

**TOWARDS A NARRATIVE THEOLOGICAL
ORIENTATION IN A GLOBAL VILLAGE
FROM A POSTMODERN URBAN
SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

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ABSTRACT

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

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

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

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

OPSOMMING

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ten Key-terms

1. Postmodern
2. Global Village (Globalization)
3. Postmodern global village
4. Narrative theology
5. Narrative truth
6. Human action
7. Contextual theology
8. Community (language community, narrative community)
9. Validity claims
10. Pastoral Redemptive Communities
11. Community of the cross and community under the cross
12. Journey
13. Descriptive theology
14. Historical theology
15. Systematic theology
16. Strategic practical theology

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THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1. THEME

Theme: Towards a narrative theological orientation in the *global village* from a postmodern urban South African perspective.

The theme captures the direction of the study which is a narrative theological orientation within the “global village” but limits the study by placing it in the urban South African context.

In this first chapter of the study I will not be making use of references or quotes as this first chapter is a description of my subjective experiences and impressions which led to the development of the study. I will in the following chapters substantiate all the arguments that I will be making in this first chapter.

The dominant economic process within today’s world is globalization which culminates in the global economy. Thus today’s world has often been described as a global village which conjures up images of unity, intimacy and of a globe united into a quaint little village, but this image is in stark contrast to the daily experiences in our world. This image of the global village is based on the unification of the world through information and communication networks and the interrelatedness of the world through the global finance and trade markets. The global village is a constructed image of the world united by global trade, global finance markets and through the communication and information networks yet the world has never before been so fragmented and divided as in this century. The communication and information technologies and networks bring the whole world into our living rooms via satellite TV not as a united global village, but as a fragmented world torn apart by wars, ethnic conflicts, the rise of nationalism and dictatorships and the extreme suffering of billions because of poverty. This is a paradox as on the one hand there is a united, connected and interrelated world and on the other a world fragmented and torn apart by wars and poverty.

The image of the global village is thus a misnomer as it only captures half the truth and is no reflection of the other reality that is experienced daily. In this study I will use this image as I believe it to be a useful image for our world since it captures the dominant ideological story of our day which is a story motivated and driven by the global trade markets and the global finance markets.

Globalization and the global village is only one of many perspectives or descriptions of the world today and in the study I will focus on this perspective thereby not denying the possibilities of other perspectives. I will use the image of the global village in this critical sense and engage with the village within a narrative theological context. The narrative approach will guide the study in the discovery of the stories of need within this village, the

dominant stories and the power relations behind the stories, the effects of these stories and how the different role players affect each other and the problems within the stories and will consequently seek to find unique outcomes within these stories all within the context of the story of the urban congregation.

I chose the narrative approach as I believe this approach to be appropriate within the postmodern context in which I find myself. I will in the second chapter reflect on postmodernity and motivate why I chose the narrative approach.

The narrative approach sees the study as a dialogue with the various realities and levels of reality of the context. This approach will not seek the *correct* response, answer or conclusion, but rather a *deeper* understanding of the context and the situation so that the dialogue can continue. The narrative approach will be in dialogue with the various levels of the story of the village such as economic, social, philosophical, psychological, political and theological. I will explore these realities and their interrelations with each other, in other words I will be “*mapping*” the problem story by describing and interpreting the problem story in dialogue with these various levels. The theme also indicates that the study is not just a narrative study, but that it is a narrative **theological** study thus placing the study within the theological narrative and thereby limiting the narrative approach. The study being a theological study limits the narrative approach on various levels:

- 1) The motivation for the study is the ministry experience, thus rooting the study within the context of Christian ministry (urban South African). The study is written within this context and for this context as the leading questions arose out of this context.
- 2) The subject of this study is rooted in a theological narrative and is purposefully placing this study within this narrative.

I place the study within the postmodern urban South African context and root the study within a concrete ministry context – a Lutheran congregation in the centre of Pretoria (capital city of South Africa). This context becomes the main dialogue partner of the study. This congregation will be the co-travellers on the journey of this study. It is within this ministry context that the study will unfold. I included the postmodern situation in my theme as I believe that no research today can ignore the realities of postmodernity. Not only is the method of research affected by postmodernity, but the context of research - the urban congregation and urban community - has also been affected, but I will address these affects on the context as a challenge to the church’s respond within such a context in Chapter Two. In Chapter Two of the study I will reflect on postmodernity and seek an appropriate theological model and research methodology within postmodernity.

The purpose of the study is to find an appropriate ecclesiological praxis within the

narrative theological orientation that can respond to the challenges of the global village within a postmodern, urban South African context.

The purpose specifies the direction of the study even more as it places the study within the story of the church (ecclesiology). The specific ministry context (postmodern, urban and South African) forces me to search for an appropriate praxis of being church and this limits the study again by placing it within the field of ecclesiology. This ecclesiological praxis needs to create the framework for the economically divided community in the urban South African context to be reconciled and thus offers the world an alternative to the exclusive tendencies of the global village. The sub-theme emphasises my interest in the church as the context in which theology is done and I indicate my belief that the Biblical narrative, within a narrative theological approach, can unite a diverse community and guide this community on an imaginative alternative journey into the future.

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The study as a narrative theological study begins with my personal ministry story. This story is a story of ministry within various urban contexts where a division was experienced and discovered between the ministry needs of the congregants and the needs of the growing poverty-stricken communities surrounding the congregation such as homeless individuals begging from the congregants on the way to church. In this journey of discovering the division within the urban community between those who actively partake and in some ways benefit from the economic system and those who are excluded, the concept of the global village seemed to capture something of this dichotomy and unity which is experienced in the urban context. In the urban context this dichotomy and unity of a world united as a global village, but simultaneously being torn apart by increasing poverty and competition, is experienced daily. The idea of the global village describes a united urban world where one can buy shoes made in Taiwan, bulbs designed in Holland and produced in South Africa or anything else from all over the world. It also describes the multicultural context of urban centres where the different cultures and people of the world meet - the migrant labourers, economic or political refugees or just immigrants who responded to job opportunities. This experience of globalization that one can buy products from all over the world and the world's cultures coming together in the cities is only half of the reality. The other reality that is experienced is rising unemployment, tremendous suffering and poverty in the *developing* cities of the world as well as rising unemployment and racial tension in the *developed* cities of the world. The image of the global village remains appropriate because the term '*village*' describes a small community and not a global Megalopolis, in other words there is limited space causing competition, conflict and eventually exclusion from the village.

While the world is united culturally and economically in the cities into a global village there are at the same time strong exclusive forces at work as the labour market becomes tighter and competition for jobs rises and ever more people and communities are excluded from the village. This process of exclusion and fragmentation creates **villagers**, who partake and benefit in some way from the economic processes and the information and communication networks and **marginalised**, who are marginalised from the economic processes¹. The story of the global village promises development, progress, unity and global connectedness as a kind of solidarity yet the experience is that of fragmentation on various levels in daily life. The story of the global village promises connectedness yet the reality experienced is the exact opposite namely a fragmented world. This fragmentation is experienced for example:

- 1) professionals who work in specialized fields with very little connection to the final product and thereby losing contact to the other phases of the production process;
- 2) the labour market which is highly competitive creates such stress and pressure at the work place that it fragments the team as they compete with each other and live in constant fear of losing their employment;
- 3) the companies who can demand long over hours in a context of a highly competitive labour market and thus fragment families and marriages and thereby fragmenting the whole of society.

I will approach the global village in a narrative context by listening to the stories of the villagers and the stories of those excluded from the village (marginalised) thereby identifying the problem stories of the global village. This problem story will then be unpacked and described on the various levels thereby identifying the ideological story which is portrayed in advertising, films and various other forms of media of the global village. The problem story will be described and mapped, in other words bringing into dialogue, the various realities of the problem and discovering the connections and the powers behind these connections. In this section of the study the various levels of global reality (economic, social, political and psychological) will be described to gain a deeper understanding of the problem and why this problem does not offer a hopeful view of the future.

The study being a theological study places the narrative approach within a certain understanding of God and God's relation to history and thus needs to incorporate this

¹I will make use of the term *global village* as a metaphor used to describe a certain aspect of the world. I extend this metaphor by the use of the words '*marginalised*' and '*villager*', but in no way do I intend by this division to be exhaustive nor do I believe there to be a distinct line between villagers and marginalised. I do not intend to categorise people or communities into villagers and marginalised, but uses these terms as a useful extension of the global village metaphor for the purpose of this study.

understanding into the study.

I believe that God is a God of history and the STORY of salvation is a unique outcome within the history of humanity. When listening to the STORY of God within history, the study will be guided to unique outcomes in the story of the global village just as God has within history responded to various situations of need. In the Old Testament is the story of God's response to the need of His people as He liberated them from slavery in Egypt and how the relationship between God and His liberated people unfolds within history. This story of God can be described with the concept of "incarnation" as God is revealed within history. God (the Liberator who is in a covenant relationship with His people and is involved in history through His people) enters the world as Christ (God incarnate as a Servant to all) and after the resurrection and ascension He is incarnate in the community of believers as the Holy Spirit (God incarnate in the Body of Christ - community of believers).

The story of God within history can be described as the story of incarnation which is characterized by images of humility and servanthood or *diaconia* as God takes on the plight of the lost, hopeless, marginalised and excluded. I believe that the Biblical narrative will guide the study in the search for unique outcomes within the story of the global village. Is it coincidence that Africa, the most excluded continent from the global village, has the highest population of Christians in the world? The study will reflect on such questions as it seeks unique outcomes.

The study will theologically reflect on the cross and the theology of the cross (and especially as it culminates in the celebration of the Eucharist) as the guiding theology for a community where the outsiders and villagers can meet and be united into one community - a community which is a unique outcome, a community guided by the *Story of Christ*, a community of reconciliation and a community which imagines and lives in the hope of an alternative world.

I will conclude the study by reflecting on Pastoral Redemptive Communities² as a transformative ecclesiological praxis within an urban postmodern global village context.

The theme of the study can become rather extensive so I have chosen an urban congregation in Gauteng to be the main context of study. By limiting the study to this context the research will be placed within certain boundaries and rooted in a concrete ministry situation. The urban congregation which is the context of this study has a membership which is made up mainly of people who indirectly or directly benefit from the global village, yet the congregation finds itself within a context where there are literally

² The term '*Pastoral Redemptive Communities*' is a term that I coined during a series of workshops that I conducted in the Evangelical Lutheran congregation Pretoria – St. Peter's.

thousands of people (homeless, unemployed, etcetera) who are marginalised from the village and who exist in the areas surrounding the congregation.

I will reflect on the postmodernity as a challenge to theology and seek a possible model of doing theology within the postmodern context. In Chapter Two a possible model of doing theology within the postmodern context will be proposed and tested throughout the study. The study concludes with a critical reflection on this process and model.

3. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATIONS FOR THIS STUDY

In Part Two of this study (Descriptive Theology - Chapters Three, Four and Five) a more detailed description of the context of the study will be given. In this section I will be indicating the motivation for the study. It is my personal journey/story which is the main motivation for this study. This study is the result of a search for answers on questions that arose out of this journey. This study is firstly motivated by the search for a theology that gives meaning to my experiences of God, reality and ministry which is riddled with questions and the study will help me discover a deeper understanding of these questions and this search. Secondly this study was motivated by a search for an appropriate ecclesiology which can seek to respond to the challenges of a concrete ministry situation.

3.1 Concrete South African reality

The first question that motivated this study and arose from my journey into the ministry in South Africa was: how can the church effectively minister to the urban community in South Africa today?

This question is very wide and open, but is limited by the following:

- 1) the question is asked in the context of the church,
- 2) in the context of the urban church
- 3) in the context of the urban church in South Africa today.

Motivation 1: How can the church effectively minister to the urban community in present day South Africa?

The South African urban context however is not a uniform context and therefore, from the various different aspects of this context, different questions motivated this study.

3.2 A divided context

In my personal ministry journey I became aware of two very different aspects of the ministry

and this challenged me. The first aspect was the congregation itself and its pastoral spiritual needs, and the second was the social condition and diaconical needs surrounding the church in the urban context.

One could describe the congregants in the various congregations into which my personal ministry journey took as economically middle to upper class and thus benefiting in some way from the global village and therefore the congregants can be described as villagers.

The congregants and I were confronted by increasing unemployment and homelessness. The homeless community is in no way benefiting or partaking in the global village and therefore are marginalised or even excluded from the village. In the urban context the ministry would always be challenged by villagers and marginalised. These two groups create two very distinct areas of the ministry, to which the story of God obliges the church to respond. The question that kept coming to mind was, how can the church do justice to both and listen to both their stories? It is in this ministry context that the image of the global village became a useful concept to make this distinction between villagers and marginalised although this distinction cannot be seen as conclusive and the line of distinction is not clear. This distinction is a useful image to explain the rising number of individuals and communities who are being marginalised and excluded from economic development throughout the world, especially in the urban centres.

3.2.1 The story of the global village

Most of the congregation would have medical aid schemes, pension funds, insurance funds or investments therefore they are in some way connected to the global finance markets. A large part of the congregant's financial security is dependent on the global village.³ The congregants are connected to the communication and information networks of the global village via TV, satellite television, internet, media, etcetera. The communication and information networks of the global village expose the congregants to the globe and while relaxing in their living rooms they are connected to the whole world as images from all over the world are shown on TV. This connection enables them to follow the war in Iraq closely as it is portrayed by CNN or get hourly updates on the markets. Many conversations and shared stories in meetings and discussions are stories that arise from living in the global village.

These shared stories are stories of being in touch with family via the Internet or some other of the latest telecommunication developments, who has immigrated to countries all over the globe. Congregants can closely follow the war in Eastern Europe, talk about the children who have immigrated to Europe for better job opportunities, and talk about how the financial markets are affecting personal savings in international unit trusts. These are the

³ The global village is understood in this context as an economic entity.

stories that tell the story of the global village.

These are not the only stories that are being told as these stories reflect only half the reality of the global village, but there are also totally different stories. The different stories are stories told by villagers, but which challenge the story of the global village.

3.2.2 Other stories that challenge the story of the global village

Concerned parents are complaining that their children are struggling with the pressures at the workplace. Young professional adults tell the story of coming home late at night after working long hours over time at the office and of the continuous demand to work weekends as well with only minimal extra pay. These kinds of demands can be made by management because there is always somebody somewhere who is prepared to work under such conditions thereby making the individual who is not prepared redundant. Young married couples and parents complain that their families are falling apart as they do not have time for their partners or for their children. Young mothers suffer from feelings of guilt as they bring their few month old babies to the day care centre. Families break up because they see each other, if they are lucky, only on Sundays or very late at night.

