CONCLUDING REMARKS ON DESCRIPTIVE THEOLOGY WITH REGARDS TO THE *POSTMODERN GLOBAL VILLAGE*

This chapter will be a bridging chapter between the descriptive theology of Chapters Three and Four and the historical and systematic theology which will follow in Chapter Six.

In this bridging chapter I will seek to do three things:

1.   in conclusion describe the *postmodern global village* thereby bringing the thoughts of Chapter Two (on postmodernity) and the thoughts of Chapter Four (on the global village) together and thus describe the *postmodern global village*,

2.   describe the story of the church in the development of the *postmodern global village,* and then

3.   formulate questions that arise out of the practice of the church in the global village.

These questions, developed from the practices of the church, will lead the journey into historical and systematic theology, as these questions come into dialogue with the sacred texts and story of theology, which will be the content and format of Chapter Six.

1.   DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY OF THE *POSTMODERN GLOBAL VILLAGE*

Professor Harvey begins his book, *Another City*, with the statement that if you ask ten people at random "what they think about the state of the world in which they live, and you will probably hear at least fifteen different opinions" (Harvey 1999:1).

There will be those, he continues, who will see the present times as the best times ever. The global village is for some the pinnacle of the modern dream of heaven on earth, the climax of the modern and the realisation of the Enlightenment dream with regards to technology, communication and global mobility. For these, the villagers, it is a time filled with opportunities to realise their personal dreams and aspirations. This is the view of the global villager who has found his/her place within the global village and is privileged enough to embrace the opportunities which the global village offers. In Chapter Three I reflected on some informal interviews with villagers, who would agree that this time we are now living in, is the peak of development and opportunity, but at the same time they would also complain about the lack of time, their tight schedules and the frustration of balancing work, family and private time[1]. Then there are numerous others who see

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1 Chapter Three: 3.2 The stories of need from the villagers, which are stories of unemployment or the fear of unemployment, stories of emigration, stories of families in the global village, story of the young

these times as the worst as they are struggling with unemployment and with all sorts of other social, economic and political problems not to mention the psychological, moral and spiritual challenges of this postmodern time in the global village – the marginalised.[2]

At the end of Chapter Four I came to the conclusion, after unpacking the stories of the global village and placing these stories within the narrative global field of experience, that the stories of the individuals in the global village was a story of homelessness. "In conclusion it can be said that although the dominant story (discourse) in the global village is one of unity and connectedness the most common story of individuals and communities (bother the villagers and those marginalised) living in the global village is one of disembeddedness and 'homelessness.'"

1.1   Capitalism and postmodernity in the global village

In the second perspective of Chapter Four I have tried to show that postmodernity and capitalism are closely related (Chapter Four: 13.4 Globalization and postmodernity). I believe that I can even go further and say that the one is the logical outworking of the other. Nicholas Boyle strongly agrees as he argues that postmodernism is the logic outworking of global capitalism (Boyle 1998). In a similar line of thought Fredric Jameson identified postmodernism as the cultural logic of *global*[3] capitalism (Jameson 1991). Capitalism within the global village needs a culture of continuous novelty as it is no longer just a question of supply and demand, but the question of induced demand. This induced demand is created by a culture of novelty where the new is always better. For some in the global village a new car, a new kitchen, a new wardrobe every six months has become absolute essential and a culture is created where individuals are free to choose from a variety of products, not out of necessity, but because personal identity is no longer found in history, or culture, or story, but in consumption.[4] The individual has become that which he/she consumes. David Harvey argues that postmodernity needs to be seen and understood within the context of daily life in the global village (Harvey1990:63). It needs to be understood within the narrative global field of experience. Within this context postmodernity cannot be seen as some abstract academic enterprise, but an experience which directly relates to the every day economic reality of pluralism and fragmentation. Terry Eagleton argues that there is no better intellectual alternative than postmodernism for the capitalist markets, as capitalism is the ultimate form of deconstruction (Eagleton1996: 62).

Capitalism is in its very essence innovative, not because of some myth of the creative

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person in the global village, the story of flexibility, and lastly the story of no hope.
2 Chapter Three: 3.3 The secondary stories of need from those on the margins of the global village, which are stories of homelessness, stories of shack dwellers and the story of a young girl in crisis.
3 I have changed Jameson's "*late*" capitalism to "*global*" capitalism and I believe in the context of Chapter Four's story of the global village this is justified.
4 Chapter Four: 15. Narrative global field of experience.

and innovative entrepreneur but because of the coercive laws of competition and the class struggle which are endemic to capitalism. Thus the labour market is continuously challenged and under tremendous pressure, which was described in Chapter Three (Harvey 1990:105). The fragmentation of the individual working in such a global village is not the result of spiritual or cultural processes, but also and predominantly the result of the economic reality of the global village. Yet this causal connection between the economic reality and the fragmentation of the individual, is precisely

> "what "genealogical" deconstructive thinking not only cannot represent – it denies it exists. In so doing it plays the game precisely as the global market wants it played. For the fiction by which the global market commends itself to us and encourages our participation in it is that the human self is purely a consumer… The self is little more than a formality, the name we give to the principle that consumes options the transient locus of interpretation. There is nothing outside the text, just as there is nothing outside the market" (Boyle 1998: 153-154).

Boyle sees there to be an analogy between the postmodern perspective that there is no single truth, but only a multiplicity of mutually untranslatable perspectives and the market seen as a boundless medium of perfect and free competition amongst an ever growing number of commercial identities (Boyle 1998:152).

In a certain sense postmodernity is very convenient in the global village, because with the demise of the nation state[5] and the lack of political clout to really respond to the political challenges of the global village, postmodernity offers a feasible excuse. "For in a period when no very far-reaching political action seems really feasible, when so-called micro-politics seems to be the order of the day, it is relieving to convert this necessity into a virtue – to persuade oneself that one's political limits have, as it were, a solid ontological grounding, in the fact that social totality is in any case a chimera" (Eagleton 1996:9).

1.2   The global village a postmodern village

Zygmunt Bauman says that postmodernity is modernity without illusion, but the obverse of which is also true, that modernity is postmodernity refusing to accept its own truth. The illusion that he is referring to, is the illusion that the messiness of the world will go away through the power of reason as this messiness will be replaced by a systematic rule of reason. The postmodern truth he is referring to is the truth that "the "messiness" will stay whatever we do or know, that the little orders and "systems" we carve out in the world are brittle, until-further-notice, and as arbitrary and in the end contingent as their alternatives (Bauman 1993:32f).

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5 Chapter Four: 6. Unpacking the story of the global village – the demise of the nation sate as well as Chapter Four: 15.1.2 Individual – society problematic

Capitalism has united the world into a single commercial village (global village) and in the previous section I reflected on postmodernity as the logical outworking of global capitalism. Therefore I can refer to this village as the *postmodern global village* and in the rest of the study I will be using this term, *postmodern global village,* to describe the present world condition.

The pioneers that gave birth to the postmodern city or the *postmodern global village* did not set out to produce a monster, but with good intentions they set out to produce heaven on earth. Many of these pioneers were "rebellious children of Christendom" (Harvey 1999:7). As Henry Steele Commager argues in *The Empire of Reason*, these pioneers of the modern era were adventurous and recognised "no boundaries to their curiosity, no barriers to their thought, no limits to their activities or, for that matter to their authority. They took the whole earth for their domain and some of them the cosmos, for they were not afraid to extend their laws to the universe" (Commager 1982:3).

1.3 The *postmodern global village* – the realization of the modern dream of heaven on earth

Three generations after the Enlightenment "virtually everybody and every place on the globe have been brought – sometimes willingly, oftentimes not – under the authority of the regime charged with making this vision of heaven on earth a reality. Seduced by Descartes' depiction of the essential human subject as an ahistorical, disembodied entity for thinking and acting rationally in response to stimuli provided by an "external" environment, the modern world systematically dismantled the "encumbrances" that local customs and conventions "impose" on "autonomous individuals," and in the process deprived us not only of our sense of who we are and what is at stake in our lives, but also what makes for genuine and lasting peace" (Harvey 1999:98).

Thus the *postmodern global village* becomes a reality that has globally succumbed to the vision of the 'Enlightenment project' as Alasdair MacIntyre calls it (MacIntyre 1984). Humanity striving globally to realise this sweet dream of heaven on earth has some proud achievements with regards to technology and the sciences. In Chapter Three it was referred to that the global village does offer tremendous possibilities, for example parents communicating via internet with their children who are working globally. One can stand amazed at the developments in the communications and IT spheres. Yet with all these developments in the process of realising the dream of heaven on earth the globe is today challenged by humanity which is faced with "infinity, restlessness, tumult, and madness" (Poteat 1985:4).

The dream of heaven on earth was the dream to have complete control over nature and

with this control also have control over fate. *Fortuna* would at last be conquered and be under the control of the universal man. Alasdair MacIntyre refutes the possibility to gain control over Fortuna (MacIntyre 1984: 105). He argues that for at least four reasons the future remains unpredictable and therefore the social sciences cannot predict the future. These four reasons which MacIntyre (MacIntyre 1984:93) describes as, "the four sources of systematic unpredictability in human affairs," are:

  1)   radical conceptual innovation;
  2)   the unpredictability "of my own future actions so far as these depend upon decisions as yet unmade by me '"(MacIntyre 1984:96);
  3)   game-theoretic character of social life. There is never just one game being played, but at all times numerous different games;
  4)   pure contingency. With these four sources of systematic unpredictability the future remains vulnerable and unpredictable and in the hands of Fortuna.

The Enlightenment and modern dream to render unto human history predictability is impossible. The "pervasive unpredictability in human life also renders all our plans and projects permanently vulnerable and fragile" (MacIntyre 1984: 103). If the future cannot be predicted it also means that one cannot plan for the future with absolute certainty. In response to this unpredictability of the future and the uncertainties of all human plans, the universal man in the global village has thoroughly organised life so as to insure him/herself against the blows of fate. In the pre-modern times nature and fate were controlled by spiritual forces and now, in the *postmodern global village,* fate is controlled by organisation.

Insurance companies, life savings, medical aids schemes etcetera all seek to ensure the individual from fate and its unforeseen consequences. So nature and fate is conquered by technical organisation. The result of this is that the universal man is no longer a creature of fate and nature, but a creature of organisation. Bonhoeffer argues that our immediate environment is no longer nature, but organisation and although this organisation might protect us from nature's menace, it itself becomes a new menace (Bonhoeffer 1971:380).

This is the secular realm which has not been found, as was believed once the veil of myth and religion had been destroyed,[6] but which has been constructed and humanly created. "In short the new secular realm has been fashioned rather than found. It was literally created by means of practices, social roles, equipment, and goals, the aim of which is to control and predict with ever-increasing precision all that falls within its technical regime (Harvey 1999:112-113).

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6 Refer to 2.3.1The Enlightenment claim to universal divinity, of this chapter. In this section I will shortly reflect on the rise of the modern understanding of the secular as a physical space rather than a time in Divine history.

It is this secular technical organisation which sets human life apart from all other forms of life in the modern and postmodern world. In this highly technically organised world of the global village human "freedom" is interpreted within the context of the wide ranging choices that are at our disposal. The global shopping malls offer everything from all over the world and satellite television brings the world into our living rooms, yet this freedom of choice ironically has also become our subjection, as humanity has become dependent on the technology that offers this "freedom of choice" to the villagers of the global village. This freedom and plurality of choice has disembedded[7] the individual from the traditional narrative settings of community and religion and offers the individual only one narrative setting and that is the setting of the *postmodern global village*. This is a hidden narrative setting which describes the individual as an autonomous consumer.

1.4   The individual in the *postmodern global village*

Yet the search to establish heaven on earth was also in a certain sense a search to become like the gods (not the God of Israel, because the God of Israel wanted to be found only in history and not beyond the realm of reality and history) and in the process humanity has lost itself. This 'universal man' seeking divinity status "has found …its own freedom – from the world, from time, from other selves. But this freedom is a very expensive torso, because of what it is obliged to leave out: society, temporality, the other. What remains for it, is solitude and the abyss"(Bloom 1992:37).[8]

This is a very dangerous self understanding of humanity, because if humanity does not see itself as part of time and creation, but rather as lords and masters of the physical world, then humanity also believes that we can manipulate anything according to the values that we have chosen without any accountability – no accountability to history, in other words to our heritage, nor to the future, in other words to the future generation. Nor is there any accountability to anything beyond the self in the present. The world then becomes a stock of resources to fulfil our needs and desires (Rouse 1987:66). Humanity's understanding of itself and its purpose is driven by Nietzsche's 'will to power' "a continual striving for increased control and more precise determination of ourselves and the world that is never subordinated to any other concern" (Rouse 1987:261).

Yet, is this 'universal man' really the lord and master of this self-created (constructed) universe?

> "We have at our disposal immense manipulative powers that reflect values that
> we have chosen, and yet at the same time these powers and capabilities are
> embodied in techniques and institutions that in a very real sense have come to

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7 Chapter Four: 15.3 The Disembedded narratives of selves
8 Chapter Four: 16. Globalization and homelessness (nostalgia)

possess us" (Harvey 1999:100).

The average postmodern individual in the global village, lives the lie that consumption and freedom of choice will bring him/her happiness and a fulfilled life. Therefore there is a general unwillingness to sacrifice any material certainties for moral or spiritual integrity.
"We are adrift on a stagnant pool of isolation and avarice, antipathy and boredom, uncertainty and self-centeredness" (Harvey 1999:5).

