so hard to understand your enemy. You can speak to your friends, listen to their answers and ask again and again, from heart to heart. You can understand your friends. But how do you understand your enemies? States send spies to enemies in order to understand them. That is not love, for the understanding is not used for faithfulness toward the enemies, but in order to overcome them. Love tries to understand the enemy, in order to deal with him openly.

“You have heard that it was said: ‘Love your neighbour – the people of your own community – and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies” (Mt. 5:43f). Most people interpret this last phrase independently: “Love your enemies.” Then it means: “We must try to do so as much as possible, but we know it is difficult.” However, we should keep the couple together: love and hate. In biblical language that is a fixed couple, which is not about absolute love and hate, but about preference. For instance, a man who has two wives is not allowed to give more to the one he likes most, and to her children. He must give equally to both, and to their children as well (Dt. 21:15f). He does not hate the less preferred wife, but just likes the other one more. Or in the example of Jesus: “No one can serve two masters. He will hate the one and love the other” (Mt. 6:24). Love in this coupling thus implies preference.⁸ Now we come again to the saying: “It was said: ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’” You must prefer your kinsmen before your enemies. “Of course,” we would say. However, Jesus says: “No, prefer your enemies. Invest more in them. Try to understand them and deal correctly with them. In your life, you should give this preference.” That is even more important than giving offerings in the temple (Mt. 5:24).

If we consider how difficult it is to understand friends, brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, children and partners, then we must conclude that this command is an enormous challenge, much more than an utopian ideal of emotional love for the enemies can ever be.⁹ We must notice that even in the New Testament letters, this claim is already softened: “Let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Gal. 6:10). The family deserves preference. So we are back to: “Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.” However, the latter verse is an exception. The normal implication of love is that you consider others higher than yourself (Php. 2:3). The other one has priority, even if that other one is your enemy.

It is this practical Christian love that conquered the Roman Empire. The characteristic of Christians was not that they were good friends in the same social sphere. In that case they would not have differed from the Hellenistic stoic elite. But they gave priority to those who were not of their own kind: the poor, the strangers, the orphans, the lepers. They built an organization for the care of widows. They did not kill, not even an enemy in war. Without boasting, the church fathers of the second century could claim that Christian life made a real difference in the Hellenistic world. And people knew this, and so the Christian community grew.¹⁰ When the emperor Julian, after the Constantinian turn, wanted to go back to paganism,

8. One should also take the continuation of Jesus’ argument into account: a master can claim everything from his slave and it is impossible to have two absolute claims.

9. Also in Hos. 6:6 love and knowledge are considered as parallels.

10. Justinus, *Apologia* I,14; Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis* 11; 32-35; *Ad Diognetum* 5v; Origenes, *Contra Celsum* III,29.

he was convinced that this could only be successful if they would also organize care for orphans and widows (Bowersock, 1978:87v; Aalders, 1983:111-113). Practical Christian *agapè* had overcome stoic *philia*.

6. A GOVERNMENT OF AGAPÈ

It would be a blessing if this kind of social life was not restricted to the Christian community, but shaped the face of society as a whole. This is what I call “agapocracy”: that the rule of societal life be *agapè*: practical love, with people who can be trusted and are faithful. We can say that Christianity made a real impact on societal structures and behaviour, and it is not necessary to repeat this statement. Even in spite of many bad things both in the church and in Christendom, there is indeed a spin-off from Christian ethics that influenced societies where Christians were substantially active, and even the world society as a whole.

From the perspective of a Christian theology of ethics we must, however, ask: is our society based on *agapè*? Is this its leading principle? That is what makes the difference. This can be applied both to the interrelations of citizens and to the government. It is not important how the government is elected and which political system we have. I think Calvin’s reflections on this point are still true (*Institutes* IV,20,8): an absolute monarchy will usually not be the best system, for little human beings must always be corrected by other people. A plural government will be better. However, a people’s democracy can also be a risk, for politics is complicated, and people can easily be deceived by opportunistic leaders. The notorious example is Hitler who was democratically chosen by the majority of the German people – and I note similar populist results of elections in European countries nowadays, though fortunately not with a similar impact. It is not the question *who* decides, but *what* is decided. Christians should focus on that. The church should not judge a government on its democratic character, but on its “agapocratic” character. For the question is not whether it listens to the majority of the people (which can be very oppressive, aggressive and egoistic) but whether it is doing good to all people. Leaders cannot justify themselves by being chosen *by* the people, but only if they rule *for* the people.

Christians can and must judge the government, and society at large, according to the rule of love – the practical love of *agapè*. And if you focus on politics and societal organization, should you not be actively involved in it? Should Christians not be involved in societal and political changes so that love can be the rule of life? This question has been positively answered since the time of Constantine. Indeed, the role of Christians in South Africa in the transition of 1994 is exemplary – just as the role of Christians was exemplary in the *denial* of the rule of love, whereby all the characteristics of love, that 1 Corinthians 13 sums up, were reversed.

Nevertheless, there remains an uneasiness for which I do not have an answer. As often happens in critical scholarly work, we end up with more questions than answers. This uneasiness was already manifest in early Christianity, represented both in the New Testament and ante-Constantinian church fathers. The most explicit examples are to be found in Tertullian and Origen, but it is generally present in writings from the first to the third century. Tertullian says: “We have no pressing inducement to take part in your public meetings; nor is there anything more entirely foreign to us than affairs of state.”¹¹ Origen shares his opinion.¹² Christians should

11. *Apologia* 38.

12. Origenes, *Contra Celsum* VIII,75.

not participate in government and political affairs. Why not? It is because politics have to do with power – ultimately with the power to kill. As the government is authorized to issue each police officer with a firearm, so, too, it is authorized to have tanks and strike fighters. At the very moment you participate in this system, you become responsible for the death of people – for as Paul says: the government does not bear the sword for nothing (Rm. 13:4). Tertullian and Origen were very resolute: keep your hands off this system. You can and must pray for the government, but you should not participate in its practice.¹³ Paul also writes in this vein (1 Tim. 2:2; Eph. 5:11), and so it is written in the Roman church law at the beginning of the third century: no soldier can become a Christian unless he gives up his job.¹⁴ On the other hand, however, what if someone attacks me to hijack my car and threatens my life? What if I see a man torturing a child and I have a stout stick in my hand? What if terrorist groups kill people in a market place? Is it not the rule of love to defend the victims? Should we not do something against individual criminals and oppressing regimes? Should we not participate in the government precisely in order to prevent it from becoming oppressive? And should we not give our energy to build such a society that people are not so desperate that they hijack cars or torture children? Certainly, we will not create a perfect society, but should we, being in this world, not do the next best thing? That is what Christian ethics, since the days of Bonhoeffer and Barth, since Beyers Naudé and Desmond Tutu, have proclaimed.

There are presently two mainstreams in Christian ethics. One supports a consolidation of dominant power. People should be obedient to the government and the government guarantees traditional Christian values. In the South African perspective, it may seem that this was the option in the past. However, in the USA for instance, it is alive and kicking, with the American flag in almost every church. Indeed, even theology in South Africa is continuously at risk to turn back to the old tradition of providing the present political system with a theological underpinning.

The other stream is critical of this. That does not necessarily mean revolutionary action, but rather a continuous reminding of the government of its proper responsibility to the people. It is the prophetic approach as it has been developed since the time of Barmen and was taken over by leading South African theologians since the sixties of the twentieth century.

If I must choose between these two options my choice is for the latter. It gives voice to the oppressed. It reveals evil systems and structures. It is critical just as early Christianity was critical of the powers of the beast, not only in the book of Revelation, but also by the very theologians I mentioned: Tertullian, Origen, and before them Ignatius and Justin. I find it a shame that Eusebius, in the beginning of the fourth century, changed his history of martyrdom into a prologue of the imperial power of Constantine.¹⁵

So here is no debate for me on this. Yet the uneasiness wells up from the more radical aspects of early Christianity – and radical voices of today as well.¹⁶ We can opt for a prophetic voice and for a contribution of Christians to a society of love. My worry, however, is that love is too easily replaced by rights. It really makes a difference if we see the other one as a person for whom we

13. Origenes, *Contra Celsum* VIII,73f.

14. *Traditio Apostolica* 16 (Sources Chrétiennes 11bis: 72).

15. Eusebius was writing a work on the history on Christian martyrdom when the Constantinian turn happened. He then changed the perspective of the same material: the history of the martyrs became merely the prologue of the glorious empire of Constantine.

16. See esp. the work of Hauerwas (Hauerwas, 1995; 2000; Hauerwas & Willimon, 1989; 1996)

must be trustworthy or from whom we claim our right. In the first case the other one is in focus, in the latter we are in the centre.¹⁷ In that case we are back in ancient Rome – and Roman law is still dominant in today's judicial systems of individual rights and possession of property.¹⁸ Even the will to defend a threatened people leads all too easily to a so-called just war, for who defines what is 'just' other than the one who begins the war? Should we not be more radical, something of which Stanley Hauerwas never tires? He tells the story of the American soldier who refused the execution of a Vietnamese, though the latter was a murderer, but who was just a boy (Hauerwas, 1995:2). At the very moment you see an individual not as one of a class, but as a human being, he or she calls for *agapè* – even to such an extent, says Jesus, that he or she enjoys priority with me. Tertullian tells the story of a young Christian who, while being a soldier, was converted and no longer accepted anything from the army, not even the crown of victory of his company. "I am a Christian" is his only argument. "For," says Tertullian, "is the laurel of the triumph made of leaves, or of corpses? Is it adorned with ribbons, or with tombs? Is it bedewed with ointments, or with the tears of wives and mothers?" And he continues: "also among the barbarians is Christ."¹⁹

The only political system that is right, according to the Christian faith, is *agapocracy*. But can you exact agapocracy by force – as governments are prone to do? For ultimately, force is the power of the bullet! Should the church be involved in political change for a better society? The 1989-1994 transitions were relatively peaceful, but what about Bosnia, Libya, Syria? What would happen if the Russian and the Chinese people claim democratic freedom? Should we not choose the other track? Should the church not go its own way as an alternative community, as Hauerwas says, precisely because we are responsible for human beings, also for Vietnamese human beings? Everywhere in the church I see people who make their decisions based on fear and power. Both are closely related. The powerless claim power and call for empowerment. The powerful are continuously in fear of losing power and possessions.

However, love is not a good feeling: it is *agapè*: very concrete faithfulness. Should not the church at least be a place of agapocracy? An agapocratic alternative community – with at its centre the meal where we remember the death of Him who loved the world? Agapocracy comes at the expense of power, of self-saving, of rights, of possessions. It is sacrifice, if need be even unto death, because the other one has priority. The church father Ignatius is grateful that he is allowed to bring this sacrifice. "Do not plea for me to get me free."²⁰ For the sacrifice of love is ultimately the sacrifice for God who is love – or even more: it is the sacrifice whereby Christ through the members of his body sacrifices Himself for the world.

That is my dilemma: the prophets or the martyrs? Isaiah or Ignatius? Amos or Tertullian? My natural tendency is to opt for the prophets. But I feel this has to do with fear of losing what I have or the desire to gain what I want. Between the prophets and the martyrs is Jesus and Him

17. Dr. H. Bosman (Stellenbosch) directed my attention to the Song of Songs where it is also the other one who is important in love: it is not my grasping of the other's body but the glory of his and her beauty that evokes the songs. He gave also other hints for this article that I gratefully accepted.

18. The implications of individualism in Roman law were painfully displayed in a court case in the Netherlands, where the legal system is based on Roman law. Two boys tried to hold up a hotel but they were taken by surprise by the police. They fled on a scooter and ran over a man who died. Nevertheless, in court they were successfully pleaded free because it was not certain which of the two was driving the scooter, and therefore guilty. .

19. *De corona* 12.

20. Ignatius, *Ad Romanos* 2-5.

crucified. And that act of love, concrete *agapè*, turns my life upside down. Once again: what to do when I see a man torturing a child and I have a stout stick in my hand? What to say about the office of untrustworthy ministers? I have no response to Jesus' reaction to untrustworthy Peter: "Feed my lambs" (Jn 21:15). Is any *agapè* to people like him not a betrayal of the little ones? Christian love – who knows how to deal with it?

Consequently, any Christian is in the position of Paul who writes: "If I want to do good, evil is right there with me" (Rom. 7:21). If we liberate this verse from its egocentric psychological interpretation and see it as the condition of Christians in the world, we notice the dilemma wherein Christians are. I cannot finish this essay with solid solutions for the problem I encountered. Rather, I problematized situations where fixed ideas seemingly provided a solid ground. However, this course of reasoning is more productive for scholarly work than the other way around – and more fruitful for living as well.

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Cognitive transformation and spiritual growth: The matrix for discerning the wisdom of God (An exploration in Pauline discernment: part 2)¹

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on cognitive transformation and spiritual growth as fundamentals for the discernment of divine wisdom. This is the second part of two articles that explore Pauline discernment, specifically with reference to 1 Corinthians 2. For Paul, “being spiritual” encompasses a new way of thinking which is imperative for the discernment of the wisdom of God. It is only here, in 1 Corinthians 2, that Paul discusses the cognition of divine wisdom so comprehensively. In order for his readers to understand the “discernment of divine wisdom” he compares the spiritual person (πνευματικὸς), firstly, with the person who lives on an entirely human level (ψυχικὸς, 1 Cor 2:14-16); he does this in order to point out the radical cognitive differences between these two opposites. Secondly, he compares the spiritual person with the person moved by entirely human drives (σαρκικὸς, 1 Cor 3:1-3) to point out that the discernment of divine wisdom also relates to spiritual growth, which becomes perceptible in a person’s conduct.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1 Corinthians 2, the apostle Paul speaks about the wisdom of God – a wisdom that can only be discerned and comprehended by those who are spiritual (πνευματικοί). This wisdom is a divine wisdom, and a wisdom that Paul contrasts with human wisdom.² The Spirit of God has revealed it only to those who are spiritual (2:14-15). To date, little research has been undertaken on this text (1 Cor 2:14-3:3) and how it can contribute to a better understanding of the cognition of spiritual people in their discernment of the wisdom of God.³ This research focuses on the cognitive transformation and spiritual growth that Paul had in mind when he writes about the discernment of the wisdom of God.

1. This article is the second article on “an exploration in Pauline discernment”. The title of the first article is “Spiritual discernment according to 1 Corinthians 2: the Spirit and discerning the wisdom of God” which was published in DEEL 53, SUPPLEMENTUM 3, 2012. That article endeavoured to point out the relatedness and coherence of the different components that are involved in the process of discerning the wisdom of God (as explained in 1 Cor 2 by Paul). In that article, I also explained how Paul understood the process of spiritual discernment. The relatedness between the two articles is that in this article I have tried to point why Paul emphasises that only “spiritual persons” (πνευματικοί) can really discern the wisdom of God.

2. Pratt 2000:33; cf. Polhill 1983:329; Grindheim 2002:693.

3. See Francis, J. 1980. As babes in Christ. *JSNT* 7:41-60. Toussaint, S.D. 1968. The Spiritual man. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 125:139-146. I am also aware that Campus Crusade for Christ has used the three types of persons reflected in this text (1 Cor 2:14-3:3) as a framework around which they have built their discipleship programme (see their teaching on “How to be filled with the Holy Spirit” in the document of *Five steps of Spiritual Growth*).

In literary terms, this passage clearly consists of two subsections: 2:14-16 and 3:1-4 in which he compares the *πνευματικοί* with the *ψυχικοί* and the *σαρκικοί*. In the first subsection, Paul compares the *natural person* (*ψυχικός*) with the *spiritual person* (*πνευματικός*). In 2:14 he describes the *natural person* and, in 2:15-16, he describes the *spiritual person*.⁴ He uses the dichotomy between *ἄνθρωπος* and *πνευματικός* to emphasise the radical differences between the two in terms of identity.⁵ In the second subsection (3:1-3) another comparison is found, between the *spiritual person* and the *fleshly person*, which enables Paul to point out also that discernment of the wisdom of God also relates to spiritual growth which becomes sensible in a person's conduct (3:3-4).⁶ The three adjectives, *ψυχικός* (2:14), *σάρκινος* (3:1), and *σαρκικός* (3:3), all draw their semantic nuances from their mutual interaction with one another within a single semantic field in which the term of major contrast to all three is *πνευματικός*, *spiritual or pertaining to the Spirit* (Thiselton 2000:292).

But it must be borne in mind that, in this text, Paul refers explicitly to two extreme opposite groups: *natural people*⁷ and *spiritual people*. The third group, *fleshly people*, is more closely related (3:1) to the *spiritual people*.⁸ This group cannot be positioned, as in a continuum, between the first two opposites mentioned, although Paul clearly distinguishes them from and compares them with the spiritual group (3:1).

Paul's comparison of the natural person (*ψυχικός*) with the *spiritual person* (*πνευματικός*) will now be discussed; after this, I will discuss Paul's comparison between the *spiritual person* and the *fleshly person*.

2. RENEWAL OF THE MIND: A MATRIX FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF THE WISDOM OF GOD (2:14-16)

1 Corinthians 2 is saturated with semantic related verbs (*καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη, οἶδα* [3x], *κρίνω, συγκρίνω, ἀνακρίνω* [3x], *γνῶναι, ἔγνω, γινώσκω* [3x]) and a noun (*νοῦν*) about reasoning and the intellect of the mind. For Paul, the renewal of the mind is crucial for the discernment of the wisdom of God. In order to explain this, Paul contrasts the mind of the spiritual man with the mind of the natural man. Paul uses two adjectives to describe these people: the one in an attributive sense and the other in a substantive sense. In 2:14 the adjective serves an attributive function, attributing a quality to its head noun: *ψυχικός δὲ ἄνθρωπος*. In 2:15, the adjective functions as a substantive (like a noun). In this case the adjective is used without a head noun.⁹ The adjective is here accompanied by the article *ὁ* in the phrase *ὁ δὲ πνευματικός* and functions as a noun. In verses 2:14-16,¹⁰ Paul focuses on the

4. More characteristics are mentioned in the entire pericope: from 2:6 – 3:4.

5. See footnote 10 in connection with 2:14-15.

6. The adversative particle *ἀλλά* (but) with the negation *οὐκ* (*οὐκ ... ἀλλά*, 2:13, 2:1-2) introduce antithetical statements. This particle carries here its effect as an intensifier, which is best translated as “indeed” (Thiselton 2000:291). The uses of the negation, *οὐ δύναται* (4x in 2:14 and 3:1-2), also emphasise the contrasts. The emphatic negation *οὐ δύναμαι*, strengthen the contrast between these three groups of people. Thus, this whole text is about contrasts and comparisons.

7. In the rest of the article the plural will be used where necessary to eliminate gender issues.

8. I disagree with Toussaint (1968:140) that four types of people can be distinguished in 1 Corinthians 2:14 - 3:4 - the natural man, the spiritual man, the infant Christian, and the carnal Christian. In this article, I shall point out that the “infant” and “carnal” Christians refer to the same type of Christian.

9. http://greek-language.com/gram_mar/05.html

10. In the previous subsection (2.2), it has already been pointed out that the selected text for this

two most diverse cognitive responses to the divine revelation mediated through the Spirit of God. From these verses it seems evident that, for Paul, there are those who did not accept this revelation. He refers to these people as *οἱ ψυχικοί*. In contrast with these people are the *πνευματικοί*, people who accepted the revelation.

Because Paul wants to focus on the discernment of the wisdom of God, he describes the perception of the spiritual person in far more detail than he does the perception of those who could not discern this wisdom. The following are the characteristics of the spiritual man, who is the opposite of those who are without the Spirit:

3.1 ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος	3.2 πνευματικός
<p>^{2:12} Now we have received not the spirit of the world,</p>	<p>¹²...but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.</p>
<p>¹⁴ Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them,</p>	<p>¹³...but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.</p>
<p>¹⁴...and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.</p>	<p>¹⁵ Those who are spiritual discern all things,</p>
	<p>¹⁵...and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.</p>
	<p>¹⁶... But we have the mind of Christ</p>

The table above (2:12-3:2) shows how Paul characterises both the spiritual man in comparison with the man without the Spirit. This comparison focuses on the cognitive level. The chain of thought here is progressively as follows: those who are natural have the spirit of the world. *Because they do not have the Spirit that is from God > they do not receive the gifts of this Spirit > it is foolishness to them > therefore they cannot understand them.* The mature (2:6), those who are spiritual, *receive the Spirit in order to understand divine gifts > are taught by Spirit > discern all things > are subject to no one else's scrutiny > have the mind of Christ.*

In 1 Corinthians 2:14, Paul introduces the reader to the so-called natural man and communicates the following about this person:

Firstly, this person has no relationship with God: the *ψυχικός*¹¹ *ἄνθρωπος* is a reference to the physical existence that is dependent on human abilities without the aid and illuminating work of the Spirit (cf. Toussaint 1968:140; Schweizer 1979:663; Garland 2003:100). By this adjective Paul is referring to an unbeliever, a person who has no relationship with Jesus Christ (Toussaint 1968:139f; Kistemaker & Hendriksen 2001:91; Pratt 2000:37). This person lives at a totally human level (cf. Garland 2003:101). The natural person's failure is not only moral, but also

investigation (2:13b-3:4) can be subdivided into two smaller units (2:13b-16 and 3:1-4).
 11. This adjective occurs also in four other places in the New Testament: I Cor. 15:44 (twice); 46; James 3:15; Jude 19. In 1 Corinthians it refers to the physical human body. In James it is translated as "unspiritual" and related with earthly and devilish wisdom. Also in Jude it has a negative meaning and has been translated as "worldly people" and related to those who set up divisions and those who do not have the Spirit.

epistemological. Those who are spiritual and those who are natural therefore belong to two different worlds. They exist in not only separate, but also antithetical “universes of discourse”; in fact, there is no epistemological contact between them (Gaffin 1995:110f). This proves that there is a radical difference between these two people.¹²

Secondly, this person does not receive the things that come from and relate to the Spirit of God. The verb translated “receive” (2:14, δέχομαι) can also mean “welcome”¹³ or even “accept” (Kistemaker & Hendriksen 2001:91). The natural person fails to accommodate spiritual truths in his life; they are also somewhat repellent to him. Having made this assertion (about the person without the Spirit), Paul explains why this is the case, which is evident in the following aspects.