These are some of the challenging stories of the global village which are stories of overworked and stressed individuals and of marriages and families breaking apart. These stories **challenge the church** to respond to the pastoral needs of the congregants as they struggle with the global village and its demands.

Motivation 2: How can the church respond to the villager's stories of need?

But not all the stories of the global village have been told. There is yet another reality and more stories need to be told.

There is the story of sitting in the study 'surfing' the World Wide Web and being connected to an amazing world of information, but sitting behind security doors and trusting in the armed response if something should happen. Security is high on the agenda of the stories told in congregations and rightfully so if one realises the increasing crime rate in traditionally white suburbs, hijacking and increase in rape and violent crimes. These stories are no longer told from the distance of headlines, but have for too many congregants become personal stories.

Another favourite story that is often told is the story of the well-known picture of people standing at traffic lights with a piece of tattered cardboard begging for money or support of some kind. There are also the stories of the car watch groups and individuals offering to

wash the car while the customer does his or her errands.

These are two very different kinds of stories - the one of a united world, where we can communicate within seconds at ever cheaper rates all around the world, send information and know more about developments in China than in our own country and the other of a world falling apart because of rising fragmentation as the division between rich and poor increases and unemployment rises internationally.

The urban congregations are very aware of rising social problems. Not one congregant in an urban congregation can deny the reality of homeless people begging at traffic lights, homeless individuals guiding one into parking bays at every shopping centre and the increase in informal settlements on the outskirts of the city.

The social reality of South Africa, rising unemployment and homelessness, is daily confronting congregants. The congregant cannot ignore this situation, because his/her Christian background tells him/her that these people are our Christian responsibility. Yet they have no idea how to deal with this growing problem.

<p>Motivation 3: How does the church respond to the stories of need of the marginalised?</p>

Daily more communities and individuals are marginalised and excluded from “normal” society.

From the above I understand there to be two aspects and **these two aspects seem to form the problem of the ministry in a global village**. This problem is not unique to South Africa. Books, articles and studies tell stories of similar problems in all the cities of the world. It is a global problem of a world where the reality of the global village is not a reality of unity and solidarity, but rather of fragmentation and competition and where an increasing number of people are excluded from society and economic development because of economic reasons.

I will now reflect on ministry experiences in other parts of South Africa and the world where the global village challenges the church.

3.3 A global reality

The problems that motivated this study, described above, are not unique to South Africa, but very similar problems are identified all over the world, for example in Germany.

Germany – Berlin

After my studies I did my internship in the inner city of former Eastern Berlin in a congregation called St. Bartholomäus. Bartholomäus is situated in the center of three very interesting yet diverse urban communities, namely: Berlin Mitte which is the central inner city of Berlin; Prenslauer Berg which was an older part of Berlin where the buildings were very dilapidated and where various alternative communities found a home and Friedrichsheim where the socialists built the residential flats (Plattenbauten). I came into this congregation five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and very soon realised that the euphoria of the united Germany had disappeared and was replaced by disillusionment with the so called “freedom of the market”. The past and everything individuals, families and communities had believed in was destroyed and broken down piece by piece like the Berlin Wall.

In the same way the ideology of the past is being torn apart until nothing is left of it. The people found themselves incorporated into an economic system that had promised so much. They had once dreamt of the West and now the West was here and they were disillusioned. The people from the East had dreamt of a different world as they received images of the West on Western TV (the TV transmitters did not respect the Berlin Wall). In these five years a very different reality had replaced the dream.

In Berlin I could not help but notice the increase in unemployment, the rising number of foreigners entering Berlin in search of employment and the rising racial and cultural tensions. The congregation I was working in, got involved in various projects with refugees and young homeless youths.

The global experience reflects the reality of South African cities and indicates that the problems of the global village are indeed global.

3.4 The post-apartheid postmodern South African context

In the search for deeper understanding to the above mentioned questions which were born in the various ministry contexts and experiences, I soon realised that the church is faced with a challenge beyond the various stories of the global village. The church could no longer give ethical guidelines based on universal accepted truths, or absolute value standards in a postmodern world. The postmodern context aggravates the problem as it makes the response to the challenges of the global village all the more difficult. Postmodernity challenges the church to find new ways to respond to the various stories of need of the villagers and those marginalised from the global village. The postmodern pluralism and relativism adds to the fragmentation experienced in the global village. The study will reflect on this aspect of postmodernity.

The South African experience

The first ministry experiences that I had in South Africa were all in the New South Africa and in various urban centres (Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and Pretoria). My experience was that people were struggling with the new South Africa not because they supported racial discrimination, but because of the loss of securities. Apartheid was not only a divided society which was divided along racial lines, but for white South Africans it was a protected society, for example job reservation protected the white community economically and socially.

Christianity had a special place of privilege in the old South Africa and this protected the Christian community. The country was governed on so-called Christian morals which the censorship board and legislation protected and ensured. In this protected environment issues such as abortion, homosexuality and death penalty were not debated. In other words the authoritative standards of values were so-called '*Christian*' values and by these values the various aspects of public and private life were judged.

For most South Africans the New South Africa is extremely different from the old as so much has changed with the end of apartheid. South Africa has become a different country within a very short period of time. When South Africa elected its first democratic government this meant that the privileged position of Christianity disappeared which was seen very clearly at the inauguration of President Mandela as various religious leaders offered prayers and blessings.

South Africa in a very short period of time moved from a protected modern state to a postmodern democracy and a country with new laws, a new developing culture and new value systems. The constitution, as a guide for public and political life, has fundamentally changed and this has been the cause of much debate about certain rights that seem to disagree with traditional religious values, for example the debate on abortion, the death sentence, etcetera. The church's role during the apartheid years has eroded her credibility. For many the world has been turned upside down and South Africa has been thrown into postmodern relativity overnight with no new standard of values and truth.

This new situation affects the lives of the congregants as they struggle to find their identity, meaning, values and a purposeful life within this new postmodern South Africa. The daily reality within the global villages is one of extreme competition, the fear of rising unemployment, high violent crime rates and tremendous poverty and this situation requires an ethical response. The question is: on what basis are ethical responses founded within this postmodern context of relativism? Postmodernity challenges the villagers and outsiders as they seek meaning, purpose and justice in a world without universal standards or absolutes, but it also challenges the church to seek a way in which to respond to the needs

of the congregants within this postmodern context.

Motivation 4: How does the church minister in a postmodern context?

3.5 Personal interests

This study is not only motivated by certain ministry experiences, as I am sure that others would have made different experiences in the similar contexts as they would have interpreted the context differently. I will need to clarify my personal interest in order to do justice to this study and how my interest and personal journey led me to listen to this context in a specific way.

3.5.1 Philosophy

I have always had an interest in philosophy ever since school years and took philosophy as an extra subject during my training for the ministry. It is this interest in philosophy that made me aware of the postmodern as a philosophic and hermeneutical problem. The postmodern context challenges the church to find new ways in which to respond to the stories of the villagers and those marginalised from the global village.

3.5.2 Economic justice

I participated in an action-group in Germany on economic justice, globalization and Third World issues which sought ways in which to combat the increasing number of people who are marginalised and excluded from the economic developments and the world markets. Today's world is a world where the majority of the population is excluded and doomed to poverty. In this study I describe the world as a global village which I understand as a village powered by global trade markets and the global finance markets connected via communication and information networks. Inside this village there is rapid development as information can be sent around the world in seconds. All this makes the global village an exciting village with numerous possibilities, yet millions of people are excluded from this village. They are excluded because they do not have the means to trade on the global trade markets, or they are not connected to the developments and because their labour might not be competitive enough just to mention a few possible reasons. They also do not have the money to trade on the finance markets, nor do they have the high-tech developments that connect them to the communication and information networks, thus they are excluded ever more as they do not participate in the high speed developments of the world wide information and communication networks.

I worked with the homeless community in the inner city of Pretoria which is a community

that is excluded from the global village and its developments. This period created in me an awareness for the homeless communities and for the plight of the homeless people in all the different ministry contexts I have worked in since. I realised that it is not a matter of rich countries and poor countries, but that there are people who partake in and benefit from the global village (*villagers*) and those who are excluded from and marginalised (*marginalised*) everywhere in every country and every city.

If I look at the concrete South African context, the middle to upper class congregation is part of the global village. The members directly or indirectly benefit from the global village. Their insurance funds, pension funds, medical aid schemes and investments rise and fall with the fluctuation of the global finance markets. The villagers are connected to the communication and information network or at least enjoy the benefits thereof. Yet the person standing at the traffic light is excluded from this village or lives off the scraps of the village.

Motivation 5: How does the church respond to both villagers and those marginalised from the village and unite them into the one body of Christ?

3.6 Personal position

I need to place myself within the global village as I am a white, middle class, educated, South African male, who has access to a computer and the internet and is exposed to various forms of media, communication and information networks. I benefit and must honestly say that I enjoy certain benefits of globalization and the global village. Yet I am aware of and frightened by the thought of the billions of people who have no access to or any benefits from the global village, but rather suffer unemployment and ever growing poverty because of the process of globalization.

I have been exposed to various ministry situations in South Africa and Germany and it is in these situations that I realised that the church needs to find creative ways to respond to both the villagers and outsiders.

3.7 Spiritual and Biblical understanding

The various contexts to which I was exposed have raised numerous questions, but also a deep conviction that within the Christian narrative a deeper understanding is to be found with which to respond to the challenges. In my training I was exposed to the contextual theological approach which has had a great influence on me. The contextual approach not only taught me to take the context seriously, but also made me aware of the marginalised and excluded communities and their stories and need.

From my understanding of the Bible God has a very special place for the poor and marginalised as He journeys with them towards healing, empowerment and justice. Thus the Bible calls us into the world with this special focus – a focus for the ones the believer will encounter as we accompany Christ (Matthew 25).

Motivation 6: How does the church take the Biblical bias for the poor and marginalised seriously?

I also came across narrative theology as a field within theology and this led me to a new understanding which I believe can respond effectively to the challenge of postmodernity.

Motivation 7: Is narrative theology a possible response to the postmodern?

The Bible invites us on a journey of understanding and interpreting our own journeys and on this continuous journey contextual truth, meaning and purpose are to be found. This is a journey of salvation which is guided by Biblical metaphors and themes – an understanding of salvation which is holistic, in other words, it encompasses both spiritual and secular, public and private, and the individual and the community / society. I believe that ministry is a calling to accompany individuals on their journey of life. Yet we journey not as individuals but as communities of believers who are accompanying the world on its journey just as Christ walked the streets of this world.

I believe that God gives meaning to our existence and purpose to our lives and that His journey with us - interpreted and guided by tradition and the Biblical witness - can sustain us.

I also believe that the Story of Christ unites the world into one body namely the Body of Christ.

3.8 A theology for the postmodern world

The context of a congregation in the inner city of Pretoria challenges me to seek a theology that responds to the *pastoral and ecclesial needs* of those searching for meaning and purpose and the *diaconical needs* of those suffering on the margins of existence, yet a theology that unites us into the one body of Christ. I hope to find in the Biblical testimony, the tradition and history of the church as well as in the contemporary theological thinking, the roots and signposts that will guide this journey towards a theology and ecclesiology appropriate to the global village in a postmodern urban South African context.

Motivation 8: Is there a theology which pastorally responds to the needs of the

villagers and at the same time responds to the needs of the marginalised and thus uniting the two into one body of Christ?

Summary of Motivations:

- How can the church effectively minister to the urban community in present day South Africa?
- How can the church respond to the stories of need of the villagers?
- How does the church respond to the stories of need of the marginalised?
- How does the church minister in a postmodern context?
- How does the church respond to both villagers and marginalised and unite them into the one body of Christ?
- How does the church take the Biblical bias for the poor and marginalised seriously?
- Is narrative theology a possible response to the postmodern?
- Is there a theology which pastorally responds to the needs of the villagers and at the same time responds to the needs of the marginalised and thus uniting the two into one body of Christ?

These seven motivations - formulated as questions which arose out of my personal journey into ministry, personal interest/study, spirituality and Biblical understanding - motivated this study. This study will be guided on its journey by these seven questions. As I journey into the various levels of reality these questions will guide and accompany me in this study.

4. FORMULATION OF THE CHALLENGE /PROBLEM

In this section I will seek to formulate the seven questions that motivated the study into a challenge with various sub-challenges.

The challenge that motivated this study is that the world has been united into a single global village by the process of globalization and the consequences thereof. Globalization is a process that connects the world via communication and information networks and financially connects and interrelates the world into a village through the global markets and finance markets. The global village is the result of this process where the communication and information networks and the global markets connect the globe to such an extent that never before has the world been so united. If there is an oil crisis in the Middle East the whole world is affected as the petrol price increases. A war in Eastern Europe affects the financial markets all over the world thus affecting personal investments, pension funds and medical aid schemes. We are living in a global village of interconnectedness, intimacy and interdependence. The global village is experienced when we watch TV in our living rooms, or buy products from all over the world and are exposed to different cultures on the street

and when we 'surf' on the internet.

However, not everything fits into this picture of the global intimate village.

A war in certain parts of the world such as Central Africa, for example the conflict in Rwanda, will not influence the global finance markets. This means that certain parts of the world are excluded from this global village. Yet this is not only the situation between continents and nations. Even within countries and in urban centres there are excluded communities.

In the global village the labour market has become global which means a rise in the competitiveness of the labour market and not just for menial labour, but for all levels of employment. An engineering firm in Pretoria does not only compete with other firms in South Africa, but competes internationally thus placing extreme work pressure on the young engineer who drives through to Midrand every day.

The global village that seems to be this village of intimacy and connectedness is in reality a village of exclusion and the villagers daily live with fear. They live with the fear to be excluded, to be unemployed, to lose the connection to the finance markets and eventually end up on the street being homeless. This is the story of too many homeless individuals in our urban centres who have lost their employment because of the pressures on the labour market.

Challenge 1: The world as a global village is excluding and marginalising more and more people.

The church exists in the global village and is confronted by the reality of the village mainly through her members.

The congregation is confronted with the whole spectrum of villagers ranging from those who have employment or pensioners living off their pension fund (invested in the global finance markets) to those who have lost their formal employment seeking alternatives and living off social security or retirement packages paid out and increasingly to those who do not have sufficient social security and need help from the congregation. Even congregations in affluent neighbourhoods have been confronted with the reality of unemployment. The church and her congregants are increasingly confronted by the marginalised who are excluded from the village and no longer have any benefit from or connection to the village besides the advertising billboard of a trans-national company with which they build their shack or the boxes and newspapers with which they cover themselves at night.