The individual in the postmodern global village is an individual that is empty and disembedded without substance, because he/she has no past, no community, no loyalties and thus he/she is frantically searching to fill the melancholic void. Self identity is not found within a communal context, but individually constructed as Giddens argues, "in the context of multiple choices as filtered through abstract systems" (Giddens 1991:5f).

The individual has to construct his or her identity within this technological organisation which is not the natural environment, but as Giddens says, an abstract system. The individual constructs his/her identity within this field of freedom of choice, yet this choice is not free, but carefully co-ordinated by overlapping mechanisms of social control (Harvey 1999:118). Harvey continues and says: "not only do we have little choice but to be individuals in this society; we are also condemned to realize our individuality pre-eminently as consumers" (Harvey 1999:118).

It is this understanding of postmodernity that is exactly the logic that is required for the unfettered capitalism of the global village.

What is new in the modern and postmodern construct of individual identity is not the "reflexive accumulation of knowledge about human life as the basis on which choices are made. All human beings, in one form or another, have routinely "kept in touch" with the grounds of what they do as an integral element of doing"(Harvey 1999:119-120).

This keeping in touch was, in the past, primarily the task of community and the task of tradition. These communities and tradition did not resist change, but reflexively conversed, debated, organised and monitored practices and activities taking certain "temporal and special markers in terms of which change can have any meaningful form" (Giddens 1990:37).

So reflexivity took place in the form of a tradition within a community and it was this process which allowed communities over time to identify and name the good that they as community should pursue, and identify that which gives the community its common

identity.

It is this common identity and reflexivity of tradition which has changed in the modern and postmodern era as human reason is no longer located within a community's practices and traditions, in other words a community that is participating in the world of time and space (Toulmin 1972:133), but is rather seen as a "quasi divine power that configures the world, both theoretically and practically around the fictional character of the individual" (Harvey 1999:120).

The individual constructs his or her own reality supposedly free from tradition and history. This then also means that the everyday life is "acted out" on the stage of reflexive organization of knowledge environments, or as Bonhoeffer calls them technical organizations.

This 'liberation' of reflexive power from the community and tradition has set a process in motion, as Michael Foucault puts it: "the formation of knowledge and the increase of power regularly reinforce one another in a circular process" (Foucault 1977:224). Self identity is therefore no longer rooted in communities of tradition, but within technical environments and a technically organized world which is organized around the individual in a power struggle. It is a power struggle between him/herself and the technically organised world as well as other individuals, who are similarly trying to establish their personal identity within this technically constructed world. The great dictum that was quoted by Kant, "Know thyself" has been replaced in the postmodern world with a new formulation - "Make thyself." This is "a shift threatening to swamp us with affluence of rampant consumerism" (Sanneh 1996:30).

Thus the postmodern global villager as an individual is a "disembedded" individual as he/she is cut off from all forms of communal and traditional identity.[9] This disembedding process happens via the institutions of the global village, where the individual is defined within these institutions across vast distances of time and space and is therefore no longer rooted in a local context.

Giddens speaks of two different types of disembedding mechanisms.
The first is "**symbolic tokens**" which he defines as "media of interchange which can be 'passed around' without regard to the specific characteristics of individual or groups that handle them at any particular juncture" (Giddens 1990:22).

Giddens understands money as the pre-eminent symbolic token of modernity, but the prototype of all secular "symbolic tokens" was in modernity citizenship of the nation state (Giddens 1990:22-27). To remove personal identity from a local community to an

abstract concept like the nation state with an arbitrarily defined territory was absolutely unique to modernity and completely a human construct. This then can lead to nationalism.

> "Nationalism often acts to fuse the otherwise separate impulses of culture and politics, and by its force produces a sentiment indistinguishable from the religious.   Nationalism offers people a creed every bit as potent as religion"(Sanneh 1996:52-53).

In postmodernity it is the *global village* which is the symbolic token wherein the individual needs to construct his/her identity, but this is a total abstraction and therefore he/she can only define themselves via money and consumption.

The second disembedding mechanism Giddens identifies is the spread of **expert systems** throughout the technical regime of modernity. This again uproots the individual from the local contexts and connects him or her to these temporal expert systems. Daily life in the *postmodern global village* is basically organised via these expert systems, without there being any deliberation about the ends pursued, because these expert systems are not necessarily in any way connected to each other. These two mechanisms disembody individuals from their "social relations and the immediacies of moral contexts and reconfigure them within in carefully delineated knowledge environments" (Harvey 1999:122).

It is these knowledge environments and technical and professional expert systems that have taken control over the daily lives of the global villager. Life is divided into these separated fields of expertise and knowledge environments. In chapter three I reflected upon the lives of global villagers where this becomes very clear.

In the past an individual went through various life stages (rites of passages) and these were embedded within community and tradition. In the *postmodern global village* these rites of passage are embedded within these knowledge environments of technical and professional expertise. Take for example family planning which is controlled by a whole spectrum of expert systems, such as marriage counselling and family counselling. Family planning is also dependent on the job environment as financial questions are raised. A family cannot just decide to have children, but need to consider the financial and professional implications of children on their careers.

Raising a child is no longer connected to or embedded in the community, but here again a whole spectrum of professionals and expert systems are brought in. These expert systems vary from the books parents buy to the various offers and choices with regards to play school, pre-school primary school.

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9 Chapter Four: 15. Narrative global field of experience.

Secondary schools and tertiary education is then the knowledge environment that prepares the individual for professional expertise.

Marriage and family life is once more handed over not to the community, but to various counsellors. The individual and his/her family live daily within this diversity of knowledge environments and professional expertise. The individual in this environment looses all capacity to make any moral judgements on his/her own, because he/she needs professional expertise to make judgements. To make a basic moral judgement or to make a decision the postmodern individual seeks information from the internet or from some professional before a decision can be made. Decisions and moral judgements are no longer embedded in traditions and communities, but in the information world and expert systems.

1.4.1 The fragmented lives of individuals in the *postmodern global village*

From the above it may seem as if the postmodern global villager lives in a pluralistic world, where he/she can decide and choose from a whole variety of choices, methods, counselling techniques etcetera. MacIntyre refutes this and argues that we do not live in a pluralistic or culturally diverse world, but rather in a fragmented world. Wilson then goes on to make the distinction between pluralism and fragmentation.

Pluralism: "describes a world of competing outlooks, traditions, or claims to truth. It pictures a culture made up of coherent, integrated communities, tradition, or positions that can be clearly differentiated from one another" (Wilson 1997:27).

In such a pluralistic context the identity of an individual is very clear, because the "convictions that constitute that identity are clear and coherent, and the life that follows from those convictions is determined" (Wilson 1997:27).

A Pluralistic society would be one where one encounters various different world views and religious outlooks, for example Muslims, and Hindus, etcetera. A pluralistic society is a society where these different outlooks are clear and coherent and one could enter into dialogue with these differing views.

Fragmented worlds: Fragmentation is there where there is no clarity or coherence and where lives are lived piecemeal and not whole. "The disagreements we have are difficult to resolve because we cannot locate them within some coherent position or community"(Wilson 1997:27).

The postmodern lives are these piecemeal fragmented lives that are constructed within the context of all these different knowledge environments and fields of expertise.

> "The inhabitants of postmodern culture, with few exceptions, must now undertake the reflexive task of constructing their individual self-identities on their own, each

choosing her or his own conception of the good life, but without the benefit of reliable moral landmarks or guides to lead them through the process" (Harvey 1999:124).

In the fragmented *postmodern global village* there are no moral landmarks to guide the individual through his or her life.

1.4.2 The individual and morality in the p*ostmodern global village*

Human beings in the postmodern global village have been separated from their moral resources and therefore have nothing at their disposal to make their life meaningful and satisfying. These knowledge environments and fields of professional and technical expertise are indeed impressive and open the doors to innumerable possibilities for life in the global village, but as long as they are only extensions of control over fate and nature they lack moral meaning and the whole process is morally stunted (Giddens1991:9).

How does the individual in the *postmodern global village* then identify him/herself? The only way is for the individual to essentially imagine him/herself as separate from the world of time and space so that you can treat the future as "a territory, as it were carved out and colonized" (Giddens 1991: 3).

MacIntyre (MacIntyre 1984) tells the story of how morality lost its coherence. One of the characteristics of the *postmodern global village* is the loss of moral authority or the prevalence of moral relativity. The 2003 USA led war on Iraq became a moral issue and in many circles people were arguing about the possibility of a just war. Yet all these arguments remained open ended as there was no conclusion to them. MacIntyre argues that there is a reason why these arguments in the *postmodern global village* will not come to any conclusion. He gives three reasons for this.

1.   Conceptual incommensurability

All the arguments, both pro and contra arguments about a just war, are logically valid "or can easily be expanded so as to be made so; the conclusions do indeed follow from the premises. But the rival premises are such that we possess no rational way of weighing the claims of one as against the other" (MacIntyre 1984:8). This means that in a postmodern world these arguments are all relative to each other as there is no rational argument to defend one premise over and against the other.

2.   The arguments purport to be *impersonal* rational arguments

Observing these arguments one could come to the conclusion that there "is nothing to such contemporary disagreements but a clash of antagonistic wills, each will be determined by some set of arbitrary choices of its own" (MacIntyre

1984:9). Yet these arbitrary choices are clothed in language that presents them as logical objective arguments.

3. The arguments have totally differing historical origins (MacIntyre 1984:10). All the moral arguments of all the ages, together with arguments based on totally different world views, can come together in one clash of opinions without there being any rational standard of discerning between these arguments/opinions. In other words, there is a pluralism of moral arguments and world views that come together and how does one argue without a universal rational premise?

MacIntyre argues that the only resort to which we can fall back on in this culture is emotivism.

"Emotivism is the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and more specifically all moral judgments are nothing but expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character" (MacIntyre 1984:12).

If this is the only basis for moral arguments then there is no rational method and arguments are 'won' by "producing certain non-rational effects on the emotions or attitudes of those who disagree with one. We use moral judgments not only to express our own feelings and attitudes, but also precisely to produce such effects in others" (MacIntyre 1984:12).

I was reading MacIntyre during the time of the USA led war on Iraq (2003) and following the news as well as the reports in defence of this war I could not but help notice that all the arguments were highly emotive. The whole debate was an emotive and manipulative debate without any rational grounding or method. The problem with this way of living in the global village is that other human beings are seen as means to an individual end. The individual will manipulate the other until they agree, without there being any rational bases.

1.4.3 The individual in relation to others in the *postmodern global village*

MacIntyre identifies three different characters which he uses to describe our moral ethical relationships with each other in the postmodern context. MacIntyre classifies these social roles as characters specific of the postmodern society. In Chapter Two[10] I reflected on narrative nature of identity and that the narrative setting in which the individual finds him/herself determines the individual's character. This character again determines the moral/ethical actions of the individual, because the actions are shaped and formed by the character which in turn is shaped and formed by the narrative setting. MacIntyre describes the character which is shaped and formed by the narrative setting

of the *postmodern global village*.

MacIntyre calls them characters, because there is a specific moral constraint placed upon the character.

> "*Characters* specified thus must not be confused with social roles in general. For they are a very special type of social role which places a certain kind of moral constraint on the personality of those who inhabit them in a way in which many other social roles do not. I choose the word 'character' for them precisely because   of the way it links dramatic and moral associations"(MacIntyre 1984:27).

It is through these characters that the moral obligations of a specific social order are lived out.

> "They are so to speak, the moral representatives of their culture and they are so because of the way in which moral and metaphysical ideas and theories assume through them an embodied existence in the social world. Characters are the mask worn by moral philosophies"(MacIntyre 1984:28).

1.   The first character is that of a rich aesthete.

The rich aesthete "whose interest is to fend off the kind of boredom that is so characteristic of modern leisure by contriving behaviour in others that will be responsive to their wishes, that will feed their sated appetites" (MacIntyre 1984:24).

2.   The second character is the manager

It is the manager's task to direct and redirect the resources towards an identified end. Every "bureaucratic organisation embodies some explicit or implicit definition of costs and benefits from which the criteria of effectiveness are derived" (MacIntyre 1984: 25). The manager's task is to strive towards more efficiency within the organisation.

> "The manager treats ends as given, as outside his scope; his concern is with technique, with effectiveness in transforming raw materials into final products, unskilled labor into skilled labor, investment into profits" (MacIntyre 1984:30).

The manager is believed to be an expert in his/her field (which is purported to be a morally neutral field) and he /she is believed to be able to make law-like generalisations and thus predictions of the future (MacIntyre 1984:77).

3.   The third character is the therapist

The therapist also treats ends as given, as outside his/her scope; his/her concern also is with technique, with effectiveness in transforming neurotic symptoms into directed energy, maladjusted individuals into well-adjusted ones.

> "The therapist enables us to adjust our private feelings and values in order to

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10 Chapter Two: 8.3 Narrative understanding of human existence.

come to terms with that fragmentation. Focusing on technique and lacking any means to question our ends, the Therapist underwrites our moral fragmentation…"(Wilson 1997:48).

Neither manager nor therapist can or do engage in moral debate. Yet there is the belief that each one of us is an autonomous moral agent;

> "…but each of us also becomes engaged by modes of practice, aesthetic or bureaucratic, which involve us in manipulative relationships with others. Seeking to protect the autonomy that we have learned to prize, we aspire ourselves *not* to be manipulated by others; seeking to incarnate our own principles and stand-point in the world of practice, we find no way open to us to do so except by directing towards others those very manipulative modes of relationship which each of us aspires to resist in our own case" (MacIntyre 1984:68).