Thirdly, the natural person considers spiritual things to be foolishness. He is incapable of understanding the revelation and teaching of the Spirit.¹⁴ Paul’s point is that natural reason and intuition are completely unable to receive the divine realities unaided¹⁵ (cf. Garland 2003:101). As Grindheim (2002:697) observes, the “appropriation of divine wisdom requires a special ability. Natural human beings lack this ability (2:14), which is an exclusive attribute of the Spirit of God (2:11b).”

Fourthly, “he is unable to understand (γινώσκω) the things of the Spirit because they are spiritually discerned” (ἀνακρίνω). The verb *discerned* is quite significant here. It points to a continual process of evaluating the spiritual context in which someone lives. The passive voice used here denotes the fact that believers are guided by the Spirit of God, which enables them to test the spirits to ascertain whether they come from God (compare I John 4:1). Because they are submissive to God, Christian believers should judge all things spiritually (Kistemaker & Hendriksen 2001:92).

If a distinction is to be made between γινώσκω (to know),¹⁶ as used here and οἶδα (know),¹⁷ then γινώσκω is not merely perceiving things, but “embracing things as they really are”. Thus,

12. The radicalness is also complemented by Paul’s use of the dichotomy of ψυχικός δὲ ἄνθρωπος and τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ in the same verse. The negation, οὐ δέχεται, strengthens this even further.

13. See Louw and Nida 57.125 (receive) and 34.53 (welcome); Swanson 1997:#1312; Thomas (1998:#1209) “to receive: accept (2), accepted (3), receive (16), received (12), receives (15), take (3), taken (1), too (1), welcome (2), welcomed (1)”. According to Danker (2000:221) it means “to receive something offered or transmitted by another, *take, receive*”.

14. According to Kistemaker & Hendriksen (2001:92) the translation *to not accept* is the same as *to reject*. The repudiation of the things of the Spirit of God by the fleshly person is because he does not understand them and nor does he desire them. He accepts only the things of the world. This action becomes clearer in the next characteristic of this person.

15. Gaffin (1995:114) cites Calvin’s biting comments: “Faced with God’s revelation, the unbeliever is like an ass at a concert.” The ass is completely uninterested in the music and disturbs the concert with an irritating commotion. For example, some of the Epicurean and Stoic (cf. Garland 2003:101) considered “Paul a ‘babblers’ (Acts 17:18) and mocked at his preaching of the resurrection (17:32). Gallio regarded the dispute between Paul and the Jews as silly talk (Acts 18:15), and Festus thought Paul to be mad (Acts 26:24).”

16. “To arrive at a knowledge of someone or something, *know, know about, make acquaintance of*; to acquire information through some means, *learn (of), ascertain, find out*; to grasp the significance or meaning of something, *understand, comprehend*; to be aware of something, *perceive, notice, realize*; to have come to the knowledge of, *have come to know, know*” (Danker 2000:199).

17. “to have information about, *know*; be intimately acquainted with or stand in a close relation to, *know*; to know/understand how, *can, be able*; to grasp the meaning of something, *understand, recognize, come to know, experience* to remember, *recollect, recall, be aware of*” (Danker 2000:694f).

natural persons neither welcome nor embrace the realities found in the biblical text because they are “discerned” (ἀνακρίνω), that is, they are investigated and appraised to have a certain value by people who are aided by the (Kaiser 1981:318) illuminating work of the Spirit.

But it has to be borne in mind that those without the Spirit certainly can know (οἶδα) in the sense that they can understand spiritual truths (cf. Pratt 2000:37). Paul is not explaining the matter of the ability of unsaved people to understand spiritual things. Instead, he is describing the inability of these people to interact with the things of the Spirit of God. The word that Paul employs here (γινώσκω) does not simply mean “to know about”: it infers some form of recognition and acknowledgment. The word is used in this sense several times in the New Testament.¹⁸ While those who are natural (ψυχικοί) may understand doctrine, they cannot interact with spiritual things. There is an explicit reason for this. The apostle states: “Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Because those who are natural do not possess the Spirit, they cannot interact with spiritual realities. They are spiritually dead and insensitive (Toussaint 1968:141).

Opposite to the “natural man” (ψυχικός), according to Paul, is the “spiritual man” (πνευματικός).¹⁹ By this term the apostle is describing a mature Christian (Toussaint 1968:142),²⁰ the one to which he refers in 2:6: “Yet among the mature (τελείοις) we do speak wisdom, ...” This person, in radical contrast to the ψυχικός, has:

Received the Spirit of God (2:12): Spiritual persons are those Christians in whom the Spirit has really become the fundamental power of life (cf. Gal. 6:1). Gaffin (1995:114) comments that people are spiritual because they are “indwelt, renewed, enlightened, directed by the Holy Spirit”. They are the opposite of persons directed by the spirit of the world (2:12; cf. Eph. 2:2).

Taught by the Spirit: 1 Corinthians 2:13 reads:²¹ “...but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual” (ἀλλ’ ἐν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος, πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες). The verb διδακτοῖς (taught) refers to “that which is imparted by the Spirit to someone” (Danker 2000:241). This concluding phrase of 2:13 poses a problem for interpretation (Gardner 1994:138).²² The gender of πνευματικοῖς, however, could be masculine or neuter, and the verb συγκρίνειν could mean “interpret” or “compare”²³ (Garland 2003:99; also Büchsel 1979:954). If the noun is taken as masculine, Paul could mean that he, by the Spirit, teaches the

18. See Matthew. 7:23; John 10:14-15; Romans. 7:7; 1 Corinthians. 8:3; Galatians. 4:9; 2 Timothy. 2:19.

19. In verses 2:1-5 Paul writes in the first person singular, referring to himself and how he communicated the divine wisdom. From verse 2:6 he writes in the first person plural to incorporate himself as one of those spiritually matured over and against “those who are unspiritual ... unable to understand...” (2:14).

20. The references to “infancy” and by implication “maturity” (influenced by τελείοις in 2:6) refer to fleshly and spiritual Christians. In the literary context of 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 they are derivatives used by Paul symbolically to describe the effects of fleshly and spiritual persons. They do not introduce new groups of people.

21. This statement has been discussed in a similar way in my other related article.

22. There is no uniformity among scholars about which is the best or most correct interpretation. It is not necessary to become involved in the debate here. See the following scholars for varying viewpoints and interpretations: Garland (2003), Thiselton (2000), Kaiser (1981), Ellingworth-Hatton (1995); Kistemaker-Hendriksen (2001) and Pratt (2000).

23. Balz & Schneider (1990:283) translated it as “compare in 2 Cor 10:12a, b. In 1 Cor 2:13 compare is less likely than interpret / explain”. For Swanson (1997:#5173) it means to “explain; express (NIV), interpreting (RSV, NRSV, NEB, REB), describe (NAB).” Louw & Nida (1996:I, 33.154) understand it as “to explain, primarily by means of comparison –to explain, to make clear”.

things of God and interprets spiritual truths to spiritual people (Rhyne 1990:175). If the noun is taken as neuter (see p 13), however, Paul means that he marries spiritual truths to spiritual expression (Kaiser 1981:317). According to the entire context (2:6-3:5) it is not an “either... or”, but rather a case of “complementing”. Both meanings are equally true and present in this text and can be interpreted as: spiritual truths (πνευματικὰ) come through spiritual expression taught by the Spirit who expresses these spiritual truths to spiritual people.

Discern all things (2:15): this subsection (discernment)²⁴ takes the previous subsection (teach) one step further.²⁵ As the Spirit “searches everything” (2:10), so do spiritual people “discern all things” (2:15). The discernment produced by the Spirit contemplates πάντα, “all things”. This echoes πάντα as the object of the Spirit’s searching activity in 2:10 (Gaffin 1995:115). According to Kistemaker & Hendriksen (2001:93) the expression, *all things*, signifies the broad spectrum of human existence. This does not mean that those who are spiritual are experts in every area of life. Instead, with respect to the community in which God has placed them, they are able to appraise all things spiritually.²⁶

The spiritual person is subject to no one else’s scrutiny: the background to this remark is undoubtedly the Corinthian factionalism, which was based on judging the merits and demerits of certain authority figures. This leader is superior to that one, this idea to that (Fee 1987:118). Paul states that only those truly spiritual people are able to make proper judgements about these matters. Such people, guided by the Spirit of God, are not really subject to human judgement. Paul may be implying here that the Corinthian factions’ tendency to judge others may be a sign of their lack of the Spirit. It is impossible for the world to understand faithful Christians just as it is impossible for them, the world, to understand God Himself and His Word. Those who are natural, and in whom the Spirit of God does not dwell, cannot examine all things, particularly God’s ways that were formerly hidden, because they have no means, so to speak, of bridging the knowledge gap and cannot make correct assessments (cf. Fee 1987:118; Ellingworth & Hatton 1995:63).

But we have the mind of Christ: those who are spiritual are further characterised as “having the mind of Christ” (ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν, 2:16). According to Willis (1989:118), the mind of Christ refers “to believers having their outlook shaped by an awareness of Christ.” Willis thinks that Philippians 2:5 provides an important clue for “understanding the meaning of the ‘mind of Christ’ in 1 Cor. 2:16”. This argument shows how Paul’s conclusion ties in with the disputes that cause him to plead with them to be of the same mind (1:10). Willis (1989:119)

24. According to Louw & Nida 1996:27.44a, study thoroughly; 56.12, investigate in court; 33.412, criticise; 30.109, evaluate carefully. Zodiates (2000:349) explains it as: “*anakrinō*, from the emphatic *aná* (303) and *krinō* (2919), to judge. To discern, judge (1 Cor. 2:14, 15; 4:3, 4; 9:3; 14:24); to examine or question in order to pass a judicial sentence (Luke 23:14; Acts 4:9; 12:19; 24:8; 28:18); to examine accurately or carefully (Acts 17:11); to inquire, ask questions in general (1 Cor. 10:25, 27).” According to Danker (2000:66): “to examine with a view to finding fault, *judge, call to account, discern* (Demosth. 57, 66; 70; POxy 1209, 19; 1706, 20) πάντα 1 Cor 2:15; pass. vs. 14f.”

25. For a more thorough discussion on discernment, see subsection 6: “The discernment of the wisdom of God” in my publication *Spiritual discernment according to 1 Corinthians 2: the Spirit and discerning the wisdom of God*.

26. Scholars disagree on the meaning of the adjective πάντα. Pratt (2000:38) interprets “all things” as that insight afforded by the Spirit of God to equip spiritual people with wisdom in all the areas of life. Thiselton (2000:272), influenced by Witherington and Pogoloff, interprets it socio-historically. He asserts that, “As ‘spiritual people,’ many at Corinth saw themselves as ‘judging everything’ but as ‘being judged by no one.’ Paul then responds to this attitude.”

asserts, “Based upon other Pauline usage and the immediate context, then, the appeal ‘to have the mind of Christ’ does not mean to think Christ’s thoughts after him,²⁷ nor to have ecstatic experiences, nor to knowing proper dogma. The ‘mind of Christ’ is not focused upon special wisdom or experiences, but on community life.” This verse referring to the “mind of Christ” (2:16) is transitional and links Paul’s discussion of cognitive change (2:14-16) with the life in the community (3:1-4).

Paul requests for the mind of Christ as a paradigm for Christians to follow (Garland 2003:102): “And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them” (2 Cor. 5:15). Brown (1995:145) adds to Willis’ explanation. He asserts that, “To have ‘the mind of Christ’ is to have a cruciform mind.” This relates to the basic discernment of the divine wisdom. This entails crucifying selfish ambitions, humbling oneself, and giving oneself for others (Garland 2003:102). Grindheim (2002:708-709; cf. also Garland 2003:100-102) aptly summarises Paul’s point: “To be spiritual... , then, is to have apprehended the word of the cross in such a way that it has transformed the entire existence of the believer into its image – to a cruciform life, a life characterized by self-sacrificing love, and where power is manifest through weakness.”

In conclusion, the “mind of Christ”, then, constitutes the framework or environment within which the discernment of the wisdom of God will and only can take place²⁸ (cf. Toussaint 1968:142). In his radical comparison of the ψυχικός with the πνευματικός Paul tried to emphasize how radical is the change in people’s mind and thinking when they become spiritual. This change is decisive for the discernment of the wisdom of God.

3. SPIRITUAL GROWTH: A MATRIX FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF THE WISDOM OF GOD (3:1-4)

In 2:6-16 Paul thinks in terms of an absolute dualism: Christian – non-Christian. He explains the necessity of a cognitive change in order to discern the wisdom of God. In 3:1-4 he changes the perspective to distinguish between mature and immature Christians (cf. Grindheim 2002:708) where Paul turns his attention to those people who are capable to receive the revelation of the wisdom of God by the Spirit of God (2:13-16), but who did not recognise it. The maturity that Paul wants the Corinthians to reach is characterized by nothing else than a realization of the implications of the state they had already reached as Christians. Their value system and consequent behaviour, however, are indicative to a lack of conformity with the gospel” (Grindheim 2002:708).

The following table is a comparison of those who have developed spiritually, the πνευματικοί, with those who have not developed spiritually, the σαρκικοί.

27. Pratt (2000:39) differs from this statement. According to him, it refers to: “They think as he thinks; they evaluate life as he evaluates it.”

28. Dunn’s (1998:250) understanding of “the mind of the Lord” adds another perspective which complements that of Willis and others. In the context of Isaiah, the answer to the question “Who knows the mind of the Lord?” is that only God can know these things. For Paul, those who are spiritual have access to the mind of Christ, which in turn gives clearer insight into the mind of God. This then implies that those who know “the mind of the Lord” will have clearer insight into “the depths of God”.

<p>3.1 σαρκικοί</p> <p>3:1 people of the <i>flesh</i>...</p> <p>3:1-2 <i>infants</i> in Christ...</p> <p>3:2 I fed you with <i>milk</i></p> <p>3:3 For as long as there is <i>jealousy and quarrelling</i> among you...<i>behaving according to human inclinations?</i></p>	<p>3.1 πνευματικοί</p> <p>3:1 <i>spiritual</i> people</p> <p>[2:6 <i>mature</i> (τελείοις)]</p> <p>3:2 (are fed with) <i>solid food</i></p>
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For those in Corinth who act according to the flesh Paul uses two related Greek adjectives, σαρκικοί (3:3) and σαρκίνοις (3:1).²⁹ Paul regards these people as being different from those referred to in 2:14 (by the adjective ψυχικοί). For Paul, these people are Christians and are different from the ψυχικοί. This adjective (σαρκικοί) describes those natural people who are completely lacking the guidance of the Spirit.³⁰ As Christians, the Corinthians are not ψυχικοί (cf. Fee 1987:123), but their behaviour testifies that they are still too much “of the flesh”. The adjective σαρκίνοις characterises them as being weak and sinful.³¹ In Christian circles, *fleshy* (carnal) is a word that describes Christians who are not maintaining a good testimony.

Here in chapter 3 Paul is more directly concerned with the process of growth that leads to Christian maturity and a life that is entirely under the control of the Spirit of God. Here,

29. Some scholars contend that the adjectives σαρκικός and σάρκινος are essentially synonymous (Conzelmann 1975:72; Schrage 1991:281–82; Kuck 1992a:160; Wolff 1996: 64 n. 228; T. Schreiner 1998:392; R. Collins 1999:143–44). Others argue that σάρκινος in 3:1 emphasises the finitude and physical side of their existence versus the spiritual, while σαρκικός has negative ethical overtones (Fee 1987:124). The -ινος suffix connotes “made of” (cf. 2 Cor. 3:3), while the -ικός suffix connotes “characterised by” (cf. 9:11). Friberg & Friberg (2000:346) explicate σαρκίνοις “as relating to the earthly sphere of existence *worldly, earthly* (possibly 1C 3.1 and HE 7.16), opposite [of] πνευματικός (*spiritual, pertaining to the spirit*); in distinction from σαρκικός (*fleshy, carnal*), ζ. has to do with the body and living in the body; σαρκικός has to do with living for the body, i.e. to satisfy bodily desires; (3) as relating to human existence *natural* (possibly 1C 3.1 and HE 7.16); substantively σάρκινος *mere human beings*.”

30. Louw & Nida (1996:I, 694) define σαρκικός as “pertaining to the natural, physical characteristics of persons and often including their characteristic behavior—‘natural, human.’” Danker (2000:914) explains it as 1) “pertaining to being material or belonging to the physical realm, *material, physical, human, fleshy*”, 2) “pertaining to being human at a disappointing level of behavior or characteristics, (*merely*) *human*”. According to Schweizer (1977:144), σαρκικός means what is inadequate, what is not decisive before God. The inadequacy is such that it tempts man to be satisfied with it and consequently to lose God. See Dunn (2003:62-70) for a good explanation of Paul’s use of σάρξ.

31. The Corinthians are weak and sinful because they undermined the authority and gospel of Paul. It seems as if some of the influential members were “puffed up” against him (4:14–21). According to Rhyne (1990:174f), the factors that led to the schisms and the decline of Paul’s authority are more easily discerned. The Corinthians are fascinated with “wisdom”, a divine wisdom they hold to be imparted to them by the Spirit of God. Possessing this wisdom makes them “spiritual” people. They believe that true wisdom reveals itself in the rhetorical skills of its exponents. Such notions about wisdom may be a carryover from their past when they became fond of the orations of itinerant Hellenistic philosophers. They boast in the wisdom of their favourite preachers and, by implication, in themselves. While they consider themselves to be spiritual, they are not so sure about Paul: neither his person nor his gospel of the Crucified is impressive – at least, not by their standards.

this theme of Christian progress is implied with reference to babes, and in three different expressions that are translated “not ready” (οὐκ ἠδυνήθη, 3:1-2). These people have a longing for the material world and for prestige in the eyes of men. Basically, this statement implies a wilfulness to live in sin. Πνευματικοί Christians deserve censure and admonition because of their fleshly orientation; this is partly how Paul uses the word here. The Corinthians should have developed and matured in the Christian faith, but instead they stubbornly pursued their own selfish course and became fleshly Christians (Toussaint 1968:144).

In 3:1 Paul continues to reprimand the Corinthians by saying he could not address them as “spiritual persons” because they were in fact “fleshly” (σαρκίνοις). Since he also identifies them as “infants in Christ” (νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ) he must be making a fine distinction here: they “are spiritual, but live as if they did not have the Spirit” (Kuck 1992a:160).³² As σαρκίνοις they are controlled by natural, human impulses and faculties rather than by the Spirit.

These fleshly Christians of 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 have the following characteristics. *First* (vv 1-2), *they cannot perceive and appreciate the more profound truths of Christ*, although they are old enough in the faith to be able to do so. To the Corinthians Paul says: “I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, for you are still of the flesh” (3:2). These Christians have been Christians for years, but still cannot go beyond the ABCs of doctrine (Toussaint 1968:144). Their problem is not failure to progress, but they have failed to comprehend (Francis 1980:57; cf. Garland 2003:106). One clear proof of their immature behaviour is that they view Paul’s teaching as milk rather than solid food (3:2) (Rhyne 1990:176).

In accordance with this dichotomy, Hooker (1966:21) adds a new perspective. She comments, “Yet while he uses their language, the fundamental contrast in Paul’s mind is not between two quite different diets³³ which he has to offer, but between the true food of the Gospel with which he has fed them (whether milk or meat) and the artificial substitutes which the Corinthians have preferred.” The fact is that Paul’s solid food does not differ from his milk (Hooker 1966:21; cf. also Gaffin 1995:119f). They could not discern the “solid food”.

They yearn for the more exquisite charms of clever oratory, which made the simplicity of the word of the cross seems weak (cf. Garland 2003:109) and elementary.³⁴ If Paul’s message looks like milk to them, this shows that they are not as mature or spiritual as they think. The divisions that they have caused are incompatible with following Christ because they emulate the world’s wisdom. This means that “they do not need a change of diet but a change of perspective” (Fee 1987:292). The issue here is their behaviour now, not their progress in understanding.³⁵ These

32. See Gaffin (1995:113) for a different understanding.

33. Garland (2003:108) agrees on this point. According to him, Paul does not divide Christians into lower-level beginners who need to be fed a diet of theological substance and an upper-level elite who can receive advanced, esoteric doctrine, as if Christianity were like the pagan mysteries. Nor does he offer a two-stage wisdom, leading believers to the next stage of more esoteric lessons when he thinks they can handle it. In 15:3–7, he reminds them that he delivered to them as of first importance Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Cf. also Gaffin 1995:119f.

34. Soards (1999:67) comments, “They could not digest the solid food of the message of the cross because they were looking for a wisdom different from God’s revealed wisdom.”