The marginalised confront the congregants at the traffic lights or in the church premises where they seek a compassionate Christian heart to help them with some immediate need

such as money to buy bread or alcohol.

Challenge 2: The church is called to minister to this whole spectrum which ranges from the villagers to the marginalised.

The ministry needs of the villagers and marginalised differ. The villagers are struggling to cope with the fast developments of the global village and the social-cultural context of the village while those marginalised are struggling with basic survival and seeking empowerment just to be able to live.

Challenge 3: The needs of the villagers and the marginalised are different.

This study is motivated by a search for an effective Biblical ministry to both villagers and marginalised. This must be a ministry that unites villagers and marginalised into the one body of Christ. It needs to describe and interpret the various needs of the villagers and marginalised to be able to seek an effective ministry in response to them.

4.1 The struggles of the villagers

4.1.1 The story of the village

The story of the village is a story of being part of, being with it and being connected and informed. The driving image of the global village is the image of intimacy and belonging that is portrayed in the idea of a quaint village of progress and prosperity. This image is screened into our living rooms, on the way to work along the highways on billboards and in the magazines by the trans-national companies' aggressive advertising programmes as they compete in an oversaturated market. The growing YUPPY (Young Urban Professional Person) culture – which is the culture of young adults who are employed or self employed, who are connected to the world via Internet and the cell-phone and who are speculating on the finance markets – is the portrayed goal of life in the global village.

4.1.2 The reality of the village

The day to day story of the village looks a lot different from the dream. The professional young adults' personal lives and marriages are breaking up as they struggle to cope with the pressure at the work place and the pressure of living up to the village dream. The employer demands that overtime be worked and the competitive market demands that businesses must be open over weekends as well as on Sundays which means that many couples and families only have one Sunday a month where they can be together.

Daily they live with the fear of exclusion and ending up like the unspeakable other - the Outsider who has been marginalised. This fear is very real and is exploited by the management, and the insurance and investment companies flourish in this context of fear.

The growing number of those who are marginalised from the village increases the social problems within the cities as individuals seek alternative forms of income and some of these alternatives are illegal. This increase in crime aggravates the fear of exclusion because added to this fear is the fear of losing that for which the individual has worked.

4.1.3 The postmodern story of the village

The postmodern absence of universal truths or universal standard of values opens the door to all sorts of ideas/theories and practices which are all relative and therefore the questions of what is right and what is wrong becomes impossible to answer in a pluralist society. In the absence of universal standard of values it becomes difficult to establish what is right and just in the competitive economic environment of the global village. Violent crimes become relative to the economic, political and social context of the crime. In South Africa crime has become relative to so many factors: crime in the townships is relative to crime in the traditionally white suburbs; crime is no longer just crime, but is seen relative to it being politically motivated or being a consequence of the legacy of apartheid, in other words crime is dependent on so many factors that are relative to other factors. For the individual within this postmodern village context it is difficult to know what is right or wrong. In a postmodern world there is no longer a universally accepted standard by which one can decide what is right or wrong in business or in the back streets of the inner city.

The church is challenged by this situation. In the past the dominant church had no difficulty in making decisions on what is right or wrong, but in the postmodern religiously plural society this becomes much more complicated.

Challenge 4: The need for direction and guidance in a postmodern village.

4.2 The struggles of the marginalised

This global village does not include everybody. Not everybody has access to global trade and global finance markets that drive the economy of the global village. Nor do they have access to the World Wide Web or the media and telecommunication networks and therefore they are excluded from the village. A global reality determined by global trade markets and global finance markets can be described as the global market economy. The social reality of this global economy is an ever widening gap between rich and poor. This economic gap is growing between rich and poor countries, rich and poor communities

within one country and in this study rich and poor communities within one city.

The world today is a divided world between the *villagers*, who benefit and partake in the global village, and the *marginalised* who are excluded. The whole world, countries, cities and communities are divided into *villagers* and *marginalised*.

4.2.1 Globalization

Globalization is the process by which the world is becoming ever smaller and more connected into a global village. This is a process determined by global markets, global finance markets and global communication networks.

4.2.1.1 Global markets

The global market economy has revolutionised global trade as it has gone through a historic revolutionary development. Today the global trade market is no longer the import and export of goods, but trans-national companies which move around the globe seeking favourable conditions to produce their goods. A decisive factor in the trans-national companies' choice of where to produce its products is the availability and cost of labour. If the trans-national companies travel around the globe in search of cost effective labour, the labour market becomes global creating global competition for the lowest wages.

4.2.1.2 The global labour market and unemployment.

The rising competition on the global labour market causes an increase in unemployment and thus increases the number of people excluded from the labour market, global market and global village. This exclusion from the labour market causes higher unemployment rates and this is experienced in the reality of everyday life with the numerous people standing by the traffic lights begging for money or support.

4.2.1.3 The global village an exclusive village

The global market economy drives and unites the global village with the information and communication networks. As mentioned above not everybody is connected to this network and are thus excluded from the village.

Two things exclude from the global village. Firstly there is the exclusion from the labour market because of unemployment and secondly exclusion because of lack of access to the communication and information network. The global market economy can be seen as causing numerous social problems and is challenging the church to respond to the injustice.

Communities are excluded from active participation in this economic system because of

historical, social and material reasons. The excluded communities are ostracised ever more as the economic system develops and they are excluded from this development. The story of the global market within the global village is a story of exclusion.

Challenge 5: More and more people are excluded from the global village.

4.2.2 The concrete context

The main context of this study is an urban congregation which is surrounded by the social challenges of growing poverty within the city. The churchgoing members are confronted with crime as cars are being stolen as they attend church and therefore church elders are requested to stand outside and keep watch. Congregants are also confronted with the homeless community (those marginalised) begging for money after and before the service. This reality with which the congregation is confronted is a reality which they do not know how to deal with. The two worlds in one city confront each other outside the church and sometimes even in the church as one of the homeless gets into the church and “disturbs” a few members.

Challenge 6: The church does not know how to respond to the marginalised.

These communities, who are excluded from the church, are also the communities excluded from the global village. They are the forgotten communities that exist on the margins of society and are calling out to be heard, seen and noticed.

4.3 The church’s response to the global village

The church’s response to the global village is divided as some churches have sided with the excluded and others are at home in the global village.

Many churches find themselves trapped between the needs of the excluded or the marginalised and the needs of the villagers and therefore struggle to respond to either. The church is losing credibility in both areas.

4.3.1 The church’s response to the villagers

Among the villagers the church has lost many members due to secularisation during modernity and now in postmodernity the church is losing more members as they search for meaning and truth in the pluralism of truths and systems of meaning available to them. What the church has to offer has become a commodity on the religious market competing with other ideologies and religions. What is the Good News to the postmodern individual? The Good News that the church is offering has to be good news that is acceptable in the

postmodern paradigm.

Some churches have responded by returning to a pre-modern time of fundamentalism and authoritarianism, while other churches are seeking creative ways to respond to postmodernity.

In Berlin, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and Pretoria I realised there is a hunger for meaning or spirituality which can accompany the families as they seek to come to terms with the new situations and the various crises they are experiencing in the global village. I encountered many who were very outspoken that they did not “get anything” from coming to church. The church service had become empty and did not “feed” the community the spiritual bread for which they hungered.

4.3.2 The church’s response to the marginalised

The response to those marginalised is just as varied. Some churches close their doors to the outsiders and make sure they do not enter while other churches have responded in providing various services, for example clothing or food hand-outs or a soup kitchen. It seems as if there is no clear interpretation and description of the problem or a clear theology of how to address such social problems.

The diaconical and social problems in the South African cities are growing and yet the church which is Biblically called to reach out to those in need seems to avoid or only marginally respond to this challenge. In the specific congregations in which I worked it seemed that it was not the lack of conviction or will, but the lack of knowledge and faith that reduced the ministry of the church to a hand-out ministry. I wondered if it is not the lack of a theology which is founded on the faith that in Christ there is transformation, healing and empowerment.

4.4 The Theological Challenge

When the context of the urban congregation asks questions that are directly related to globalization in a postmodern context then postmodernity and globalization becomes a theological challenge to the church. The church is losing members in the postmodern age because it cannot effectively respond to the needs of the individual villager. Nor does the church seem able to respond to those marginalised and their specific needs for economic and social justice.

THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

Questions from the individual (villager or marginalised):

- The villager asks questions about the meaning and purpose of life within the

global village.

- The villager seeks guidance in the many choices he/she needs to make in business as well as in the private spheres.
- The villager asks questions about the criteria for ethical actions in a time where values structures and authorities have disappeared.
- 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.
- The marginalised living off the scraps of the global village is denied economic justice and development and asks where is God in his/her situation. *Is God the God of the villagers only?*
- Does God care for the marginalised need for daily bread?

Questions directed at the church as community of believers:

- 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?
- 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?
- Can the church offer an alternative community to the exclusions and thus the dehumanisation and confusion of the global village?

Questions directed at the church and her diaconical social responsibility:

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

These questions can be divided into three distinct categories:

- 1) Questions concerning individuals and his or her spiritual pastoral needs.
- 2) Questions concerning the church and her function as community of believers, in other words ecclesiological questions.
- 3) Questions concerning the church's role within society.

These are questions that arose out of the context of the ministry which stimulated a theological search for answers. These three categories of questions coincide with Heitink's understanding of practical theology being "integratieve praktische theologie" (Heitink 1993:93). He identifies three perspectives or three different forms of Christian mediation -

individual, ecclesiological and social. Heitink sees practical theology as integrating these different forms or perspectives of mediation. Practical theology according to Heitink (Heitink 1993:93) needs to understand the role that Christian faith plays in the life of the individual, in the church and in society. From the above these are exactly the questions that this study is seeking to understand. I will separate these three perspectives and seek better understanding of each of them, in other words the study will have an individual approach (anthropological), faith community approach (ecclesiological) and a social approach (diaconical/public/prophetic) and seek to integrate these three into an appropriate ecclesiological model.

4.5 The Challenge

The challenge of this study is the global village in postmodern urban South Africa seen within the context of an urban congregation. The challenge is twofold:

1. Globalization unites the world into a global village with the communication and information networks and creates global financial interdependencies on the global markets, but it also excludes and fragments the world. The global village has exclusive tendencies and in the extreme divides the world into villagers and those marginalised.
2. Both groups, marginalised and villagers, are a challenge to the body of Christ, the church - the spiritual hunger for meaning and purpose caused by the confusion and fragmentation within the global village and the existential survival of those on the margins of the global village. The challenge of the global village is aggravated by the challenge of postmodernity.

Summary of the challenge:

- The world as a global village is excluding and marginalising more and more people.
- The church is called to minister to this whole spectrum ranging from villagers to marginalised.
- The needs of the villagers and those marginalised are very different.
- The need exists for direction and guidance in a postmodern village.
- More and more people are excluded from the global village.
- The church does not know how to respond to the marginalised.

5. DIRECTION OF STUDY

5.1 A narrative theological orientation responding to the economically divided community in postmodern urban South Africa and uniting the divided community into a community of the cross as modelled in Pastoral Redemptive Communities

In this study I would like to investigate the possibility of a theological approach that responds to the spiritual and diaconical needs of the urban community in South Africa today. The challenge of the study is to seek a theological framework where the Gospel can be the bread of life that can be figuratively and literally broken and shared to nourish the ones who physically hunger and those who spiritually hunger.

Three questions:

- 1) Can the church be a home, in the global village, for the physically homeless as well as the spiritually homeless?**
- 2) What theological framework is necessary for the church to become such a home, uniting a divided community?**
- 3) What role would such a church play within society?**

5.2 Narrative Theology

I believe and will seek to show that the Christian-Jewish faith has deep narrative roots and within this narrative tradition does not only find meaning and faith, but also ethical direction. This direction is given by various Biblical themes and characterisations pointing into a distinct direction. Thus narrative theology can provide the narrative framework in which the villagers find meaning, purpose and community, a narrative that - when brought into dialogue with the stories of the villagers - begins a new journey with a distinct direction.

6. DIRECTIVES OF STUDY

6.1 Narrative approach

- 6.1.1 The narrative approach allows the study to engage in a dialogue with the global village within a postmodern urban South African context.
- 6.1.2 Within this dialogue the study will listen to the various stories of the global village.
- 6.1.3 The problem will be identified and named and described from various levels of reality.

6.1.4 A unique outcome will be sought which could lead to a new future, a story of a different community.

6.2 Narrative Theology

6.2.1 The study being a theological study will be guided by the Biblical narrative in the search for unique outcomes.

6.2.2 A narrative theology could be an appropriate theological framework within a postmodern context.

6.2.3 The Jewish-Christian faith community has deep roots in the narrative tradition therefore the church has a narrative tradition based on the Biblical narrative.

6.2.4 The Biblical narrative is the story of God with His people and thus of God within history and within our world.

6.2.5 God reveals Himself within history in the lives of His people.

6.2.6 This narrative of God's revelation and incarnation, when brought into dialogue with the stories of individuals and families, points towards truth and meaning.

6.2.7 The Biblical narrative calls all those who are in dialogue with this narrative into community.

6.3 The Biblical Narrative's call into Community

6.3.1 The context of dialogue with the Biblical narrative is a community context.

6.3.2 The Biblical narrative draws believers into the continuing story of Christ with the world as He is present in the body of Christ - community (Church).

6.4 The Collision of the Narratives in the Eucharist

6.4.1 The celebration of the Eucharist is a celebration where the individual's (community's) identity narrative is confronted with the Story of Christ and is sacramentally incorporated into the story of Christ, thus allowing for a re-authoring of the individual's and community's narrative.

6.4 Diaconical Community

6.4.1 The Biblical narratives which are the guiding metaphors for the community (body of Christ) are diaconical.

6.4.2 The community is drawn into this diaconical narrative in relation to the world.

7. DELIMITATION AND FOCUS OF STUDY

The study is extensive as it seeks to address major challenges of the global village in a postmodern context. This challenge is connected to numerous other processes and factors that will need to be brought into consideration.

To limit the study some choices needed to be made - choices that seek to confine and limit the study, but also focus the study.