These three different characters each describe our manipulative relationships within the postmodern village.

MacIntyre argues that there are three moral fictions which determine our moral emotive arguments, namely utility, rights (human rights or natural rights) and the last and probably the most powerful in the postmodern world is effectiveness. This brings us back to the fragmentation of the individual, because he/she is exposed to the efficiency of both manager on institutional level and therapist on the personal level.

Therefore the postmodern individual will treat the world of time and space, the future, fate, as well as other individuals as something that needs to be organised and managed. This kind of situation brings with it a paradox that Alasdair MacIntyre highlighted.

> "It is necessary, if life is to be meaningful, for us to be able to engage in long-term projects [*colonise the future*], and this requires predictability; it is necessary, if life is to be meaningful for us to be in possession of ourselves and not merely to be the creations of other people's projects, intentions and desires, and this requires unpredictability. We are thus involved in a world in which we are simultaneously trying to tender the rest of society predictable and ourselves unpredictable, to devise generalizations which will capture the behaviour of others and to cast our own behaviour into forms which will elude the generalizations which others frame" (MacIntyre 1984:104).[11]

1.4.4 The *postmodern global village* a place of freedom yet conformity

Toni Morrison speaks of this paradox of freedom and yet captivity within the modern /postmodern city or *postmodern global village*: "do what you please in the city, it is there to back and frame you no matter what you do"(Morrison 1993:8f).

> "A peculiar mix of permissiveness and supervision thus characterizes the comings and goings of the global Cosmopolis, as people do exactly what it wants them to do, yet all the while saying to themselves that they are free. This mixture drives the conformity that underlies the celebrations of pluralism and diversity in contemporary society"(Harvey 1999:2).

In Chapter Four of the study (13.2 Globalization and experience of self) I reflected on the experience of this multiculturalism, which Stanley Fish calls "boutique multiculturalism" (Fish 1997:378). This is seen in South Africa where at regular intervals there are certain cultural festivals celebrating certain cultural groupings, which gives the appearance of true pluralism, but in truth it is the same homogeneous global consumer society of the global village, that celebrates diversity as part of the entertainment offered to be consumed. In essence we cannot really speak of a pluralistic global village, as the villagers are all rather homogeneous in their purpose in life with one goal: consumption.

The villager's "purpose in life is to pursue their own interest in every sphere allotted to them by the institutions of our commercial republic" (Harvey 1999:3). The individual is free to choose from the pluralism of lifestyles, but only in the private sphere of his or her life and thus create a fragmented patchwork that has no coherence or clarity, but is made up of the diversity of disconnected ideas and ideals. This freedom of choice in the private sphere needs to conform to the ultimate good, which is predetermined by the institutional regime of the global village, and so the freedom of choice is limited to those spheres which do not influence the needs of the market mechanisms, but which are supportive to these mechanisms. It is the international market which manages, coerces, and manipulates the heterogeneity of interests, the pluralism of lifestyle choices, the values of scientific progress, the funding of research at universities, and thus the sovereignty of choice itself (Cavanaugh 1995:409).

MacIntyre argues: "there are two alternative modes of social life open to us, one in which the free and arbitrary choices of individuals are sovereign and one in which the bureaucracy is sovereign, precisely so that it may limit the free and arbitrary choices of the individual" (MacIntyre 1984:35).

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11 Italics and square brackets are my own insertions into the quote.

1.5   The triumph of consumerism

The postmodern global individual who has been emptied of all social content has paid a high price for this 'freedom'. This empty self thus needs to seek fulfilment and purpose in life elsewhere and one place that he/she looks for it is in the "consuming of goods, calories, experiences, politicians, romantic partners, and empathetic therapists in an attempt to combat the growing alienation and fragmentation of its era" (Cushman 1990:600).

The *postmodern global village* in a certain sense has become addicted to that which only the risk culture of the global market can provide. In that sense the global villagers have become relatively easy to govern as you only need to provide that which they seek, which is more consumption. This psychology is a very favourable context for the global markets, as the demand will always be there and all the market needs to do is provide the goods. The only limit to this capitalist dream is the environment.

1.6   The effects of the *postmodern global village*

The ideology of the *postmodern global village* is so complete that many have fallen pray to the "phantasy life of community", the delusional hope for "a collective life without inner or outer boundaries, with obstacles or occlusions, within and between souls and within and between cities without the perennial work which constantly legitimates and delegitimates the transformation of power into authority of different kinds" (Rose 1996:16).

This global village community is held together by what some might regard as rational politics, but which is the totalizing domination of an imaginary community in which all are demanded to be dedicated to the ideals of difference, otherness, and toleration, and this "leaves the individual more or less exposed to…unmitigated power" (Rose 1996:21). The individual seems powerless against the unmitigated power of the total global market and its demands.

1.6.1 Violence and division

The global village with its ideology of unity and community cannot cope with the rise in fragmentation and thus violence is very often the result. This is seen as in the past few years there has been an increase in racial violence in most of the major urban complexes of the global village. There has also been an increase in other forms of violence as well as a heightened degree of crime and specifically violent crime. This escalation in violence and crime can be attributed to the *postmodern global village* not having the necessary dramatic resources to interpret the fragmentation and homelessness experienced in daily life in the village. "Hatred, division, violence and oppression have multiplied throughout the world at a geometric rate that would have

been unimaginable to our "unenlightened" forebears"(Harvey 1999:8).

> "We find ourselves barbarized by an empty public culture intimidated by colossal bureaucracies, numbed into passivity by the absence of opportunities of meaningful deliberation, inflated by absurd habits of consumption, deflated by the Leviathans that surround us, and stripped of dignity by a way of living that far exceeds a human scale. We live in societies that embark upon the grandest and most hubristic collective projects, while granting their citizens only the feeblest opportunities for an effective say over the disposal of their own destiny" (Beiner 1992:34).

Vaclav Havel asks the question: "is not the greyness and emptiness of life in the post-totalitarian system only an inflated caricature of modern life in general?" (Havel 1987:54)

If one looks at these signs one cannot help but come to the conclusion that the *postmodern global village* is caught in a cycle of consumption, cynicism, and conflict which will destroy the very fabric of society as well as the environment.

> Martin Buber says: "caprice and doom, the spook of the soul and the nightmare of the world," which are bound together, ..."get along with each other, living next door and avoiding each other, without connection and friction, at home in meaninglessness – until in one instant eye meets eye, madly, and the confession erupts from both that they are unredeemed" (Buber 1970:108).

These are the effects of the *postmodern global village*.

1.7   The concluding descriptive story of the *postmodern global village*

Capitalism and postmodernity are so closely related that the one is seen as the logically outworking of the other. The two go hand in hand. They belong together. Capitalism through the development of trans-national companies and the financial markets, as discussed in Chapter Four, united the globe together into a single commercial village. Postmodernism and capitalism go hand in hand and therefore the village that capitalism has created can be described as a *postmodern global village*.

This village was the modern dream of heaven on earth that universal humanity will be able to control his/her fate by controlling nature and the whole universe through the power of free reason. Free reason is reason that is free from history, community and context, yet this was discovered to be impossible for various reasons. In response to the impossibility of controlling fate, universal humanity created an organisational structure to ensure itself against the unpredictable blows of fate and

> so humanity had created for itself a technically organised global village. This village, being a capitalist village, defined humanity primarily as consumers. These consumers are in a perpetual competition with each other for the limited resources. Individuals who are disembedded from all context, story or community live in this technically organised global village as consumers, distrusting each other because of constant competition and organizing their lives through technical and professional systems of expertise. The whole reality is an organised reality which had become all-encompassing and the result of this was that humans needed to identify themselves within this context of differing systems of expertise as well as different systems and organisations where they had to fulfil certain roles and duties by playing the role of certain characters which are needed by the organisational system of the *postmodern global village*. These characters (rich aesthete, manager and therapist) were created and formed by the dominant narrative of the *postmodern global village* – characters that were intended to respond to the needs and tendencies of the global market within a postmodern understanding. The experience of reality was very different and thus the result was complete fragmentation and a feeling of homelessness.
>
> The result of this fragmented world, empty of all meaning, was violence and more division as people felt insecure and needed to defend themselves against everyone around them.

2. THE STORY OF THE CHRUCH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE *POSTMODERN GLOBAL VILLAGE*

2.1 Introduction to the story of the church in the *postmodern global village*

This will be the last step of descriptive theology as the theological journey now inevitably turns towards describing the story of theology or the story of the church. This is the story of the church and her relationship to the *postmodern global village*.

Although there has already been made mention of the church's role in modernity[12] in this chapter her story will be told. It is a story that tells of a wandering community that has wandered through the wilderness of the development of the world into a global village. I will reflect on the church's story mainly from the perspective of her story in the Western world and those parts of the world that have been influenced by the West. I am aware that the story of the church is a lot more diverse than this Western perspective.

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12 Chapter Two: 7. The church and modernity

This story however is told from my perspective which is a subjective perspective, namely a white, Western South African perspective. Thus this story excludes the story of the church in the Eastern parts of the globe, as well as of the story the church in Africa and many other parts of the continent. It is not that these stories are unimportant for the study, but for the purpose of the study's context, the global village, the Western perspective and specifically the American perspective of the church's story is primary.

> "America is now the fate of the world. In other words, America is not simply the name of a country but rather names how liberal practices, particularly through the agency of capitalism, now seems to be "global"" (Hauerwas 2000:17).

Although I only agree in part with what Hauerwas says, I do believe that the global village is dominated by the story of America (liberal practices of capitalism) and thus this American story is the dominant story,[13] although I do believe and hope that other stories are also playing an important role. Wilson agrees with Hauerwas that Western Culture is the dominant culture in the development of the global village, thus I believe it to be important to focus on the church within Western culture. "My concern is primarily with the church that is situated in Western culture …..As we move towards a global culture dominated by the technologies and economies of this culture, my concern becomes increasingly global"(Wilson 1997:5).

For the purpose of this study I shall be looking at the story of the church from an American/Western perspective.
Professor Jonathan Wilson's concern is that the church in "Western culture is in grave danger of compromising its faithfulness to the gospel" (Wilson 1997:1).

The irony is that the church has been actively involved in the development of this postmodern global setting and now this setting threatens to overwhelm the church. For sixteen centuries the church saw itself as the spiritual form of Western civilization. In this chapter I will briefly unpack these first sixteen centuries beginning with the time of Constantine.

2.2   The diverse and paradoxical story of the church and the development of the *postmodern global village*

This section of the chapter cannot be written simply as the church's response to modernity and postmodernity, because the church did not only respond to modernity and postmodernity, but played an active role in the development of some of the tenets of modernity and postmodernity. There are some who would even argue that "postmodernism, in short, is the outworking of mistakes in Christian theology correlative

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13 Chapter Four: 9. Unpacking the story of the ideological media story of the global village.

to the attempt to make Christianity "true" apart form faithful witness" (Hauerwas 2000:38).

I cannot separate the church from the story of modernity or postmodernity, but what I will try and do in this section is retell her paradoxical story of involvement, at times disagreement, and the consequences of her involvement in the story of the development of the *postmodern global village*.

I have learned from Alasdair MacIntyre that telling the story of traditions themselves constitutes an argument that may or may not commend that particular tradition. In this study I will tell the story of the church as an argument for Christian faith, which will then be taken up in the following chapters.

2.2.1 History of the church as an argument for Christian faith

Wilson argues that there are various reasons why humanity has neglected history as argument. Firstly, the main models for arguments came from philosophy and these are "constructed syllogistically; they are disembodied, ahistorical arguments for disembodied, ahistorical people" (Wilson 1997:10).

MacIntyre (MacIntyre 1984) exposes this fallacy with regards to ethical arguments and thus the failure of the Enlightenment project. MacIntyre exposes this fallacy not by using the model of syllogism, but by telling the story. In Chapter Four I told the story of the global village thereby exposing many of its inconsistencies. As this study is a narrative study, I find meaning in this method of argument. The second reason why the church and theology has neglected using history-as-argument is that the history of the church is not always something that the church can be very proud of and thus there exists the fear that its very history can be used as an argument against the Gospel or the church. There is much in the church history of the Western church that can be feared, for example the Medieval church and her crusades, the German church and her association with the atrocities of Nazi Regime, the American church and her connection with the slave trade and the church in South Africa and her very close connection with Apartheid. The church's history is problematic and would probably give enough reasons for many to abandon the church.

This fear is misplaced, argues Wilson, for several reasons:
    1.   This fear of history confuses the church and the Gospel or the church and the Christian faith. If the distinction between the two is clear then the history of the church becomes the history of how far the church is from the Gospel and so even the failures of the church can witness to the Gospel if these failures are identified and confessed (Wilson 1997:11).

2.   The fear of history disembodies our faith. "At the same time what we avoid the church's history we also avoid the history of the gospel at work in this world. The double neglect disembodied the gospel of Jesus Christ and renders it unreal in the world. One of the reasons that there is such a gap between formal theology and the life of the church is that formal theology disembodies the gospel" (Wilson 1997: 11).

The danger of not reflecting on the history of the church is that the church today becomes a victim of her past. If we are not aware of the processes and the developments that have shaped and brought the church to where it is today, in the *postmodern global village*, then these very same processes and developments will determine also the future of the church.

Yet there is another error that the church can make with regards to her past, which is that she can either seek to forget the past or that she can glorify the past (Wilson 1997:14).

In the study I will not seek to forget the past, nor glorify the past, but tell the story not as it is, but from a very subjective perspective and that is the perspective of myself, a white Western South African and by doing so offer an argument for the Christian faith which can justify the continuation of this study.