35. The contrast is not between the present and the past, but between that which is from God and that which is of the flesh. Note how the two different systems of power and wisdom are designated by Paul: on the one hand, “of this age” (1:20; 2:6, 8), “of the world” (1:20, 21, 27, 28; 2:12), “according to the flesh” (1:26, 29), “of human beings” (1:25; 2:5,13), and on the other hand, “of God” (1:21, 24, 25; 2:1,

spiritual people are simply thinking and behaving like unspiritual people – like unbelievers (Rhyne 1990:175). Just as “the mature” correctly discern the foolishness of the gospel to be the highest wisdom, so the immature incorrectly discern this “milk” to be solid food.

*The second characteristic (3:3-4) of the fleshly Christian is selfishness and pride.*³⁶ These characteristics manifest themselves through the envy, strife, and divisions experienced at Corinth (3:3, “For as long as there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, ...”). Blinded by conceit, these Christians live only for themselves and consequently cannot get along with others. In fact, their disagreement, caused by selfish ambitions that have crushed the wisdom of the cross, proves their immaturity. By fancying themselves to be wise and mature, the Corinthians have cut themselves off from the transforming power of the cross, a power that can change their worldly ways (Garland 2003:107; cf. also Bultmann 1968: 239f). In 3:3 Paul depicts them as still being σαρκικοί, which is ironic in a congregation that valued its spiritual giftedness. The use of the adjective σαρκικοί thus refers to these Corinthians’ values, attitudes, and judgements, which manifest themselves in self-centredness, self-indulgence, and arrogant self-sufficiency (Garland 2003:110), all of which lead to a certain kind of behaviour and conduct. For Bultmann (1968:239), “This self-delusion is not merely an error, but sin, and a turning toward the creation – and to do that is to trust in one’s self as being able to procure life by the use of the earthly and through one’s own strength and accomplishment.”

Discernment and pragmatics: such self-centredness, self-indulgence, and arrogant self-sufficiency is addressed by Paul in 3:3-4: “For you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is *jealousy and quarrelling* among you, are you not of the flesh, and *behaving* according to human inclinations? 4: For when one says, ‘I belong to Paul’, and another, ‘I belong to Apollos’, *are you not merely human?*” In this reference, it becomes evident that right discernment is not only made in a good and theoretical explanation of the (text of the) wisdom of God, but also in conduct and behaviour that does justice to the pragmatic aspects of this wisdom. The discernment of the wisdom of God is always a discernment that results in interrelated conduct. From the viewpoint of spirituality, self-surrender to the praxis of the divine wisdom is an important element in the understanding and realisation of the will of God. Those in the early church could see the right explanation of the wisdom of God not in what someone says (this may be correct), but in what someone does. The discernment that explains the divine wisdom is always a practical and concrete exercise. This is also closely related to what Paul says in 2:16: “For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”³⁷

To conclude: it is not that Paul could not or would not give them wisdom in the form of solid food; they failed to recognise that what he gave them was wisdom; in other words, they could not discern the wisdom of God. If there is any distinction between the “mature” and the “infants”, it is this: “Both the immature and the perfect are affected by the same revelation, but only the perfect penetrate what happens to them and in them” (Theissen 1987:352).

Opposite to the σαρκικοί, but in related terms, Paul characterizes further the πνευματικοί. By

7,12), “of the Spirit” (2:10, 13, 14), and “of Christ” (2:16). These designations clearly point toward a fundamental dualism between that which is without God and that which belongs to God, rather than to a dualism between the before and the now (Grindheim 2002:699).

36. See also James 4:1-3.

37. See an explanation on the practical meaning of this verse in my article “*Spiritual discernment* according to 1 Corinthians 2: the Spirit and discerning the wisdom of God.”

contrast to the σαρκικοί, whom he typified as “infants” (νηπίοις) he refers to the πνευματικοί as “full grown” (spiritually mature, 2:6): “We speak wisdom among them that are full grown.”³⁸ The wisdom which Paul preached was better comprehended by the mature (τέλειος)³⁹ Christians at Corinth than by the immature. In both 1 Corinthians 2:6 and 2:15, Paul recognises that some Christians are more developed than others, although both had entered into the truths which he preached. They have exercised their senses to discern both “good and evil”. Discernment is the result of the exercise and use of spiritual faculties, and this can only come with time and a determination to really know the gospel. Although this Christian congregation is still very young, Paul already expects its members to show a form of maturity. The mature Christian of 1 Corinthians 2:6 appreciates the wisdom of God, and the spiritual man⁴⁰ of 1 Corinthians 2:15 apprehends it. It becomes quite clear that the two terms describe the same person.

In *conclusion*: who, then, is the spiritual person? By this term Paul is describing a mature Christian. It is this person that Paul sets forth as the ideal of every Christian. For these people who have received the Spirit, there is a different way of viewing reality. What appears foolish to the world is seen in its true light as God’s ultimate wisdom. For them, a transformation has taken place; they no longer live and think on a purely natural level, but are guided and enlightened by God’s own Spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 5:161).

4. CONCLUSION

In 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, Paul negates the humane involvement in the communication and discernment of the “wisdom of God”. In contrast, he emphasises the role and power of the Spirit in communicating God’s wisdom to the believer: the Spirit of God (τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ) who teaches spiritual truths (πνευματικοῖς) in spiritual words⁴¹ (πνευματικῶς) to spiritual people (πνευματικοί). Because this wisdom is revealed and inspired by the Spirit, only a spiritual person can discern the exclusive divine wisdom, of which the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus form the most important content.

The emphasis in this essay is not to categorize people or believers in different groups but to emphasize how Paul uses contrast to cause effect how the true discernment of the wisdom of God can happen. This research shows why those who are spiritual can discern the divine wisdom. Paul points out two fundamental and related matters involved in the discernment of the wisdom of God: to have undergone a radical intellectual change and to continue changing. He describes these two matters in a comparative way. He compares those who are spiritual (πνευματικοί) with (1) those who live on an entirely human level (ψυχικοί) and (2) those moved by entirely human drives (σαρκικοί). In the first comparison of the πνευματικοί with the ψυχικοί, Paul refers to their epistemological cognitive differences. He compares their intellectual faculties. It is striking how 1 Corinthians 2 is saturated with semantic related words on cognition. For Paul, before anyone can discern the divine wisdom, that person has to undergo a radical intellectual change and renewal, a change and renewal that can only be performed by the Spirit of God. In the second comparison of the πνευματικοί with the σαρκικοί, Paul emphasises the continuity of change that should take place in a person’s

38. Such maturity is also implicit in 3:1-4.

39. Thiselton (2000:289) interprets it as “*grown up, adult*,” and Danker (2000:#5455) as “*being mature, full-grown, mature, adult*”.

40. This person could be fed with solid food (3:2).

41. Or “...in a spiritual way...”

life. For Paul, only those who are spiritual and continue to live a spiritual life can increasingly discern the exclusive wisdom of God through the mediation of the Spirit of God.

Because of their discernment, Christians may be considered to be spiritual, but they are never to cease their spiritual development. As Paul says: "Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own" (Phil. 3:12).

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KEY WORDS

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Natural person
Fleshly person

TREFWOORDE

Beoordeel/besluit
Wysheid van God
Kognitiewe verandering
Geestelike mens
Natuurlike mens
Vleeslike mens

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Multicultural worship in Pretoria. A ritual-liturgical case study

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this article is to develop a theory for praxis with regards to multicultural worship in South Africa. With this aim in mind qualitative research were undertaken in three denominationally different congregations namely Dutch Reformed, Roman Catholic and Charismatic. The research question was “what are the ritual-liturgical qualities that make sustainable multicultural worship possible with the goal of enhancing social cohesion and reconciliation?” After a discussion of the theoretical points of departure of the research project the congregations and collected data are presented and ritual-liturgical qualities are identified. The article concludes by revisiting these qualities rephrasing them into a preliminary theory for praxis which could possibly enhance the development of more sustainable multicultural worship services in the South African society.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

During a small scale research project conducted in 2011 amongst worshippers attending a weekly multicultural communion service in a Dutch Reformed Church in Pretoria, the worshippers identified the multicultural nature of the worship as not only important, but also essential (Kleynhans, 2011:91). The South African society is diverse in many ways, but that is not always the case if we are looking at worship services. Research findings suggest that people need to feel part of the diverse South African society when attending worship services, therefore the need for multicultural worship services. Robert Schreiters’ notion of local theologies describes this diversity quite well. He defines “... local theologies can have nuances in the theological tradition of a church denomination as a result of a congregation’s history, context and diversity in spirituality. A congregation is a cultural web. In this cultural web beliefs, interpretation of the confessional creeds, history of congregation, spirituality, attitudes, morals, customs, specific practices of a certain pastor, and the environment form an intertwined whole that is a cultural web” (Schreiter, 1985:3).

In this article the researchers use a ritual-liturgical approach for researching multicultural Christian liturgies (cf. Wepener 2009). The researchers deem rituals in liturgy as agents on the road towards reconciliation in our country. Five concepts are important as a theoretical framework for our research namely multicultural worship, ritual, liturgical inculturation, reconciliation and social cohesion as a result of social capital. The researchers use the following working definitions or descriptions for the concepts.

Firstly *multicultural liturgy* comprises the inclusion of a diversity of South African cultures in one shared liturgy in our context. We regard our multicultural situation as an asset which

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should be celebrated (Wepener 2009:116-117; also Degenaar 2000). The following quote from a well-known singer and songwriter emphasise the potential that the multicultural South African society inhibits. "Every day in South Africa I am confronted by bizarre contradictions: in a hardware store I buy *riempie*⁴ from a Chinese man who speaks seemingly fluent Zulu to his customers; an Afrikaner Nationalist who gives extra lessons in English, decorates her lounge with a reed mat, beads and assegais⁵; I order a cold *Lion*⁶ from a Xhosa waiter who wears a red fez and white gloves; drive past a block of flats called St Tropez; watch lions and elephants in a circus that tours Southern Africa with a ring master in top and tails; a pot-bellied 'witch doctor' dressed in skins and beads opens the door of luxury motor cars outside a four-star hotel; a Ndebele woman paints the pictures of windows on the mud wall of her home...It is a complex and exciting world and one searches for the beacons and sign posts. Yet apartheid denies all this. It erected fences, it separates, it avoids the future..." (Van der Merwe, 1996:78; see Kramer, 1986:54).

Ritual can be phrased as follows "Rituals can often be repeated, self-evident, symbolic actions, that are always interactive and corporeal, sometimes accompanied by texts and formulas, aimed at the transfer of values in the individual and the group, and of which the form and content are always culture, context and time bound, so that the involvement in the reality which is presented in the rituals remains dynamic" (Wepener 2009:36). All the above mentioned characteristics work together to form a ritual landscape and within this specific ritual landscape people attach meaning and value to certain symbols. "*Liturgical inculturation* is a continuous process of critical-reciprocal interaction between cult (liturgy) and culture so that a totally new entity comes into being, namely an inculturated liturgy" (Wepener 2009:42). The importance of liturgical inculturation is as Senn describes it "This is because every generation of Christians has been concerned that its worship be relevant, at least to them." (Senn, 1983:38). With this in mind, the South African context is in dire need of multicultural liturgies bearing the message of reconciliation and social unity.

The fourth concept of *reconciliation* is defined as "the continuous process through truth and justice aimed at the restoration of broken relationships, so that a new reality which is qualitatively different to any previous relationship comes into being" (Wepener 2009:49; cf. also Nürnberger 1989:12). De Gruchy in his book *Reconciliation, Restoring Justice* emphasises the journey of reconciliation "... a journey from the past into the future, a journey from estrangement to communion, or from what was patently unjust in search of a future that is just." (De Gruchy, 2002:28). The last concept, social cohesion, can best be understood against the background of the use of the concept social capital in recent literature in South Africa.⁷

Generating *social capital* in liturgy leads to social cohesion. Three dimensions in social capital come to the fore: bonding, bridging and linking (De Roest & Noordegraaf 2009:217). We must be aware of the danger of an insignificant intellectual discussion of social capital in our context. Wepener and Cilliers (2010:419) have made a contribution in this respect. They decided to attach an added dimension to the "linking" aspect of the three: bonding, bridging and linking. With "linking" the possibility for ideological discussion and conflictual dialogue is

4. An Afrikaans word for a leather thong used on chairs (Van der Merwe, 1996:89).

5. An assegai is a traditional African spear which is traditionally used for self-defence; it can also be regarded as a symbol of manhood (Van der Merwe, 1996:89).

6. It was a beer locally brewed in South Africa (Van der Merwe, 1996:89).

7. For more work on social capital and ritual/liturgy see for example Barnard, Mbaya & Wepener (2012), Wepener (2009a) and Wepener et al (2010).

held open. In other words, the dominant economic model and status quo are not protected in any way ... Matters like equity and justice, power, and the redistribution of wealth and assets come into play. The one-way movement from those who “generate” social capital to those who “receive” it is transformed into an equitable partnership where holders of power (political, economic and social) are confronted and invited into a truly reciprocal transformation of society. This is not a neutral, stance on, or discussion about social capital, but a process of linking in which ideological presuppositions are not only questioned, but also shattered and transformed (Wepener & Cilliers 2010:419). Therefore they add a fourth dimension to the three dimensions of social capital which is generally accepted, namely that congregations are spaces within which a new ethos is born and nurtured, an ethos that confronts structures and constellations of power, and works in collaboration with other relevant agencies towards a real transformation of society in terms of equity and justice (Wepener & Cilliers 2010:419).

The working hypothesis with which we have worked in this research project is that in multicultural liturgy this kind of social capital can be generated. The goal of social capital is social cohesion and inclusion (Swart 210:326). *Social cohesion* takes place where the values of trust and reciprocity are cultivated in multicultural ritual-liturgical celebrations. Social cohesion cannot take place without trust and reciprocity as enrichment of the cultures (Worthington, 2006:268). Worthington concluded “Society needs a plan. The plan needs to be negotiated by all voices at the table so that relationships can be built and trust can grow. This will occur mostly as the warmth-based virtues and altruistic motives – such as grace, mercy and conciliation – are emphasized, and tolerances can be brought about even in some of the more extreme members of each group.” (Worthington, 2006:268).

Where this happens social cohesion is fostered in communities (Eigelaar-Meets, Gomulia, Geldenhuys 2010:48). Therefore our working hypothesis is that rituals in multicultural liturgies can create a home for all where social cohesion is growing (Eigelaar-Meets, Gomulia & Geldenhuys 2010:46). Then reconciliation becomes possible. Based on the empirical data generated from three worshipping communities we will in conclusion formulate a preliminary theory for praxis concerning multicultural worship. However, these preceding five concepts formed the theoretical basis for the case study that was conducted in this research project.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

In 2012 multicultural worship services were identified and participated in by means of participatory observation⁸ in Pretoria. A selection of three worship services in the Pretoria region were made which was provisionally termed as being ‘sustainable multicultural’ worship services. These three worship services were studied by means of a ritual-liturgical inquiry in a qualitative research⁹ of half-structured interviews¹⁰ in order to identify the so-called ritual qualities (cf. Grimes 1990) that contributed to making the multicultural nature of the worship sustainable and that can eventually be inculturated in liturgies in South Africa.

8. “Participant observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture.” (De Walt & De Walt, 2002:1).

9. “Qualitative research typically is enacted in naturalistic settings, draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of the participants in the study, focuses on context, is emergent and evolving, and is fundamentally interpretive.” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:2)

10. “The interviews are usually not entirely pre-structured with respect to content, formulation, sequence and answers. Neither are they left entirely open.” (Boeije, 2010:62)

The research question we were investigating is:

“What are the ritual-liturgical qualities that make sustainable multicultural worship possible in furthering social cohesion and reconciliation?”

Our research program followed the steps in the approach to Practical Theology of Richard Osmer (Osmer 2008). This will be:

- a descriptive-empirical task: what is going on?
- an interpretative task: why is it going on?
- a normative task: what ought to be going on?
- and a pragmatic task: how might we respond? (Osmer 2010:4).

Therefore in this article after this introduction the ritual-liturgical data will be presented and thereafter in conclusion the central concepts will be revisited in order to establish whether these services indeed further the above mentioned processes.

Already mentioned above is the choice for three sustainable multicultural churches in the Pretoria region, firstly Dutch Reformed Church Pretoria (Arcadia), secondly Elim Full Gospel Church and thirdly Roman Catholic Church St Pius X. The reason why we chose to use three churches in different denominations, rather than three Dutch Reformed Churches is because of diversity. We argue that the diversity amongst the three different denominations in terms of worship services, liturgies and even people attending the services will broaden the significance of the study. Before presenting the ritual-liturgical data we want to shortly explain the context of each congregation as this is very important for the presentation of the ritual-liturgical data.

The Dutch Reformed Church Pretoria (Arcadia) started with a multicultural ministry in the early 1990's even before the election in 1994, called the Pretoria Faith Community. This congregation is situated in Pretoria Central; the multicultural worship service is a well-established part of the congregation. On a regular basis you will find South African (black, brown, Indian and white) citizens, Asian (Chinese and South Korean) citizens as well as citizens from other African countries (Congo, Kenya, Zimbabwe) attending the service. The cultural composition of the focus group at the Dutch Reformed Church Pretoria (Arcadia) consisted of one brown male, two Congolese males, two South African black females and two South African black males.

Elim Full Gospel Church is part of the Pentecostal tradition. Ever since the early 2000's the congregation focused on being multicultural in essence serving people from different cultural backgrounds. The congregation is situated in the Hatfield area and is therefore a popular attraction for students. On a regular Sunday morning you will see a wide variety of cultures attending the worship service, mostly South African citizens (black, brown, Indian and white). The cultural composition of the focus group at Elim Full Gospel Church consisted out of one white male, two white females, one coloured male, one coloured female and two black South African females.

For some years the Roman Catholic Church St Pius X is serving a multicultural community. On an average Sunday morning at the 09:30 mass one finds different cultures attending the worship service. This parish is situated in the Waterkloof area where many diplomats reside. On any given Sunday the following cultures can be expected at the morning mass from black, white and brown South Africans, East Asian people such as people from Indonesia, Malaysia,

Japan and Thailand, African Americans, Europeans and black people from the rest of the African continent. The focus group at The Roman Catholic Church St Pius X consisted out of two black South African males, one black South African female, one Kenyan female, one white American male and one Lebanese male.

The following six questions were asked in no specific order in the three focus groups. Subsequently a detailed presentation of the data collected through means of a focus group discussion:

2.1 Why do you choose to worship at this specific church?

The focus groups repeatedly mentioned a specific atmosphere surrounding the three different worship services. They used adjectives such as comfortable, openness towards everyone, the friendliness and the warmth of the people attending the worship service. The fellowship people experiences at the three worship services are in their words the same experience as being part of a family. Another reason mentioned by all three focus groups is the fact that everyone is given the opportunity to participate in all of the ministries, in their own unique way, through means of their own strengths and gifts. The praise and worship were emphasised by all three focus groups as well. One of the South African black males participating in the Roman Catholic Church focus group made this powerful statement:

“When I worship in a multicultural faith community, I represent the South African society inside the church walls.” (Respondent R2, 2012).

2.2 What is it about the worship service that keeps you coming back?

In the Dutch Reformed Church the whole focus group stated that the teaching part (sermon) is one of the reasons why they keep attending the worship service. It is practical and you feel equipped afterwards to spread the word of God to other people not knowing about Him yet. The focus group at Elim Full Gospel Church also said the teaching part (sermon) as they feel that the sermon sustain them for their whole lives, that is why they come back each Sunday. The Roman Catholic focus group said the Eucharist, for them the Eucharist is the centre of their liturgy, actually the centre of their life. All three focus groups mentioned the praise and worship which creates a moment where they really experiences the presence of the Lord. All three focus groups talked about the atmosphere created by the worship service and the people attending the worship service:

“I like the way the congregation gets a chance to greet each other, giving the congregation a chance to meet new people, invite them for tea after the service to get to know them a bit more. To make them feel welcome and share the love and peace of God with them.” (Respondent A1, 2012).

“When I feel sad and step inside the church there is always someone caring for me, either with a smile, a hug or a short conversation.” (Respondent E5, 2012).

“For me when I am busy praising the Lord together with fellow Christians, it is a cleansing experience.” (Respondent R4, 2012).

2.3 What skills or capacities do congregants/pastors need when churches and worship are multicultural?

The skills mentioned by all three focus groups are communication skills, people skills, understanding of different cultures, flexibility, sensitivity, tolerance and a specific personality type, someone who is open and friendly towards people. One of the skills mentioned by all three focus groups is a teachable spirit:

“We can all teach each other something, we must just be prepared to learn from each other.” (Respondent E1, 2012).

2.4 Do you think that the multicultural nature of the worship service promote reconciliation and social cohesion?

Most respondents were positive about the multicultural nature of the worship service promoting reconciliation and social cohesion. A respondent in the focus group at the Dutch Reformed Church said

“This congregation give people the opportunity to tell other people their experience. Most people have certain opinions which are untrue because of their ignorance. Therefore, being able to share our experiences with other people through means of telling our stories promotes reconciliation.” (Respondent A2, 2012).

They also said the teaching part of the sermons is always based on reconciliation with God and fellow human beings as this is the vision of the congregation. The focus group at Elim suggested that in this multicultural congregation

“They made a choice and take the effort to befriend each other. We reached out towards people from different cultures and backgrounds, each one should participate in this outreach. When this happens reconciliation happens naturally.” (Respondent E1, 2012).