- The study is a **theological** study, and the focus will be to seek a deeper theological understanding of the context's challenges.
- The study sees itself as an **interdisciplinary study** within the field of theology bringing into dialogue various disciplines within theology, yet the main focus being a theological framework for ministry in the urban South African context and therefore the study will mainly place itself within the field of **practical theology**.
- The study is also **intradisciplinary** as it brings into dialogue various other disciplines beyond the field of theology such as sociology, psychology and philosophy, but they enter into the dialogue from a theological perspective.
- Within the sphere of practical theology the study tends towards a **narrative theological** approach. The study will also seek to develop within this narrative approach.
- The study will seek to respond to the social economic challenges of the context and thus lean towards being a **diaconical study** as it understands the Biblical narrative as a guiding narrative for the servant community of God's people. The study believes the Biblical narrative to have a certain bias towards the poor and marginalised. This bias also finds expression in the character of Christ's incarnation as a model for the body of Christ (the church) within society.
- The study's approach will be a **narrative contextual** approach as the study will be in dialogue with the various realities of the context, bringing these realities into dialogue with each other as well as with the theological tradition.
- The study will unfold within the framework of the **fundamental practical theology** of Don, S. Browning.
- The context of the study is limited to the **South African urban congregation**, with references being made to the global picture.
- The study is limited by two challenges that have been identified within this context namely the challenge of **postmodernity** and the challenge of the social economic consequences of **globalization**.
- The study is directed by a search for an **ecclesiastic model** for being a community church within the specified context.

8. CLARIFICATION OF TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

In this section I will clarify some of the terms that I will be using in this study. This is my initial understanding of these terms but as the study progresses the understanding of these terms will be developed.

Postmodern

- 1) Postmodern can be understood as post-modern, in other words as that which comes after modernity.
- 2) Postmodern in this study is understood as the questioning of the modern and Enlightenment tenets

Global Village

I will use the concept of “global village” as a narrative concept describing the dominant narrative setting in which society today constructs their stories of personality and reality. This narrative setting is constructed by the dominant economic ideology today. The global economic system excludes certain communities and individuals therefore the study will refer to those who are included, thus partaking or benefiting from the global economy as “villagers” and those who do not directly benefit, but make a living of the scraps of the system as “marginalised”

Narrative

- 1) Narrative can be understood as the Oxford dictionary describes it: “a tale, story, recital of facts” (The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1982:673)
- 2) In this study I will describe narrative as storytelling.

Narrative theology

- 1) In this study I understand narrative theology to be theology that takes the narrative character of scripture and soteriology seriously as well as the narrative understanding of humans. Humans are story-telling people.

Community

- 1) The Oxford dictionary describes community in the following way: “joint ownership or liability; state of being shared or held in common; fellowship (community of interest); organised political, municipal, or social body; body of people living in the same locality; body of people having religion, a profession in common (Oxford Dictionary 1982:190).
- 2) I understand community in this study as a fellowship which is organised through a common understanding of faith.

Community as Body of Christ

This concept comes from Paul in his letter to the Romans and in his letter to the Corinthians. (1 Corinthians 12:12, Romans 12:4f)

9. STUDY OUTLINE

In this section, I will provide an outline as to how the study will be developed.

Part 1: Orientation

Chapter One defines the **scope of the study** and provides the motivation, background and the purpose of the study. It also highlights the challenges that the study seeks to understand and indicate the direction of the study that is a narrative theology which seeks to bring people together from the economically divided South African context and unites into the body of Christ, becoming a humble servant within the South African community. This general direction is indicated by certain directives that will guide the study.

Chapter Two introduces a **theological orientation in a postmodern world**. In a postmodern world it is difficult to offer ethical responses to the challenge of the social economic reality of our world. On what universal norms or values would one base such ethical challenges? In a world of relativism, pluralism and value disorientation with the loss of universal truths and absolutes, new ways need to be found in which individuals and communities can find meaning, purpose, truth, and form values. This chapter will introduce the theological roots of the study and the theological challenges. It will present my personal assumptions, the nature of narrative theological approach and the theological method proposed by the study.

Part 2: Theological Process

Chapter Three introduces the first phase of the theological method proposed in Chapter Two, namely **descriptive theology**. The first step in the descriptive theological journey is insertion and in this step I will introduce the various stories of the South African postmodern urban global village – stories of the global village, of villagers and marginalised. The study will listen to the **stories of need** within the global village and seek to illuminate and describe the first level of reality of these stories as understood and interpreted by myself. This section of the study will be made up of interviews, experiences and stories of individuals from the context.

Chapter Four is the descriptive exploration of the stories of Chapter Three, in other words the **description** of the various levels of reality of the marginalised and villager. The study

will listen to the **stories of the past** by reflecting on historical processes that led to the globalization and the global village, hearing the **darkened story of the future** describing the hopelessness of the situation and the lack of an outcome.

Chapter Five is the **concluding chapter of the descriptive theological journey**. In this chapter I will bring together the thoughts of Chapters Two, Three and Four and describe the *postmodern global village*. I will also be describing the story of the church and her involvement in the development of the *postmodern global village*.

Chapter Six is a **historic and systematic theological journey**, where the study will confront the classic texts with the questions emerging from the theory-laden practices of the ministry. In this chapter the study will bring into dialogue the questions and challenges of the concrete ministry experience with the Biblical narratives.

This chapter will also be a systematic theological reflection as the horizons of the theory laden questions will fuse with the horizons of the historic texts. In this chapter I will reflect on the church as a language community guided by the Biblical narrative. I will be looking at the individual member (anthropological/ personal faith) and how she or he finds meaning and purpose (truth) within the Biblical narrative and the community gathered around this narrative. The guiding themes within the Biblical narrative will be highlighted and how these themes will affect the community (ecclesiological). Lastly the study will investigate the role that such a community would play within society (social / political / prophetic / diaconical). In the stories of the Biblical narrative the study will seek to discover themes (**unique outcomes**) that will lead to a **re-authored story of the past**.

Part 3: Theological Guidelines

Chapter Seven is the **strategic practical theology** where I will be reflecting on the theological journey of strategic practical theology within the specific ministry context of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Pretoria, St. Peters. The re-authored story of Chapter Six is then brought into this specific ministry context. It is a story of transformation and a story of hope where a new imagined future is anticipated in a proposed praxis for the church in the postmodern urban South African context within a narrative theological orientation.

Part 4: Summary

Chapter Eight will be a critical reflection of the process of the study.

Part 1:	Orientation
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Chapter 1	The Scope of the Study
Chapter 2	Towards a narrative theological orientation in a postmodern world
Part 2:	Theological journey: descriptive, historic and systematic theology
Chapter 3	Descriptive theological journey, phase one: Insertion; listening to the stories of need
Chapter 4	Descriptive theological journey, phase two: Unpacking the story of the past and the clouded story of the future.
Chapter 5	Conclusion of the descriptive theological journey
Chapter 6	Historic and Systematic Theological journey
Part 3:	Theological Guidelines/Strategic Practical Theology
Chapter 7	Imagining the story of the future within the context of Pastoral Redemptive Communities
Part 4:	Summary
Chapter 8	Critical reflection on the journey and research model

TOWARDS A NARRATIVE THEOLOGICAL
ORIENTATION IN A POSTMODERN WORLD:
EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF POSTMODERNITY
AND SUGGESTING A THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION
WITHIN THIS CONTEXT FOR DOING THEOLOGY IN A
POSTMODERN URBAN SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT.

1. INTRODUCTION

David Tracy (Tracy 1986: 3-31) wrote about the “three republics” of theology where he argues that theologians need to address and reflect critically in all three of these republics namely: the **church**, **society** and **academia**. He argued that theologians should reflect as well as defend their arguments in all three of these republics.

I will take up Tracy’s challenge in this second chapter by introducing, describing and defending the theological orientation of this study with regards to all three of these ‘republics’. As the title of the study indicated I propose to orientate this study within the narrative theological approach and it is the aim of this chapter to describe this narrative theological orientation as well as defend this orientation with regards to all three of Tracy’s republics.

I believe that narrative theology has a vital role to play within the postmodern context and that narrative theology can effectively respond to the challenges of postmodernity. In Chapter One, I identified the following challenge: **The need for direction and guidance in a postmodern village** (Chapter One: 4.1.3 The postmodern story of the village). It is to this challenge that I will seek to respond to in this chapter.

Firstly, I will begin by describing the postmodern condition as I interpret and understand it and then try and explain why I found the narrative approach to be an appropriate method of doing research and theology within a postmodern context.

Secondly, the study – being a narrative study – will also in this chapter give a short description of the theological narrative of the study, in other words the tradition in which this study is set as well as the various influences and experiences that had an effect on the development of the theological narrative that led to this study. This will be the description of my personal theological/spiritual story.

Thirdly, I will propose the research methodology that will accompany the rest of the study.

2. THE CHALLENGE OF POSTMODERNITY

2.1 Introduction

As indicated in Chapter One I will seek to respond to the challenges of the global economy and the effects of this economy on the local urban congregation. To be able to adequately respond to this challenge of the global village, I need to take the condition which has been named 'postmodernity' into consideration as it will influence the methodological setting as well as the theological setting of the study. This condition, which has been described as postmodern, has influenced all three of Tracy's republics - the academic world, society and the church - and therefore in the study I will seek to describe the story of these influences.

In the academic republic postmodernity has possibly had its greatest influence within philosophy, especially epistemology and the philosophy of language, and from here influenced all other spheres of human knowledge (such as sociology, psychology, natural science, etcetera). The philosophical movement from modern to post-modern was a radical move which was a turning point in the way humanity understands and interprets the world and how humanity understands and interprets what it means to be human. This new way of understanding or of interpreting has consequently also influenced society and thus also the church.

I will start with a description of postmodernity and seek a deeper understanding thereof, in other words reflecting on postmodernity within the academic (philosophic) republic before it moves on to reflecting on the postmodern condition in society and church.

2.2 The methodology of Chapter Two

Chapter Two will seek to describe postmodernity in all three of Tracy's republics as well as offer a justification for the use of narrative theology in a postmodern context. I will then propose a fundamentally narrative methodology as the guiding methodology for the study.

The Methodology of Chapter Two	
1. Introduction	
2. The challenge of postmodernity	A brief description of the challenges of postmodernity is given.

<p>3. An Introduction to the postmodern condition I will introduce the origins of the term as well as reflect on some descriptions offered on the postmodern condition.</p>
<p>4. The story of postmodernity (a story in Tracy’s academic republic) The story of postmodernity begins with the story of modernity. Thus I will reflect on the story of modernity, describing some of modernity’s themes, with special focus on modernity’s relationship to truth and knowledge. I will then reflect on the development from modern to post-modern, reflecting on various thinkers who challenged the nostrums of modernity.</p>
<p>5. The story of postmodernity (a story in Tracy’s society and church republics) I will reflect on the influences of postmodernity in church and society with special reference to the South African and urban contexts.</p>
<p>6. Summary: Postmodernity in Perspective This will be a summary of the main themes of postmodernity.</p>
<p>7. The church and Modernity Before I can reflect on the church’s response to postmodernity I need to reflect on the church’s relation to modernity.</p>
<p>8. Narrative, a response to postmodernity In this section the study reflects on how narrative thought responds to some of the tenets of postmodernity and incorporates them in its thinking.</p>
<p>9. Postmodernity’s challenge to theology This section gives a brief description of the challenge of postmodernity specifically to theology.</p>
<p>10 Narrative theological response to postmodernity This section reflects on how narrative thinking has been incorporated into theology in order to respond to the nostrums of postmodernity. This section also reflects on the narrative nature of theology as well as the narrative roots of theology in the Christian-Jewish tradition.</p>
<p>11. A Narrative theological orientation in a postmodern world for “doing theology in a global village” This section describes the narrative theological orientation of the study</p>
<p>12. Narrative methodology for the study This section proposes the research methodology of the study as a combination of narrative and contextual models as well as proposing a working description for doing theology. This description will guide the rest of the study.</p>

3. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE POSTMODERN CONDITION

3.1 In search for an adequate understanding of the postmodern condition

In the search to understand any condition within modernity, a definition of the condition was offered. Yet this is exactly one of the dramatic changes that have taken place in postmodernity. It is no longer possible to give precise definitions of conditions or phenomena, thus to try and define postmodernity would in essence be modern. The best a postmodern study can do is to offer a description of a condition. This description needs to be understood as a subjective description constructed within a certain context and a different context would probably offer a totally different description of the condition. So from a postmodern perspective I can only describe postmodernity as I understand it. This understanding needs to be seen within the context of Western tradition and thinking. In the process of seeking a better understanding of postmodernity I will describe the development (story) from modernity and what changed in modernity to give rise to the post-modern. “A key to this term is the hyphen buried within it – “post-modern”” (Lundin 1993:3).

3.1.1 The origin of the term ‘*postmodern*’

The term was used for the first time in the late fifties by Irving Howe and Harry Levin, who coined the concept within the context of literary criticism to describe the demise of modernity (post-modern = demised-modern). Howe used the term to describe the move away from modern to what he called “postmodern” and for him it was symptomatic of the cultural decay that was taking place. Levin used the term to describe the ‘anti-intellectual undercurrent’ that is threatening the rationality and humanism of modernity (Kirsten 1988:29).

It was only years later in the seventies that the concept was accepted and became part of the intellectual world as it moved via Paris to the European philosophical world. Jean-Francois Lyotard, a French philosopher, presented a paper at a conference held in 1979 in Canada - *Conseil des Universities* - in which he described the intellectual revolutions which had taken place and which had formed the very basis of all the cultural developments in the Western world. He coined the phrase ‘*postmodern condition*’ as a condition which “exposes the tenuousness of the grand narratives of modernity and enlightenment “(Graham 1996: 20). Lyotard argues that “the word postmodern designates the state of our culture following the transformation which, since the end of the nineteenth century, have altered the game rules for science, literature, and the arts.” (Lyotard 1984: xxiii) He continues and writes that the postmodern condition can be characterised as an “incredulity towards the metanarratives” of modernity (Lyotard 1984: xxiv). “The metanarratives toward which the postmodern temperament responds with

incredulity are the stories of progress and development that have given shape to the Western experience over the last several centuries”(Lundin 1993:4).

Today the concept ‘postmodern’ is well known and is used to describe the present epoch in our history - lending its name to certain styles of architecture, art and literature. In the study I will seek to describe some of the tendencies that characterise this postmodern condition.

3.2 A description of the postmodern condition

As postmodernity cannot be clearly defined I can only describe it in broad terms, forming thus the parameters in which we can think and reflect on postmodernity. I will first reflect on various thinkers’ description of postmodernity. There are numerous different opinions about what postmodernity is and I will elucidate some of these ideas.

Du Toit (Du Toit 1988:37) describes the postmodern as recognising the *openness*, *indeterminateness* and therefore the *nomadic-metaphoricalness* of our existence.

Lundin speaks of the postmodern within the context of the modern when he says: “If modernism represented a desperate effort to have art and culture fill the void created by the decline of religion in the West, then postmodernism stands as the affirmation of the void, as the declaration of the impossibility of ever filling it.” (Lundin 1993:3) Lundin sees the postmodern as the affirmation of the *void* left by the *decline of religion* in the *modern western* thought.