2.3   The history of the church

2.3.1 Introduction

When describing the story of the church in relation to the *postmodern global village* I will need to go a bit further back into the history of the church. Various scholars would agree that the church's story in our present time, in Western culture, began with the understanding of the church after Constantine, therefore, I will briefly reflect and describe the church's self-understanding during this time in her history.

When Constantine was converted to Christianity there came about a very important paradigm shift within the church's story, because up and until Constantine the church was a minority group within the Roman Empire. Around 300 C.E it was estimated that only ten percent of the population of the Empire was Christian (Stark 1996:7). After Constantine the church was no longer a minority group within the Empire, but by the middle of the fourth century Common Era over fifty percent of the population had been baptised (Stark 1996:7).

This period in history can be described as an important watershed for the church and set the direction of the church's development for the next sixteen centuries therefore, I will begin my description of the story of the church from what has been termed 'the

Constantinian shift'.

2.3.2   The church after Constantine

There was a great sense of victory and jubilation with the Constantinian and Theodosian establishment of a Christian empire as this was seen as God's victory over the rulers and idols of that age (O'Donovan 1996:193ff; Markus 1970:31). Christians who were eager to serve the world saw this as the fulfilment of certain prophecies and the mission of the church fell prey to a realized eschatology. This resulted in the fading away of the very important distinction, which had historically been in the early church, between church and the world. Historically in the early church the church and the world were seen as two distinct political societies (Harvey1999:72-73).

2.3.2.1   The unity of church and state

This unity of church and empire was entrenched even further when Pope Gelasius proclaimed the idea of the church being the soul of the Empire and that the priest and the king should jointly rule the empire each according to his proper office (Harvey 1999:76-77).
This movement went one step further in the Carolingian age when priest and king no longer jointly ruled the empire, but the church was seen as the ruler of society and the king was seen as a lay minister within the church, who had certain charismas (O'Donovan 1996:204). In the middle ages the church was officially recognised as the supreme authority, while the rulers of society became the "police department of the church" (Figgis 1956:4).

What the church lost in this unification of church and state was the carefully nurtured and biblically spelled out distinction between the church (people of God - the *communio sanctorum)* and the world. As a result of this lost of distinction the church also lost the prophetic distinction between this age and the eschatological age to come. The church lost its eschatological presence within history and therefore also its mission with regards to the world. Thus the church lost her identity. Before the Constantinian shift, everybody – believer and non-believe – was aware of the existence of the church, but believers had to believe contrary to appearances in the rule of the risen Christ over the whole cosmos (Yoder 1994b:57). It was in this faith that they found their identity and their mission.

The early church not only found her identity in Christ, but also her mission, and it was from this very central premise that she interpreted history and understood herself, her mission and the world. Ephesians 3:10: "He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." Christ is the key to all

things, thus also to the history of the universe.

The church had lost this identity and mission and had found for herself a new role on the stage of Western history.

"Western civilization has been so powerful economically, militarily, technologically and culturally that the church, in sponsoring it, had seemed close to the center not merely of a few men's and women's lives but of history itself" (Clapp 1996a:17).

It was this centre stage position of the church in history that brought about the idea that the church was doing the world a 'holy service', while at the same time still remaining true to its calling and identity as "God's eschatological vehicle of passage for this world through time into the world to come" (Guroian 1987:122). The early church after the Constantinian shift confused the kingdom of God with society. It was an error of "thinking that the mission of the church was not to make disciples of Jesus Christ amongst all nations, but to rule the world by exercising power through political structures" (Wilson 1997:14).

The church paid a very high price for this 'holy service' to the world as it had to give up its independence as a distinct community, which for several centuries had cultivated her own patterns of behaviour and standards of judgment (Harvey 1999:10).

The world also paid a high price, because the church was no longer a prophetic alternative to society, but the spiritual sanction of the history of the development of the West.

Although in the high Middle Ages there was joint authority of church and state, this was only in word and not so much in deed, as the church compromised her mission at every turn in the development of the Western civilization to accommodate the dominant powers and thus her own practices were subordinated to values and interests quite alien to that of her biblical and early church heritage.

This relationship between church and state continued right through until the beginnings of the Enlightenment, but even in the Enlightenment and what followed in modernity and postmodernity, a clear distinction between church and state as it was in the early pre-Constantine church, was never again achieved.

2.4   The church and Enlightenment

"It would be impossible to read the philosophic and literary works of the Western world from the eighteenth century onward without realizing that new attitudes were in the making which, if they did not topple the Christian establishment

immediately and dramatically (as was attempted in revolutionary France), would certainly do so eventually" (Hall 1997:4).

The church of the Middle Ages was slowly moving from the centre to the periphery, yet this movement was not a clear cut movement for various reasons:

1) The Church and the Enlightenment movement were not antagonistic towards each other as many of the Enlightenment thinkers were convinced Christians. In a sense the church was part of the very development that moved her to the periphery.

2) The church on the one hand was part of the thinking of the Enlightenment yet the metaphysics of the Enlightenment and especially later in modernity did not really agree with the metaphysics of the Christian faith as revealed in Scripture and as understood by the early church fathers.

It is this strange relationship that I will seek to unpack in this section of the chapter – a relationship that in a certain sense is threefold:

1. The church was moved to the sidelines of society,

2. the church was part and parcel of the very thinking that is moving her to the sidelines

3. There existed a fundamental differences between the church (Christian faith) as revealed in Scripture and the Enlightenment project, modernity and later also postmodernity.

In Chapter Two of the study I already referred to René Descartes[14] as one of the architects of the modern age. Descartes believed the modern age would usher in a time where humanity would be "the masters and possessors of nature, which aim is not only to be   desired for the invention of an infinity of devices by which we might enjoy, without any effort, the fruits of the earth and all its commodities, but also principally for the   preservation of health"(Descartes 1969:78).

This was the vision of the Enlightenment and modernity – to make heaven on earth a reality (Poteat 1985:4). Yet it was believed that human beings could only realise this vision if humanity no longer relied on the "moral and intellectual inheritance of countless generations, practices, and institutions attuned by centuries of refinement to the delicate balance between ourselves and the world in which we live" (Harvey 1999:96).

Human beings in this endeavour to realise heaven on earth through the free reign of rationality, which is freed from the constraints of tradition and institutions, sought the status of immortals and thus followed in the footsteps of Sisyphus who tried to claim the secrets from the gods of the universe.

2.4.1   The Enlightenment claim to universal divinity

The biblical eschatological understanding of history went through two major paradigm shifts in the hi***story*** of the church. The first major paradigm shift was the Constantinian shift and the second was the Cartesian shift. Both these brought about a transformation in ecclesial practice and social polity. It was the second shift that shattered the church's practices, which had been understood to be within the framework of the beginning and the end of God's providential design and involvement in history. It was this second shift that took the historically involved God out of the equation of history. It was this shift that took from humanity any understanding of a *telos* that was associated with God. Truth was also no longer to be found in God, at least not in the God of the church, but was to be found in the empirical scientific method and the future of humanity was no longer in God's hands, but in the hands of technological progress (West 1999:14).

As stated above this was not so clear cut, as for many of these Enlightenment thinkers this faith in the technological progress was divinely ordained. These thinkers, such as Canon Hugh (twelfth century), believed that this was what was meant by Genesis 1: 28 where it says: "fill the earth and subdue it" and have dominion "over every living thing." These thinkers thought they were doing what God had intended humanity to do and did not for one moment think that they were removing God from the equation. "The hope of communion with God is the motivation for technological progress. But this God is already captive to the scientific and technological enterprise itself" (West 1999: 14).

Descartes believed that there are two levels of discourse, one mechanical and the other religious. He never doubted or even questioned the existence of God, yet he paved the way for the development of the mechanistic discourse of modernity. The mechanical discourse expanded and the religious was reduced to nearly nothing and this process reached its climax in Kant and Newtonian physics with the belief that everything can be explained and understood as everything worked according to natural mechanical laws. In this process God was moved further and further away from the day to day reality. The church's role was also moved to the sidelines of society and daily life.

2.4.2   The Enlightenment's redefinition of the secular and the church's response

God was removed from certain spheres of human life which the Enlightenment called the secular. This secular was no longer an understanding of time between the two ages as the early church understood it, but an understanding of a physical space over which humanity was sovereign and God had no say. "In place of the biblical story about the overlap of two ages, the leading figures of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment

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14 Chapter Two: 4.1.1 Great themes of the modern philosophic story

imagined not time, but a space over which human beings were sovereign (Harvey 1999:104).

These Enlightenment thinkers were Christians and their motive was not to remove God, but to understand God and creation anew. They sought to understand God and nature not from the perspective of tradition, but from the perspective of reason.

The development of the secular realm and theology's surrender to secular reason probably began in England between the time of Henry of Ghent (1217-1293) and Duns Scotus (1266-1308) (Blond 1998: 6). Henry of Ghent noted that any knowledge of the created thing by human reason was also knowledge of the creator. The only difference was that in created beings knowledge was determinable and in the Creator indeterminable. This was then also the interpretation of the natural theologians who tried to escape the scepticism of the Enlightenment and modern thinkers. The natural theologians attempted "to discern, or infer, the nature of God from a secular construal of the nature of the world"(Blond 1998:5).

For Duns Scotus the "distinction between knowing God in himself and knowing him in a creature was not important" (Hauerwas 2000:38).
> Thus Scotus in the "universal science of metaphysics elevated being (*ens*) to a station over God in order that being could be distributed both to God and to his creatures. Scotus did this because God could not be known naturally unless being is univocal (univocum) to the created and uncreated" (Hauerwas 2000:38).

This is, according to Blond, where the mistake came into theology and according to him theology became idolatrous. His argument is that this univocity of God and creatures was the beginning of idolatry. It would have been better if theology had kept to Thomas Aquinas' contention that nothing can be predicted about God, except via analogy (Blond 1998:6).
In this sense the root problem of modernity and postmodernity lay in theology itself and theology's search for God and theories of God.

Immanuel Kant, reflected on in Chapter Two, also played a vital role in this development and understanding of humanity. Kant sought to establish the limits and the boundaries of rational thought and knowledge which for him formally existed in the tension between finite and infinite.
> "He managed to convince several generation of scholars that it was possible (assuming the absolute veracity of Newtonian physics and the moral sagacity of Lutheran piety) to isolate and exhaustively catalogue the categories of pure understanding that define and order the essential, lawlike properties of both the natural and social worlds" (Harvey 1999:110).

Kant's categorisation of pure reason did not extend to the transcendental realm, although he did not exclude the possibility that humans could have access to the infinite, but not via the way of pure reason. Access to the infinite was only possible as a derivative inference of practical reason, which was grounded in the new conception of freedom. The consequences of this categorisation of reason and knowledge had the result that the religious was banned to the realm beyond the 'world of experience' (Bonhoeffer 1991:341).

Kant in a certain sense protected the possibility of religious beliefs by placing them into the realm of human freedom.

> "This 'protection,' however, effectively removed ecclesial practices and convictions from any kind of involvement in the public domain of the everyday world, and put them at the margins of life, where our capacity to quantify, predict, and control the phenomenal world gives out" (Harvey 1999:110).

In this separation of secular from sacred certain theologians tried to combine theology with this new "rational" understanding of reality. One of these theologians was Schleiermacher, as already referred to in Chapter Two (7. The church and modernity).

Karl Barth believed that Schleiermacher went too far as in his theology there is no longer any "ultimate opposition between God and man, between Christ and the Christian" (Barth 1969:354).

Bonhoeffer challenged both Barth and Schleiermacher - "Barth for having done too little to make revelation comprehensible to modern men and women, and Schleiermacher for having allowed the world to define the very gospel itself" (Lundin 1993:79).

Many theologians followed the pattern of Schleiermacher's thinking by trying to make the Gospel to conform to the reasoning of modernity and in the process lost the very essence of the Gospel. "Modernity, drawing on the metaphysics of a transcendent god, was the attempt to be historical without Christ" (Hauerwas 2000:39).

The church in modernity could be described on the one hand as those who tried to make Christ (gospel) relevant to the 'cultured despisers'. Yet I need to ask the question: How redeeming is a completely relevant Christ? Or can one not discard of Christ once He has been so integrated into the modern thought, that there is basically no difference between modern philosophy and theology?

Yet, there were also those like Barth and Bonhoeffer who did not seek to accommodate the 'cultural despisers', but sought a theology which was truly redeeming and therefore relevant to the modern times.

Faith and religion were not denied in modernity, but they were given their specific place outside the secular which was governed by the universal man and his reason.

It was also claimed that this secular sphere, which was a creation of the Cartesian shift, had always existed. The argument was that the secular had always existed but it was hidden under the "sacred canopy" (Berger 1967) of ancient myths and medieval metaphysics. Religion and the church were seen to have been hiding the real world from humanity and that rational thought, pure reason, had liberated humanity from this bondage of the church and opened to view the real '*secular*' world. Reason was the weapon in that combat against religion to liberate the secular from the tyrannical power of religion (Sanneh 1996:3).

The Archbishop of Chicago comments on this movement of the church to the periphery in a speech quoted by Hauerwas, "what marks the modern consciousness is a breakdown of this classically Christian participation metaphysics and the consequent emergence of a secular arena at best only incidentally related to God[15]"(Hauerwas 2000:12).

The archbishop continues and says: "the end of the modern era, however, is signalled by the inability of the secular calendar to call people out of their private concern into the rhythm of shared public life. National holidays have become primarily occasions for private recreation. Time itself becomes a field to be personally scheduled, a function of private purpose"(Hauerwas 2000:13).