2.5 What is your personal opinion about reconciliation and social cohesion in the South African society?

The three different focus groups admitted that a lot has been done in terms of reconciliation, but there is still a long way ahead for reconciliation to happen. A lot has been done in terms of racial reconciliation in South Africa, which the focus groups define as the traditional understanding of reconciliation between black and white people. The groups feel that the term reconciliation lacks a broader definition; including reconciliation between rich and poor, between people from South Africa and all over the world. The focus group at Elim suggested that we struggle to forgive one another.

“When you forgive one another you lose your power and might over the other one. We do not want peace, people want dominance and then reconciliation will never happen.” (Respondent E7, 2012).

The Roman Catholic focus group said that you can change the laws of the country, but reconciliation will not just happen; you need to change the hearts of the people of the country. The mass can make a difference changing the hearts of people, if the message of reconciliation of Jesus Christ is taught people will understand and change.

2.6 Do you think the church can and should play a role in terms of reconciliation and social cohesion in South Africa? If yes, how do you think the church can make a difference promoting reconciliation and social cohesion?

The groups were unanimous that the church can and should play a role promoting reconciliation and social cohesion. One of the ways one of the focus groups mentioned is the concept of diversity. We live in a diverse society in terms of race, culture, languages etc. In the Bible Paul talks about unity in Jesus Christ: yes we are different in many ways, but in Jesus we become unified, we are now equal human beings. The focus groups said that people need to start small in their own communities spreading the message of reconciliation, not just by words but also through action for example to host a multicultural worship service once a month.

The following qualities were identified in promoting reconciliation and social cohesion through multicultural worship services: An open and friendly atmosphere during the worship service

- Fellowship
- A teachable spirit
- Telling stories to one another
- Making an effort to reach out to strangers (hospitality)
- The power of forgiveness
- Unified in Jesus Christ
- Context
- Leadership

In what follows these qualities will be arranged into a preliminary theory for praxis concerning multicultural worship.

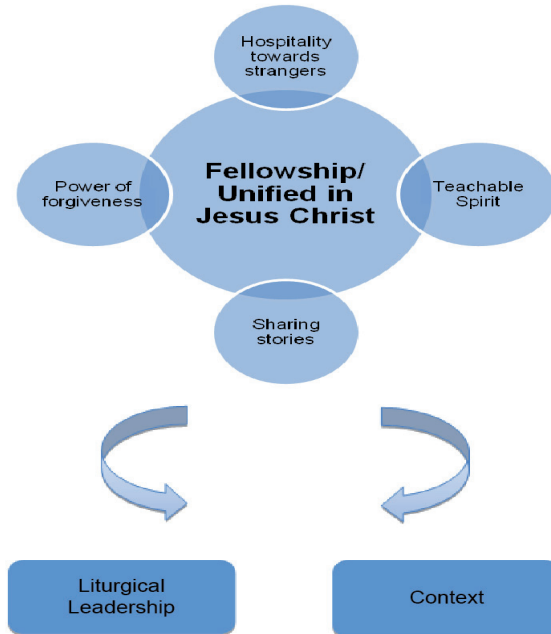
3. CENTRAL CONCEPTS REVISITED

literature on the concept social cohesion is overwhelming and diverse (cf. Cantle, 2005; Dexter, 2004; Friedkin, 2004; Kunene, 2009) going back to the work of French sociologist Emile Durkheim. From this array of possibilities regarding possible definitions of social cohesion we opt for Cantle's (2005:62) description offered in bullet format, namely:

- There is a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities;
- The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued;
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

With this definition in mind we revisit the qualities. The central quality distilled from the field work was in our mind "fellowship" and that in combination with "unified in Jesus Christ".

These two in combination we posit as a centre around which the rest of this theory for praxis can emerge. There is however also strong interference (in the positive and creative sense, cf. Post 2001) between this centre and the qualities of “hospitality towards strangers” as well as having a “teachable spirit” and in turn these latter two qualities which are also closely related to particular attitudes of worshippers interfere again on their part with the qualities regarding the “sharing of stories” and the “power of forgiveness”. All these qualities that are interlinked do however rest on the edifice of the qualities regarding “liturgical leadership” and “context” without which none of the above will be possible.



With the above in mind it is important to note that social cohesion can be both positive and negative (Kunene, 2009:6&7) and according to Dexter (2004:viii) the real challenge in the South African society is that of building social cohesion and simultaneously “recognise, protect and give expression to difference”. It is well known that ritual has a social dimension or function and that worship or liturgy has the potential to bind a group together. However, it is important to acknowledge the fact that both mono- and multi-cultural worship services promote social cohesion, but most probably different types of cohesion. Inclusion and exclusion are two sides of the same coin when it comes to the generation of social cohesion by means of worship services. It is therefore essential in our view to expand somewhat more on a renewed theory for praxis regarding multicultural worship; based on the data obtained from the fieldwork. And at its core we propose that the sociological concept “social cohesion” should be *baptized* in the front of the biblical notion of “hospitality” and that this core should be the principle which shapes the form of multicultural liturgies.

In our presentation it has been stated that during a study in 2011 the worshippers identified the multicultural nature of the worship as not only important, but also essential in their

appropriation of the worship in which they are participating. In addition, all respondents in the current 2012 research project were positive regarding the multicultural nature of the worship they attend. This means that the worshippers appropriate the liturgy in which they are participating as positive, even though some of the elements of worship are not of their own cultural background. In contrast to our findings the Dutch Lutheran liturgist Mirella Klomp comes to a different conclusion. In her research project published as *The Sound of Worship* she studied by means of Liturgical Musical Ethnography the sound of worship in a Surinamese and a Ghanaian congregation in the Southeast of Amsterdam. We quote her final conclusion which is relevant for our research: "Although worship may still become sacramental when it takes unfamiliar shapes, when it does not embody the faith of the performer, or when a performer is confronted with the shapes in which fellow Christians encounter Christ, the establishment (or creation through mergers) of cross-cultural churches would in the long term probably lead to serious problems concerning the possibility for worship to become incarnational: too many shapes that do not embody people's faith, will impede the possible encounter with Christ of several performers" (Klomp, 2011:262). This conclusion of Klomp is of course based on a very specific context of worshipping minority groups in the Netherlands, but it is helpful in our research in order to challenge our own findings. Therefore this conclusion of Klomp, however true, raises several serious questions within our unique South African context, but also as such presents a challenge.

Our unique South African context of 2012 in which we are still on the road towards reconciliation, liturgies that serve the goal of greater social cohesion we believe should be promoted. From the empirical findings it became clear that multicultural worship services can indeed serve this common goal in a very unique way. Therefore our renewed theory for praxis posits that a multicultural liturgy that promotes greater social cohesion by 2012 is a liturgy that promotes the values of belonging, the appreciation of difference, the fostering of relationships across certain perceived boundaries (to name but some of the characteristics of social cohesion), but in such a way that the Spirit of Christ can continuously deconstruct any liturgical *ordo* in which inclusion yet again becomes exclusion. Good liturgical leadership and the right context cultivate the space for this whilst the right attitude of worshippers is also imperative, but in the centre of such a theory is a sense of fellowship that stems from the Spirit of Him who was excluded so that other may be included.

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Wie was die Gaius, die adressant van 3 Johannes? Enkele kantaantekeninge

ABSTRACT

Who was Gaius, the recipient of 3 John? A few side notes

A survey is presented of both internal as well as external arguments used to identify the recipient of 3 John, namely, Gaius. Apart from what can be learned from 3 John itself, little is known about this early Christian figure. In the letter itself the author is clear about the loving relationship between him and Gaius as well as Gaius' behaviour in truth, which makes him a prototype of the ideal Johannine leader. Nevertheless, he cannot be positively identified with any of the early Christians who were also known by the common Roman name of Gaius.

1. INLEIDING

Die selektiewe maar doelgerigte gebruik van name in die Johannese literatuur is wel bekend en ook al deeglik ondersoek.² Wanneer Johannes name soos Lasarus of Nikodemus in sy Evangelie gebruik, is dit vir 'n baie spesifieke doel. Die afwesigheid van name waar dit verwag sou word, bevestig dat Johannes name vir 'n spesifieke doel gebruik. So weet ons byvoorbeeld nie wie die bruidegom of bruid by Kana was nie (Joh 2:1-11), ons ken nie die naam van die Samaritaanse vrou nie (Joh 4), ons weet nie wie die verlam man in hoofstuk 5 was nie en ken ook nie die naam van die blinde man in Johannes 9 nie.

In die Briewe van Johannes is dit nie veel anders nie, behalwe in 3 Johannes. Ons vind geen name in die ander twee Briewe van Johannes nie, nie eers van die skrywer of ontvangers van die briewe nie (die ontvanger van 2 Johannes word alleen indirek benoem as "uitverkore vrou"). In 3 Johannes word die name van Gaius en Diotrefes, asook van Demetrius genoem. Die brief word aan Gaius (variant van die Romeinse naam Caius) gerig. Wie was hierdie Gaius? As ons meer van hom te wete kan kom, sou dit ons miskien meer van die Johannese groep kon vertel. 'n Direkte antwoord op die vraag is egter nie maklik om te gee nie, eenvoudig omdat daar so min inligting is wat kan help met die identifisering van Gaius. Wat hier volg is 'n oorsig en kort bespreking van die gegewens wat tot ons beskikking is in die vasstelling van die identiteit van Gaius.

Dit is gebruiklik in so 'n tipe ondersoek om beide interne en eksterne gegewens na te gaan. Daar gaan met die interne gegewens begin word, waarna die eksterne gegewens aan die beurt gaan kom.

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2. Sien Bennema (2009) vir 'n oorsig oor relevante literatuur.

2. WIE WAS GAIVS VOLGENS DIE INHOUD VAN 3 JOHANNES (INTERNE GETUIENIS)?

Die interne getuieuis fokus veral op twee verhoudinge, naamlik die verhouding met die presbiter (die skrywer) en met Diotrefes. Alvorens daar egter verder gegaan word, moet 'n teoretiese probleem kortliks genoem word. Die afleidings wat in die hieropvolgende bespreking gemaak word, is gebaseer op 'n logiese samevoeging van die beskikbare materiaal soos dit in 3 Johannes aangetref word. By die lees van die materiaal word dit egter gou duidelik dat daar 'n hele narratief van gebeure agter die brief lê wat nie eksplisiet in die brief uitgestippel is nie, maar tog vir die eerste bedoelde lesers binne hulle konteks as leesraamwerk beskikbaar sou gewees het en moet gevolglik die opmerkings vir hulle kontekstueel sou gekleur het.³ Die probleem is egter dat hierdie narratief nie in die brief verwoord is nie en dus nie vir die hedendaagse lesers direk toeganklik is nie. As hedendaagse lesers is ons dus op verskillende scenario's aangewese, met vroe soos byvoorbeeld, of Gaius deel van Diotrefes se huisgemeente was, of die presbiter ook die leier van Diotrefes was of net van 'n buurgemeente, of Gaius 'n leier in die gemeenskap was of nie, ens. In die nagaan van wie Gaius was, moet al die moontlikhede in ag geneem word. Die hieropvolgende gegewens moet dus met hierdie probleem in gedagte gelees word.

a) Die verhouding tussen Gaius en die presbiter

Die beeld wat uit 3 Johannes van Gaius se relasie met die presbiter na vore tree, is baie positief. Daar moet onthou word dat dit die opinie van die presbiter as skrywer weerspieël waarin retoriese motiewe ook 'n rol gespeel het, soos later geargumenteer gaan word. Gaius word op die volgende maniere beskryf:

Die presbiter noem hom die “geliefde” en sê dan dat hy hom “in waarheid liefhet” (ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ; v. 1).⁴ Twee Johannese sleutel terme word hier met mekaar verbind, naamlik liefde en waarheid. Beide word met hoë frekwensie in die Evangelie asook in die Briewe gebruik.⁵ Dit is vir ons doeleindes onnodig om op die gebruik van die twee sleutel terme in die Johannese literatuur in te gaan. Dit is voldoende om op basis van bestaande navorsing⁶ die volgende op te merk ten einde bogenoemde uitspraak in perspektief te plaas. Die konsep “waarheid” in die Johannese literatuur “functions as an overarching concept indicating what relate to God as well as how it impacts on the

3. Schnackenburg (1984:319) en Rensberger (1997:156-157) lê veral klem op die probleem van gebrekkige kennis oor die situasie. Marshall (1978:81) spekuleer, byvoorbeeld, dat die draer van die brief die nodige inligting mondelings aan Gaius sou kon oorgedra het wat die brief dan vir hom in die regte perspektief sou geplaas het.

4. Brown (1986:739) meen dat dit nie uit die brief afgelei kan word dat die presbiter Gaius lank geken het nie en dat sy kennis alleen maar afhanklik was van wat die sendelinge wat by Gaius tuisgegaan het, vertel het. Dit sou beteken dat Gaius nie algemeen bekend was as geestelike leier nie. Om dit met sekerheid vas te stel is egter moeilik, want die presbiter maak ook baie persoonlike opmerkings oor Gaius, byvoorbeeld dat hy sy geestelike kind is en dat hy hom liefhet, wat 'n deegliker kennis van mekaar veronderstel.

5. Byvoorbeeld: die gebruik van die begrip “waarheid/waar” in die Johannesevangelie en -briewe is soos volg: ἀλήθεια Joh 1:14,17; 3:21; 4:23,24; 5:33; 8:32,40,44,44,45,46; 14:6,17; 15:26; 16:7,13; 17:17,19; 18:37,38; 1 Joh 1:6,8; 2:4,21; 3:18,19; 4:6; 5:6; 2 Joh 1,2,3,4; 3 Joh 1,3,4,8,12; ἀληθινός - Joh 1:9; 4:23,37; 6:32; 7:28; 8:16; 15:1; 17:3; 19:35; 1 Joh 2:8; 5:20; ἀληθής - Joh 3:33; 4:18; 5:31,32; 6:55; 7:18; 8:13,14,17,26; 10:41; 19:35; 21:24; 1 Joh 2:8,27; 3 Joh 12; ἀληθῶς - Joh 1:47; 4:42; 6:14; 7:26, 40; 8:31; 17:8; 1 Joh 2:5.

6. Sien Van der Watt (2006: 49-75 en 2009: 317-333) vir bespreking en literatuurverwysings.

believer... In this sense the term (functions)... as a sort of ‘symbolic term’, covering what could be included under ‘divine’ or ‘divinely related’” (van der Watt 2009:322; sien ook Brown 1986:703; Bultmann 1973:97; Marshall 1978:82; Menken 2010:134). Dit impliseer dus dat as gesê word dat die presbiter Gaius in “waarheid” liefhet, dit eintlik beteken dat hy dit doen soos God dit ver wag en dit reg en waar voor God is (Schnackenburg 1984:322; Brown 1986:706). As hy dus nie iets “in waarheid” doen nie, is dit nie soos God dit wil nie. Daarom kan die skrywer in verse 11-12 sê dat Gaius die goeie en nie die slegte moet na-aap nie, bedoelende dat hy nie Diotrefes moet navolg nie (Brown 1986:721), maar eerder vir hom as presbiter, want hulle albei, hy en Gaius, staan immers in die waarheid.⁷

Die waarheidsbegrip word meer as eenmaal in die brief ten opsigte van Gaius gebruik.

In verse 3-4 verwys die presbiter na die getuienis van sommige mense oor die lewe van Gaius. Op die basis van hoe Gaius geleef⁸ het, naamlik “in waarheid” (σὺ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ περιπατεῖς) kon hulle van sy waarheid getuig (μαρτυροῦντων σου τῇ ἀληθείᾳ; v. 3). Soos hierbo genoem, moet verwysings na waarheid in Johannes gesien word as beskrywings van dit wat in lyn met God en sy wil is. Dit dien duidelik as identiteitsmerker vir die Johannese groep. Met ander woorde, Gaius leef in ooreenstemming met die wil van God en dit is ‘n lewenstyl wat in ooreenstemming met die Johannese groep se verwagtings is en hulle identiteit dienooreenkomstig weerspieël. Gedrag wat daarvan afwyk, soos die van Diotrefes, loën hierdie waarheid en dit pas nie by die Johannese Christelike identiteit nie. Dat die skrywer van die begin af homself en almal wat met hom verbind is met die waarheid identifiseer (verse 2-4) dien as retoriese tegniek om alles te diskrediteer wat nie met hul optrede ooreenstem nie. Daarin lê deel van die retoriese funksie van die brief. Die brief funksioneer dus ook performatief (sluit in en uit, spreek vry en veroordeel, skep verwagtings en keur gedrag af, ens.) binne die konflik wat in die brief aangespreek word.

Die vereiste om mekaar lief te hê is reeds in die Evangelie duidelik gestel: “Ek gee julle ‘n nuwe gebod: julle moet mekaar liefhê. Soos Ek julle liefhet, moet julle mekaar ook liefhê. As julle mekaar liefhet, sal almal weet dat julle dissipels van My is” (Joh 13:34-35). Dit is die merkteken van Johannese dissipelskap. Die begrip “liefde” in Johannes beskryf ‘n aktiewe houding van lojaliteit en verantwoordelikheid teenoor jou mede-groepsgenote wat konstant in aksie oorgaan tot die voordeel van die ander groepsgenote, tot by die punt waar jy bereid is om jou eie lewe te gee (Joh 15:13). Daar is dus nie grense aan jou lojaliteit en bereidheid om die ander te dien en te ondersteun nie (vir vollediger motivering sien van der Watt 2006:115-120, asook die literatuur daar vermeld). In 1 Joh 3:16-17 word dit so gestel: “Hieraan weet ons wat liefde is: Jesus het sy lewe vir ons afgelê. Ons behoort ook ons lewens vir ons broers af te lê. Wie aardse besittings het en sy broer sien gebrek ly, maar geen gevoel vir hom het nie—hoe kan die liefde

7. Die 1983-vertaling vertaal ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ in 1:1 soos volg: “wat ek *waarlik* liefhet”. Volgens die gegewens hierbo is dit nie die beste vertaling nie (teen Painter 2002:367), maar wel moontlik. Sien ook Brown (1986:703); Kruse (2000:220).

8. Die term περιπατέω is moontlik ‘n Semitisme (bv. Spr 8:20; Jes 2:5 - Brown 1986:197; Klauck 1991:88; Smalley 2002:23), hoewel nie noodwendig nie, aangesien die term ook in Griekse literatuur gebruik word (sien BDAG ad loc.). Die referensie is gewoonlik na die aktiwiteit van lewe, die rondgaan op jou lewenspad. Die term word ook elders in Johannes gebruik, asook in die res van die Nuwe Testament, hoewel met laer frekwensie (byvoorbeeld, Mk 7:5; Hand 21:21; Rom 14:15; Ef 5:2 asook 1Joh 2:6,7,11; 2Joh 4, 6; 3Joh 3,4). Vergelyk ook Lieu (2008:52-54) and Rensberger (2001:20) vir gedetailleerde besprekings.

van God in hom wees?” Die liefde vir Gaius beteken dus binne die breër Johannese raamwerk dat Gaius as deel van die “dissipels of volgelinge” van Jesus gesien word en dat daar ’n verhouding van lojaliteit en verantwoordelikheid wat in aksie kan en moet oorgaan tussen Gaius en die presbiter veronderstel word, veral natuurlik van die kant van die presbiter in hierdie geval. Liefde vereis lojaliteit en opoffering, veral as dit binne die wil van God, ja, die waarheid plaasvind. Indien Gaius homself dus binne hierdie indentiteitsraamwerk tuis voel, het hy eintlik nie ’n ander keuse as om die raad van die presbiter te volg en aan sy versoek te voldoen nie.

Dat die begrippe liefde en waarheid hier gebruik word om die groepsbinding en gedeelde identiteit tussen die presbiter en Gaius te beskryf, lê ook die fondament vir die latere versoek van die presbiter aan Gaius om die gestuurde sendelinge te ontvang, ten spyte daarvan dat Diotrefes dit sou verbied.

- In vers 2 is daar ’n kort getuienis oor Gaius, naamlik, dat “dit met jou siel goed gaan” (εὐοδοῦται σου ἡ ψυχὴ). Hierdie opmerking volg op die bede dat dit met Gaius in alle opsigte goed mag gaan en dat hy gesond mag wees (περὶ πάντων εὐχομαί σε εὐδοῦσθαι καὶ ὑγιαίνειν); ja, dat dit fisies met hom so goed sal gaan, “so goed as wat dit met sy siel gaan” (καθὼς εὐοδοῦται σου ἡ ψυχὴ). Die woord ψυχὴ kan natuurlik verskillende referensies hê (sien BDAG ad loc.). In die Johannes-evangelie word die woord ψυχὴ feitlik deurgaans vir die fisiese lewe van iemand gebruik,⁹ dit in kontras met die woord ζωή wat deurgaans vir die ewige lewe gebruik word (sien van der Watt 2000:201-245). Die feit dat in 3 Johannes 2 die fisiese gesondheid teenoor ψυχὴ gestel word, dui daarop dat die fokus in hierdie konteks op die geestelike lewe¹⁰ van Gaius val (Marshall 1978:83; Smalley 2002:346; Kruse 2000:221).¹¹ Volgens die skrywer gaan dit reeds geestelik goed met Gaius, veral omdat hy in liefde en waarheid leef, soos die daaropvolgende verse uiteensit (Brown 1986: 704; Strecker 1989:361). Dieselfde voorspoed en gesondheid word Gaius op fisiese vlak toegewens.