Glanville speaks of the postmodern as “*a flight from authority*” (Glanville 1993:39) The postmodern condition is often interpreted as negative, because it questions empirical thought, rationality, reality, relativism and humanism. It can thus be seen as *destructive* and *decentralising* as it breaks down the basic authorities of modernity. Graham describes the postmodern as the age of *uncertainty*, where there is *no longer a consensus of values*. He also describes postmodernity as *destabilizing* many of the nostrums of the Enlightenment by challenging the major concepts of the Enlightenment such as truth, human nature, knowledge, power, selfhood and language. (Graham 1996:1) Postmodernity not only challenged the nostrums of the Enlightenment, but also the Romantic Movement. (Lundin 1993:4) Both the Enlightenment and the Romantic Movement emphasised the self as an entity in isolation.

The self was “equipped in its solitude with panoply of powers. In Enlightenment, to be sure, faith was centred upon rationality as the instrument of power, while in romanticism it was the intuition or imagination that promised to deliver humans from their bondage to ignorance and injustice. But the adherents of the

Enlightenment and romanticism were more united by their unshakeable faith in the self than they were divided by their disagreements about the mechanisms through which that self did its work” (Lundin 1993:5).

In postmodernity the individual human being is seen as always being a cultural subject inscribed in linguistics, historical and social contexts (Graham 1996:1). Postmodernity emphasises the *indeterminacy* and *fluidity* of identity and knowledge.

In the past, science was seen as the mirror of nature that could give a faithful account of reality, yet the postmodern has questioned this knowledge because the postmodern emphasises the dependency of knowledge on *linguistic conventions* and *social-cultural systems*. Yet it cannot be described as being agnostic towards knowledge because it does not reject knowledge. It only understands knowledge to be relative to its social-cultural system and context. The postmodern recognises that there are *no neutral points of view* and therefore there is *no neutral access to knowledge* (Graham 1996:2). Knowledge is never independent of self-interest or group interest, in other words there is no neutral authority from which humanity can gather to agree on the terms by which its affairs might be ordered. If there is no shared basis from which ethics can be developed we can see the dangers and confusions that this age of uncertainty can cause. Yet it also opens numerous possibilities. “Lyotard’s definition of postmodernism as “scepticism toward metanarratives” means, among other things, that the postmodern self is free to see itself as neither defined nor confined by the historical or communal narratives that make a claim upon it. The therapeutic self considers itself free of the obligations of truth and the claims of ethical ideals”(Lundin 1993: 6). The *therapeutic self* is a concept that was coined by Phillip Rieff (Rieff 1966:13). Rieff describes this therapeutic understanding as “the unreligion of the age, and its master science” (Rieff 1966:13). Richard Rorty describes the postmodern condition as the discovery that no power outside language and the human will rules the world. Postmodernity has seen the truth of language and that is “that anything could be made to look good or bad, important or unimportant, useful or useless, by being redescribed” (Rorty 1989:7).

Alasdair MacIntyre argues and says that truth in our postmodern Western culture has been displaced by *psychological effectiveness* (MacIntyre 1984: 30-31).

If no cultural/linguistic system dominates, then knowledge remains open for dialogue and it respects the differences in understanding and the knowledge of the various cultural systems.

The postmodern accepts everything, but this does not mean that everything agrees. Its point of departure is limited, determined and personal, yet it is not subjective. The paradox is that opposites are not solved, nor does one try to solve them, yet they

respect each other. There is *no attempt to harmonise disharmony*. One cannot really describe the postmodern as being new, since relativism, pluralism and deconstruction are not really new, but in the postmodern paradigm they have a new value. In postmodernity differences are more important than homogeneity.

3.3 Postmodern summary

Postmodern has been described as: open, intermediate, a nomadic metaphoricalness, uncertain, a flight from authority, filling the void left by religion, psychological effectiveness, therapeutic self, destructive, decentralising, destabilising, no longer a consensus of values, no neutral access to knowledge, no attempt to harmonise disharmony in the context of relativism and pluralism.

I have introduced a few ideas with regards to postmodernity as post-modern, in other words challenging the nostrums of modernity. It is difficult to positively describe postmodernity as it is generally described not by what it is, but more by what it is not. In other words postmodernity is described by describing what it is not - *postmodern is not modern*. Postmodernity is generally described in its relation to modern and in which ways it is different from the modern. In the study I will follow this dominant method of describing postmodernity by describing in which ways postmodernity is different and has developed from the modern condition.

To understand how it came to the postmodern condition I will follow the story of development from modernity to postmodernity.

4. THE STORY OF POSTMODERNITY (a story in Tracy's academic republic)

In this section I will reflect on the development of the postmodern condition by reflecting on its development within Western history of modernity. The history of Western modernity is the story of the birth of capitalism, liberal democracy and positivism. This story is founded (based) on particular economic, socio-political and intellectual conditions which shaped the cultural and philosophical contours of this age (Graham 1996:4).

Within these cultural and philosophic contours of the modern age certain models were developed from the 'modern' understanding of: human nature, identity, knowledge, action and ultimate value and these "modern" models have shaped our understanding of selfhood and community. In the development from modern to post-modern these basic models of modernity are contested by postmodernism and poststructuralism thus

questioning modernity.

“The related - but separate - movements of postmodernism and poststructuralism have delineated our contemporary condition as variously one of moral and philosophical fragmentation, political cynicism, superficiality and collapse of legitimation” (Graham 1996:13).

The feminist movement also played an important role in the demise of the modern values and models of understanding. Feminists claimed that the modern values saw Western maleness and masculinity as the norm (Graham 1996:4). Although feminism can be seen as an ally to postmodernism it also is based on modernism’s understanding of basic values of human rights and justice.

Postmodernism brought with it a new way of understanding history, as Erickson says: “In history, there is the new historicism, in which history is not merely the objective discovery of the past, but actually creates it” (Erickson 1998:18).

Before I move on to describe this development I would like to highlight some of the tenets of postmodernity and then proceed to tell the story of the development from modernity to post-modernity.

Tenets of Postmodernism

1. The objectivity of knowledge is denied. Whether the knower is conditioned by the particularities of his or her situation or theories are used oppressively, knowledge is not a neutral means of discovery.
2. Knowledge is uncertain. Foundationalism, the idea that knowledge can be erected on some sort of bedrock of indubitable first principles, has had to be abandoned.
3. All-inclusive systems of explanation, whether metaphysical or historical, are impossible, and the attempt to construct them should be abandoned.
4. The inherent goodness of knowledge is also questioned. The belief that by means of discovering the truths of nature it could be controlled and evil and ills overcome has been disproved by the destructive ends to which knowledge has been put (in warfare, for instance).
5. Thus, progress is rejected. The history of the twentieth century should make this clear.
6. The model of the isolated individual knower as the ideal has been replaced by community-based knowledge. Truth is defined by and for the community, and all knowledge occurs within some community.
7. The scientific method as the epitomization of the objective method of inquiry is called into question. Truth is not known simply through reason, but through other channels, such as intuition (Erickson 1998: 18-19).

4.1 The story of modernity

Before I look at the story of modernity we need to give a brief glance as to what went before modernity, namely pre-modernity.

“The pre-modern understanding of reality was teleological. There was believed to be a purpose or purposes in the universe, within which humans fit and were to be understood. This purpose was worked out within the world. In the Western tradition, this was the belief that an omnipotent, omniscient God had created the entire universe and the human race, and had a plan he was bringing about. There had to be reasons for things, and these were not limited to efficient or “because of” causes, but also included final or “in order that” causes. This understanding was carried over to the interpretation of history. There was a pattern to history, which was outside it” (Erickson 1998:15).

The pre-modern believed in the objective existence of the physical world and in a correspondence theory of truth. In other words a proposition is true if it directly corresponds to the reality it describes.

Modernism kept some of these ideas, but developed others and discarded some of the pre-modern thoughts and themes. The story of modernity can be described from a philosophical, social-cultural and economic perspective. My main interest is in the philosophical story as it will focus on the philosophic developments that took place in the transition from modernity to postmodernity. But this philosophical story cannot be understood without reflecting on the social-cultural and economic setting of the story.

The philosophical ideas of a transcendent reality changed. History and reality were no longer interpreted as being determined by transcendental realities, but within history itself certain patterns could be determined and explained without the aid of any transcendental. Modernism did away with final causes or purposes as all causes and purposes were efficient causes. Thus all things that happened were not caused by some final cause or purpose, or because of some deity, but because of natural social phenomena within history.

David Wells, according to Erickson, sees the modern era being divided into two periods. The division between these two periods he believes to be a division between the age of the West and the age now (Erickson 1998: 24).

“On the other side of that line, Europe was the center of the world, politically and economically; now America is. In the earlier period, there was a sense in which Judeo-Christian values were at the center of culture, even if they were not

believed in personally. Now, however, there is no such set of values. Rather, they have been displaced and replaced by a loose set of psychological attitudes, which are now referred to as modernity” (Erickson 1998: 24).

David Wells continues and argues that the soil from which the time now has sprung is capitalism and democracy and these in turn depend on technology and urbanisation. So modernity can be seen as a transition from one social and economic order to another and as a new way of thinking. Thus in order to understand the philosophic story of modernity the soil from which this story strung needs to be taken into consideration as well. I will come back to this thought in the next chapter when I will unpack the story of the global village and how modernity, postmodernity and the capitalism of the global village are linked and connected.

I will now reflect on some of the main themes of the modern story.

4.1.1 Great themes of the modern philosophic story

4.1.1.1 Science

The first great discovery of the seventeenth century was the rise of science and the commitment to empiricism, the understanding that all knowledge of the natural world is grounded on observable and verifiable facts (Graham 1996:15). This was the new key to all knowledge, and with it came a new optimism that science and empiricism had the power to discover and prove all that there is to know. Truth was reduced to that which can be empirically proven, thus all metaphysical or transcendental truth was discarded as it could not be empirically verified.

4.1.1.2 Enlightenment

The Enlightenment in the eighteenth century brought with it a new way of seeing the world, society and the individual.

“It prompted a new approach to the study of society founded on the idea of the social as a distinct sphere of life, available to be analysed in human and material terms alone, and requiring no recourse to religious frameworks” (Graham 1996:16).

René Descartes and Isaac Newton were the two thinkers who ushered in the Enlightenment. Descartes saw the individual being as an autonomous rational substance living and encountering the mechanistic world of Newton (Erickson 1998:84).

The Enlightenment brought numerous other great thinkers, known as the secular

intelligentsia, who championed the idea of reason free from the confines of religion. The optimism that surrounded science was now aided by the belief that rational thought is the key to all progress in society. It was believed that humanity could solve all its societal problems without religion or moral authorities, but that true humanity and society was to be found in freedom. Enlightenment can best be described by the words of one of the greatest spokespersons of the Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant: “Enlightenment was man’s leaving his self-caused immaturity. Immaturity is the incapacity to use one’s intelligence without the guidance of another... Sapere Aude! Have the courage to use your own intelligence! Is therefore the motto of the Enlightenment”(Kant 1949: 132).

Rational thought in modernity was liberated from God (religion), from authority and liberated from the confines of the past (tradition). Thinkers like Nietzsche, Freud and Marx were the liberators of rational thought and challenged the church and her beliefs. Science and the Enlightenment formed the basis of the philosophical thinking of modernity. I would like to highlight some of the thoughts of this time:

The basic tenets of Modernity

1. **Naturalism.** The idea that reality is restricted to the observable system of nature and in nature all is to be found.
2. **Humanism.** The human is the highest reality and value, the end for which all of reality exists rather than the means to the service of some higher being.
3. The **scientific method.** Knowledge is good and can be attained by humans. The method best suited for this enterprise is the scientific method. Observation and experimentation are the sources from which our knowledge of truth is built up.
4. **Reductionism.** From being considered the best means for gaining knowledge, the scientific method was increasingly considered to be the only method, so that various disciplines sought to attain the objectivity and precision of the natural sciences. Humans in some cases were regarded as nothing but highly developed animals.
5. **Progress.** Because knowledge is good, humanly attainable, and growing, we are progressively overcoming the problems that have beset the human race.
6. **Nature.** Rather than being fixed and static, nature came to be thought of as dynamic, growing, and developing. Thus it was able to produce the changes in life forms through immanent processes of evolution, rather than requiring explanation in terms of a creator and designer.
7. **Certainty.** Because knowledge was seen as objective, it could attain certainty. This required foundationalism, the belief that it is possible to base knowledge on some sort of absolute first principles. One early model of this was found in the rationalism of René Descartes, who found one indubitable belief, namely, that he was

doubting, and then proceeded to draw deductions from that. An alternative was empiricism, the belief that there are purely objective sensory data from which knowledge can be formulated.

8. **Determinism.** There was a belief that what happened in the universe followed from fixed causes. Thus, the scientific method could discover these laws of regularity that controlled the universe. Not only physical occurrences but human behaviour were believed to be under this etiological control.

9. **Individualism.** The ideal of the knower was the solitary individual, carefully protecting his or her objectivity by weighing all options. Truth being objective, individuals can discover it by their own effort. They can free themselves from the conditioning particularities of their own time and place and know reality as it is in itself.

10. **Anti-authoritarianism.** The human was considered the final and most complete measure of truth. Any externally imposed authority, whether that of the group or of a supernatural being, must be subjected to scrutiny and criticism by human reason (Erickson 1998: 16-17).

4.1.2 Great themes of the modern social-cultural and economic story

The developments in the West were not only philosophical, but there were social, economic and cultural movements that were all part of this revolutionary time in Europe and North America. I will just highlight a few of these themes in the story of modernity.

4.1.2.1 Industrial Capitalism

The philosophic story of modernity (with science and the Enlightenment as themes) needs to be placed within its social-cultural and economic setting, which brings me to the other great theme of modernism - the rise of industrial capitalism.

Industrial capitalism can be described in the following way:

“Production and consumption were organized on the basis of a market economy, involving large-scale monetary exchange and the accumulation of capital”(Graham 1996:17).

Industrial capitalism with its factories and industries mainly took place in the urban centres of the modern world. Thousands of people thus came to the urban centres in search of employment within these factories and industries, which is a phenomenon known as urbanisation. The people, who moved into the urban centres, had to adapt to new living conditions and social structures. The industrial workers were often separated from their families and formed new social groups such as miners and factory workers with their own set of values and norms. Urbanisation was not just the movement of

people from rural areas into the cities, but it was also the rise of a new lifestyle in these urban centres. This lifestyle can be described as a modern urban lifestyle.