2.4.3 Enlightenment's understanding of the individual and the church's response

This understanding of the secular was the first postulate of the Enlightenment and modernity and the second postulate was a new understanding of the individual. It was a set of "images, analogies and attitudes that converged into a picture of a self unfettered by the physical body or the webs of interlocution embedded in social and geographical ties" (Harvey 1999:104).

This was the image of the universal man "capable of cutting himself loose from the communal roots and loyalties; of lifting himself, so to speak, onto a higher plane and taking from there a long, detached and critical view of communal demands and pressures" (Bauman 1993:39).

This was the result of the Cartesian shift which severed human "identity from all forms of

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15 Hauerwas quotes the Archbishop of Chicago, Francis Cardinal George, who gave a speech entitled: "Catholic Christianity and the Millennium" in a series "Frontiers of the Mind in the 21st Century". This series has not yet been published therefore I need to make use of the secondary quote in Hauerwas' book.

historical and social entanglements, which are by their very nature always tied to particular times and places" (Harvey 1999:105). There was a powerful new faith that "man" and not God was in charge of human destiny (Sanneh 1996:4).

The Enlightenment and modern humanity had "liberated" a space called the secular and the understanding of the individual from God. So the individual self freed from God lived in a space that was devoid of God – the universal man lived in the secular realm of modern western history.

In a certain sense the universal man had *ascended into heaven* as he had attributed to himself the power to set himself over and above history and the whole created order. Universal man's role was now much the same as the role of the Judaic and Christian God, who could create out of nothing - *ex nihilo*.

2.4.4 The church's role in the development of the secular and the universal man

This liberation of the universal man and the secular space from God was not something which happened against the church, but on the contrary the church herself played a major role in this development.

> These results "are rooted in Christian theological mistakes that repudiated the Thomistic understanding of the analogy of being. The result is an over-determined distinction between "nature" and "grace": God is no longer understood   as the generous power in which all things exist but rather as that supreme being apart from whom all things exist" (Hauerwas 2000:13).

Modernity can be seen as that time which brought about a fundamental split between the divine and the non-divine, the secular and the spiritual and thus questioned the very essence of the Christian understanding of Christ as being of two natures, divine and human in one. Modernity and the incarnation stood at odds with each other, as the metaphysics of the modernity and the metaphysics of the incarnation were direct opposites.

2.4.4.1   The church's Enlightenment project

"The church has carried on its own version of the Enlightenment project in relation, not to morality, but to the gospel"(Wilson 1997:40).
As a result of the church's desire to be relevant she has taken on the task of establishing a rational justification for the Gospel. The basic idea was to find a justification that is not grounded on the Gospel itself, but on some rational grounds, which have nothing to do with the Gospel. The church followed the thinkers of the Enlightenment, Hume, Diderot, Kant, and Kierkegaard, who sought to find rational

grounds for morality separate from the teleological grounds of the past.

Hume and Diderot sought to found morality on the passions and desires, Kant on reason and Kierkegaard on choice. So these various thinkers also tried to justify the Gospel on the grounds of passion, desire, reason and choice.

> "When the church abandons the teleological conviction of where God intends humanity to be, then we are left with the project of seeking a ground for the claims of the gospel apart from the gospel itself"(Wilson 1997:44-45).

2.4.5 The result of the church's position toward these developments

If the secular is untouched by the sacred then the public life needs to be essentially atheistic or agnostic and what ever is "religious will then be added as a superstructure to a religiously neutral substructure" (Hauerwas 2000:15). This neutral substructure needed a new form of control or governance and this was the secular nation state.

> "The movement that began in the Enlightenment with the courageous and joyful celebration of the emancipation of the human spirit saw itself as opposed to Christianity, though its faith and vision derived from the religious. However, in trying to outrival Christianity, this immense cultural movement became in the twentieth century a distorted replica of its religious foe and degenerated into a partisan crusade centered on race and nation" (Sanneh 1996:30).

Thomas Hobbs would probably agree with Sanneh's description of this new crusade which is based on race and nation, when he argues that nature without God is: "solitary poor, nasty, brutish, and short". In other words, once humanity is without God there is nothing left but to fight the fight "against all." The government and nation therefore find itself in the role that it had in ancient Rome and that is the role of keeping a "temporary and ersatz peace on the basis of coercion and violent control" (Hauerwas 2000:13).

This universal man could not live in a vacuum and therefore he was very much part of the development of the modern democratic state and the rise of the capitalist markets and its war on local customs and traditions. This state of the universal man, liberated from custom and tradition, could crusade against the local customs and redefine these customs as superstitions and "condemned to death for the crime of resisting centralized management" (Bauman 1993: 39).

The idea of the universal man,[16] which was born in the Enlightenment, stands in total contrast to the Jewish and Christian understanding of humanity. The Jewish and

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16 I am purposefully using non-inclusive language as I believe it more reflective of the time that I am describing.

Chapter Five: Concluding remarks - Descriptive Theology

Christian understanding of humanity is that the human exists "as humans only within contingent webs of interlocution that ultimately begin and end with God" (Harvey 1999: 107).

Thus was the development of the democratic national state, where liberty was praised, but if liberty is separated from love, "liberty cannot help but become licence, an improperly directed love, a mere "pursuit of happiness"" (Hauerwas 2000:15).

This pursuit of happiness will inevitably end up in a culture of death which characterises our modern/postmodern world. As Archbishop George says: "The culture of death is none other than that "world" generated by the separation between free and truth; it is a result of the unfortunate compromise between the City of God and the City of Man that stands at the heart of the modern experiment" (Hauerwas 2000:15).

With God taken out of the equation of both society and the universal man, humanity was also left without purpose (telos) and history. MacIntyre argues that humanity lost its purpose because it no longer knew what its end was. The pre-enlightenment understanding was that every being had its specific purpose in the divine plan. This was true for the various religions as well as for Aristotelian ethics. The basic structure was that there was a "difference between man-as-he-happens-to-be and man-as-he-should-be-if-he-realized-his-essential nature" (MacIntyre 1984:52).

Ethics and morality was seen as the science which will enable humanity to move from the one state to the other.
The basic requirement of this structure is that there must be some teleological understanding of the essence of humanity. The Enlightenment which sought to liberate universal man from the constraints of religion through reason, sought to understand this essence of humanity within the realm of reason and not in the realm of religion. In the different religions as well as in Aristotle's ethics there is a basic three phase structure.
1. Where humans are on the moral landscape
2. Where they should be
3. How to get from where they are to where they should be (Wilson 1997:29).

It was the second phase that the Enlightenment project tried to avoid. But without this second phase there is no justification for morality and thus we end up with emotivism, because we can find no rational grounds for stating where we should be as humans. The moral language of our time still sounds a lot like the coherent language of morality, but without the *telos* it is only a meaningless fragment. When this happens anything can be attached to these fragments of morality.

Without this telos all moral arguments become irrational and lack coherence and

meaning.

It is clear that in the Enlightenment already was the beginning of the end of Christendom as understood in the Constantinian era although this process was not an abrupt but a gradual process and there were certain religious responses to the various developments of the Enlightenment, for example "eighteenth century rationalism was ameliorated by evangelical pietism – and nineteenth-century "pagan" romanticism by the Christian romanticism of Schleiermacher, the Oxford Movement, and other groups – the process of secularization was well under way, and, despite religious revivals of various types, it has continued to be so" (Hall 1997:4).

The church still had a very important role to play in this new division of secular and sacred. The church was given the task of governance of the soul and thus the task of '*making good and obedient men and women'* to live in the democratic secular realm.

2.5   The church and modernity

Anthony Giddens understands modernity in the following way: "an alteration in the perception of determination and contingency, such that human moral imperatives, natural causes, and chance reign in place of religious cosmologies" (Giddens 1990:34).

The Baptists in North America certainly promoted strong separation of church and state as proposed by the Enlightenment thinkers (Harvey 1999:85). But is it possible to speak of a true separation of church and state? Yes, as they are separated institutionally, but their respective spheres of influence are integrated within a social order and culture that is driven mainly by the economic and political forces that do not recognise any ethical or religious norms or limits to their authority. In the global village there is no sphere of human existence which is not influenced by the economic and ideological forces of the global village. The church cannot be completely separated from the global village as her members still live in this village and are thus influenced by the economic and ideological narratives of the village and therefore it is impossible to speak of a total separation between church and state.

The question that has been posed to theologians and church leaders before the Constantinian shift and after the shift has changed dramatically.

Before the shift it was asked: "How can we survive and remain faithful Christians under Caesar?" and after the shift: "How can we adjust the church's expectations so that Caesar can consider himself a faithful Christian?" (Clapp 1996:26)

How should the church have responded?
Was the church meant to turn back towards something like during the Constantinian

time, or even a theocracy? The answer would be, no. Firstly because the church could not turn back the wheel of time, but also for reasons inherent in its own thinking the church could not advocate a theocracy as compared to a democracy which is based on the rights of the individual universal man. There are two reasons inherent in her thinking that prevents the church from seeking a form of theocracy.

1. Faith is never pressed on anyone through coercive means. This is true for both New and Old Testament revelations of God's will.
2. "…the church should not establish itself officially or juridically outside its own structures" (Hauerwas 2000:16).

The church in modernity was now left with the responsibility of governing the souls and the ethical and moral standards of the citizens. The church's task was to spiritually prepare individuals for good citizenry in the secular democratic state.

In the process the church lost all influence in the social, political and economic spheres of life as her sole task was now to nurture the individual soul and develop the private ethic of private individual life. The church's role in modernity can be described as providing the spiritual, personal, individual moral and ethical background for nationalism, democracy and capitalism. "As a result, Christians who believe they are "orthodox" inevitably end up living lives that make sense even if God does not exist or is no more than the gods of deism" (Hauerwas 2000:16).

The story of the church continues not so much as the unity of church and monarchy, but the unity of church and democratic nationalism, or monotheism and capitalist markets. ""Radical monotheism" and "Western culture" have now become virtually synonymous in the minds of both professional theologians and people in the pew" (Harvey 1999:87).

Harvey continues and says: "Moral guidelines are restructured to accommodate the duties and obligations of station, office, and profession, that is, social roles established and maintained by the ruling authorities of the world so that they could serve their preservative function" (Harvey 1999:88). For example Reinhold Niebuhr, as an example of a modern theologian, struggled with the Christian ethical problem and his struggle was "how to achieve relative justice in a world in which love can never be realized" (Hauerwas 2000:25).

So although Niebuhr was a theologian he never really took much cognisance of the church. In the preface to the 1964 edition to his book, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Niebuhr wrote:

"I placed a special emphasis on the eschatology of the New Testament with its special symbols of the Christ and anti-Christ, taking them as symbols of the fact that both good and evil grow in history and that evil has no separate history, but that a greater evil is always a corruption of a greater good. I believe that the

perils of a nuclear age substantiate this interpretation much more vividly than I
expected   when I presented the thesis. But I am now not so sure that the historic
symbols   will contribute much to the understanding by modern man of his tragic and
ironic   history with its refutation of the messianic and utopian hopes of the Renaissance
        and Enlightenment" (Niebuhr 1996:xxvi).

The Christian message had become so intertwined with the liberal ideals and dreams
that there was no longer anything distinctive to say from the Christian point of view.

What this quote from Niebuhr also makes clear is that it became more and more difficult
to speak, as church, using Christian language and symbols. This whole endeavour by
the modern theologians to also base morality and ethics on universal natural law
principles took away the power of specifically Christian language to speak prophetically
within this modern context. So if the Christian wanted to enter into public dialogue
he/she would need to find a neutral mediating language to say anything that would be
relevant to the public and social reality of modernity (Hauerwas 2000:26).

Later in history the whole idea of finding universal natural laws as the common
foundation was questioned and thus all foundations became relative to each other. This
thought will be taken up later again in the discussion of the church and postmodernity in
the context of pluralism of values/foundations and fragmentation.

MacIntyre's three characters are to be found in the church as well and even in the
leadership of the church and thus the moral guidelines the church had to offer are no
different from those of society. Yes, the church is certainly "called to be successful and
effective, but it is called to be those in relation to the mission given by God, not by our
culture" (Wilson 1997:51). The church can certainly make use of the social sciences, but
needs to be aware of the difference in telos and not join in the cultural move towards
maximum bureaucratic effectiveness.

The result of this fusion of spheres is that it makes no difference if you are a Christian to
the social order of the modern world or not. On the contrary it is seen as fine and
commendable for a professing Christian to actively participate in the state and in the
other realms of cultural life as the Christian participation would make no difference,
because the two are seen to be fused.

Christianity became a private and an inner matter that had very little to do with the
public spheres of culture and society.
Bonhoeffer saw this danger and comments: "displacement of God from the world, and
from the public part of human life, led to the attempt to keep his place secure at least in
the sphere of the 'personal,' 'inner' and the 'private'" (Bonhoeffer 1971:344).

Christianity focussed on the private and inner, although as Clapp would argue this inner private life of faith certainly condoned and supported the social and the cultural reality of the day. In that sense one cannot really speak of a separation of church and state, but of a fusion, as the moral requirements of the state and culture were seen to be one with those proclaimed by Christianity. The church did not challenge the dominant narratives, but rather condoned and even supported these narratives.

"As the centuries went by, most Christians increasingly lost sight of the relationship between the grace that is freely given (*gratia gratis data*) and the grace that makes pleasing (*gratia gratis faciens*)" (Harvey 1999: 90).