Uit die opmerking dat Gaius fisies so gesond moet wees as wat hy geestelik is, moet nie noodwendig afgelei word dat hy fisies siek was nie, hoewel dit seker nie buite rekening gelaat kan word nie (so Marshall 1978:83). Dit gaan hier waarskynlik eerder oor ’n algemene wens wat in welwillendheid deur die presbiter gemaak word. In antieke briewe was dit gebruik om goeie wense te gee, byna soos ons vandag ’n brief sou begin met “Ek hoop dit gaan goed”, sonder om daarmee te bedoel dat dit sleg met die persoon gaan. Dit mag ook retories as aanmoediging dien – die feit dat daar erken word dat dit reeds goed gaan moedig moontlik die ontvanger aan om so voort te gaan.

9. So Joh 10:11, 15, 17; 12:25; 13:37, 38; 15:13, asook 1 Joh 3:16. Strecker (1989:360) noem dit “eine alttestamentlich-jüdische Prägung”. In twee gevalle word die woord binne uitdrukkings gebruik: Joh 10:24; 12:27 – hier kan miskien ’n saak daarvoor uitgemaak word dat die woord ψυχὴ na die geestelike (nie-sigbare) sy van die mens in teenstelling met die fisiese gebruik word (sien Brown 1986:704).

10. Dat dit moeilik is om die uitdrukking presies te omskryf, blyk uit pogings om dit te verwoord, soos: “überirdischen Leben” – Strecker (1989:360), die “spirituele, christelike welbevinden” – Menken (2010:133); of “noble spirit” – Brown (1986:704).

11. Die meeste kommentatore lê klem daarop dat dit nie hier om die kontras tussen die materie en die gees gaan nie (byvoorbeeld, Schnackenburg 1984:321; Menken 2010:133). Dit gaan hier om twee fasette van ’n mens, naamlik dat die mens as eenheid fisies gesond kan wees, maar ook op spirituele vlak, as ander faset van ’n mens, gesond kan wees. Schnackenburg (1984:321) meen dit gaan oor die hele persoonlikheid van Gaius wat uit verskillende gesigspunte aangespreek word met die fokus op sy “religös-sittliches Verhalten”.

Uit 3 Johannes 3, 5, 6 is dit duidelik dat Gaius reeds besoekende sendelinge gehuisves het (wat Johannese broers was – Menken 2010:133). Hulle het die gasvryheid positief as die betoning van liefde, met ander woorde van hulle Christelike verbondenheid met mekaar, beleef. Hulle het 'n positiewe getuigenis oor Gaius by die presbiter gelewer (Schnackenburg 1984:322). So het Gaius bewys dat hy 'n mede-arbeider van die waarheid is en dat hy die goeie nagevolg (vv. 8, 11 – sien die diskussie oor waarheid en liefde hierbo). In sy situasie was die praktiese uitdrukking van liefde en waarheid teenoor mede-Christene in die vorm van gasvryheid aan die besoekende sendelinge die bewys van sy verbondenheid aan die Johannese groep, waarvan die presbiter ook deel was. Hy het nie alleen die sendelinge in sy huis ontvang nie, maar het ook gesorg vir verdere versorging op hulle reis (v. 12 – Strecker 1989:362; Brown 1986:728; Schnackenburg 1984:325).

- Die goeie verhouding blyk ook daaruit dat die presbiter Gaius as 'n lojale persoon aan hom, sy geestelike kind (v. 4), gesien het. Die feit dat die presbiter 'n brief skryf aan Gaius waarin hy Diotrefes (wat as skynbare outoriteitsfiguur weier om die sendelinge te ontvang en ander verbied om dit te doen – vv. 9-10) berispe en dan van Gaius vra om die sendelinge wel te ontvang, kan moeilik anders geïnterpreteer word as dat die presbiter Gaius as teëvoeter teenoor Diotrefes opstel. Binne die situasie identifiseer hy hom dus as die (potensiële of miskien nuwe?) outoriteitsfiguur.¹² Gaius verteenwoordig nou die etos en identiteit van die Johannese groep, van die liefde en die waarheid in die gemeenskap. Daar word soms geargumenteer dat om mense in jou huis te ontvang nie noodwendig op leierskap hoef te dui nie, maar bloot net wil sê dat Gaius waarskynlik blyplek vir hulle gehad het (Gillman 1992:869). Gasvryheid was egter 'n belangrike sosiale waarde in die antieke tyd,¹³ wat meer as net die neutrale ontvangs van mense in jou huis beteken het. Dit was 'n gelade sosiale aksie. Dit verswak die argument dat Gaius maar net sy huisdeure vir hulle oopgemaak het en niks verder nie. Die term “voorhelp” (προπέμψας) in vers 6 dui op 'n aktiewe betrokkenheid nie alleen by die ontvangs van die sendelinge nie, maar ook by die verdere versorging (“Ausstattung und Weiterbeförderung” – Strecker 1989:362) op hulle reis (Brown 1986:710; Smalley 2002:350). Verder, in die situasie waar 'n outoriteitsfiguur opdrag gegee het om nie sulke mense te ontvang nie, is om dit wel te doen tog 'n leierskapshandeling.

Die retoriese aard van 3 Johannes verdiep die beeld van Gaius verder. Metodes soos die taalhandelingsteorieë¹⁴ het daarop gewys dat spreke/skrywe ook 'n handeling of aksie is wat mense wil beïnvloed, met ander woorde, iets aan mense wil doen (= performatief). 'n Volledige retoriese analise van 3 Johannes is nie hier moontlik nie, maar op die volgende moet tog gewys word. 'n Konstruksie van die situasie waarop 3 Johannes reageer, dui op 'n krisissituasie wat rondom die ontvangs van rondreisende sendelinge ontwikkel het. Die brief wil die situasie aanspreek en manipuleer. Dit word gedoen

12. Brown 1986:728 sien die strategie van die skrywer as dat hy Gaius die posisie van Diotrefes ten opsigte van die besoekers wil laat inneem.

13. Sien die baanbrekende artikel van Malherbe (1977:222-232) oor die gasvryheid in 3 Johannes; Keener (1993:ad loc.); Schnackenburg (1984:323-325). Brown (1986:730) noem die tweede eeuse *Martyrium S. Iustini 3* as voorbeeld van hoe Christene wat vreemde stede besoek het, verwelkom is.

14. Die teorieë kan nie volledig in die artikel behandel word nie; alleen van die insigte word gebruik. Vir volledige bespreking van die teorieë sien Austin (1962) en Searle (1969) as twee van die grondleggers wat die taalhandelingsteorieë vir wyer benutting beskikbaar gestel het, ook in die Nuwe-Testamentiese wetenskap. Botha (1991) het die metode vir die interpretasie van Johannes 4 gebruik.

deur aan Gaius te skryf. Eerstens word Gaius hoog aangeprys en as ideale Johannese groeps persoon geskets (liefdevol, in die waarheid en lojaal), byna as prototipe. Daarmee word hy retories binne 'n bepaalde verwagtingshorison geplaas. As hy nie so optree soos die presbiter volgens die brief verag nie, tree hy teen sy eie identiteit op (ten minste soos sy geestelike vader¹⁵ – vers 4 – dit sien). Dan is hy vergelykbaar met Diotrefes, die navorger van wat verkeerd en nie volgens God se wil optree nie (vv. 9-11).

Die sterk woordeskat in vers 11 (μη μισῶ τὸ κακὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀγαθόν. ὁ ἀγαθοποιὸν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν· ὁ κακοποιὸν οὐχ ἠγάπησεν τὸν θεόν) het ook 'n retoriese funksie in die sin dat 'n performatiewe uitspraak oor die etiese impak van die aksie voor God gemaak word. Om nie te doen wat die presbiter vra nie, beteken nie alleen 'n reaksie teen die presbiter nie (vergelyk Diotrefes – vv. 9-10) maar ook 'n keuse teen God en die goeie. Die aanprysing van Gaius plus die retories sterk taal, plaas dus vir Gaius in die posisie dat hy eintlik nie kan nee sê vir die versoek van die presbiter nie. Die brief "dwing" hom eintlik daartoe. Daarmee verseker die presbiter, so goed hy retories kan, dat die rondreisende sendelinge, veral Demetrius (v. 12) wel deur Gaius gehelp sal word en die sendingbedrywighede van die presbiter se Johannese groep kan voortgaan. So identifiseer hy dus vir Gaius as die nuwe sleutelpersoon en as leier (nie in die sin van 'n spesifieke amp nie) binne die proses van Johannese missionêre werk.

3. WAS GAIUS 'N LEIER VAN 'N JOHANNESE GROEP?

'n Vraag is of Gaius deel van die gemeente van Diotrefes was en of hy aan die leiding gestaan het van 'n eie, onafhanklike (Johannese) groep (Brown 1986:702)? Opinies loop uiteen hieroor: sommige is van mening dat Gaius wel invloedryk en 'n leier was, moontlik van nog 'n huisgemeente. Hy het ten minste 'n huis gehad en kon self besluit om sendelinge daar te ontvang. In die sin moet hy as leier gesien word (sien, byvoorbeeld, Malherbe 1977:226-229; Menken 2010:135). Ander is weer van opinie dat daar niks in die brief is wat Gaius as "leier" tipeer nie, selfs nie die feit dat hy mense in sy huis ontvang nie. Malherbe (1977:226-229) toon aan dat die ontvangs van iemand in jou huis jou nie die leier van die gemeenskap maak nie, maar wel die baas oor jou huis. In die gevalle word "leier" gewoonlik as iemand met 'n kerklike amp gesien, dus 'n soort van formele leier.¹⁶ Dit is nie noodwendig die enigste vorm van leierskap nie. Sosiale identiteitsteorieë definieer leiers in terme van die rol wat hulle binne die identiteitsvorming en –uitdrukking van 'n groep speel, dus meer funksioneel as formeel. 'n Kompliserende faktor is verder die vraag of Gaius deel van Diotrefes (vv. 9-10) se huisgemeente was, want dan was hy waarskynlik ondergeskik aan Diotrefes wat homself belangrik wou maak. Indien hy nie deel van die Diotrefes-groep was nie, maar 'n buurgroep, is dit makliker om hom as leier voor te stel.

'n Belangrike argument dat Gaius deel van die Diotrefes-groep was (soos Bultmann 1973:96 ook suggereer), is die gebruik van die woord ἐκκλησία ("gemeente" – alleen hier in die Johannese geskrifte) in die *enkeltvoud* in verse 6 en 9. Dit word egter nie as 'n sterk argument

15. Geestelike vaderskap beteken nie noodwendig dat Gaius 'n bekeerling van die presbiter was nie. Dit word nie uitgesluit nie, maar ook nie direk gesê nie. Sien Menken (2010:134). Die intieme taal dui wel op die samehorigheidsgevoel wat bestaan (Schnackenburg 1984:323).

16. Volgens Marshall (1978:11) is dit anakronisties om so te redeneer, aangesien die soort van formele leierskap nog nie teen die tyd van die skryf van die brief so duidelik ontwikkel was nie. Brown (1986:729) noem dit "of dubious accuracy" om van die biskopamp te praat. Schnackenburg (1984:320) meen ook dat Gaius geen "kirchliche Amtsperson" was nie. Dit lyk tog of Diotrefes wel in die rigting begin dink en beweeg.

gesien nie, aangesien dit nie noodwendig daarop dui dat daar net een algemene gemeente was nie. Malherbe (1977:226-229) voer byvoorbeeld aan dat die enkelvoud dui op 'n brief aan al die huiskerke in die omgewing, ook aan die van Gaius (Brown 1986:731 betwis dit egter). Gaius sou dan van die brief bewus gewees het en gehoor daaraan gegee het, iets wat Diotrefes nie gedoen het nie. Brown (1986:729) sê 'n verdere argument dat Gaius verbonde was aan die Diotrefes-groep is dat die skrywer aan Gaius noem dat hy met sy koms Diotrefes gaan konfronteer (vers 10).

Daar is egter sterk ondersteuning vir die standpunt dat Gaius se groep onderskei moet word van Diotrefes en dat hulle waarskynlik buurgroepe was (Malherbe 1977:226-229). Strecker (1989:362) argumenteer byvoorbeeld dat in vers 6 die woord ἐκκλησία bloot na die groep verwys wat vanaf vers 3 met Gaius verbind word en wat van die groep van Diotrefes – waarna daar in vers 9 verwys word – onderskei moet word. Argumente ten gunste van 'n eie groep waaraan Gaius behoort het en wat miskien in sy huis bymekaar gekom het, los van die van Diotrefes (so Malherbe 1977:222-232; Regensberger 1997:159), sluit die volgende in: i) In vers 9 word 'n brief wat aan die gemeente (van Diotrefes) geskryf is (Ἐγραψά τι τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ) onder Gaius se aandag gebring. As hy deel van die gemeente was, sou hy waarskynlik van die brief geweet het en sou so 'n opmerking nie nodig gewees het nie (so Brown 1986:729-731). ii) Boonop sê die skrywer dat Diotrefes eerste onder *hulle* (ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων αὐτῶν) wil wees, wat Gaius skynbaar uitsluit. iii) Gaius het wel van die besoekende sendelinge ontvang (Brown 1986:704) en tree dus anders as die Diotrefes-groep op, skynbaar sonder agting vir die verbod van Diotrefes (vv. 3-8). iv) In vers 15 word Gaius gevra om vriende by die naam te groet. Dit lyk of dit 'n ander groep as dié van Diotrefes kon gewees het en dat nie almal dus Diotrefes se gesag aanvaar of daaronder geval het nie (Bultmann 1973:103; Marshall 1978:94-95). v) Daar is nie aanduiding in die brief dat die presbiter sou vermoed het dat Gaius moeilikheid sou optel met Diotrefes en uit die gemeente gegooi sou word nie (Brown 1986:728-729 teen Schnackenburg 1984:323). Dit lyk eerder of die presbiter, soos hierbo geargumenteer, Gaius as 'n onafhanklike "leier" van 'n onafhanklike groep gesien het (so ook Strecker 1989:362). Die standpunt dat Gaius 'n leier van 'n Johannese groep was wat onafhanklik van Diotrefes kon optree lyk meer aanvaarbaar (so Malherbe 1977:226-229), veral gesien in die lig daarvan dat Gaius relatief vry kon optree.

Brown (1986:731-732) het tog bedenkinge of Gaius werklik 'n *leier* van 'n huiskerk was. Hy noem dat die brief byvoorbeeld aan hom persoonlik en nie aan 'n gemeente, soos in die geval van Diotrefes, geskryf is nie. Dit mag dus wees dat Gaius net 'n ryk huisbesitter was wat met die huisves van die sendelinge gehelp het. Dit sou beteken dat die brief daarop gemik is om Gaius tot 'n belangriker bondgenoot van die presbiter te maak en so as leier te vestig. Die scenario het sy probleme, aangesien dit nie lyk of Gaius alleen was of alleen opgetree het nie, maar deel was van 'n groep, aan wie hy volgens vers 15 gevra word om groete oor te dra. In die antieke tyd sou dit ook sosiaal gesien onwaarskynlik gewees het dat 'n ryk huiseienaar en dan nog Christen ook, as individu alleen sou optree, sonder dat hy ingebed was in een of ander groep.

Die implikasies van die moontlike verhouding tussen Gaius en Diotrefes vir die interpretasie van 3 Johannes raak ook die doel vir die skryf van die brief. As Gaius inderdaad lid van die Diotrefes-groep was, sou dit beteken dat die brief funksioneer as 'n oproep aan Gaius om hom los te maak van die outoriteit en beslissings van Diotrefes en die presbiter na te volg. Hy word dan retories aangemoedig om vir die waarheid, liefde en die goeie te kies. Hy moet nie aan die dreigemente en voorbeeld van Diotrefes toegee nie. So sou die brief onder andere dien as legitimasie vir die leierskap van Gaius. Aan die ander kant, as Gaius nie deel van die Diotrefes-

groep was nie, is die brief daarop gerig om Gaius in te lig oor die situasie en hom aan te moedig om in die waarheid en liefde te bly volhard en nie die verkeerde voorbeeld van Diotrefes te volg nie (sien Kruse 2000:218). Hy moet die presbiter se standpunt bly ondersteun.¹⁷ Op die wyse vestig hy Gaius as ideale Johannese leier teenoor Diotrefes wat gediskrediteer word.

Die interne getuienis oor Gaius is dus baie positief – hy is ‘n egte voorbeeld van ‘n goeie Johannese gelowige wat in liefde en waarheid die belange van die groep, via konkrete hulp aan die rondreisende sendelinge uitleef. Hy doen dit ten spyte van die gebeure rondom Diotrefes, wat moontlik kan aandui dat hy aan ‘n afsonderlike Johannese groep of huiskerk kon behoort. Daar het hy waarskynlik ‘n leidende rol gespeel. Die presbiter, wat Gaius as sy geestelike kind sien, beoordeel die verhouding tussen hom en Gaius veral as liefdevol en lojiaal. Gesien vanuit die hoek van die sosiale identiteitsteorie¹⁸, waar die leier die verteenwoordiger van die identiteit van die groep is en konkreet daaraan uitdrukking gee, is Gaius volgens die beskrywing in 3 Johannes die ideale leier. In hom word die etos van ‘n egte Johannese gelowige in liefde en waarheid uitgedruk en sy narratief van hulp en betrokkenheid by sy medegelowiges word as die ideale narratief vir Johannese gelowiges geteken. Die sendelinge getuig dan ook van Gaius se liefdevolle optrede wat volgens die sosiale identiteitsteorie al van hom ‘n leier maak aan wie ander lede van die groep spesiale (charismatiese) eienskappe wat hulle identiteit as groep verwoord, toesê. Hy is die een op wie die presbiter sy hoop plaas om die slegte voorbeeld van Diotrefes met die goeie weg van die waarheid te vervang.

4. VERTEL INLIGTING BUITE 3 JOHANNES ONS IETS VAN GAIUS, DIE ADRESSANT VAN 3 JOHANNES (EKSTERNE GETUIENIS)?

Gaius (Caius) was ‘n algemene naam van Romeinse oorsprong wat ook onder die Griekssprekendes van daardie tyd gebruik is.¹⁹ Die gewildheid van die naam is waarskynlik die enkel grootste probleem as dit kom by die identifisering van die adressant van 3 Johannes met iemand anders. Die argument kan nie alleen op die ooreenstemming van name gebaseer word nie, maar daar moet duideliker verbande tussen die ontvanger van 3 Johannes en ander

17. Hier kan kortliks op ‘n verdere aspek van die debat rondom die verhouding tussen die presbiter en Diotrefes gewys word. Käsemann (1951:292-311) argumenteer dat die skrywer van die brief waarskynlik ‘n presbiter in die Diotrefes-groep was en toe vanweë dwaalleer uitgegooi is. Hy staan dus as “ketter” buite die groep. Hy val Diotrefes nie aan oor sy leer nie (wat waarskynlik die ortodokse leer was), aangesien hy self daaroor onseker is, volgens Käsemann. Die brief word nou geskryf om mense na sy kant oor te haal en weer sy posisie te versterk teenoor die van Diotrefes. Daarvoor wil hy Gaius as instrument gebruik. Bultmann (1973:101) meen egter dat Käsemann die gegewens oor-interpretêr. Daar is geen teken in die brief dat die presbiter een van Diotrefes se mense was wat ge-ekskommunikeer is nie. Dit mag egter wees dat Diotrefes voel hy verdedig die ortodokse posisie deur die rondreisende sendelinge se invloed uit sy gemeente te hou (sien 2 Johannes 11). Volgens die teorie sou die rondreisende sendelinge en die presbiter Gnostiese tendense in die gemeente wou indra. Dit is vir die meeste opponente van die standpunt die swakpunt van die argument: nêrens is daar enige aanduiding dat die presbiter enige Gnostiese tendense vertoon nie, wat dit dus ‘n ongegronde hipotese maak (so Marshall 1978:12-13; Schnackenburg 1984:299-300). Die meer aanvaarbare teorie bly nog dat die presbiter nie deel van die Diotrefes-groep was nie.

18. Die grondslae van die sosiale identiteitsteorie kan nie hier volledig behandel word nie (sien Tajfel en Turner 1979; Turner en Oakes 1986 as van die grondleggers van die teorie), maar die insig dat die leier ‘n verteenwoordiger is van die sosiale identiteit van die groep en dat sy narratief die narratief van die groep op ‘n ideale manier weerspieël, illustreer tog die aard van die leierskap van Gaius volgens 3 Johannes. 19. Strecker (1989:358) noem die volgende bewyse uit Griekse dokumente dat Gaius ook binne Griekse kringe as naam gebruik is: Diodor. S. XI 60,1; XIII 104,1; XIX 73,1.

persone met die naam Gaius gelê kan word voordat enige koppeling met sekerheid tussen twee sulke naamgenote gemaak kan word.

Ons lees van die volgende persone met die naam Gaius in relevante Christelike literatuur (aanhalinge uit die Nuwe Testament kom uit die 1933 vertaling).