Capitalism has been described as the accumulation of capital, but for capital to accumulate constant innovation and advances in technology were needed. This meant that the markets for the products being produced continuously needed to expand. There were two ways in which the markets could be expanded: 1) either by convincing people of the necessity of the commodities or 2) establishing new markets abroad through colonial expansion.

4.1.2.2 Secular Democracy

The other great theme of the modernity is secular democracy. Modernity can be characterised as the era that was dominated by secular forms of power and influence (Graham 1996:17). It was during the modern period that secular governments and constitutions were developed and that the idea of the nation state developed. All over Europe revolutions took place in the 18th century, which was to take over the political and economic power from the monarchs and the church.

The revolutions were based on the philosophic themes of modernity, namely science, reason and the equality of all humans thus eschewing authoritarian and traditional forms of rule by the Monarchs and the Church. Yet the economic theme was also playing a dominant role in these revolutions as science and technology opened the door for new forms of economic development in factories and industries, thus shifting the economic power base away from the land owned by the monarchs and the church to the owners of factories.

All these great themes of the modern story: science, Enlightenment, industrial capitalism and secular democracy, are closely related and need to be seen in this relation to each other. In the study I will focus on the philosophic developments of modernity.

4.1.3 The modern understanding of truth and knowledge

To understand the development from modern to postmodern I will need to describe the shifts that took place in the search for truth and knowledge.

The intellectual search for truth in modernity was based on three epistemological enlightenment assumptions (Erickson 1998:85).

4.1.3.1 Epistemological Enlightenment assumptions

1. *Knowledge is certain.* Reality can be and should be scrutinised by reason using a

method of inquiry that can prove the essential correctness of philosophical, scientific, religious, moral and political ideas. Thus truth can be empirically proven by proving the correctness of the statements. True statements are statements that can be verified universally. Knowledge attained by this empirical universal process was certain and believed to be infallible and thus a more stable and rational foundation than religion or transcendental truths. MacIntyre describes this attitude towards knowledge as the “culture of encyclopaedia”. The encyclopaedist operates with the “belief that in all enquiry, religious, moral, or otherwise, the adequate identification, characterization, and classification of the relevant data does not require... any prior commitment to some particular theoretical or doctrinal standpoint. The data, so to speak, present themselves and speak for themselves” (MacIntyre 1990: 16). MacIntyre traces the encyclopaedic culture back to the Enlightenment and the central belief of the Enlightenment that all matters of moral and theological significance can be discussed and a rational consensus reached by individuals committed to the search for truth. In other words the rational quest will discover truths which can then be universally verified by all rational beings. From this followed the belief that rational minds “freed from the constraints of religious and moral tests would make irreversible progress in intellectual enquiry” (Lundin 1993:20).

2. *Knowledge is objective.*

“The ideal intellectual is a dispassionate knower, who stands apart from being a conditioned observer, and from a vantage point outside the flux of history gains a sort of “God’s-eye view” of the universe - if there were a God. As the scientific project is divided into separate and narrow disciplines, specialists, who are neutral observers who know more and more about less and less, emerge as the models and the heroes” (Erickson 1998:85).

Thus empirical knowledge is objective, as the experiment can be repeated anywhere in the world and the same truths will be proven, thus no subjective or contextual influence determines empirical rational truth.

3. *Knowledge is inherently good.*

Ignorance was seen as the great evil from which knowledge liberates us. Thus science had the freedom to continue its process, never needing any justification for what it did. The more we know the better the world, was the motto that justified any research, no matter what the consequences. In modernity there was the belief that science together with technology and the findings of sociology and psychology will solve all of humanity’s problems. This optimism, which prevailed, was based on reason and the freedom necessary to explore. This also meant individual freedom. This was a freedom from authorities and traditions which were seen to hold back the free exploration of reason. So the enlightenment ideal for humanity was an

autonomous self, which is a self determining subject who exists outside of traditions and /or community (Erickson 1998:85).

Keith Putt uses an analogy to describe the modern human predicament in the search for truth and knowledge.

“He pictures human beings as adrift on the “infinite sea of being” (Erickson 1998:128).

This “sea of being” is an ocean of dangerous waters and human beings need to navigate through these waters by using stars which can tell us where we are.

Keith Putt’s analogy clearly highlights humanity’s need for something that can guide it through this ocean of being. This ‘something’ that functions as a guide needs to be certain. Modernity believes that rational and empirical knowledge is this something which is certain enough to guide humanity.

For Descartes it was reason that would map out the way in our infinite sea of being. Rationality gives humanity certain fixed basic points by which humanity could orientate itself. Hume and Lock added to Descartes rationality, empirical knowledge and truth.

For Putt there are two sets of certainties in the modern quest for truth: the rational journey of Descartes and the empirical journey of Lock and Hume. The basic necessity for both of these journeys is that there is some basic certainty on which their quest is founded, just like the stars on the open sea. This is also the first question of hermeneutics: What is the basis that we can be certain of? What is the bottom line that we can agree on? If such a *bottom line* is not found then all meaning and knowledge would be destroyed in a “bottomless pit of indeterminacy” (Erickson 1998:129).

Modernity was in search of this bottom line and found it in rational and empirical knowledge which is certain, objective, rational, empirically verifiable and which is non-hermeneutical and thus can guide humanity through the infinite sea of being.

4.2 Modern and the development of the postmodern

The collapse of the grand narratives of modernity did not come from outside, but from within the story of modernity and its quest for this bottom line based on empirical and rational truth and knowledge. Postmodernity came out of modern quest for knowledge which is certain and true, or as MacIntyre says that it was this quest for universal rational truth that opened the doors for the “genealogical school of criticism” (MacIntyre 1990:39). MacIntyre describes the task of the genealogist as writing “the history of those social and psychological formations in which the will to power is distorted into and concealed by the will to truth” (MacIntyre 1990:39).

What changed philosophically?

Postmodernity challenged the three basic epistemological assumptions of the Enlightenment and thus of modernity, namely:

- 1) knowledge is certain,
- 2) knowledge is objective,
- 3) knowledge is inherently good.

In the Enlightenment truth was based on the certainty of knowledge which in turn was based on the idea that there was a direct correlation between language (knowledge) and reality, which could be empirically verified. This empirical epistemology was the basis of **positivism**. There are five key concepts with regards to positivism:

- 1- the belief that all knowledge is derived from empirical observation and is verified by empirical experience and experiment;
- 2 - the methodological unity of all science (human and natural);
- 3 - faith in the progress of science and that science will solve all the problems of the world;
- 4 - the central role of the subject-object scheme in which reality is seen as an objective reality that can be known by a neutral subject and can be analysed according to causes and effects;
- 5 - that scientific truth is only possible through the correspondence between propositions of knowing subjects and the state of affairs of objects within reality (Pieterse 1993: 57).

These positivist ideas were challenged very early already by Enlightenment thinkers themselves, such as Kant. "From Kant and David Hume, the challenge to self-certainty came as an attack upon claims about the mind's ability to apprehend reality, the thing-in-itself, directly. The empiricists and rationalists had taken their understanding of nature and the human mind to constitute indubitable knowledge of the primary structures of reality"(Lundin 1993:49). Kant challenges this in his work, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, where he argues that the self not so much discovers pre-existing order in nature, but projects that order creatively upon the world.

"Since... nature's conformity to law rests on the necessary liking of phenomena in experience, without which we could not know any objects of the world of the sense, in other words, such conformity rests on the original laws of the intellect, it sounds strange at first, but it is none the less true when I say in respect of these laws of the intellect: the intellect does not derive its laws (a priori) from nature but prescribes them to nature" (Kant 1949b: 91).

This Kantian attack on the rational self did not destroy the self, but rather opened the door for this self to rise again but this time with the power of imagination.

Kant understood the self, not to be an isolated "I", but the "transcendental ego" of

humanity “imposing its forms upon the random facts of experience. What is given to humanity is the random information of the senses; the transcendental ego must supply the ordered meaning missing in the facts” (Lundin 1993:50). This opened the door to Nietzsche’s understanding of the individual imposing his/her will/ desire on the world. As Richard Rorty describes the thinking of Friedrich Nietzsche and William James, “instead of saying that the discovery of vocabularies could bring hidden secrets to light,....said that new ways of speaking could help us get what we want” (Rorty 1982:150).

It can be argued that the work of Kant anticipated the triumph of perspectivism, as he brought about a profound shift in the understanding of the nature of knowledge. For nearly two centuries before Kant the empiricism of Francis Bacon and the rationalism of Descartes dominated the understanding of knowledge and saw the individual as a discoverer of truth. Truth was something that could be found. It was found either in the inner regions of the mind (Descartes) or in the phenomena of the natural world (Bacon).

The three modern assumptions were being challenged:

That knowledge is certain was challenged by Kant already from within the period of the Enlightenment. He argued that knowledge is not in the objective world, but within the language of the subjective knower. This idea also challenged the idea that knowledge is objective. Nietzsche very strongly put forward the idea that knowledge is driven by our subjective wills and desires and therefore cannot necessarily be seen as good.

In the last few decades the confidence in science has been shaken, with very influential books such as Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Hans Georg Gadamer’s *Truth and Method*, and Jacques Derrida’s *On Grammatology*. These books “have worked to bring about a dramatic questioning of science as a standard of epistemic certainty (Lundin 1993:34). I will be coming back to these thinkers in the next section of the study. In history also some things happened that challenged the positivist view of humanity and knowledge as Françoise Mauriac writes in the foreword to Elie Wiesel’s Book, “Night”: “The dream which Western man conceived in the eighteenth century, whose dawn he thought he saw in 1789, and which, until August 2, 1914, had grown stronger with the progress of enlightenment and the discoveries of science – this dream vanished finally for me before those trainloads of little children. And yet I was still thousands of miles away from thinking that they were to be fuel for the gas chambers and the crematory” (Wiesel 1981:8). The things that happened in the two great wars of Europe and the gas chambers of Auschwitz shattered the Enlightenment dream of goodness of the rationality of humanity. It is within this historic setting that some of these tenets of modernity were questioned and challenged.

I shall be unpacking the transition from modern to postmodern in more detail in the next

section.

4.3 The epistemological story of postmodernity

These positivist ideas were further challenged amongst others by Ludwig Wittgenstein as he discovered that there is no direct verifiable link between language and reality. The implication of this lack of a verifiable link between language and reality is that there is no direct correlation between words and states of affairs in reality. This means that words do not represent objects or concepts beyond the scope of language (Graham 1996:21). Language refers to language ad infinitum and nowhere is there this direct link to reality. Therefore there is no non-hermeneutical basis (the basis that modernity thought it had found in rational and empirical thought) on which all knowledge can be built. In the modern (positivist) world view, language corresponded in a one-for-one way to the objects and events of the real world. Modern epistemology was built on this basic assumption that this correspondence between language and the real world exists.

Thus the modern view of the world could be divided into subject (person with mental capacity to understand) and objective reality of the world which is there to be understood and language was the reliable and accurate link between the objective and subjective worlds. This basic concept of subject (knower) and the objective (known) world was turned upside down by Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* where he says:

“5.6 The limits of my language mean the limits of my world” (Wittgenstein 1961:56).

To the postmodernists the only worlds that people can know are the worlds we share in language (Freedman, J & Combs, G 1996:28). I will need to elaborate on this epistemological development as I believe that it is here, in this concept of language that the crisis arose in modernity that gave rise to post-modernity.

To re-tell the epistemological story of postmodernity the study will reflect on the thoughts of various thinkers who struggled with new events and experiences and consequently re-authored the epistemological story of modernity into a postmodern story.

4.3.1 Wittgenstein, epistemology, language and postmodernity

In modernity it was thought that the subject can understand and know the objective reality through the medium of language as the direct link to reality, which is one of the basic assumptions of positivism described above. In other words, there is a direct correspondence between the most basic fundamental name (proposition) and an

objective (state of affairs) in reality. This direct correspondence was the non-hermeneutical basis of all positivist epistemology. This direct correspondence was never empirically verified, but was accepted a priori. Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was fascinated by this proposed direct correlation between language and objective reality of the world which made all knowledge possible.

He used the idea of a picture to analyse this correlation.

“2.11 A picture presents a situation in logical space, the existence and non-existence of states of affairs” (Wittgenstein 1961).

For the picture theory to make any sense these pictures need to be understood as isomorphic pictures (Stenius 1960:90). For two pictures to be isomorphic the following needs must be fulfilled:

- 1) the categorical structure of both pictures needs to be the same,
- 2) there must be a one to one correspondence between the elements of each of the pictures.

If both these conditions are fulfilled then one can say that the pictures are isomorphic. The relationship between language and reality is accepted a priori to be isomorphic. In other words language is understood as a picture of reality where the categorical structure of language and that which it describes is the same and there is correspondence between the elements of each.

It is as if the picture has feelers which reach out to the corresponding reality.

“2.1515 These correlations are, as it were, the feelers of the picture’s elements, with which the picture touches reality” (Wittgenstein 1961).

The question if a picture is true or false is basically a question if the picture is isomorphic or not. But how does one know from the picture if it is isomorphic if one does not have access to the reality it represents and depicts? Therefore from the picture alone we have no possibility to tell if it is true or false.

When Wittgenstein says: “2.221 What a picture represents is its sense” (Wittgenstein 1961), he is actually saying that the sense and meaning of a picture or a proposition is internal to the picture or proposition (Mounce 1981:23).

This implies that the only thing we have is our language and language is our world. There is no direct link between humanity and reality besides through the medium of our language.

Steiner (Steiner 1989:93) calls this the “break of the covenant between word and world“. This radical new understanding of language within the philosophy of language broke

down the epistemology of modernity (positivism) as well as the subject-object dualism of modernity (positivism) and hailed in the post-modern.

“...if indeed there really is no world (to speak of) apart from language, then there really isn't much reason to become distraught over the alleged fact that we can never get it quite right. From this perspective, in other words, there is nothing to 'get'; there is only language itself, discourse, texts, 'social constructions' of the world, nothing more” (Freeman 1993:11).

Freeman argues that this absence of getting it right is not so much a failure as it is a non-possibility: “...language, rather than referring to the world 'itself', refers only to language (which refers only to language, which refers only to language, and so on ad infinitum)” (Freeman 1993:11).

“To postmodernists the only world that people can know are the worlds we share in language, and language is an interactive process, not a passive receiving of preexisting truths”(Freedman & Combs 1996:28). Understood as such language then tells us how to see the world and is not a direct reflection of the world, but a creation of the world as we know it (Freedman & Combs 1996: 29).

“If texts refer to anything at all, it might be held, it is only to other texts, this chain of 'intertextuality' being endless, infinite; and what this implies, in turn, is that there may really be no 'lives' apart from this infinite play of language itself” (Freeman 1993:8).

