Towards a narrative theological orientation in a global village from a postmodern urban South African perspective

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ABSTRACT

As the theme of the study indicates the study is a narrative study seeking to respond to two of the major challenges which congregations are facing within the context of ministry, namely postmodernity and globalization. After seeking a fuller description of these two challenges I sought a theological orientation within such a context (*postmodern global village*) as well as an ecclesiological praxis that could be transformative and redemptive within such a context. I believe to have found in the narrative orientation an appropriate way for doing theology in the postmodern context. The narrative orientation will guide the story of this study within four movements, namely descriptive theology (stories of need), historical theology (texts and tradition), systematic theology (re-authored story of the past) and lastly strategic practical theology (imagined story of the future).

The climax of this journey (story) is in the fusion of horizons between the theory-laden questions of descriptive theology and the historical texts of the Christian faith within the narrative orientation of the study. I discovered that truly transformative and redemptive praxis is only possible within language communities (narrative communities). These narrative communities cannot exist in isolation, but are continuously confronted and relativised by the stories of other communities in the global village and therefore these language communities need to be open to the fragmentation and pluralism of the global village, otherwise they will not be able to respond to the reality of the globalization and postmodernity.

The narrative communities needed a story (sacred story) that did not deny the reality of fragmentation and pluralism, but could incorporate this reality into its story. I found this story in the story of the cross and therefore refer to the narrative communities as communities *of* and *under* the cross of Christ. These ideas formed the basis for a transformative praxis within a specific congregation, namely Pastoral Redemptive Communities.

The journey within these four movements was a critical journey in dialogue with other disciplines (economics, philosophy, psychology and sociology) and I tried to defend and describe my journey within the parameters of validity claims thereby opening the study for further dialogue.

OPSOMMING

Tema: *'n Narratief-teologiese benadering binne die konteks van die '*global village*' vanuit 'n postmoderne Suid-Afrikaanse perspektief.*

Soos aangedui in die tema, is hierdie 'n narratiewe studie wat wil reageer op twee van die belangrikste uitdagings waarmee gemeentes gekonfronteer word in hul bedieningskonteks, naamlik postmodernisme en globalisering. Nadat ek gepoog het om hierdie twee uitdagings vollediger te omskryf, het my soeke begin na 'n teologiese benadering binne so konteks (postmoderne *global village*) sowel as 'n ekklesiologiese handeling wat transformerend en soteriologies kan funksioneer in die konteks. Ek glo dat ek in die narratiewe benadering 'n geskikte manier gevind het om teologie te beoefen in die postmoderne konteks. Die narratiewe benadering sal die verhaal van hierdie studie begelei met behulp van vier momente, naamlik beskrywende teologie (verhaal van nood), historiese teologie (tekste en tradisie), sistematiese teologie (herstrukturering van die verledeverhaal) en laastens strategiese praktiese teologie (rekonstruksie van 'n toekomsverhaal).

Die klimaks van die avontuur (*journey*) is die versmelting van horisonne tussen teorie-gelaaide vrae van die beskrywende teologie en die historiese tekste van die Christelike geloof binne die narratiewe benadering van die studie. Ek het ontdek dat ware transformerende en soteriologiese handelinge slegs moontlik is binne taal gemeenskappe (narratiewe gemeenskappe). Hierdie narratiewe gemeenskappe kan nie in isolasie bestaan nie, maar word voortdurend gekonfronteer en gerelativeer deur die verhale van ander gemeenskappe in die *global village* en daarom is dit noodsaaklik dat hierdie taalgemeenskappe 'n openheid het ten opsigte van die fragmentasie en verskeidenheid (pluralisme) van die *global village*, anders sal hulle nie in staat wees om te reageer op die realiteit van globalisering en postmodernisme nie.

Die narratiewe gemeenskappe het 'n verhaal nodig (*sacred story*) wat nie die realiteit van fragmentasie en verskeidenheid ontken nie, maar wat juis die realiteit in die verhaal kan inkorporeer. Ek glo dat ek in die verhaal van die kruis so verhaal gevind het en verwys daarom na die narratiewe gemeenskappe as gemeeskappe *van* en *onder* die kruis. Hierdie gedagtes het die basis gevorm vir

transformatiewe handeling binne 'n spesifieke gemeente, naamlik *Pastoral Redemptive Communities*.

Die avontuur, begelei deur die vier momente, was 'n kritiese avontuur in dialoog met ander dissiplines (ekonomie, filosofie, sielkunde, sosiologie) om sodoende die studie te
open vir verdere dialoog.

Ten Key-terms

1.   Postmodern

2.   Global Village (Globalization)

3.   Postmodern global village

4.   Narrative theology

5.   Narrative truth

6.   Human action

7.   Contextual theology

8.   Community (language community, narrative community)

9.   Validity claims

10.   Pastoral Redemptive Communities

11.   Community of the cross and community under the cross

12.   Journey

13.   Descriptive theology

14.   Historical theology

15.   Systematic theology

16.   Strategic practical theology

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