<p>Handelinge 19:29: “Daarop raak die hele stad heeltetal in verwarring, en hulle storm soos een man na die teater en sleep Gaius en Aristargus saam, Masedoniërs wat reisgenote van Paulus was”.</p>	<p>Die gebeure het in Efese plaasgevind toe Demetrius, die silwersmid, die stad teen Paulus opgesweep het. Hier word die Masedoniër Gaius ook die teater ingesleep saam met ander vriende van Paulus.</p>
<p>Handelinge 20:4: “En tot in Asië het Sopater van Beréa hom vergesel, en van die Tessalonisense, Aristargus en Sekundus, en Gaius van Derbe en Timoteus, en uit Asië Tígikus en Trofimus”.</p>	<p>Hier heet een van Paulus se medereisigers Gaius. Hy kon van Derbe gewees het, maar Derbe kan in hierdie Griekse sinskonstruksie ook moontlik na Timoteus verwys.</p>
<p>Rom 16:23: “Gaius, my gasheer en ook gasheer van die hele gemeente hier, stuur ook groete”.</p>	<p>Hierdie Gaius was die gasheer van Paulus en die gemeente het waarskynlik ook onder sy leiding bymekaar gekom. Hy kan dieselfde Gaius as die een van 1 Kor 1:14 wees.</p>
<p>1 Kor 1:14: “Ek dank God dat ek niemand van julle gedoop het nie, behalwe Krispus en Gaius”.</p>	<p>Hierdie Gaius is in Korinte deur Paulus gedoop en word soms met die Gaius van Romeine 16:23 verbind omdat Paulus moontlik in Korinte kon gewees het toe hy Romeine geskryf het. Hy stuur dan groete aan die mense in Rome (Schnackenburg 1984:320). ‘n Latere kerkvader, Origenes, vermeld in sy <i>Kommentaar op Romeine</i> 10:41 ‘n tradisie dat hierdie Gaius die eerste biskop van Tessalonika geword het. Die tradisie kan egter nie geverifieer word nie.</p>
<p>Apostoliese Konstitusies, 7:46 (ongeveer 370 nC): “Nou, wat die biskoppe betref wat in ons tyd georden is; ons stel julle in kennis, hulle is die volgende... van Pergamum, Gaius...Hierdie is die biskoppe aan wie die gemeentes in die Here deur ons toevertrou is...”.</p>	<p>Hierdie Gaius word as die biskop van Pergamum geïdentifiseer en word ook dikwels met die Gaius van Handelinge 20:4 verbind. Die dokument stam egter uit die vierde eeu wat die historiese waarde van die getuienis onseker maak.</p>

Ten spyte van pogings om Gaius van 3 Johannes met een van die bogenoemde figure te identifiseer²⁰ is daar geen duidelike inligting wat die Gaius van 3 Johannes met enige van hierdie figure verbind nie (Brown 1986:703; Kruse 2000:220; Akin 2001:239). Die Gaius van Efese kom uit die vermeende plek waar die Johannese groepe waarskynlik hulleself bevind het. Dat hulle in dieselfde stad gebly het, is nie genoeg rede om te konkludeer dat dit dieselfde persoon was nie. Boonop was die persoon deel van die Paulus se groep waarskynlik byna 45 jaar voor 3 Johannes geskryf is wat so'n verband nie onmoontlik maak nie, maar onwaarskynlik. Rensberger (1997:158) argumenteer immers dat as 3 Johannes eers in ongeveer die jaar 100 geskryf is, dit eintlik onwaarskynlik is dat een van die figure met die Gaius van 3 Johannes verbind kan word. Daarom noem Smalley (2002:344) hom 'n "unknown Christian leader" en Bultmann (1973:95) noem enige poging om van hierdie persone met mekaar te verbind arbitrêr.

Ter afsluiting, die eksterne materiaal bied dus nie inligting wat met enige sekerheid meer oor die Gaius van 3 Johannes meedeel nie. In nie een van die dokumente waar Gaius se naam genoem word, is daar enige aanduiding, hetsy direk of indirek, wat die vermoede kan laat ontstaan dat daar 'n verband tussen Gaius van 3 Johannes en die ander genoemde persoon kan wees nie. As ons dus vra wie Gaius van 3 Johannes is, moet daar maar volstaan word by die inligting wat in 3 Johannes self oor hom gegee word. Hy bly opgesluit binne die vyftien verse van 3 Johannes (Brown 1986:702).

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20. Chapman (1904:366) is onoortuigend in sy argumentasie wat Gaius van 3 Johannes met enige van die bogenoemde persone wil verbind.

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Was Phinehas a religious terrorist? In dialogue with Paul Cliteur

ABSTRACT

The Dutch philosopher Paul Cliteur wrote a defence of secular thought in his recent book: “The secular outlook. In defence of moral and political secularism” (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). In this book he criticizes Christianity amongst other modern religions as inherently violent and as a danger to the liberal democracies and the human rights environments of our age. He is lead to this conclusion by an exegesis of several passages of Scripture. One of these passages is the story of Phinehas in Numbers 25:1-18. According to his exegesis Phinehas can be considered to be a biblical terrorist in the name of God, and he states that this conclusion can entice Christians to condone violence on religious grounds. This article evaluates Cliteur’s use of Scripture from a Reformed Theological Ethical perspective and asks the question whether his conclusion is valid. This evaluation is done within the scope of the revelation of God in the book of nature, the written word and the incarnate word. From this perspective Cliteur’s use of scripture in an a-historical way and without the evidence of the book of nature (natural law) and the revelation in Christ as the incarnate word can be termed as Biblicist, and thus as invalid.

1. INTRODUCTION

In his defence of moral and political secularism Cliteur (2010a:1) notes that the contemporary world is confronted with a relatively new phenomenon namely religious violence or, as he prefers to name it, religious terrorism:

“Governments are suddenly facing religious leaders who issue death sentences to writers, and they are struggling with the demands of religious minorities in the midst of their liberal democracies (Cliteur 2010a:105).”

At first sight it might seem that he has modern radical Islam in mind, but citing many examples he contends that the tendency towards violence is part and parcel of religious thinking and conduct as a whole. Religious terrorism is, according to Cliteur (2010a:105), justified by Scripture in certain cases. He is of the opinion that the inherent violent nature of religion manifests a contradiction between modern constitutional texts like the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” and the “Holy Scripture” as handed down by the ancient religions of the book. His aim is to revisit the concept of secularism with the purpose of re-inventing secularism as the only discourse capable of establishing a peaceful environment within which various religions can function in a liberal democracy.

This aim is noble and cannot be questioned from a moderate religious perspective. However, the question is whether Cliteur judges Christianity fairly? Can his exegesis of the prominent passages of Scripture that he uses to prove his argument stand the test of sound scientific

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hermeneutical principles? One can even ask: Is Cliteur not making the same mistake in his exegesis of passages to prove his argument that Scripture justifies religious terrorism, as Biblicalists make when they interpret Scripture a-historically and biblicalistical? How sound and convincing is his use of Scripture?

This article aims to enter into dialogue with Cliteur on this issue. The central theoretical argument of the article is that Cliteur errs in his interpretation of Biblical texts by employing a proof text method to support his argument that Christianity is inherently violent. One example of such a proof text used in his argument will be discussed. This example represents the bulk of his criticism of Scripture. I am referring here to his analysis and application of the story of Phinehas in Numbers 25:1-18. First of all the history of Phinehas will be analysed and compared to the analysis that Cliteur presents. The meta-theory of the main principles regarding the use of Scripture in the Reformed tradition will be explicated in order to indicate the deficiencies of Cliteur's point of view. In conclusion, this model of biblical interpretation will be used to evaluate Cliteur's presentation of the Phinehas story.

2. THE PHINEHAS HISTORY

The history of Phinehas took place after the Exodus of Israel, the people of the covenant, from Egypt according to the promise of God. While the people lived in Shittim on their way to the Promised Land they were enticed by the Moabites to take part in the religious practices of the people of Moab, who worshipped Ba'al Peor. This worship entailed sexual immorality with the daughters of Moab as a result of idol worshipping. Such an act was strictly forbidden by the first and the second commandments. The first commandment reads: "Thou shall have no other gods beside me" (Ex 20:2). Israelites were not supposed to devote their hearts to Yahweh as well as to other gods. The Shema calls the Israelites to love Yahweh with all their hearts, their souls and all their might (Douma, 1992:23). As the people of the covenant they had to be holier than the people of the land. This command to otherness is linked to the holiness of God that is expressed by the many ceremonial laws found in the book Leviticus. There are instructions regarding the holy places and the holy ceremonial actions, the offerings (Chapters 1-7), the chastity of people and the way animals should be treated (Chapters 11-15).

Furthermore, the seventh commandment forbids all forms of sexual immorality. The immoral actions of the Israelites were against the will of God. Leviticus 18 and 20 provides the regulations specifying the boundaries of permissible sexual relationships. According to these the Israelites would sin by engaging in sexual relations with the daughters of Moab. The people of Israel transgressed the law of God with their idolatry and sexual immorality. The death penalty was laid down for such grave sins against God such as idolatry (Ex 22:19; Lev 20:1-5; Dt 13:2-9; 17:2-7; Numbers 15:32-36) and also for abuses of sexual relations (Lev 20:10; Dt 22:22) (De Vaux, 1988:158). Offences in this regard would evoke the anger of God.

God instructed Moses to hang such men in public in front of the holy place. Such action would rescind the anger of God towards his people (Levine, 2000:288). The sentence was passed by the judges of Israel, probably those who were appointed by Moses over the Israelite divisions of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens and who settled disputes among the Israelites (Cole, 2000:440). One man brought a Midianite woman into the gathering of the Israelites with the intention to engage in an immoral sexual relation with her. Phinehas killed this man and the woman to protect the honour of God. His action resulted in the rescinding of the anger of God and preventing the destruction of the Israelites. Phinehas was not punished for this act

of murder. On the contrary, he was commended by God. God entered into a covenant with Phinehas and promised him a blessed future. For him and his descendants priesthood would be guaranteed.

God honoured Phinehas because he stood up for the honour of God in an act of atonement. By killing the adulterous couple he averted the judgement of God on the Israelites. Shortly after this event God instructed Moses to regard the Midianites as enemies and to destroy them because they acted with hostility towards the people of God and enticed them to worship Ba'al Peor. Two actions of God are noteworthy in this history:

- He commended Phinehas for the killing of the couple although the shedding of blood and the taking of a life was strictly forbidden in Old Testament ethics. The law against bloodshed was the foundation of all the other laws because it was a breach of the *imago dei* (Barth, 1961:116). God even rewarded Phinehas and his descendants with priesthood. An immoral act of murder is seemingly appraised by God and rewarded.
- God instructed Moses to exterminate the Midianites. Here again it seems that the instruction of God ran against his direct covenantal instruction in Genesis 9:5 and 6. In this passage He affirms the special status of the human in his creation. Created in His image, humans should mirror God's virtues in the world. His covenant, reaffirmed in these words, should be a "covenant of peace" (Wright, 2004:133). Therefore, all illegitimate shedding of human blood is forbidden.

3. CLITEUR'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE PHINEHAS HISTORY

In his defence of a secular outlook Cliteur refers to this history of Phinehas to conclude that Scripture condones what he terms "biblical terrorism" and violence perpetrated by citizens themselves. For him this story is not only an exciting, though gruesome story, but interesting because of the Lord's reaction. The Lord did not reprimand Phinehas, but rewarded him. He is of the opinion that while Moses flouted the authority of God by killing only the people guilty of idolatry and not all the chiefs as God commanded, Phinehas did what God commanded. Apparently, Phinehas' religious zeal is more appreciated by God than Moses' cautious way of dealing with the matter (Cliteur, 2010a:107).

This stance can have grave consequences. It is even likely that it would have grave consequences. According to Cliteur God's rewarding of Phinehas can be seen as substantial encouragement to those who claim special knowledge of God's will and who are prepared to perpetuate violence in defiance of the traditional political leaders of the state. Phinehas can be seen as the archetypical religious terrorist because he is prepared, on religious grounds, to use violence against citizens of the state, thereby violating the law of the state and defying legitimate authority. Modern-day religious terrorists act according to the same pattern.

Cliteur (2010a:107) continues:

"It is clear that this attitude and the whole worldview connected with it is hard to reconcile with modern freedom of religion, freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, free inquiry and other fundamental rights ingrained in the concept of a liberal democracy."

The story proves that religion in its organised as well as its unorganised manifestations poses challenges to modern liberal democracies.

His interpretation of the Phinehas story leads him to far-reaching conclusions. Cliteur argues that the action taken by Phinehas can be seen as a justification of violence when the honour of God is at stake and that this story is proof that religion is essentially a danger to democracy and fundamental human rights. He laments the violent nature of religion that does not recoil from intimidation, threats, murder and sedition. Today such violent kinds of religions are reappearing (Cliteur 2010b:235). These conclusions can be debated, but the main question remains: Is his interpretation of Scripture valid? Can a historical event in the Old Testament be interpreted in such a prescriptive way in order to formulate moral directives for Christian conduct today? To answer this crucial question attention should be paid to the way Scripture ought to be interpreted in the effort to understand the relevance of historical material for modern-day moral conduct.

4. HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES

In his article on the relevance of Old Testament ethics Carroll (2011:561) explains the various epistemological paradigms that are currently employed to understand the meaning of the Old Testament for Christian ethics. He gives a resume of these and explains the value and problems provided by each of these paradigms of interpretation. He concludes that the fact that Scripture is both literature and Scripture adds immeasurable weight to the process of reading, and he discusses certain examples. What is a clear pattern of reasoning in all these paradigms is that a literal reading of the Old Testament does not bring the Old Testament reader to the core meaning of ethical norms for present day conduct. A clear epistemology is necessary. Cliteur does not take this important prerequisite seriously and approaches the Phinehas story in a very a-historical and naïve way. What is important in Carroll's account is his reference to the canonical approach and the resurgence of a theological interpretation of Scripture (Carroll, 2011:565). This methodology endeavours to approach the part (text) from the perspective of the whole, such as the socio-historical and the biblical context. This article follows this line of thought and will use the concept of divine revelation as its point of departure.

4.1 Revelation

The hermeneutical angle of approach includes the presupposition that the Christian religion is a religion emanating from the self-revelation of God to human beings. It is consequently essential to explain what is meant by revelation and what the characteristics of this revelation are. Such an explanation is important in the exposition of Christian thinking, as well as the evaluation of secular critique, because both Christian ethics and secular critiques can err in this regard. A good example of such an erroneous use of Scripture is the view of divine revelation in the (emerging) Christian fundamentalism. According to this version of fundamentalism the revelation of God is embedded in Scripture, and especially in a literal and a-historical reading of the Biblical text. This view of Scripture is also called Biblicism. According to Ritschl (1999:255) this term is commonly used to denote a particular way of dealing with Scripture, especially the expectation that it can be transposed directly into modern thought and forms or lifestyles. In his thorough study on the ethical meaning of the Ten Commandments in modern society, Douma (1992:363) also warns against the dangers of Biblicism for the understanding and application of Christian ethics. By Biblicism he means appeals to Scripture that use the biblical texts in an atomistic (isolated) way by lifting them out of their immediate contexts or out of the whole context of Scripture. Biblicism is characterized by its neglect of the difference in contexts between then (the time in which the texts being cited were written) and now.

With regard to Christian ethics the literal Bible is seen as the only source for Christian ethical reflection. This use of Scripture evokes valid criticism against Christian morality from a secular perspective, for example the issue of the violence in the Old Testament as a result of divine commands.

Wogaman (1993:278) pleads for a more open and deeper use of Scripture that commits Christian ethics to a theological reflection that is more than just historical exegesis. The theologian must employ Scripture tradition, experience and reason. What Wogaman proposes seems to be adequately expressed in the classic Reformed creed, the Belgic Confession. According to this classic confession, God reveals himself in two ways. The article reads:

“We know Him by two means: first, by the creation, preservation and government of the universe; which is before our eyes a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to contemplate the invisible things of God namely, His eternal power and divinity, as the apostle Paul said (Rom. 1:20). All things are sufficient to convince men, and leave them without excuse. Secondly, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known by His divine Word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to His glory and our salvation” (Beeke et. al. , 1999:8).”

This article of the Belgic Confession is based on the Institutes of Calvin (Institutes, I:6:1:26)

In view of John 1:1 and the contents of this confession one can conclude that the revelation of God has three manifestations, namely the creational Word (the book of nature), the written word (Scripture), and the incarnate word (Jesus Christ). All three these manifestations of the revelation of God are necessary for a Christian ethical epistemology in the face of the current secular outlook. It is therefore essential to focus on each of these shortly.

4.2 The “book of nature” (creational gifts or natural law)

The revelation of God in the book of nature entails that God has bestowed on every human creature a sense of morality. These gifts were called natural law in the early Reformation (Witte, 2007:156). A more preferable term is “creational gifts”, which entail gifts that were given by God to all people, not to bring about their own salvation, but to preserve law and order in human society. This idea was prominent among Reformed theologians in the Reformation (Grabill, 2006:175). Therefore any person can formulate good norms and live by good moral norms and every government, irrespective of persuasion, can make a good law. Moral views depend on deeply held notions of the good. Everyone draws on such sources (Taylor, 2007:405).

The recognition of natural law or creational gifts in the cultivation of a Christian Reformed epistemology is important because it safeguards Christian Ethics from an exclusive claim on moral authority and Biblicism. In a recent study Grabill (2006:3) discusses the new interest in the concept of natural law in Protestant ethics. Though the Barthian school lead a protest against natural law theory during the 20th century in response to the theological justification of national socialism in Germany by the Reichskirche, a new interest in this concept has grown in recent times, especially as a source of Christian ethical moral thought (see Brunner & Barth, 1946:71). Christian ethics can draw from natural law (creational gifts) in a secular environment. For example, Christian ethics can draw moral norms from the contemporary human rights discourse, and for this reason alone religious terrorism should be rejected in the circle of Christianity. In this respect the value of natural law in the Christian ethical discourse about bio-ethics and eco-ethics also comes to mind. However, the use of natural law in the Christian

ethical approach must conform to one condition. Such a morality should not run against the thrust of the other sources of Christian moral thinking, namely the written word and the incarnate word. In this respect Barth's criticism of the use of natural law is relevant. Natural law cannot supersede the great commandment and the biblical message of reconciliation in order to provide a religious and moral backbone for ideologies. This erroneous use of natural law was evident in the Christian justification of national socialism in Germany in the 1930's and apartheid in South Africa in the 1970's. The morals derived from natural law must function within the ambit of the great commandment, which is the deepest foundation of Christian ethics.

4.3 The written word

In the use of the written word (Scripture) the utilization of "proof texts" is always tempting because it is an easy way to come to terms with certain obvious moral issues and to give credibility to a certain point of view by claiming the authority of Scripture. This is exactly what Cliteur does with his interpretation of the Phinehas story. The classic Reformed perspective on the interpretation of Scripture can be found in the explanation of the Larger Westminster Catechism (1648). This historical document of Reformed and Presbyterian churches provides a guideline for how Scripture should be interpreted (Beeke et. el., 1999:11). According to this confession the Scriptures manifest themselves to be the Scripture by inter alia, the consent of all the parts (Ac. 10:43; 26:22) and the scope of the whole.

In the classic Reformed view Scripture is seen as a book containing a continuous message according to various continuous themes. It is the message of God's renewal of the fallen world in Jesus Christ and the restoration of His relation with humanity. Various underlying themes unfold this main message, such as God's election of his people, the covenant, judgment and grace, reconciliation, transience and resurrection. The main theme is the kingship of God, which means God's rule over creation and his entering into a personal relationship (Covenant) with mankind. Bright (1973:7) echoes this conviction with his well-known statement that the concept of the kingdom of God involves in a sense the total message of Scripture. In spite of the fact that Bright's emphasis on the kingdom as the only main thread in Scripture can be questioned, the fact is that he clearly proves that Scripture should be approached as a source with a continuous message, and that individual texts should be read against this background.

Obviously Scripture was not written in a linear, historical or a logic way. There are repetitions of stories, for example in the books of Kings and Chronicles. There are four gospels, and it seems that the apostles deal with certain issues repeatedly and even in seemingly conflicting ways. No account is given of certain phases in the history of Israel. However, it is not the intention of Scripture to present a historical survey. It deals with the themes important to understand the whole message. Some accounts will approach a topic from a different angle than others. Certain writers wrote for different audiences. There are various literary genres. However, the main message is consistent and the various parts are in harmony when the parts are interpreted in light of the whole. Seemingly conflicting parts can be reconciled when they are viewed against the background of the whole message of Scripture.

The justification of the authority of Scripture in the "scope of the whole", flows from the acceptance of the "consent of all the parts". Scripture has authority as a developing organism containing a basic message by way of various sub-themes. That is the reason why the "scope of the whole" is presented as an argument in favour of the divine authority of Scripture. This view

has severe implications for biblical interpretation. Scripture cannot be interpreted without taking cognizance of the scope of the whole.

This message is not a chronological story, but a story in a revelation-historical sense. Some scholars speak of salvation-history. The history of revelation is the unfolding of the creation, renewal, up-building and future of God's kingdom. Understanding this story requires exegetical and theological reflection in order to do justice to the biblical text. Kaiser and Silva (1994:193) point out that the exegetical part of the interpretative process examines the grammatical, historical and literary aspects of the texts. Once these tasks have been concluded, they need to be related to the overall thought of the individual book being studied and to the whole canon of Scripture. In other words, biblical texts can be interpreted by means of an exegetical process, taking into account the grammar of the original languages and the cultural background of the particular text, but eventually they must be reconciled in view of the whole story. The "scope of the whole" should be involved when the Phinehas story comes to mind. Then it is clear that the action of Phinehas cannot be seen as a model of Christian conduct to defend religion, because his violence runs against the great commandment of love (also for the enemy Mt 5:43-48) which is embedded in the total message of the written word.