I would like to reflect on Friedrich Nietzsche's understanding of language as I believe that his understanding of language played a vital role in the demise of the modern epistemology and especially with regards to the epistemological assumption that knowledge is inherently good.

In an argument written in 1873, Nietzsche asked the old question: “What is truth?” The answer that he came up with was:

“a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms – in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are: metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins....To be truthful means using the customary metaphors – in moral terms: the obligation to lie according to a fixed convention, to lie herd-like in a style obligatory for all” (Nietzsche 1976: 46-47).

For Nietzsche all knowledge is a matter of perspective, thus an issue of interpretation, “and all interpretations are lies” (Lundin 1993: 38). Nietzsche understood the relationship between language and things and reality to be a relationship that is based on desire, power and acts of violence. Thus he believes that one lies so as to satisfy ones deepest needs and desires. “The man in this condition transforms things until they mirror his power – until they are reflections of his perfection” (Nietzsche 1968: 72).

It was this kind of thinking that brought about the dawn of deconstruction or poststructuralism which has its roots in the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. “Saussure propounded a series of exceptionally influential arguments about the relationship of language to reality. According to Saussure, the relationship of the signifier (a word) to the signified (the object to which we attempt to point with words) is always an arbitrary matter of the will and linguistic convention. There is no essential connection between a given word and what it connotes” (Lundin 1993: 187). Thus, the meaning of words according to Saussure was not to be found in the word’s relationship to an object or even to history, but through their formal relationship to one another (Saussure 1966: 120). This line of thinking, of Saussure, was taken up by the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss who helped to make structuralism a dominant force also in social sciences. Jacques Derrida took up this line of thought in a book *Writing and Difference*. In this article he criticises the modern dualism between nature and culture. This is a dualism which argues that whatever is “universal and spontaneous” belongs to nature, while culture is that which gives society its norms and regulates the affairs. Derrida believes that this dualism was important as it kept the myth alive that there was something stable and thus a foundation upon which all could be founded. This is a fundamental human desire (Derrida 1978: 278-279). Derrida means that the emptiness is at the heart of language because there is nothing behind it or within it. Language carries within itself the acknowledgement that there is nothing behind, below or within it save the free play of human desire. “Language bears within itself the necessity of its own critique”(Derrida 1978:284). This led to the rise of post-structuralism that there is no possible centre, no point of certainty or stability outside the world of the interpretive play of signs and symbols.

Some of the thoughts of Wittgenstein and Nietzsche are echoed in the work of Richard Rorty, whose work can be seen as a response to this post-structuralism. Rorty sees his own work not so much as constructionism, but as therapeutic (Rorty 1979:9). Nietzsche’s perspectivism led Richard Rorty to question some of these modern assumptions. He attempted “to undermine... confidence in ‘the mind’ as something about which one should have a ‘philosophical’ view, in ‘knowledge’ as something about which there ought to be a ‘theory’ and which has ‘foundation’, and in ‘philosophy’ as it

has been conceived since Kant” (Rorty 1979:7). In his first book (Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature) Rorty took on foundationalism and the bankruptcy thereof. He argues that the collapse of Enlightenment ethics and epistemology has left the world with nothing else but hermeneutics. “Hermeneutics ... is what we get when we are no longer epistemological” (Rorty 1979:325).

Rorty refers back to a distinction that Kant once made between determinate and reflective judgement. Determinate judgment “ticks off instances of concepts by invoking common, public criteria,” while reflective judgement “operates without rules, ... searching for concepts under which to group particulars” (Rorty 1982:143). The determinate judgement provides us with hard knowledge, while the reflective judgement provides us with the pleasing images that our imaginations crave. For Kant, real knowledge was that which is based on determinate judgements, but this has been called into question, so that we are left with reflective judgements only. This opened the door to romanticism and the creative spirit as the new avant-garde of all knowledge. “According to the new criticism, the object produced by the imagination is the tightly constructed work of art. In Rorty’s scheme of pragmatic poststructuralism, the product of particularly creative activity is a new paradigm that gives order to cultural life and intellectual endeavours” (Lundin 1993: 189).

For Rorty, it is this hermeneutical understanding of knowledge that has brought with it that distinctively postmodern characteristic or as he says “attitude” which is “interested not so much in what is out there in the world, or in what happened in history, as in what we can get out of nature and history for our own uses. When we loose faith in the power of language to mirror the truth, that is, we acquire a newfound appreciation for its therapeutic capacity to help us get what we desire (Rorty 1979:359).

Rorty’s thoughts can be seen as having strong romantic tendencies, as he argues that the postmodern culture will be a thoroughly romantic and literary culture. This pragmatism is metaphysical idealism or romanticism in a new guise, but what distinguishes it is the total abandonment of the notion of discovering truth (Rorty 1982: 151).

In Rorty’s understanding there are two types of textualists, namely “strong” and “weak”. The weak textualists are amongst others the structuralists who seek to “imitate science” by using “a method of criticism” and agreement once they have “cracked the code.” The weak textualists need the assurance and the “comforts of consensus,” while the strong textualists (who are the followers of Nietzsche) simply ask questions similar to the questions asked by the engineer or the physicist when confronted with a puzzling physical object: “How shall I describe this in order to get it to do what I want?” (Rorty 1982: 152-153). The textualists have given up all hope in finding any truth, or what Rorty

calls “*privileged vocabulary*”. They see all knowledge, reading and all intellectual activity as a form of therapy, in other words a person reads and thinks in order to get what they need to get by. Thus any vocabulary that is used, be it the vocabulary of the New Critics, the analytical philosophers, the devout Christian or Muslim does not point to any truth, according to Rorty’s understanding, but only points to the needs of its user for a “means of dealing with life’s devastations and disappointments” (Lundin 1993: 199).

In another book Rorty argues with Nietzsche that history can be seen as successive metaphors and thus the poet will be seen as the vanguard of the human species (Rorty 1989: 20). Rorty had quite an influence especially within the circles of the literary critics and he was strongly attacked especially by those with Marxist sympathies. For example, Lentricchia argues that “Rorty’s vision of culture is the leisured vision of liberalism; the free pursuit of personal growth anchored in material security” (Lentricchia 1985:20). Lentricchia says that since all interpretations of reality are constructions these constructions should be constructions from the view of history as a social struggle (Lentricchia 1985:11). Lentricchia and Rorty might be arguing about which point of view of history should be used in the construction, yet their fundamental ideas are the same. They both base their ideas on what can be called the postmodern ideology of desire. “In the secular eschatology of desire, the kingdom to come at the end of history is a realm in which expressive individuals enjoy expansive and flexible freedom. That freedom is put into the service of the self’s quest for expression, acquisition, and satisfaction” (Lundin 1993: 37).

It was within this thinking about language that literature and thus narrative started to play a vital role, especially in the Romantic Movement.

C. S Lewis in a book *An Experiment in Criticism* seeks to establish what is a good book, in other words, what are the criteria for a good novel/ good narrative? He uses criteria which are largely influenced by Kantian epistemology and understanding of the arts (Lundin 1993:213). Lewis sees all reading as an escape from “immediate concrete actuality.” The question that he then asks is where do humans escape to? On this basis he classifies between lower class readers and higher class readers. The lower class readers escape to egoistic castle-building, which according to him can either be harmless fantasizing or turn into something “brutal, prurient and megalomaniac.” The sophisticated readers “escape into mere play, divertissements which may be exquisite words of art” (Lewis 1961:52). Yet both ‘high’ and ‘low’ class readers according to Lewis forget that the order that is found in art is not the true order found in reality (Lewis 1961:74).

Thus narratives, art and stories give us moments of freedom from the boredom and randomness of actual reality, or they provide glimpses and visions of a glorious world that is to come, but we must never mistake them as comments on the actual order of our

present reality or lives (Lundin 1993: 217). Frank Lentricchia says in similar words to Lewis commenting on the world: “human desire, conscious of itself as ‘lack,...confronts a grim reality which at every point denies us our needs... our ‘environment’ is alien, but...its very alien quality beckons forth our creative impulses to make substitute fictive worlds” (Lentricchia 1980: 33-34). For Northrop Frye, the glory of literature consists in its ability to transform this alien environment. In this sense literature exists as a surrogate for the kingdom of God (Lundin 1993: 218).

In another book, *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, Lewis writes: “If the author’s plot is only a net, and usually an imperfect one, a net of time and event for catching what is not really a process at all, is life much more?” (Lewis 1975:20).

Yet it is impossible to get out of our own skins, so Lewis writes that reading is in a sense to get out of our own skins, but we never reach that goal, but we “make at least some progress towards it”, by at least eliminating “the grosser illusion of perspective” (Lewis 1961: 101-102). He uses the allegory from Plato’s cave to say: if I can’t get out of the dungeon I shall at least look out through the bars. It is better than sinking back on the straw in the darkest corner”(Lewis 1961: 101-102). Lewis states that the primary impulse of the self is aggrandizement and the “secondary impulse is to go out of the self, to correct its provincialism and heal its loneliness. In love, in virtue, in the pursuit of knowledge, and in the reception of the arts we are doing this”(Lewis 1961:138). So why literature, why narratives, stories and even art if it cannot really help humanity understand reality? Lewis answers: “The nearest I have yet got to an answer is that we seek an enlargement of our being,” “We want to see with other eyes, to imagine with other imaginations, to feel with other hearts, as well as with our own”(Lewis 1961:137). The reason behind this desire is to escape the dark dungeon of our own imprisoning consciousness. Humans do not want to be Leibnitzian nomads, but seek windows or doors and literature, as Logos, could be the very doors and windows that human seek.

So one of the consequences of right reading according to Lewis is the feeling that one has got out, or “I have got in”, pierced the shell of another nomad wandering the desert of reality. The alternative to right reading is imprisonment within the dungeon of self or imprisonment within the impersonal collective, for “the man who is contented to be only himself, and therefore less a self, is in prison. My own eyes are not enough for me, I will see through those of others”(Lewis 1961: 137-138). Thus, literature has the gift to heal wounds, without undermining the privilege of individuality.

“By reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself. Like the night sky in the Greek poem, I see with a myriad eyes, but it is still I who see. Here, as in worship, in love, in moral action, and in knowing, I transcend myself; and am never more myself than when I do” (Lewis 1961:221).

Yet we cannot be solipsistic entities, because the very language we use connects us to language communities both past and present. These communities pass on to us certain prejudices with which we interpret our language and our selves. I will come back to this thought when discovering the contribution that Hans-Georg Gadamer brought the search and understanding of knowledge. Lewis' insights are very useful, but he remains largely in the romantic paradigm as he distinguishes between "reception" and "use" of art or literature. He argues that "right reading" is the passive reception of the thoughts of the other in contrast to the active "self-interest" inherent in the *use* of everything. Lewis understands there to be a two stage process with regards to our encounter with literature.

"First we *hear*, as we are filled with the thoughts of the author who has written what we read; we are able to hear, Lewis says, because we have become detached and unselfish. Then, when that experience of hearing has ended, we return to our everyday tasks and ordinary desires. We may be able *to make use of* what we have received by applying the truth to our lives. Yet all the while we are aware, Lewis appears to say, that our mundane use is derivative and inferior to the experience in which we had our initial disinterested encounter" (Lundin 1993:223-224).

Wittgenstein, epistemology, language and postmodern:

1. There is no direct link between the subjective knower and the objective world.
2. The only link there is, is language and therefore no direct correspondence to reality
3. The only reality there is, is the reality of language

There were some other thinkers that brought an end to positivism, namely Dilthey and later Popper, Kuhn, Gadamer, Habermas and Ricoeur (Pieterse 1993:60). I will highlight some of the lines of thought of these thinkers with regards to the breakdown of positivism and the development of the tenets of postmodernity described in a previous section (4. The story of Postmodernity).

4.3.2 Karl Popper, subjective truth and postmodernism

Karl Popper as a scientist developed the idea of *critical rationalism* thus bringing into rational empiricism an element of critique not known before in positivism.

Language is the epistemological link between the knower and the known / knowledge and reality and yet this link is not a direct correspondence. Thus language always refers again to language and never directly to reality. Thus no matter how much more knowledge or understanding humanity gains about reality it remains an open infinite

process.

Popper's epistemology is a process where through critical scrutiny mistakes are discovered and thus discarded. For him all knowledge was open to critique and falsification, which means there are no general (universal and timeless) truths, only temporary truths. For Popper scientific knowledge is a process of development as hypotheses are established and tested through the process of falsification (Pieterse 1993:63). Science for Popper rests on the empirical falsification of statements, hypothesis and theories (Pieterse 1993:63). Empirical knowledge is thus always temporary and hypothetical and so universal timeless truths or absolutely certain knowledge is not possible. (Compare with 4.1.3.1 Epistemological Enlightenment assumptions: *Knowledge is certain.*)

Another breakthrough in Popper's thinking was that observation is always interpretation of facts in the light of a formulated theory (Pieterse 1993:63). According to this, neutral or objective observation is not possible as humanity always interprets facts or reality in the light of a certain point of view, perspective, expectation or theory. Thus for Popper all observation is theory laden (Pieterse 1993:63). A scientist cannot formulate observations into hypothesis in a neutral vacuum, but always does this within a scientific tradition.

The formulated hypothesis is also tested within this scientific tradition.

Popper still believed in the importance and possibility of objective knowledge. He believed that knowledge should be as objective as possible, therefore he introduced another important aspect into his critical rationality, namely the inter-subjective dialogue and critique that needs to take place within the scientific community. It is in the dialogue and critique of the scientific community that objective knowledge is to be found. It is this scientific community which determines the truth and viability of scientific statements (Pieterse 1993:64).

Popper, critical rationalism and the postmodern

1. He introduced the idea of knowledge being always uncertain and that theories, statements only exist as long as they are not falsified.
2. He placed all knowledge within a scientific tradition (history) therefore no knowledge can be neutral or objective.
3. He introduced a dialogical character to epistemology as he placed it within the scientific community which determines the truth of scientific statements.

4.3.3 Thomas S Kuhn, historicity of knowledge and Postmodernism

Thomas Kuhn is famous for introducing the concept of paradigms and paradigm shifts into the scientific world. Paradigms became central to Kuhn's understanding of the development of knowledge. He believed that each scientific community has certain basic beliefs, theories, values and models in which scientific inquiry takes place and this forms the paradigm.

The scientific community and the scientist do their research within these paradigms. The paradigm determines the models of research and thus creates the space for solution to new puzzles to be found (Kuhn 1970: 182-187). Kuhn argues that the sciences are not just simply raw empirical observations and replicable experiments that add to the sure and steady progress of science, but that this progress is a process within scientific communities who are guided by dominant paradigms that are not so much definitively disproved as relegated to the sidelines by boredom and lack of interest (Kuhn 1970: 41. 53).