Bonhoeffer calls this separation the doctrine of cheap grace, which is "grace sold on the market like cheapjack's wares." He continues and says: "the world finds a cheap covering for its sins; no contrition is required, still less any real desire to be delivered from sin. Cheap grace therefore amounts to a denial of the living Word of God, in fact, a denial of the Incarnation of the Word of God. Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner"(Bonhoeffer 1959:45f).

This means that the church can change its expectation so that the *rich aesthete*[17] the *manager* and the *therapist* can consider him/herself to be a faithful Christian.

Morality is something which each individual needs to decide for him or herself according to his/her intentions within the intentions of the social economic order of the global village.

The church has lost her authority over the state that by the end of the seventeenth century, all that was left of her authority was "the purely interior government of the souls of its members; their bodies were handed over to the secular authorities" (Cavanagh 1995:399).

The privatization of the Christian faith particularly in the protestant tradition was reinforced by the Romanticism of the late modernity to such an extent that forgiveness was reduced to "an individual transaction between God and a particular person, largely devoid of its eschatological context and with virtually no consequences for either Christian community or social and political life" (Jones 1995:38).

2.6   The church and postmodernity/ the church *with* the global village

The church in the postmodern world no longer holds any position of privilege, or as

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17 The concepts *rich aesthete, manager and therapist* I have taken from MacIntyre (MacIntyre 1984), who

Hauerwas states it: "Modernity and its bastard offspring postmodernity are but reflections of the Christian attempt to make God a god available without the mediation of the church" (Hauerwas 2000:38).

"God is dead", was a slogan of modernity as universal man freed himself from the tyranny of religion and thus created a secular history of which he was the sovereign. What are we left with in Postmodernity? Michael Gillespie argues:

> "nihilism is not the result of the death of God but the consequence of the birth or rebirth of a different kind of God, an omnipotent god of will who calls into question all of reason and nature and thus overturns all eternal standards of truth and justice, and good and evil. This idea of God came to predominance in the fourteenth century and shattered the medieval synthesis of philosophy and theology, catapulting man into a new way of thinking and being, a *via moderna* essentially at odds with the *via antique*. This new way was in turn the foundation for modernity as the realm of human self – assertion"(Gillespie 1995: xii-xiii).

2.6.1 Postmodernity and Christianity

Christianity and Postmodernity share certain concerns. I would like to highlight these concerns.

1. Both are critical of the claims of Enlightenment reason
2. Both are critical of the claims of imagination and intuition of Romanticism
3. They are suspicious about the faith placed in the power of self-conscious intentions to control and direct the course of history
4. They are critical of the idea that the rational mind can know the truth with empirical scientific certainty (Lundin 1993:4).

Yet, although orthodox Christianity and postmodernism might share numerous concerns and a general scepticism about the 'Enlightenment project' this does not mean that they agree on all matters. Orthodox Christianity could not agree with Postmodernism about its conclusions with regards to truth. The Cartesian shift does not mean for Christians that the search for truth should be abandoned, but rather that this might be a call to return to Scripture, the church and tradition for truth. This thought of returning to the Bible, church or tradition for truth would not be acceptable to the postmodern mind as it would rather abandon the search for truth altogether and turn instead to a therapeutic understanding of human experience (Lundin 1993:5).

2.6.2 The church in postmodernity compared to the early church

The church in the postmodern world can be compared to the early church specifically with regards to the relationship between church and stage (Harvey 1999: 12).
It can therefore be argued that the church in the postmodern global village can find

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sees these three to be the characters of the western postmodern social order.

resources for survival in the *postmodern global village* in the story of the early church. There certainly are some similarities:

- Both find themselves as a minority group
- Both find themselves in a context with a great diversity of beliefs

There are also very serious differences which limit the guidance that the early church can give the church of the *postmodern global village*.
These differences are:

- The early church was encountering a hostile culture, while the contemporary church sees the dominant culture as benign.
- The early church had a completely new message to proclaim. The contemporary church presents a message that is familiar and even 'comfortable'.
- The early church sought to make its message understood, while the contemporary church presumes its message understood and seek acceptance thereof.
- The early church did not have to face a history of injustices perpetrated by the church.
- The contemporary church encounters many "Christian" words, concepts and practices in western culture which are leftovers of the church's impact on this culture, but which have lost their connection to the church and the Gospel and thus do not convey the message of the gospel, but rather betray the Gospel (Wilson 1997:20-21).

2.6.3 The church and the development of the postmodern

Christendom gave birth to late modernity and postmodernity, but ironically there is very little respect given by the progeny.
One of the characteristics of the modern and the postmodern time is the technical organisation with which the postmodern global village seeks to control fate.
In the Christian tradition the unpredictability of fate was seen as a sign of the pervasiveness and persistence of original sin (Harvey 1999:114). In the Christian tradition fate was never seen in isolation, but within the context of the providential design of the divine story. Before the modern times nobody would have thought that they could be more than co-authors of their life's stories. Human beings were understood to subsist in a complex web of interlocking narratives under the guiding hand of Fortuna (MacIntyre 1984:93,105).
The whole idea of the modern was to liberate humanity from this guiding hand so that humanity could write their own stories and no longer only be the co-authors of their

stories.[18]

Prior to Descartes, knowledge about the world was passed on within communities through the traditions of these communities. Harvey understands traditions, "not, as it is often caricatured a dogmatic set of beliefs handed down virtually unchanged from generation to generation, but the practices and institutions that sustain the ongoing deliberation of a community about the type of goods it should pursue and how these goods should be ordered and distributed" (Harvey 1999:115).

The church's role in the *postmodern global village* was first characterised by the Enlightenment where religion was seen as the set of beliefs that individuals hold dear about what is ultimately good, true and important in life and off course most important which they can hold apart from their political loyalties to the modern democratic capitalist state, or today the global village. This understanding of religion suits the postmodern 'risk culture' very well.

> "The individual in the role of consumer is encouraged to pick and choose from a vast inventory of religious symbols and doctrines, to select those beliefs that best express his or her private sentiments. At the very least, his or her selection must not conflict with (and ideally should promote) the civil requirements of the state, which in the secular world bears all the responsibility for arbitrating between competing interests"   (Harvey 1999:29).

In the *postmodern global village* spirituality is sought that pleases the individual and ensures the individual is a good citizen of the global village. Richard Rieff speaks about the triumph of the therapeutic (Rieff 1966:13). MacIntyre agrees with Rieff as he sees the postmodern culture as a culture, where "truth has been displaced as a value and replaced by psychological effectiveness" (MacIntyre 1984:30-31).

In such a context there is not really any room for the Christian understanding of truth, or for the Christian understanding of what is good and right. In a therapeutic culture of psychological effectiveness the Christian claim to an ethical life makes no sense (Lundin 1993:6).

If the church responds to this kind of culture by becoming part of it, it will develop a kind of spirituality that has nothing to do with the public domain. It gives no specific communal content or direction, but is completely a private matter which deals with the personal spiritual identity and preferences of the individual.

> "The uprooting of personal identity from the daily activities, habits, and allegiances of church, mosque, synagogue, and temple effectively prevents these

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18 Refer back to 2.3.1The Enlightenment claim to universal divinity

communities and their intellectual and moral traditions from interfering with the public sphere of power and knowledge politics, law, economics, and science – that have been reserved solely for the institutions of the modern secular domain" (Harvey 1999:126).

Harvey continues and describes this postmodern spirituality as a "personalized diet plan" for the soul, "complete with "before" and "after" testimonies (Harvey 1999:130). This postmodern spirituality has more commonality with ancient Gnosticism than with biblical faith (Bloom 1992:22; 32).

This is a very effective spirituality as it allows the isolated empty individual to be reconciled with the empty social sphere and at the same time eliminates any possibility to challenge this social sphere and authority. This Gnosticism in both its forms – post-Christian and Christian – can be seen as the secular form of Constantinianism, as the state religion that keeps the present social, economic and political powers in place.

Nominal Christians in the postmodern global village have "embraced this hedonism and narcissism of popular culture and don't see that this contradicts biblical faith" (Guroian 1994:89).

A very important question within this context is, What protects us from the menace of organization? Humanity is completely thrown back upon him/herself. He or she can deal with everything, there is enough knowledge to handle anything outside him/herself, but what resources are available to handle him/herself? Humanity with technical knowledge can try and control the universe, humanity can ensure him/herself against the universe, but what can he/she do to protect him/herself from him/herself?

The postmodern spirituality lacks the spiritual force needed to deal critically and creatively with the postmodern risk culture (Bonhoeffer 1971:341).The spirituality (ideology) of the postmodern global village is absolute and is engulfing life, history, family, nation, language and faith. The void spares nothing, blowing "its anti-god breath into the nostrils of all that is established and awakes it to a false semblance of new life while sucking from it its proper essence, until at last it falls in ruin as a lifeless husk and is cast away" (Bonhoeffer 1971:341). The *postmodern global village* destroys the past and conceives of the future as a domain that needs to be colonized. Bonhoeffer describes it the following way:

> "…there is no longer any meaning in the question of the historical inheritance which requires of those who receive it that they shall both develop it in the present and hand it on to the future. There is no future and there is no past. There is only the moment which has been rescued from the void, and the desire to snatch from the void the next moment as well…Nothing makes a permanent

impression and nothing imposes a lasting obligation" (Bonhoeffer 1955: 105f).

Christendom (the Constantinian shift) is coming to its end in postmodernity and especially in the postmodern global village.

What was happening since the Enlightenment and modernity is the "winding down of a process that was inaugurated in the forth century of the Common Era" (Hall 1997:1).

What was born all those centuries ago, the imperial church, has now come to its end as a new imperial spirituality (therapeutic culture and psychological effectiveness) has taken its place in the global village. In the *postmodern global village* one will still find certain vestiges of Christendom. These vestiges of Christendom are not the imperial faith of the global village, although the global village has been spearheaded by Western Europe and Northern America which both were once Christian continents. In these countries the Christian faith has permeated the culture to such an extent that it is sometimes even difficult to distinguish between culture and Christianity. Christianity has influenced every aspect of cultural and public life. It has had an influence on art, literature and music, it has influenced folk wisdom, personal relationships, pageantry and thus nearly every aspect (Hall 1997:6). It has so permeated Western culture that even those who do not have anything to do with Christianity very often "express sentiments, values, biases and also prejudices that have their origin in Christendom" (Hall 1997:6).

One could speak of the rebirth of Gnosticism in contemporary culture as one way of coming to terms with the moral and intellectual world of modernity and postmodernity.

Christianity originally saw human action and especially church practices to be a response to truth and thus a response to an ethical ideal (Lundin 1993:10). If this is still believed to be true of Christian practice and Christian action then Christianity inevitably needs to stand in stark contrast to one of the central claims of postmodernity. I will come back to this line of thought in Chapter Six.

2.6.3.1   <u>Pragmatic theology as one response of the church to the postmodern</u>

During modernity, theologians like Schleiermacher tried to accommodate the cultural despisers and in the process sought to conform the Christian faith to the developments in science and epistemology. This has gone so far that the "descriptive power of Christian symbols can only be dismissed as fruitless or irrelevant" (Lundin 1993:238).

Yet, now in the postmodern there are signs of a religious renewal. But what kind of renewal is taking place? Is it an accommodation of the religious to the present trends? If

the original dogmas of the church are no longer seen as absolute truths, but rather as myths, or religious language constructions, then as Hawkins argues "there is something which might have a profound impact on the future which for the ordinary person, might return to the realm of the believable" (Hawkins 1983:135).

This understanding of Hawkins is problematic although there always has been a tension between scripture and the need to apply it to the demands and patterns of the present reality. Yet the church needs to be aware of the temptation to totally apply scripture to a human understanding. If this happens, then scripture can serve to console and to help order our human lives, but it has lost all its power to reveal and to redeem through Christ, as He is revealed through scripture.

Richard Rorty demonstrates this line of thinking once the romantic and Nietzschean interpretative traditions are applied to the Christian language.
Rorty argues in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989), that for centuries human beings were bound to a faith in the Logos with the illusion that providence and truth governed reality. Now in the postmodern world humanity is believed to have discovered that there is no truth or providence outside of language. Language is a human construct and therefore there is nothing out there which rules the world, but the will of humanity, or in Nietzsche's language the 'will to power' of humanity. Postmodernism would argue: "that anything could be made to look good or bad, important, useful or useless, by being redescribed"(Rorty 1989:7).

Thus in the postmodern culture, which can also be described as the therapeutic culture, language can only be seen as an extension of human will, human desire, and human need. So if one way of speaking about certain things no longer fulfils the needs and desires, it must be abandoned and another way of speaking needs to be found. So in the church it was found that speaking of *sin, forgiveness, grace* and *God*, and *judgement* did not make sense anymore and did not fulfil the needs, therefore such words must be abandoned and new words found which would be more appealing to the postmodern ear in his or her pursuit of happiness.

Humans will worship that which fulfils their desire and pursuit of happiness.
"Once upon a time we felt a need to worship something which lay beyond the visible world. Beginning in the seventeenth century we tried to substitute a love of truth for a love of God, treating the world described by science as a quasi divinity. Beginning at the end of the eighteenth century we tried to substitute a love of ourselves for a love of scientific truth, a worship of our own deep spiritual or poetic nature, treated as one more quasi divinity. The line of thought common to Blumenberg, Nietzsche, Freud, and Davidson suggests we try to get to the point where we no longer worship *anything*, where we treat *nothing* as a quasi divinity,

where we treat *everything* – our language, our conscience, our community – as a product of time and chance" (Rorty 1998:22).