4.4 The incarnate word

Thirdly, Christian ethics draw on the incarnate word, and that is Jesus Christ Himself (Jn. 1: 1). God revealed Himself in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Waters (2010:5) calls the incarnation of the Word of God the formative moment of the Christian moral life. He continues to say that in this act God completes the reconciliation with creation and its creatures that were initiated in the covenant with Israel. Christ indicates the "way of his father" in his teachings and conduct. He is portrayed as the example of true Christian morality. Christians should follow in the footsteps of Christ. Filled with the mind of Christ they should imitate his attitude (Phil 2:5-11), which is an attitude of self-sacrifice (kenosis), servant hood, humility and obedience to God (see Martin, 1997:171; Schrenck, 1984:193 & Vorster, 2007:17) Berquist (2011:401) says that the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ is usually understood as a requirement and hallmark of true Christian faith.

Many noble principles in the Christian moral theory flow from the teachings and conduct of the incarnate word. In addition to his example of self-sacrifice, servant hood, humility and obedience to God, Christ teaches Christians the way of repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration. He reveals himself as the custodian of peace and non-violence. Furthermore, incarnation shows us an embodied God who resists acts that defile, devalue or damage human bodies (Berquist, 2011:402). Following in his footsteps, Christians should promote peace and bring hope and heal humanity. They have to be the custodians for justice for the poor and the oppressed and the watchdogs of the powers of the day. The morals of the incarnate word give new meaning to all other Christian ethical principles. Whatever morals a Christian teacher derives from the "book of creation" and the written word may never contradict the morals taught by the incarnate word, Jesus Christ. He gives true meaning to all other Christian moral teachings.

In the light of this explanation of the revelation of God as the source of biblical ethics and the conditions set for the understanding of Christian morality, the criticism of Cliteur against Christian morality can be addressed. As said earlier, his own hermeneutical approach is Biblicist because he loses sight of the "consent of the parts" and the "scope of the whole". Moreover, he

loses sight of God's revelation in the incarnate word and the centrality of the moral example of Jesus Christ as the incarnate word. Read within the hermeneutical paradigm discussed above, the moral implications of the Phinehas story will be quite different from Cliteur's perspective.

5. PHINEHAS REVISITED

What is the essential moral meaning of the story of Phinehas? Is it all about the justification of religious violence or biblical terrorism as Cliteur concludes? To answer the question the difference between prescriptive passages and descriptive passages in Scripture should be taken into account. Sometimes Scripture describes historical events and customs, for example the fact that the Israelites had slaves. However, the fact that Scripture mentions the practise of slavery among Israelites must not be seen as a justification for slavery. Then a descriptive part is elevated to a moral norm. This was indeed the case in churches for many centuries until Christians started to question slavery on the basis of the principle of the human dignity founded in the concept of the *imago dei*. (Ramsey, 1993:259; see also Berkouwer (1957:121).

Also, the fact that Scripture mentions the existence of many nations in its historical surveys cannot be seen as a prescription that ethnic identities should develop separately. This description cannot be used as a justification for apartheid between races and nations as the ideology has indeed emerged in South Africa. The earlier justification of slavery and the recent justification of apartheid on biblical grounds are but two of the outstanding examples of the distortions that can originate when descriptive passages are interpreted as prescriptive passages. It is of the utmost importance that the prescriptive parts must be mined out of the context where they are not explicitly or clearly indicated. This is also the case with the Phinehas story.

Numbers 25:1-18 deals essentially with the protection of the honour of God as a holy God that should be worshipped as such. The holiness of God is a constant theme in the Old Testament and this holiness comes to the fore in the covenantal people's belonging to God and being consecration to him (Joosten, 1996:125). The underlying theological message is that the holiness of God should spill over in the call to holiness of the people of God. Holiness relates to the right ordering of social relationships, that is, the practice of neighbourly righteousness (Brueggemann, 2002:99). The Israelite lifestyle and conduct should reflect His holiness and should be manifested in love, peace and justice for the poor. This link between the holiness of God and the holiness of the people is expressed in the Holiness Code of Lev 19:2. The people should be holy, not only in the cultic sense, but in their culture (Brueggemann, 1997:290). An unholy and disobedient life debases and profanes God's name in the eyes of the nations. The history of the Kings as portrayed in the Bible books Kings and Chronicles testifies to the importance of the respect for God as a holy God. When the people stray in unholiness and disobedience they are punished by God. The action of Phinehas should be evaluated in this context. He defended the honour and holiness of God and thus also the instruction to the people of the covenant to act according to the morality of the covenant and to seek the well-being of the community. The moral of the story of Numbers 25:1-18 is not Phinehas' killing of the two people, but his obedience to God and his protection of the holiness of God, which should manifest in the holiness of the people of the covenant. Cliteur's exposition of this history misses this point because he neglects the context of this history within the broader framework of the holiness code.

Another very important Old Testament instruction should be attended to when dealing with

this passage. This instruction is the instruction in Genesis 9: 6: “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God has God made man”. Respect for the sanctity of human life is also a major theme that runs through the biblical revelation. Human life is important because humans are created in the image of God and received from God the “breath of life”. The Hebrew word used for the “breath of life” is *ruach* and the word used for living being is *nephesh*. The *ruach* is more than breath in a biological sense. It indicates life that comes from God and contains the spirit of God (Preuss, 1991:161). These are the reasons why God forbids manslaughter and why preservation of life is so important in the Old Testament laws (Barth, 1961:344). God reiterated his concern for human life in the sixth commandment. To argue that God condoned the murders committed by Phinehas with tacit consent is to neglect the whole Old Testament concept of the sanctity of human life, and it therefore also runs against Christian anthropology.

In the last instance the moral codes of Scripture must correlate with everything Jesus Christ as the incarnate word stood for. He came to reconcile the human being with God and to present the full meaning of the law. The full meaning of the law is the love of God and the neighbour – even the enemy. The whole Christology of Scripture is embedded in love, peace and reconciliation and any moral code running against it is devoid of meaning and application. The violence used by Phinehas to defend the honour of God contradicts the Christology and can therefore not be elevated to a prescriptive norm for Christians to apply in inter-human relationships. Cliteur does not take cognisance of this highly important rule in the interpretation of Scripture.

6. CONCLUSION

In his defence of the secular outlook Cliteur attempts to make a case for the violent nature of Christianity. However, his use of Scripture is erroneous and has the ring of robust Biblicism. He does not apply the most basic scientific hermeneutical rule, namely that Scripture must be read as the history of salvation that flows into the great commandment of love. No violence even in the name of God can be justified in view of this message. Therefore his critique on Christianity as a religion of violence that condones biblical terrorism must be regarded as invalid.

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KEY WORDS

Hermeneutics
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TREFWOORDE

Hermeneutiek
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Sekularisme
Sekulêr

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Water rituals as a source of (Christian) life in an African Independent Church: To be healed and (re)connected

ABSTRACT

African Independent Churches (AICs) are to large extent paperless churches. This means that for the biggest part liturgical documents does not exist and that a study of their worship must entail a study of their enacted rites which will include recordings and transcriptions of verbal expressions such as sermons. This article focuses on AIC worship in South Africa, with special attention to the role of so-called water rituals. In this article the main aim is an attempt to discern what the role of these water rituals are in the worship of this AIC and in the generation of social. Thus, after a description of the ritual data, the water rituals are analysed by making use of both anthropological and theological theory, especially the work of Mary Douglas and Gerhardus van der Leeuw.

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION²

Many years ago, in the first half of the twentieth century, a mother living on a farm in what was then known as Zululand took her 12-year-old son to the community elders for help. The boy was very ill with a huge boil on his side and with no medical doctors around she did not know what to do. The elders decided to put the boy in a big pot filled with hot water. In the pot the boil burst and the boy fell into a faint that lasted for three days. When he woke up, he discovered that he was completely healed and at the tender age of twelve started to preach and teach God's message in the local community.³ In later years this boy became the founder of the Corinthian Church of South Africa (CCSA), which grew to become a large church within the collection of churches known as African Independent Churches (AIC). This particular story which incorporates both water and healing is well known in the CCSA as a denomination in which healing and water and also the two in combination are still central elements; to this day these two elements remain essential parts of their identity as Christians.

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 2. This article was first presented as a paper at the 23rd Conference of Societas Liturgica in Reims, France which focussed on Baptism. This material is based upon work supported by the South African National Research Foundation (NRF) under Grant number 73974. Any opinion, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and therefore the NRF does not accept any liability in regard thereto.
 3. Information obtained from an interview with the widow of the founder of the CCSA and his daughter on 27/06/2011 in Weybank, Durban.

In many congregations worldwide water is often used ritually in worship especially in relation to baptism, but also in other liturgical rituals such as baptismal remembrance and foot-washing services as well as for cleansing and healing. During field research in one CCSA congregation in Phepheni in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa over the past four years, we counted no fewer than seven (groups of) rituals in which water is used for liturgical purposes. We are also fairly convinced, however, that future field work in this congregation and AIC denomination will reveal even more what we will call in this paper 'water rituals'. But before we name, describe and discuss these water rituals, let us first place them within the overarching framework of the larger research project of which this paper forms a part and make some observations on the methodology employed in our research.

Currently (2011) we are in the final year of a four-year research project funded by the South African National Research Foundation (NRF) operating under the title "Exploring the role of religious rituals in social capital formation for poverty alleviation".⁴ In present-day South Africa one of the major issues or challenges we face is poverty alleviation in which poverty is certainly viewed as the absence of material belongings, but much more than that, referring also, for example, to a spiritual level.⁵ Furthermore it has been argued that a missing link in social development is what has been referred to as social capital, a term we define as a combination of bonding, bridging and linking capital. Defining social capital in this way offers an inverse definition of poverty as the absence of bonding, bridging and linking capital, thus as the non-existence of social capital. This implies that the generation of social capital can potentially contribute indirectly to poverty alleviation through the development of relationships in such a way that they can engender trust and function as a sort of glue that holds society together.⁶ And in a country such as South Africa, where religious organisations garner most trust from the country's citizens,⁷ where almost 80% of the population indicate that they belong to the Christian religion, and that 90% of persons between the ages of 18 and 35 attend a

4. For a general overview of the project and the main concepts see Cas J. Wepener et al., "The role of religious ritual in social capital formation. Theoretical and methodological points of departure of a South African exploration in progress," *Religion & Theology* 17, nos. 1-2 (2010) 61-82; and for a description of how the research field was entered see Cas J. Wepener and Marcel Barnard, "Entering the field. Initiating Liturgical Research in an AIC," *Acta Theologica* 30/2 (2010) 192-210.

5. For a discussion of poverty and specifically also a broader definition of it as applied in this research project, cf. Henry Mbaya, "The socio-practical dimensions of *isitshisa* [burning of the heifer] in the Corinthian Church of South Africa," *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 67/2 (2011) Art. #930, 8 pages. doi:10.4102/hts.v67i2.930

6. For a more thorough description of the link between social capital formation, ritual and poverty alleviation, cf. Cas J. Wepener and Johan H. Cilliers, "Ritual and the generation of social capital in contexts of poverty," in *Religion and Social Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Perspectives for Critical Engagement*, Ignatius Swart et al. (eds.) (Stellenbosch: SUN Press, 2010); also in Rein Brouwer, *Geloven in gemeenschap. Het verhaal van een protestantse geloofsgemeenschap*, (Zoetermeer, Meinema, 2008) 73-118. And for a more general discussion on research related to religion and social capital in South Africa see Ignatius Swart, "Religion and Social Capital Research in South Africa: Mapping an Agenda in Progress", in Titus Hjelm (ed.), *Religion and Social Problems*, Routledge Advances in Sociology Series (New York: Routledge, 2010) chapter 7. On congregations and social capital see Nancy, T. Ammerman, *Congregation and Community*, (New Brunswick/ New Jersey/ London: Rutgers University Press, 1997) 362-367. See also Anders Bäckström and Per Petterson (eds), *Welfare and Religion in 21st Century Europe. Vol 1. Configuring the Connections*, (Abingdon, Oxon UK: Ashgate, 2010).

7. Cf. Kate Lefko-Everett et al., "Reconciliation Barometer Survey Report" (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2010), 5.

worship service at least once a month⁸, the Christian liturgy can play, we believe, a potentially significant role in generating social capital. Building on this hypothesis, our overarching research question – which is also indirectly the question this paper addresses – is twofold, namely how to gain a better understanding of the way that liturgical rituals generate social capital, and how to actually use the liturgical rituals as a lens to gain a better understanding of social capital formation. As such this article thus not only aims at making a contribution to the field of Liturgical Studies, but also to the nascent debate regarding religion and development. James Wolfensohn for example also argues in his forward to a recent book on the topic for the importance of non-economic factors such as religion in development work. According to him religion suffuses all that people do and states that “Religion has an effect on many people’s attitudes to everything, including such matters as savings, investment and a host of economic decisions.”⁹ And one important aspect of religion is religious rituals, the main focus of the research project and also of this article.

Ritual makes use of ordinary physical material and events, but also of ordinary customs and traditions, based in culture and worldview in order to signify and point to spiritual realities, in general to the mystery of life. Rituals thereby manifest the basic ritual essence of being both *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. They are powerful “rites of passage”, pointing to a transition from the ordinary to the spiritual sphere, even from death to life, nourishing the day-to-day life of the individual and his or her community by acting on the different levels of being human.

Given this background on the repertoire of water rituals, rituals and social capital, religion and development as well as on the way in which rituals functions as a bridge between external reality and a deeper reality¹⁰, we now turn to one specific congregation participating in the research project and to some methodological considerations relevant to this article.

2. THE CHURCH IN PHEPHENI AND PARTICIPATORY OBSERVATION

For this specific article the authors conducted the field work themselves by means of participatory observation to collect the ritual data.¹¹ In this process, firstly the baptismal

8. The statistics were obtained from Statistics SA, *Population Census 2001, Religion Report*, (Pretoria: SSA, 2004) also from Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) research quoted by Nico Koopman, “Publieke Teologie in Suid-Afrika vandag. Die verhaal van die Beyers Naudé Sentrum vir Publieke Teologie” (Unpublished presentation: Stellenbosch, 2005); and cf. also Cas J. Wepener, “Liturgical research in a changing South African socio-cultural (liturgical) landscape: challenges and opportunities for method and theory,” in *Religion and Social Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Perspectives for Critical Engagement* ed. Ignatius Swart et al (Stellenbosch: SUN Press, 2010). According to Wim Dreyer South Africa is on the top 10 list of countries worldwide with regards to attendance of worship services and, with an average of 56%, fourth overall. Wim A Dreyer, *Praktiese Ekklesiologie en bedieningspraktyk. Met verwysing na die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika*, (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Pretoria, 2011) 95-96.

9. Cf. James D. Wolfensohn, “Foreword,” in *Religion and Development. Ways of Transforming the World*, ed. Gerrie ter Haar. (London: Hurst & Co, 2011) xvii.

10. Cf. Gerard Lukken, *Rituelen in overvloed. Een kritische bezinning op de plaats en de gestalte van het christelijk ritueel in onze cultuur*, (Baarn: Gooi & Sticht, 1999) 20. “Het heeft een grensoverschrijdende brugfunctie. Het verwijst naar een diepere werkelijkheid, een verdere horizon, een ruimer landschap”. Lukken here also refers to Goethe’s definition of symbols, namely “The thing that is without being the thing still the thing”.

11. Cf. Cas J. Wepener, Henry Mbaya and Marcel Barnard, “Worship in the Corinthian Church (AIC) of Phepheni, Eastern Cape, South Africa,” *Studia Liturgica* for a discussion of the typical Sunday worship

service on Easter Sunday 2011 was attended, participated in and described. Secondly, various semi-structured interviews were conducted with members and leaders of this congregation as well as with the widow and daughter of the late founder of the denomination. Lastly and very importantly, a focus group discussion was facilitated in which the main topic was water rituals in this congregation, both describing them and attempting to establish how those who participate in them also appropriate what they do.¹²

We will now describe the seven groups of water rituals and thereafter refer to theological and social anthropological theories which will help us to understand the relevance of these rituals in the light of the questions posed in the overarching research project.

3. A REPERTOIRE OF WATER RITUALS

There are many more than seven individual groups of water rituals in this congregation, but in order to describe and discuss these rituals for our purposes, we will here group different kinds together. Thus we are referring to them as a ritual repertoire.¹³ The grouping is done with regards to the place, the time and the purpose of the various rituals.

3.1 Cleansing rituals *outside* of the worship service

The first type of water rituals are those connected to cleansing or purification, of which there are many kinds. In general these cleansing rituals are performed in the following way, the details of which vary, depending on the specific circumstances. Firstly and very importantly, these cleansing rituals are always performed outside the church building. The water that is used must be blessed by a priest before it can be used, otherwise it will not work, according to the priest. Then the water is sprinkled over the individual facing the person doing the sprinkling, including the head and feet; after that the person turns around and the same sprinkling is done on the back of his or her body; they turn around again and a bit of water is poured into their hands, which they then use to wash their hands.

This ritual or variations of it are performed in the following cases:

- All persons who have attended a funeral;

in this congregation as well as a demographic description of the village of Phepheni. For a general discussion of participatory observation cf. Earl R. Babbie and Johan Mouton, *The Practice of Social Research*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa) 293-300; Carol A. Bailey, *A guide to field research*, (Thousand Oaks/ London/ New Delhi: Pine Forge Press, 1996); and for a specific application of the method of data collection cf. Clare V. Johnson, "Researching Ritual Practice," *Studia Liturgica* 35/2 (2005) 204-220; Martin D. Stringer, *On the perception of worship*, (Birmingham: Birmingham University Press, 1999), as well as Cas J. Wepener, "Researching Rituals. On the use of participatory action research in liturgical studies," *Practical Theology in South Africa* 20/1 (2005) 109-127.

12. Cf. with regards to the appropriation of a ritual by the participants see Paul Post, "Introduction and application. Feast as a key concept in a liturgical studies research design," in *Christian Feast and Festival: The Dynamics of Western Liturgy and Culture*, eds. P. Post et al., *Liturgia condenda* 12 (Leuven: Peeters Pers, 2001) 56-61. In general see Trevor Lloyd; James Steven and Philip Tovey (eds.) *Social Science Research Methods in Contemporary Liturgical Research: An Introduction* in *Joint Liturgical Studies* 69 (London: The Alcuin Club, 2010).

13. For the term 'ritual repertoire' see the repertoire of disaster rituals as reflected in the title of Paul Post et al., *Disaster Ritual. Explorations of an Emerging Ritual Repertoire*, *Liturgia Condenda* 15 (Leuven: Peeters Pers, 2003).

- Someone who has touched a corpse;
- For a woman who gave birth (cf. Lev. 12);
- For a woman entering menopause;
- All persons who attended a court of law;
- A person who has sinned;
- A person coming out of prison;
- A boy returning from circumcision.

In some of these cases the water will also be mixed with ash obtained from the *isitshisa* ritual¹⁴, with blood of an animal or with the intestines of a chicken.

3.2 Cleansing rituals in the worship service

According to the three priests and some members during the focus group discussion, participants in the Sunday worship service sometimes have to be sprinkled with water when it happens that there are people possessed by bad spirits. By means of this sprinkling the bad spirits are thus expelled and, according to members, the person is also calmed down by drinking of the water.¹⁵

When the participants talked about the associations they have with water, or in conversations about the meaning of water and what the water does, the responses from both the interviews and the focus group were unanimous – “Water is closely related to cleansing”. Cleansing as used in this ritual-liturgical context obviously does not refer to a literal cleansing, but refers to cleansing on another level, as the next ritual makes evident.

3.3 Foot washing

A standard part of the annual Good Friday service is the washing of the feet of all the members of the congregation by the priests.¹⁶ And when the members of the focus group in Phepheni tried to explain what cleansing entails they immediately referred to John 13 and Peter saying “then not only my feet...” It will be necessary to undertake an intensive study of the use of John 13 in this congregation in order to understand how exactly it functions in the use of this washing ritual.

14. The *isitshisa* or “burning of the heifer” refers to a sacrifice that is performed once or twice annually as part of a large worship service at the headquarters in Mlazi, a township just outside Durban, and of which the ashes are kept for ritual purposes.

15. There is a ritual related to funerals in Xhosa tradition called “To drink water” which is a metaphorical reference to calming people down who got a fright, although it does not involve the actual drinking of water, but rather the slaughtering of a sheep and a communal meal for the relatives of the deceased. The meal is supposed to ‘calm’ them after they were frightened as a family by the death of the family member and is therefore referred to as “To drink water”. In some other cultures people are given sugar water after they got a fright and to calm them down. Cf. in this regard Cas J. Wepener, *Van vas tot fees. ‘n Ritueel-liturgiese ondersoek na versoening binne Suid-Afrikaanse kultuurkontekste*, (DTh dissertation: Stellenbosch University, 2004), 527.

16. Cf. Cas J. Wepener, “Snert. Ritual-liturgical measurements and recipes for social capital,” *Jaarboek voor rituele- en liturgiese studies* 25 (2009) 229-246. In general the ritual of foot washing worldwide takes place on Maundy Thursday. The practice here, however, is typical of AIC liturgy in general.

3.4 At the unveiling of the tombstone

In some African cultures – such as among the Xhosa, a group of which most members in Phepheni are a part – there is a ritual for the unveiling of tombstones. During this service, which is comprised of many elements and of which the main purpose is the “taking home of the deceased person”,¹⁷ water is also sprinkled on the tombstones and the explanation given is that this is done to prevent bad spirits that may later defile the tombstone by coming to the grave and taking the body away. The water ritual here is thus performed for the protection of the spirit of the deceased and to make sure that he or she can be safely brought home and re-connected to their family who are still alive. On Saturday evening 30 July 2011 a very special variation of this ritual took place in Durban, when by means of (amongst other things) performing this water ritual at the grave of the late son and successor of the founder of the CCSA, he was symbolically taken from his grave ‘home’ to his church in Mlazi, where he served as Archbishop of the CCSA after his father’s death.¹⁸

3.5 For healing

Healing basically entails the restoration of the imbalances in an individual and societal sense. These imbalances and disorder experienced in person and in society sever the African from his/her place in the network of *ubuntu* as the basis of personal and communal life. Because illness is caused by a lack of total harmony, the principle of ordering life, healing has to be an integral part of experiencing this harmony with the life force (*amandla*). Again, in order to experience this life force, rituals are essential in man’s search for salvation as balance in life.

Illness does not only affect the sick person, but also those who are related to this person. Therefore health is defined in terms of the fulfilment of all the roles expected of people in their society. The ancestors play a significant part in the restoration of these imbalances – communication with them becomes possible through the performance of certain rites and rituals.¹⁹

The treatment of illness is therefore a deeply religious matter: the whole person is treated, the ailing body; the positive healing of the spirit under the influence of negative spiritual forces such as sorcery, witchcraft, possession of evil spirits; disobedience to ancestors or to the community in church and at home, or to God - affecting all relationships in life.

This “treatment” in moving towards healing is again embedded in the sacramental life of the individual and community, especially in the rituals of water as the source of life-giving force (*amandla*). In this regard there are numerous variations in how the water is used in liturgical rituals, such as the drinking of water, the sprinkling of water and immersion in water.

3.6 At New Year

Annually at New Year the whole congregation goes to the nearby river. As part of the worship

17. As explained by the widow and daughter of the founder of this church during an interview on 27/6/2011 in Weybank, Durban and referring to the spirit of the deceased that is taken back from the grave to his or her home.

18. Information obtained from an interview with the widow of the founder of the CCSA and his daughter in Weybank, Durban on 27/06/2011.

19. See M. Vera Bührmann, “Religion and healing: the African experience” in *Afro-Christian Religion and healing in Southern Africa. African Studies Vol 8*, eds. G.C. Oosthuizen et al. (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989) 30.

service at the river they go into the river and dip seven times into the water like Naaman in 2 Kings 5, according to one priest. And the explanation provided by members for the performance of this liturgical ritual? “There in the river we wash away all our worries from the Old Year to start the New Year afresh.”²⁰

3.7 Baptism

The seventh and last water ritual described here is the sacrament of baptism.²¹ This ritual consists of four separate parts that will here be described only very briefly, compared to the length of the overarching ritual process and compared to the enacted liturgical celebrations.

The first phase of this ritual is the so-called Ladi-service consisting of the lighting of candles in the home where a baby of parents who are members of the congregation is born. This *Ladi*-service must be performed 33 days after the birth of a boy and 66 days after the birth of a girl and is, according to one priest, closely connected to the Xhosa ancestral cult.

The second phase in the process of baptism is performed in the worship service and is performed roughly 1½ hours into the service after the call to worship, some circle dancing and Scripture reading, and a sermon. During the worship service on Easter Sunday 2011 a total of 12 babies and young children were baptized and the following actions occurred:

- The priest reads a formulary, which the researcher afterwards identified as a formulary coming from the African Congregational Church’s book of worship;
- The secretary writes the names of all the children to be baptised in a book;
- The main priest and his wife ask the parents questions:
- 1st question (Rev. Dingaan): Are both parents here? Each time the answer was “No, the father is not here, but the grandmother is here also with 2 witnesses”
- 2nd question (Rev. Dingaan): Is this your child? He asks because, as he explains over and over, you cannot steal a child, since that is against the law;
- 3rd question (Rev. Dingaan’s wife): What have you read to them? Or a variation on the question was often: What portion of Scripture has been used to cleanse the child? And right after the question: “Why was this specific portion of Scripture chosen?” The answers regarding the choice of texts included Psalm 23, Isaiah 59, and Matthew 19. One reason provided, for example, when the mother said that she read Ps 23 was: “So that he will be successful in life”. This questioning happens under the strict and scrutinising eyes of Rev. Dingaan’s wife, who is not taking the whole procedure lightly and is clearly busy with a process of letting the mothers realise that baptism involves serious commitment;

20. During an interview with the founder’s widow and daughter they pointed us to another and similar ritual: at the end of the July isitshisa in the early hours of the morning it is compulsory for all attending to bathe in the sea.

21. On baptismal rituals and customs in the AIC, see Gerhardus C. Oosthuizen, “Baptism & healing in African Independent Churches” in *Afro-Christian Religion and healing in Southern Africa. African Studies Vol 8*, eds. G.C. Oosthuizen et al. (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989) 137–188. In general see Brian D Spinks, *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism. From Luther to contemporary Practices*, (Oxford: Ashgate, 2006).

- Then Rev. Dingaana takes a glass of water from the table and hands it to his wife, who holds it in front of the grandmother, who places a silver coin in the glass. The glass is then handed back to Rev. Dingaana, who replaces the glass on the table.
- A packet of 6 candles is opened and one added to make a total of 7; Rev. Dingaana prays over them and hands them to his wife, who places one in the hands of the child/baby, the mother, the grandmother, the 2 witnesses and one for Rev. Dingaana's wife. She then lights all the candles whilst the congregation sings a hymn about the light of dawn.
- The mother then hands the child, who has a piece of cloth draped over his/her head, to Rev. Dingaana's wife, who removes the cloth and makes sure that the child's head is uncovered and then hands the child to her husband. Rev. Dingaana sticks his finger in the glass of water, and makes the sign of the cross on the child's forehead. Then he takes the glass of water and pours water from the glass on the child's forehead three times, whilst saying "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit". He pours quite a lot of water, so the babies always start crying. Then he firmly places his hand on the child's head and prays for the child quite earnestly;
- Rev. Dingaana's wife collects all the candles, which are still burning, and hands them to Rev. Dingaana, who extinguishes them by pushing them up into the air with a powerful gesture. This makes for a visually quite impressive ritual in the dark hut. After a candle has been extinguished, he places it on the table again. This is repeated several times until all the candles are back on the table;
- After all the baptisms another 2 circle dances are performed. There is a closing prayer after the door has been shut, with all the members' hands raised as they sing the Lord's Prayer for more than 10 minutes with closed eyes and very serious expressions on their faces;
- The service, which has lasted for more than 4 hours, is complete and Rev. Dingaana says that the secretary has just informed him that the baptismal certificates are ready for collection by the parents.

The third phase of the baptismal ceremony takes place at the river sometime after the church service. Afterwards (usually between one and two months) the whole congregation goes to the river in the mountain with the parents and the child(ren). There in the river at the waterfall Rev. Dingaana holds the baby and again pours the water three times over his/her head under the waterfall in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. After this the parents have a feast at the church for everyone.

The fourth phase is actually more than a phase and is in fact a second baptism. Children who have been baptised as babies or young children are again baptised at the age of 18 in the river or in the sea. A similar service is held and the Trinitarian formula and immersion in the water are central to the ritual. One can thus say that this denomination baptises its members twice, once as babies/young children and once at the age of 18, but according to the leaders, baptism occurs only twice in the life of a member and no more than twice.

4. WATER RITUALS – TO BE HEALED AND (RE-)CONNECTED

Often in the ritual data the notion of cleansing (commonly referred to in the literature as purification) was given as the explanation for the performance of a particular water ritual.

The necessity of water and specifically the ritual use of water to cleanse mean that something is thought to be dirty in some way or another in order for it to be in need of cleansing. The notion of dirt, of course, takes us to the work of Mary Douglas and in particular her book entitled *Purity and Danger*,²² in which she defines dirt as “matter out of place”, but also to some of the phenomenological and theological work of Gerhardus Van der Leeuw in his *Sacramentstheologie* from 1949 on the symbolic use of water.

Douglas’s definition of dirt as “matter out of place” is in opposition to more modern concepts of dirt that have more to do with hygiene and fear of illness. She elaborates on the notion of dirt being matter out of place to show that such a definition implies “a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order”²³ and that “where there is dirt there is system”.²⁴ It then follows that there is a symbolic relationship between dirt and a system of purity. Douglas explains that the ways in which humans and societies behave towards dirt or “matter out of place” is derived from the fact that dirt is “likely to confuse or contradict our cherished classifications”.²⁵ Those things in society that do not fit our ordered systems and classifications are potential “powers and dangers” that can threaten our sense of order, according to Douglas, and thus “Ritual recognises the potency of disorder”²⁶ Society does not know how to cope with marginalised and borderline cases with respect to its system of order. Rituals are consequently performed to keep these unclassifiable phenomena at bay, for example, the *rite de passage* for someone in a transitional state.²⁷ Rituals of purity and taboo relating to dirt are thus important in upholding a certain social structure. In Phepheni it seems as if water rituals play a particularly important role in this regard, as will be illustrated in the conclusion.

In his *Sacramentstheologie*²⁸ Van der Leeuw describes the role of cleansing and purification on account of “dirt” caused by conditions of illness, all forms of ill-luck, adversity, evil, all elements that threaten life, especially evil spirits. Dirt is something that belongs to the rubbish and refuse dump of life. The ritual of cleansing is more than “mere” cleansing or washing; it has a ‘life-renewing effect’. Van der Leeuw states that “cleansing signifies the giving of new life, renewal of life... as a matter of fact regeneration”.²⁹ He then refers to the general phenomenological uses of water rituals in old Roman customs (associated with the festival of *lustrum* = *lavo* or washing) and to February as the month of washing (*februar* = the cleansing of utensils). In Christianized Europe holy fountains were converted into baptismal fonts. This even appears

22. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo* (London / New York: Routledge, 2007, reprinted from 1966); cf. also Jan van Wiele, ‘Mary Douglas’ *Purity and Danger* revisited’, in *Jaarboek voor liturgie-onderzoek* 23 (2007) 177-209.

23. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* 44; cf. also the application of Douglas’s insights with regards to commensality in this congregation in Cas J. Wepener, “Snert. Ritual-liturgical measurements” (2009).

24. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* 44.

25. *Ibid.*, 45.

26. *Ibid.*, 117.

27. Douglas’s explanations here are closely related to the work of Van Gennep and Turner on transitional rites. Cf. Arnold van Gennep, ‘Territorial passages and the classification of rites’, *Readings in Ritual Studies*, ed. Ronald L. Grimes (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996) 529-536; Victor W. Turner, ‘Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage,’ in *Reader in Comparative Religion. An Anthropological Approach* eds. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965); Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969); Victor W. Turner, ‘Passages, Margins and Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas’, in *Worship* 46/7 (1972) 390-412.

28. Gerhardus Van der Leeuw, *Sacramentstheologie* (Amsterdam: HJ Paris, 1949).

29. *Ibid.*, 172; see also 176.

in Shakespeare's spiritually disturbed Lady Macbeth performing a ritual washing of her hands.

The pollution by "dirt" can only be removed by ritual, in the case of the individual as well as the community. When the water is blessed, this ritual receives sacramental and healing power. This not only stresses the phenomenological but also the theological viewpoint: water *in itself* has no sacramental cleansing power; it must be blessed and "ordained" in the liturgy of the community and its culture. It is therefore interesting to note how water functions in the mythological background of many cultures: as a sort of archetype, both of chaos and death, on the one hand, and new life, on the other. This new life emerges from the amniotic fluid at birth. Therefore water has such dynamic sacramental power in the life of the individual and the community. In the ritual use of water it becomes powerful in the sacramental life of the individual and his community, where the sacrament and sacramentalia are eventually empowering the primary and fundamental form of living in the fullest and most balanced sense.

According to Ronald Grimes: "Cured, you are fixed; healed, you are reconnected".³⁰ And Douglas's notion of dirt being matter out of place and her theory that rituals of purity and taboo help to uphold a certain system, along with the insights of Van der Leeuw, closely relate to Grimes's definition of ritual healing. Cleansing is needed in order to connect or re-connect someone, which is to a large extent synonymous with being healed. The social systems to which an individual is connected through water rituals as performed by the Corinthian Church of Phepheni are firstly traditional Xhosa culture as signified by the Ladi-service. Water rituals, however, are performed at various stages in a person's life cycle it seems, for example, a boy after returning from initiation and also at the unveiling of the tombstone, these are examples that are closely related to connecting people to Xhosa traditional culture and keeping them connected even after they have passed on. Secondly, several water rituals also connect a person to the Corinthian Church of SA as a denomination as well as to the particular congregation of Phepheni. In this regard baptism, as described in this paper, is a primary example of connection, but various other water rituals, such as the different uses of cleansing rituals, are used to reconnect people again after they have been disconnected for some or other reason. Lastly and referring to, for example, the water ritual at the unveiling of the tombstone, some of these rituals also serve to reconnect a deceased person to his home and family on a spiritual level, but also sometimes to the CCSA as such too, as the one example indicated. To end this discussion of healing and (re-)connecting via water rituals as pertaining to social and ecclesial groups alone would be reductive. This healing and (re-)connection also relates to a notion that can only be sufficiently explained by means of theological categories. In order to explore this further we once again turn to Van der Leeuw and his *Sacramentstheologie*.

Van der Leeuw describes symbols (*sum-ballein*) as the coincidence of two realities; by the combination of sign and having significance a reality is summoned on a second, deeper level. This has the creative power to affect something on this second level.³¹ Therefore the symbol must be repeated over and over.³² Van der Leeuw distinguishes between the biblically instituted and ordained sacraments and the so-called sacramentalia as sacramental actions in the context of liturgy whereby rituals such as cleansing, healing, blessing, dances and

30. Ronald L. Grimes, *Deeply into the bone. Re-inventing rites of passage*, (Berkeley/ Los Angeles/ London: University of California Press, 2000) 343.

31. Van der Leeuw, 1949, 8f.

32. *Ibid.*, 254.

processions have a “sacramental substratum”.³³ They are liturgical acts, next to but integrally connected to Word and sacrament. In the sacramental character of life, both sacrament and sacramentalia function in a very close connection. Sacramentalia therefore become, together with the main sacraments, essential parts of God’s regenerative and recreative work in the individual and the community. In sacrament and sacramentalia people find their fullest and most radical expression of being human. We can thus say that there is also a bridging in and through these liturgical rituals between humans and God, in this church and congregation also, and importantly the group and God, but also between individuals and themselves via a liturgical ritual in which the Spirit of God is active.

Of particular interest are Van der Leeuw’s remarks on the ritual of dancing – dance being the oldest form of art, but also the oldest ritual.³⁴ In dance and gesture, movement is demonstrated as the essence of life: “life is movement.”³⁵ Through the inherent movement in dances and processions, sacramental life is generated in its fullest sense. According to Van der Leeuw the dance is also epiclesis and calls for the *adventus Dei*. To quote him in this regard: “God beweeg zich...En Hij zette ons op deze aarde in beweging...Het is het begin van zijn werk in schepping en verlossing. Het is ook het begin van de dans.”³⁶ This is an important insight for this research, because most if not all of the liturgical rituals described earlier are accompanied and also enveloped by much dancing.

Baptism is much more than an initiation into a church community – as in most Western Churches, especially those of the Reformed tradition. Also, and especially in the African Independent Churches it signifies a way of life in the search for salvation as wholeness and well-being. Christian life in the AIC is baptismal life, life embedded in the sacrament. In some churches baptism often functions merely as a sign or as a part of a religious social system. But in the AIC it is regarded as an effectual sacrament, as a sacramental induction into the body of Christ. In a performative way it is effectual in changing the baptised person in the fullest sense of the word: it is part of the process of growing into the practice of the Christian life. Through baptism the individual is healed, blessed, restored, given power (*amandla*), given the Spirit in order to overcome the ever-present and abiding evil spirits and forces, including those of poverty and as such the absence of social capital.³⁷ Children have to be baptized not only to participate in the covenant of God with the parents, but also and in principle to obtain this power, to share in the *amandla*, and to keep the evil spirits away. For the AICs baptism symbolizes that the life of sin and the realm of evil have been broken. Note here how anthropology and tradition are integrated into a new order of life, living in a new community of the baptized. And to a large extent this happens throughout a person’s life in the CCSA by being connected and re-connected by means of the ritual use of water. In a very specific sense the baptismal theory and practice of baptism in the AIC make a valuable contribution to the ecumenical discussion of baptism – a contribution not always accepted.

Before we conclude, some final remarks related to the ritual use of water more generally in AICs in South Africa are necessary. Water mythology is not strange to the African tradition and

33. Ibid., 257.

34. See fully Van der Leeuw, G. *Wegen en Grenzen*, Amsterdam: HJ Paris, 1953. We are aware of the fact that not all scholars of ritual view dance as a ritual.

35. Van der Leeuw, 1949, 206.

36. Ibid., 82.

37. Cf. for an argument in this regard Cas J. Wepener and Johan H. Cilliers, “Ritual and the generation of social capital”, 43-44.

sacramental experience – Zulu tradition has it that the first human being came out of a bed of reeds growing by a pool of water.³⁸ In baptism life is given through purification, washing in the water of the pool or river or at the seaside, or by means of sprinkling. Baptism symbolises the life lived at the *pool (ichibi)*. At the pool or in the sea or in the sprinkling of water the baptized person receives power from the water, which also has a cleansing and healing effect. The preparation for baptism requires fasting, attending a revival service (*umvusilelo*) and confession of sins. This once more reminds us of the practice in the old church emphasizing the necessity of spiritual preparation for receiving the holy sacrament and the emphasis on preparation during the catechumenate. Of importance is also the *praying* over the water, whereby a spell is placed on the water to give it a life-giving force. One of the main reasons for the remarkable growth of the AIC movement is the fact that these churches succeed in integrating African culture, customs and traditions with Christianity. Often living in a hostile environment, especially one in the process of urbanisation and secularisation, they experience these adverse forces so strongly that they have to perform rituals, often following traditional lines such as divining and the use of water, but now adapted and streamlined for new situations. Thereby rituals help them to cope with the disorder and the lack of harmony they experience in the totality of life, personal and communal. Oosthuizen notes that these adaptations have a “miraculous effect when correctly utilized”³⁹ This is clearly demonstrated and manifested in their ritual uses of water in drinking, sprinkling, washing, immersing and also in baptism. These rituals are mostly based on and strengthened by the use of water.

A close look at these water rituals and attendance of them, the data obtained from the focus group interview and various other interviews, as well as the theological and social anthropological work, led us to the conclusion that these rituals function in the congregation in Phepheni to heal, to connect and to re-connect, all three of which are closely related to each other.

5. WATER RITUALS BOTH AS LENSES AND GENERATORS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Our journey through the data, the theology and the anthropological theories brings us back once again to the initial question and objective of the NRF project, namely the potential of ritual to act as both a generator of, and lens for, social capital formation. We start with the latter point.

The description and analysis of water rituals in the congregation and community of Phepheni made invisible borders more visible, especially with regards to the opposition of clean versus unclean or dirty. If social capital is defined as a combination of bonding, bridging and linking, then attempts to generate social capital in this community without taking cognisance of these borders will be doomed to fail, or even worse be potentially harmful in this community. These borders are also intrinsically related to the spiritual web typical of African cultures. According to Mbiti, African religion is so integrated into people’s lives that it is virtually impossible to draw a line between the secular and the religious, making it clear that African religion has formed the world view of the continent’s inhabitants.⁴⁰ In this world view in which the material

38. Oosthuizen et al., *Afro-Christian Religion and Healing* 148.

39. Oosthuizen et al., *Afro-Christian Religion and Healing* 82. See also Bengdt G M Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) 255 and Martin West, *Bishops and Prophets in a Black City*, (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1975).

40. Cf. John S. Mbiti, “‘Hearts Cannot be Lent!’ In Search of Peace and Reconciliation in African Traditional Society,” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* XX/1 (1999) 2.

and spiritual world coincide there is a longing for equilibrium, which is for various reasons often disrupted by, for example, pollution. The longing for equilibrium and also for peace reaches also to the spiritual sphere, and hence the balance and peace between the physical and spiritual worlds must be maintained and in this regard rituals are very important.

This (re-)connecting that becomes more apparent by means of a study of water rituals is aimed at this world, but thus also reaches into the spiritual realm and should be appreciated as such when there is talk about bonding, bridging and linking in this congregation and community. Bonding, bridging and linking between the living, however important, cannot be fully achieved in separation from bonding and bridging with the living dead. It therefore seems that water rituals are indispensable for these kinds of borders to be crossed in this community and are thus indeed already functioning as generators of social capital. Here we can experience how the whole of life, health and total wellbeing of the individual and community are embedded in the sacramental life. In the symbolic sacrament of *renewal of life*, in the resultant victory over life-estranging evil forces, the emphasis is placed on the *rebirth* of people and their community. And a large part of this renewal depends upon the healing power of a repertoire of water rituals, connecting and re-connecting people throughout their lives and in the hereafter. These rituals are thus indeed generators of social capital, but even more so they are also generators of spiritual capital.

It seems that, whenever a 'boil' develops in this congregation and church denomination, the wisdom of the elders in using water to promote healing is still adhered to.

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