Thus this idea of Rorty fits in well in the postmodern idea of religion especially within the context of religious plurality. The postmodern individual will now have the opportunity to look at the different texts and traditions and seek to understand how these texts and traditions either threaten or are useful in the pursuit of happiness. The individual will seek ways of understanding and interpreting these texts and traditions in such a way that they help shape the individual world according to the individual's private needs and ends.

As Rorty argues that "interesting philosophy…is implicitly or explicitly, a context between an entrenched vocabulary which has become a nuisance and a half-formed new vocabulary which vaguely promises great things" (Rorty 1989:9).

This is what I understand by pragmatic theology – a theology which applies itself to the postmodern human needs and thus seek to be a language that helps the postmodern individual fulfil his/her pursuit of happiness.

There is a huge difference between this pragmatic theology of postmodernity to that which Bonhoeffer once said when he argued that theology needs to find a way of speaking in a secular way about God and Christian doctrine. Bonhoeffer was not speaking of this pragmatic application of Christian language to accommodate the individual's private ends. Bonhoeffer's desire was to address the modern/postmodern secular humanity with the Gospel in such a way that the Gospel is understood by secular people and not in such a way that the Gospel sounds no different from the prevalent ideas and thoughts or individual's needs and desires.

Bonhoeffer was concerned with religious language, because he felt that its irrelevance would obscure the very truths that it was trying to reveal. This idea becomes vitally important in our fragmented society, where religious and especially Christian language has become so much part of the secular language that one in a sense needs to find a new language to communicate the gospel, because the religious language has lost all its relevance[19]. Bonhoeffer explains what he means with this kind of language: "I don't' mean the shallow and banal this-worldliness of the enlightened, the busy, the comfortable, or the lascivious, but the profound this-worldliness, characterized by discipline and the constant knowledge of death and resurrection" (Bonhoeffer 1971:369).

Helmut Thielicke thinks along the same lines when he says: "God's Word is not interpretative; it is creative. It brings forth being out of nothing. It thus transcends

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19 I will return to this thought of the fragmentation of Christian language in the *postmodern global village* in a following section, 2.6.5 The church in a fragmented *postmodern global village*.

all analogies and all supposedly common planes…Being an active rather than an interpretative….word, God's Word changes the self rather than disclosing it" (Thielicke 1974:156).

For Christians language is much more than just an expression of our 'will to power', or our longings and desires. "For the Christians, language is not only expressive but also mimetic; language can tell us something about the nature of God and his actions as well as about our motives and needs" (Lundin 1993:245).

The task of the church is not to try and turn the wheel of intellectual history back, but to address this history with authority if this history is suppressing truth[20]. Thielicke says: "we need to consider whether the elimination of the question of transcendence from the reflective consciousness is not perhaps due to Neronic suppression, to what Paul calls holding down the truth in unrighteousness (Rom 1: 18)" (Thielicke 1974:241).

In response to the postmodern claim that truth and transcendence are lodged only in the reigning paradigms of language, "the perspectival or therapeutic view of knowledge involves nothing less than a massive suppression of an entire dimension of truth…. What the Christian looks for in creation is something greater than the stunning reflection of his or her own desiring countenance. What the Christian listens for in the proclamation of the Word of God is more than the echo of his or her own clamouring voice" (Lundin 1993:246).

I shall come back to this argument in the next chapter, when we look at a possible narrative Christian understanding of truth and revelation of the truth.

2.6.4 How does the church view itself at the end of Christendom?

Professor Douglas Hall sees that there are basically two ways in which Christians see themselves. I will reflect on these two ways as a description of the church's response to the postmodern global village. It can be argued that the church dominated in the formation and the development of Western culture and thus also the culture of the global village, but what happens now that the church moves into a time when that dominance is only a memory? (Wilson 1997: 18)

The first way in which Christians see themselves and how the church can understand her role in the global village is as the bearer of the highest culture, as that institution which "preserves what is true, good, and beautiful from the past, yet transcending the

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20 I will in Chapter Six be discussing the understanding of truth from a Christian perspective within the context of postmodernity.

political forms[21] that manifested these values and virtues" (Hall 1997:11-12). In the history of the church the success of its mission was not measured in the qualitative success, but rather much like the empires in its quantitative success of expansion and territory.

The second response was the liberal response to the fall of Christendom. The church was part of the liberal faith in progress and the church's task was to bring about that kingdom on earth (Hall 1997:16-17). Within this second response or understanding there often was confusion between Christian mission and European expansion as Christianity totally identified with the ideals of modernity. This idea is born in the Constantinian misunderstanding, which is that the "mission of the church is to gain control of the political processes so that the laws of the land reflect Christian values and, second, to form church members into good citizens who will sustain the political life of the nation" (Wilson 1997: 14-15).

This is a very commendable idea, as it seeks to make the kingdom of God an embodied and visible reality, but it easily confused human creations as the kingdom of God. "When this happens, the existence of the kingdom and the church are thought to depend upon a particular state of affairs, such as a political system, a growing economy, a particular social structure, or the rule of particular person" (Wilson 1997:14).

Within the context of such an understanding of the church's role, together with a change in politics, as was the case in South Africa, the church and the truth of the Christian faith is also challenged. For many then the task of the church is to bring back the state of affairs of the past, upon which the "kingdom" depends, which is highly problematic. Another danger of glorifying the past and connecting the church to a specific state of affairs is that the Gospel becomes restricted to this particular state of affairs.

It can then occur that the church in general seems to be behaving as if nothing has happened – "as if we were still living in a basically Christian civilization; as if the Christian religion were still quite obviously the official religion of the official culture; as if we could carry on baptizing, marrying, and burying everybody as we have always done; as if governments would listen to us, and educational institutions would respect us, and the general public would (perhaps begrudgingly) heed our moral and other pronouncements, and so on and so on, 'world without end'"(Hall 1997:20-21).

This response became very clear in South Africa in the first half of 2003 when the churches were in uproar on the decision to change the format of morning assemblies in public school. The government decision was to no longer allow Christianity any

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21 Hall is referring to the imperial church as the political forms that manifested these values and virtues.

privileges with regards to assemblies in public schools.

Many main line churches have responded to postmodernity as if nothing has changed although the statistics show there to be a decline in membership as well as in financial contributions.

These statistics of various denominations tell the story that the church is failing to respond to the *postmodern global village* and this failure expresses itself in the decline of membership or economic difficulties, or the lack of candidates for ministry. This sense of failure is pushed to the subconscious and in the meantime the church tries to continue with business as usual for as long as possible.

The once liberal mainline churches, who a century or two ago were involved in ushering in the kingdom of progress, have now become very quiet in their missionary zeal, while the fundamentalists have taken up this zeal with very much the same kind of language as the main line churches used a century earlier. Many self-defined evangelical Christians look to the twenty-first century in rather the same way liberals looked to the twentieth as "The Christian Century""(Hall 1997: 21).

The old liberals are now confronted with what Hall calls a missionary confusion. "The old liberalism with its enthusiasm for the ringing in of the divine kingdom is now countered by a new liberalism that insists upon the rights of individuals to embrace whatever belief they choose"(Hall 1997:22). This is precisely what the global village needs, namely a spirituality that plays in on the whole idea of individual choice within the context of the consumer market. In a certain sense the liberals of today have become consciously or unconsciously very supportive of the dominant ideology of individualism and consumerism of the postmodern global village.

Although it is pleasing to realise the expansionist idea of mission has been given up as a relic of the past, this missionary confusion has caused a loss of identity and purpose (Hall 1997:23).

If the missionary project is seen as politically incorrect then the only focus for the liberal mainline congregation is the congregation itself. It is in itself that it needs to find its purpose and identity and the result is a congregation which is completely turned in on itself with the exception of certain social projects which it supports and certain comments on current ethical debates.

"The church's purpose is to be a fellowship, a "friendly church". In cities and towns that are large and impersonal, the church is a meeting place where people "get to know one another" and to "care"" (Hall 1997:24).

In a fragmented and disembodied world there will always be enough needs to respond to. So the once mainline churches can fill their church calendar with various projects seeking to address the "needs" of villagers living in the *postmodern global village*.

This is also what is happening in the church with the various groups meeting, for example parenting group, unemployment group, a group for people suffering from depression etcetera. But this cannot be the sole purpose of being church. A crucial part of being church is that there must be an element of confessing ones faith.

"Therefore, even if the fellowship and community outreach of the once-mainline churches can be construed as an implicit confession of faith, the question remains why they are so seemingly incapable of giving reason for the hope that is in them – so bereft of theology, so unsure and incapable of "gospel"" (Hall 1997:26).

 Hall continues and says that these churches cannot really offer an explanation for their hope and thus cannot offer any deeper meaning of life. He says one of the reasons for being so friendly is because they consistently avoid the deeper human concerns (Hall 1997:26). These churches cannot respond to the deeper human needs, the deeper human fragmentation, disembeddedness and alienation that life in the *postmodern global village* causes. "A superficial friendliness is no substitute for depth of meaning, or even of genuine community"(Hall 1997:27).

These mainline churches thus embark on various "church growth" projects to counter the loss in membership. These church growth projects are well received in the congregation whose makeup is mainly from the villagers and thus these projects speak the same language as the language of the village (management, goals orientated, quantitative, measurable results).
These church growth projects are still part of the legacy of the Constantinian shift, only in slightly more subtle form and not demanding any exclusive claims.
Yet, all these projects and outreaches and fellowships taken into consideration, there is a sense of boredom with ecclesiastic practices, because they are devoid of meaning and they are only there to fulfil spiritual entertainment needs of the postmodern global villager.

There is another problem for the church in the global village and that is that there is no clear distinction between the culture of the church and the culture of the global village. This is true especially in Western countries, but more and more so in the global village, which is strongly determined by the Western countries. "Christ and culture are so subtly intertwined, so inextricably connected at the subconscious or unconscious level, that we hardly know where the one leaves off and the other begins. The substance of the faith and the substance of our culture values and morality appear, to most real or nominal Christians … synonymous" (Hall 1997:31). This is a legacy of the past. It is a whole inherited system which is the result of Western history. A system of meaning that "has combined, Judeo-Christian, Enlightenment, Romantic-idealist, and more recently

nationalistic elements so intermingled that even learned persons have difficulty distinguishing them" (Hall 1997:31-32).

If this is the story of the West which is to a large extent determining the story of the global village, then it will be very difficult to imagine a future where this situation of the church will be different. Any other understanding of the church and of Christianity would be seen as being un-Christian and at the same time a betrayal of one's own culture and country. The church, although it has lost so much, still is in many parts of the global village a vestige of social status and seen as the "unofficial official cultus of our dominant culture." (Hall 1997:36) This was seen very clearly in South Africa that, while the debate is raging about religion in schools, the church is called to preside and officiate at the state funeral of the leaders of the ANC. So politically, socially, economically and even in education the church has lost its influence, yet it officiates as the official cultus at state ceremonies which in a certain sense is hypocritical, but maybe exactly the point that I am seeking to make.
But even this role of official cultus is being eroded and the church will fool herself if she thinks that this privilege is going to be kept for her alone. At the inauguration of the State President of the new democratic South Africa all the different religious leaders were invited.

This mock official status of the church in relation to the state is maybe one of the last vestiges of the past and the church's relationship with the state. In reality it cannot be denied that the church is being pushed to the periphery of the global village. This push to the periphery is substantiated statistically, "White Westerners cease to be practicing Christians at a rate of 7,600 per day" (Barrett 1982).

This is a paradox that the church will need to learn to live with and that is that the global village culture, influenced by the West, is saturated with Christian influence and yet it is in the West that we find the greatest number of people without religion (Taylor 1990:657).

The church has responded to the *postmodern global village* by allowing faith to become a completely private matter which has nothing to do with the world out there. Faith is seen as a form of therapy designed to make the lives of individuals more fulfilling and thus making believers good and content citizens within the global village. "They see little or nothing wrong in regarding the church as simply another vendor of goods and services" (Harvey 1999:3).

The church will need to be very careful not to make the quest for relevance a quest for acceptance in the global village as the church again seeks to recapture that which she has lost. Julian Hartt says that there is a great difference between the church asking,

"Are you getting the message?" and asking the world, "Do you like the message?" or "Will you go on loving me even if you don't like my message?" (Hartt 1967:345)

This is the danger that lurks in waiting for the church, the danger not to communicate the message of the Gospel, or of "cloaking a nostalgia for the past in Christian language and mistaking its acceptance for acceptance of gospel"(Wilson 1997:4).

2.6.5 The Church in a fragmented *postmodern global village*

The fragmentation that is experienced due to the loss of a human *telos* is experienced in the church especially in worship. This fragmentation causes a loss of coherence in identity and loss in purpose. We worship a God in our Sunday worship service who is a God of history and who has revealed Himself in history as a God who is on the side of the poor and the oppressed. In our Sunday worship we praise and glorify this God with our hymns and liturgy, but from Sunday after church till next Sunday morning in church we worship a completely different telos. The ends (*telos*) that determine many of the lives of the villagers is not the God of history, but prosperity, security and pleasure (Wilson 1997:33). These are two competing ends that are not reconcilable and thus church life and even our worship becomes fragmented. Although the service may appear to be orderly and even enthusiastic it will lack coherence with the rest of postmodern global village life, and because the worship service is intended to teach humanity to glorify God in all spheres of their lives there is a conflict of interests between these differing ends.

The result of this fragmentation is that either the worship service becomes meaningless or the service is directed to a new end, which is not the God of history revealed to us in scripture.

There are various signs of this happening in modern worship styles, where the worship service begins to serve other ends, a different *telos* to God.
For example:
1.   One postmodern telos is to be happy and well-adjusted.
If this is the *telos* then the worship service will serve this *telos* by transforming the worship service into a mass therapy session that makes people feel better (Wilson 1997:34).
2.   Another postmodern *telos* is to be a happy family or community.
If this is the *telos* then the worship service will also be ordered toward that end.
3.   Another postmodern telos is to be successful.
If this is the *telos* then the worship service will be ordered so as to boost the individuals in order to go back to the task of being successful in business, strengthened and encouraged.

MacIntyre, in his discussion on 'practices,' distinguishes between internal and external goods. He sees external goods as goods that are acquired through some activity, but which are external to that activity. He sees internal goods as goods that can only be acquired through some activity, in other words goods which are intrinsic to an activity (MacIntyre 1984:187-191). If for example the worship services are ordered so as to fulfil external goods then these service will be idolatrous.

In this context it does not really matter if the main stream church loose membership and are pushed to the sideline, because their message was more or less the same as that of mainstream society. This might also be the reason that numerous people have left the church, because why go to church if the church offers nothing else than that which is offered by society? (Hauerwas 2000:26)

The worship service is not the only area of fragmentation that the church experiences in the global village. The other form of fragmentation, besides the fragmented lives of individuals is the leftover Christian symbols, words and concepts in the *postmodern global village* culture. The Bible is often quoted in advertisements, or the crucifix is no longer used in connection with Jesus Christ, but has become a symbol of all sorts of other things. The Christian concept of forgiveness has been taken over by the therapeutic culture. In this kind of fragmentation the church might be using the right words and doing the right things, but without meaning or purpose as to its proper end and thus the church finds itself being unfaithful (Wilson 1997:38).

2.7   The concluding descriptive story of the church and the development of the *postmodern global village*

The story of the church's relationship to the development of the *postmodern global village* is a paradoxical story as the church did not only respond to these developments, but also actively participated in bringing these developments about. This paradoxical story began with the conversion of Constantine to Christianity because with this came a major shift in the church's story. The church was no longer a minority group, but was now the official religion of the Roman Empire and thus believed that she had entered the period of realised eschatology. The result of this was a very close relationship between church and state so much so that the two could not be differentiated. This relationship went through various phases as the church was now at the centre of Western power and development. In the process she lost all sense of being a community that is different to the world, a community that is born out of the Gospel and has the messianic character of the Gospel and therefore she lost her messianic mission to the world as she now was the Western world.

The paradoxical history then began to develop during the time of the Enlightenment as many of the leading Enlightenment thinkers where convinced Christians. Yet the thoughts and ideas of these convinced Christians pushed the church to the margins and periphery of power and society. The Enlightenment ideas and rationale, although it was born out of convinced Christian thinkers, did not coincide with the rationale of scripture and so the universality of the church was replaced by the universality of reason and universal man. The world was divided into the secular and the spiritual and the church had to content herself with the latter. The church was given that part of human life and existence which was beyond the boundaries of pure reason. The church tried to respond to this movement to the periphery by seeking a way to make her theology relevant and meaningful within the thoughts of modernity and thereby had a completely apologetic approach, although there were also others who sought to retain the church's mission to the world through the revelation of an Other.

The church tried to defend her truth and her morality by appealing to universal truths and values which she did not find in her tradition nor in scripture, but in universal natural laws, and as a result scripture became redundant for her pronouncements, which were now based on the universal categories which were free from any tradition, context or history and thus also made way for the development of an understanding of the individual which is free from history, tradition and context, who is known as the universal human. Certain groups within the church tried to respond to modernity by a new separation between church and state, while others within the church tried to respond through a new union between church and the national democratic state. The church saw her task to provide the national state with spiritual guidelines for a moral life in the secular democratic national state. With the rise of postmodernity there are certain overlapping characteristics between the church and postmodernity. There are also certain similarities between the *postmodern global village* and the times of the early church and these similarities I will take into consideration in the next chapter. Yet postmodernity essentially abandoned the search for truth, but can the church also abandon this search? The paradoxical story of the church continues. There are those who believed that the search for truth can be abandoned, that the language of the church needs to be rewritten to be more relevant to the present times. The church should respond to the therapeutic needs of the postmodern global villager, in other words the church needed to be psychologically effective. In this sense the church has not realised the change that has taken place, as she still sees herself as the guardian of the spiritual superstructure needed for the materialistic substructure of the postmodern reality. With this understanding she continues as if nothing has changed. Then there is another group that certainly sees that things have changed and they return to a missionary zeal that resembles the imperialist church of Christendom. Yet the p*ostmodern global village* needs something that will challenge

> it, that will question it and that will expose its illusions. It is in the search of such a church that this journey continues.

I would like to end this section on the history of the church in the *postmodern global village* with a song by Stef Bos, *Brief uit Berlijn*

<div align="center">

Het communisme is kapot

De idealen

Zijn verraden

En God is dakloos

Want elke kerk

Wordt hier verbouwd

Tot een tejater (Bos 1995)

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In chapter four I concluded that in the global village both the villager as well as those marginalised are 'homeless.' Stef Bos writes that God is 'dakloos' (homeless). Maybe in this there is hope for the *postmodern global village* and may this hope guide the rest of this journey.

3.   QUESTIONS FROM THE PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE THAT WILL GUIDE THE DIALOGUE WITH THE SACRED TEXTS AND TRADITIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN HISTORICAL AND SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

The questions, that I need to put forward with which to approach the sacred texts and the tradition of the Christian faith, are questions that have been raised throughout the study. In this section I will be reflecting on the development of these questions as the study progressed. There were the initial questions which introduced the study. There were the primary questions which were questions that arose out of my journey and then there were the secondary questions which came from the people I have journeyed with or from articles and books that I read. These initial, primary and secondary questions then led me into the descriptive theological journey where these questions were unpacked with the various levels and dimensions of human action. At the end of the descriptive theological journey these questions are now theory-laden questions, as the theories behind the initial questions have been unpacked on the descriptive theological journey. In this section I would like to reflect on this development of the questions and how some have been answered and new ones arose while others again needed to be reformulated into theory-laden questions.

3.2 The primary questions that motivated the study[22].

These primary questions are the questions that motivated the study and guided the research methodology that I adopted in this study.

1.   How can the church effectively minister to the urban community in present day South Africa?
2.   How can the church respond to the villagers' stories of need?
3.   How does the church respond to the stories of need of the marginalised?
4.   How does the church minister in a postmodern context?
5.   How does the church respond to both villagers and marginalised and unite them into the one body of Christ?
6.   How does the church take the Biblical concern for the poor and marginalised seriously?
7.   Is narrative theology a possible response to the postmodern?
8.   Is there a theology that pastorally responds to the villagers and at the same time responds to the needs of the outsiders and thus uniting the two into one body of Christ?

These are the core questions that motivated the study and therefore they are the questions that guided the journey. These questions are all motivated by the question of how the church ministers, in other words these are questions which arose out of the practice of the church and specifically out of my ministry situation.

3.3 Secondary questions[23]

Questions from the individual (both marginalised and villager)
1.   The villager asks questions about the meaning and purpose of life within the global village.
2.   The villager seeks guidance in the many choices he/she needs to make in the business world as well as private.
3.   The villager asks questions about the criteria for ethical actions in an age where value structures and authorities have disappeared.
4.   These ethical questions lead the villager to ask how she/he should respond to the marginalised begging at the traffic light or knocking at the door.
5.   The marginalised living off the scraps of the global village is denied economic justice and development and asks where God is in his/her situation. Is God the God of the villagers only?
6.   Does God care for the need for daily bread of the marginalised?

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22 These questions are all taken from Chapter One: The Scope of the Study.
23 These questions also are taken from Chapter One: The Scope of the study, 4.4 The Theological Challenge.

Questions directed at the church as community of believers:

1. Can the church provide the villager with a community that gives meaning to his/her life and can this community offer a value framework from which to make ethical judgments?
2. Can the church as community be a community of healing and empowerment, where people can experience the presence of God and the truth of the resurrection?
3. Can the church offer an alternative community to the exclusion and thus the dehumanisation and confusion of the global village?

Questions directed at the church and her diaconical responsibility:

1. Can the church, guided and accompanied by the Biblical narrative, ignore the exclusion and dehumanisation of millions of people by the global economic powers?
2. Can the church in a postmodern context fulfil a prophetic ministry?
3. Can the church offer the global village an alternative community, an inclusive community, thereby fulfilling the call to be the light to the world and salt to the nations and thus transforming the pattern of exclusion of globalisation?

3.4   Theory-laden questions

3.4.1 Questions arising from the postmodern context of the global village[24]

This set of questions are reformulations of the primary questions after the journey of the study had already begun and certain insights have been gained into the direction of the study.

1. Can the church offer dramatic resources to respond to the experience of unemployment?
2. Can the stories of unemployment be seen within the story of the global village and how can the church help re-author these stories from stories of need to stories of hope?
3. What kind of Christian presence is needed to be able to re-author stories of need?
4. What does this tell us about the kind of church that is needed in the global village context?
5. Can the church offer an environment where the children learn a different story to the dominant story of the global village?
6. Can the church offer a place where long lasting relationships can be built

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24 These questions are taken from Chapter Two: A Theological orientation in a postmodern world as well as Chapter Three: Descripive Theology Part One – Insertion: Describing "Global Village" by listening to the stories of need told by the villagers as well the marginalised.

which offer stability and a foundation?

7. What kind of Christian presence is needed that would create room for the stories of hope to be told as a counterbalance to the stories of no hope?

8. Does the church need to be an authority to give guidance?

9. How can the church guide when all is relative?

10. What kind of Christian presence is needed to be able to re-author stories of need, especially the church's own story of need?

11. How can the church truly listen to the stories of need?

12. Is it possible to develop an ecclesiology that will include both the villagers and the marginalised?

13. How can the church listen to the discourses behind the stories of need?

14. How does the church position itself with regards to these dominant discourses?

15. What kind of Christian presence is needed to proclaim and re-claim the story of the future as a story of hope?

16. What does this tell us about the kind of church that is needed in the global village context?

3.4.2 The questions from the theory-laden practice of the church within the *postmodern global village*

These questions are the questions that I ask at the end of the first phase, namely descriptive theology.

1. Is a genuine community possible in which identity can be found and established, as well as in which a *telos* can be found which will give life narrative meaning?

2. Is there a redemptive faith that can bring healing to the disembeddedness of life?

3. Could there be a story into which the individual can be "reborn" and thus find meaning and purpose beyond their constructed identities?

4. What must the church do in order to live and witness faithfully as a minority in a culture where she once was the majority?(Wilson 1997:19)

5. How can the church live faithfully to the Gospel in the fragmented worlds of the global village?

6. How can the church respond in faith to the saving work of God for and in a secularised society with a very problematic history behind it?

7. How does the church understand the spirits and forces at work in such a postmodern global society, and relate to its self-understanding? How can theology inform and guide our witness to the reign of Christ and the work of the Spirit in such a context?

8. What kind of church and what kind of ministry could the church have in the

postmodern global village?

9. Is it possible to proclaim that the Gospel is true in a postmodern world – that it is true for all?

10. How is the truth of God's revelation, known in the response of faith, related to the discernment and validation of truth as it is practiced elsewhere in our culture? (West 1999:xix)

11. Postmodern deconstructionism has helped us in one respect – it has dismanteled the public confidence in a universal structure of "objective," "factual" reality known by experimental reason that characterized the humanism of the Enlightenment. But how, then, is any truth claim validated – most especially the claim of the triune God revealed in Christ – in human minds and hearts? (West 1999:xix)

12. How is the power of God in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ related to the human powers and idols at work in the world?

The questions have remained the same, but have been reformulated as the journey of this study progressed and new insights came into view. I will try to condense these questions into three core questions which will guide the rest of the journey of this study.

3.5   The core questions which will guide the rest of my theological journey.

I understand the questions that have guided my study to be dealing with two major concerns. The first concern is the globalisation and the fragmentation of the world into villagers and marginalised. The second concern is the difficulty to respond to this fragmentation in a postmodern context. I would like to divide the questions into these two dominant concerns which are then united in the question of how to minister, or be a church within such a context.

I would like to unite these two concerns in one question.

> **What kind of church, which finds itself within the postmodern, urban, global, South African context (*postmodern global village*)and which has the calling to unify all in the body of Christ, could respond to the stories of need of both the villagers and the marginalised, when this ethical and pastoral task is made rather difficult in a postmodern context?**

I believe that this question phrased in this way accommodates most of the questions listed above.

It is with this question that I would like to embark further on this theological journey. This

question could not be phrased in this way at the beginning of the study, because it has developed through the descriptive process of this study.

This question leads my research forward, as it searches for an ecclesiological praxis (a way of being church):

1. which unites villagers and marginalised into one body,
2. which can guide and lead villagers and marginalised with regard to ethical questions and with regard to a faithful life within a fragmented postmodern global village context,
3. where both the stories of the villagers and marginalised can be re-authored by the redemptive story of a triune God, revealed in Christ into a story of hope,
4. where this redemptive narrative is a prophetic alternative to dominant discourses of the global village,
5. where the narrative of the triune God, as revealed by Scripture, exposes the dominant discourses of the global village and offers an alternative, although being a minority with a dominant difficult history,
6. where the Gospel is proclaimed as a redemptive truth for all.