These paradigms, according to Kuhn, change through time and this change he describes as being rather abrupt. The change from one paradigm to another can be described as a scientific revolution. A creative new concept makes this revolution possible - the *Gestaltswitch*. It only takes one new concept to bring about a *Gestaltswitch* within science. For Kuhn the new key concept opens the door to a new paradigm which is totally different from the previous paradigm (Kuhn 1970: 103).

In history there are numerous thinkers who introduced such creative key concepts which brought about paradigm shifts within their various fields. Ludwig Wittgenstein and his analytic language philosophy brought about a totally new way of understanding language as well as empiricism. Karl Marx and his material historicism brought about a totally new way of understanding the historical dialectic as well as the social world. Sigmund Freud and his psycho-analyses brought about a totally different way of understanding the human psyche. These thinkers brought about paradigm shifts within their various fields of expertise, but these shifts had repercussions that went beyond their specific fields as they transformed the way the world was seen and understood and after which it was impossible to go back to the former ways of understanding.

Kuhn argued that the scientist chooses the paradigm in which he or she will work and this choice of paradigm is a subjective choice determined by various factors such as personal biography, social context etcetera. Thus for Kuhn objectivism, as understood by the positivist was no longer possible (Pieterse 1993: 69). It is thus also no longer possible to speak of an objective reality, as the reality depends on the way that we see it and through which paradigm we interpret it. Truth becomes relative to the paradigm in

which it is stated. It is in this context that hermeneutics starts to play a dominant role as truth becomes relative to the interpretative framework in which it is stated.

Kuhn, paradigm shifts and postmodern

1. Knowledge is a process and this process takes place within paradigms.
2. Objective knowledge is not possible as it depends on which paradigm the knower is working from, in other words to which scientific community he/she belongs.
3. Knowledge is linked to history because with each paradigm comes the method of research and a method for understanding reality.

4.3.4 Edmund Husserl, phenomenology, hermeneutics, romanticism and postmodernism

The reality of human experience and action can only be understood adequately by interpreting and studying the values and intention that are behind human actions and behaviour (Pieterse 1993:72). Therefore science must discover the meaning that an individual gives to his or her actions (Pieterse 1993:73). This brings me to the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl.

The starting point of Husserl's phenomenology is the consciousness of the thinking, speaking and describing subject (Pieterse 1993:73). This consciousness of the subject is always intentional, according to Husserl, as it is directed towards reality. The conscious subject gives meaning to the reality perceived and thus humanity plays an active part in what the reality means for him or her.

“No distinction can be made between what is perceived and the perception of it” (Flew 1979:157).

According to this quotation of Flew, the world cannot be understood separate from the subjective interpretation of the individual. This brings me back to Wittgenstein's Tractatus where he says: “5.6 The limits of my language mean the limits of my world” (Wittgenstein).

The only meaning that the word has is the meaning of language and thus the meanings that humans give to it.

This meaning is determined by the intentions of the conscious subject. We hear in Husserl's thought echoes of the ideas which Immanuel Kant put forward with regards to language and the conscious self. Thus for Husserl there was no way in which humans could grasp reality with theories or models of discovery, as reality is formed through

these very theories and models. Husserl needed a different approach to reality and found it in phenomenology.

Phenomenology is the study of phenomena which are the daily experiences of reality perceived through the senses and these phenomena form the basis of science. Phenomena could not be understood with the use of theories and models, as inherent to these models and theories are the subjective conscious intentions of the researcher. If this is the case then Husserl believed that the only method to understand the core characteristics of phenomena is via intuition, a *Wesenschau* (intuitive understanding of the character of phenomena) (Pieterse 1993: 74). These ideas opened the door for the rise of the Romantic period.

Kant and Husserl made it impossible for the individual (self) to retain some credibility as it was no longer possible to trust in the rational ability to discover truth, therefore the self had to find a new basis on which to ground its thirst of knowledge and truth. This new basis was found in the intuitive capabilities of the self and this became the characteristic of the romantic period.

This opening up to the intuitive self again opened the door to religion. As Abrams says: “the Romantic enterprise was an attempt to sustain the inherited cultural order against what too many writers seemed the imminence of chaos; and the resolve to give up what one was convinced had to give up of the dogmatic understructure of Christianity, yet to save what one could save of its experiential relevance and values” (Abrams 1971: 68).

For many this dawn of the romantic age was a victory for the arts and literature. “Since the romantic age, after all, it has been the goal of many defenders of literature and the arts to see such values – which have to do with the intangible realms of human feeling, desire, and spirit – established at the heart of Western societies” (Lundin 1993:33).

Science within modernity was seen to have the task of describing the world around us, the inhuman environment we inhabit. But only literature has the task of creating for the individual a land and for society the “home” we all long for. The artists “job is not to describe nature, but to show you a world completely absorbed and possessed by the human mind” (Frye 1964:32-33). This was a typically modernist understanding of the relationship between art and literature and the sciences and philosophy. This view of the relationship is clearly still based on the empiricist understanding of knowledge. Thus for a very long time large domains of knowledge were abdicated to science and its rationalistic and empiricist methods of enquiry.

Kant’s understanding of art was very influential in the rise of the Romantic Period. Kant believed that when humans produce works of art they are “creating alternate worlds in

which we hope to discover the purpose and order missing in our “real” world” (Lundin 1993:51). Kant’s understanding of art brought about a major revolution in the history of western culture and the rise of the romantic understanding of art as expression.

“Rather than being a *mirror* held up to nature, art became a lamp illuminating an otherwise darkened world; instead of attempting to *re-present* reality, the artist now sought to *express* himself or herself – that is, to press out to the surface whatever was within the self” (Lundin 1993: 51).

This understanding brought about the idea that art and literature could be moved from the sidelines to the centre of the human endeavour. Thus the Romantic Period restored the necessary confidence in the self, by placing the emphasis not on the rational mind, like Descartes, but the intuitive heart. The individual self was saved from the attacks of perspectivism on the rational self. “By linking human consciousness to God and nature by means of human feeling, the romantics were able to sustain the Cartesian tradition’s faith in the self’s ability to discover truth” (Lundin 1993: 71).

The individual was still at the centre, although no longer the rational empirical self, but the intuitive self now stood at the centre of the quest for truth and knowledge. The irony of the Enlightenment and romanticism was that the “geocentric picture of the world was replaced with as a matter of course by the anthropocentric” (Barth 1969: 15-16). The great transition from pre-modern to modern was that in the pre-modern world everything revolved around the world and its moral and ethical purposefulness. Then the modern world of science discovered that this world is just a speck of dust within the larger universe and that everything does not revolve around this little planet called earth. Yet the Enlightenment and the romantic period replaced this geocentric world view of the pre-modern with the anthropocentric world view and later even smaller the egocentric view of the therapeutic self. “The hero of the anthropocentric world became the free and powerful self”(Lundin 1993: 83).

Husserl’s phenomenology did not only usher in the romantic period. It also brought about a shift in the sciences. It is only via intuition that a researcher is able to understand the intentions behind phenomena. To be able to do this *Wesenschau* the individual had to be very aware of his or her own conscious and intellectual processes and place all assumptions in brackets (Flew 1979:266). The consciousness is then directed only towards the phenomenon and can perceive the phenomenon purely. If the intentions and processes of the researcher’s consciousness are bracketed then the way of intuition can lead to pure knowledge.

In this way Husserl wanted to understand the “lived” world which is the world of experienced phenomena. This real world is the world in which we live with all our experiences. Husserl later on developed the idea of “*Lebenswelt*”. The *Lebenswelt* is the

world where individuals live as historical beings (Pieterse 1993:74). It is the world of an historical being experiencing and interpreting these experiences within this historical setting. It is also “a communal world and involves the existence of other people as well. It is also a personal world, and in the natural attitude the validity of this personal world is always assumed” (Gadamer 1975:219).

Within the field of phenomenology the subjective “I” again regains a central role, for it is the subjective “I” that creates the reality. Thus intentionality becomes important as well as the values that are attached to such intentions as the individual is seen as a “value being” (Gadamer 1975:216).

“This was to culminate in the claim that intentional phenomenology had made the mind, as mind, the field of systematic experience and science and thus totally transformed the task of knowledge. The universality of absolute mind embraces all beings in absolute historicity in which nature as construct of the mind also finds ‘its place’” (Gadamer 1975:215).

It is with these ideas that the concept of constructionism was developed, which meant that the individual constructs his or her own reality. Constructionism sees all human activities and behaviour as creative expressions of individuals within interpreting communities. In other words individual’s construct their own realities.

Gregory Bateson and Norbert Wiener coined the term ‘cybernetics’ within systems thinking and the process of gaining knowledge within systems (Freedman & Combs 1996:3). Modernity’s epistemology can be described as first order cybernetics as the individual researcher has access to an objective reality which she/ he can understand and interpret from a neutral point of view. This view then changed with the developments in philosophy and especially language philosophy and the concept of constructionism developed where the individual has no objective neutral access to reality, but constructs his or her own reality. This constructionism can be seen as second order cybernetics (Müller 1996:81).

To gain any kind of knowledge about the “*Lebenswelt*” of others within the field of phenomenology a process known as symbolic interaction was introduced. The researcher has a vague idea of what he or she wants to research. This vague understanding of a specific social reality is then used to get a better understanding of how the people living in this social reality interpret their world and what concepts they use to make sense of their existence. The researcher has to enter into this “*Lebenswelt*” as much as possible to be able to interact with the people she or he is researching (Pieterse 1993:75). Researchers within the constructionist theory believed that they could enter the “*Lebenswelt*” of social groups as neutral observers and seek to understand how this social group constructs their reality.

Husserl, constructionism, romanticism and postmodern

1. The social reality exists only in the consciousness of people and cannot be seen separate thereof
2. The social reality is continually constructed and reconstructed by the subjective “I”
3. The social reality is determined by people’s definition of their situation in terms of their own context and experience (Pieterse 1983:76).

4.3.5 Modernity, the individual self and the return of Gnosticism

If reality exists only in the consciousness of people and cannot be seen separate thereof and if reality is random and devoid of all meaning and purpose is this not too much to bear for the self? Biologist Stephan Jay Gould argues that because humanity cannot bear the randomness of nature, therefore they seek to concoct “comforting answers.” He says: “our error lies not in the perception of pattern but in automatically imbuing pattern with meaning, especially with meaning that can bring us comfort, or dispel confusion.” He continues and says that humans have continually “tried to impose ‘heart’s desire’ upon the actual earth and its largely random patterns.” The reason that he gives for this is that the human mind is not made to function with the “rules of probability, though these rules govern our universe.” Therefore, just like Husserl had argued, humanity takes the essence of an entity and then arranges all judgements about it “by the degree of similarity to the assumed type” (Gould 1991: 467-468).

The only difficulty is that this order that is perceived when we “match to type” is an order that has been imposed upon reality. For Gould the individual is caught in a dilemma between the unfeeling and random laws of matter and logic, on the one hand, and our desire and instinctive need to create or construct meaning on the other (Gould 1991:469). This brings us to the heart of the Romantic Movement which believed that it is not important what propositions we believe but what vocabulary we use (Rorty 1982:142).

These thoughts of Gould also sound very much like an ancient form of Gnosticism, which understands there to be a dualism between matter and spirit and that truth and deliverance is to be found in the understanding of this dualism.

Gnosticism has been a trap for the church throughout the centuries, but I will come back to this later when reflecting on the church and modernity as well as the church and postmodernity.

This dualism between matter and spirit has its roots already in the Enlightenment. Karl Barth believed Leibniz to represent the essence of Enlightenment humanism and thus of

the secularization of the spirit (Barth 1969: 11-57). Leibniz philosophy of the nomad gives us a perfect example of this individual self standing in contrast to the universe and all matter. Barth speaks of this Leibnizian nomad in the following way: "This simple and utterly individual, indeed unique spiritual substance is the fountain-head of all reality." The individual in the Enlightenment rationalism and the intuition of romanticism exists alone with God and "the physical and moral evil in the world which man imagines to be actively opposed to him contain in truth nothing positive, but are, so to speak, only shadows fleeing before the light" (Barth 1969:56-57).

It was the belief that the natural world was devoid of any purpose or meaning and thus dead and that the individual self, with his/her rational and intuitive powers needs to bring it to life by granting it meaning.

"To be sure, the dualism formulated at the beginning of the modern period did not oppose a spiritual God to an evil natural world; rather, it posited a vast chasm between the divine self and the oppressive lifelessness of nature and tradition. Whether in the rational faculties of the disciplined mind or in the intuitive powers of the creative spirit, the Enlightenment tradition honoured the disembodied power of the self"(Lundin 1993:83).

Robert Solomon attacked this dualism and the Enlightenment self, or as he called it the "transcendental self....whose nature and ambitions were unprecedentedly arrogant, presumptuously cosmic, and consequently mysterious" (Solomon 1988:4). He argues that the Enlightenment as modernity can be characterised by "its humanism, rationality, and universalism" (Solomon 1988:9). At the core was a belief that the individual self had the power to discover truth and knowledge and that these truths were universal and binding in areas of science, politics and morality. Within this understanding of humanity it is also believed that all rational individuals could come to the same conclusions all over the world as truth was seen to be objective and universal. For this to be possible the individual had to be autonomous and thus universal knowledge was directly connected to individual autonomy (Solomon 1988:11).

Alasdair MacIntyre argues that the Modern self was eager to free itself and gain autonomy "from the contingency and particularity of tradition" (MacIntyre 1988).

Yet certain things happened which toppled the Enlightenment and romantic self from his/her throne. The "Napoleonic wars, slavery and civil war in America, the trauma of the Great war, and the unspeakable horrors of Auschwitz and Hiroshima – have helped to topple that imperial self from its throne" (Lundin 1993: 86).

"In the nineteenth century, Kierkegaard scorned the palatial pretence of faith in universal rationality and inevitable progress; Marx attacked what he took to be

the oppressive rule of the bourgeois individual in the West; and Nietzsche mocked his culture for its having contrived to seek pleasure and peace at the right hand of the divine father whom, in effect, it had already slain” (Lundin 1993:87).

Towards the end of modernity the confidence in the self was being eroded away by various socio-political events, but also by the avant-garde of science and philosophy.

Solomon says that the work of Foucault and Jacques Derrida can be understood as “wholesale rejection of the transcendental pretence... and its expansive sense of self, its confidence in our knowledge, its a priori assurance that all people everywhere are ultimately like us” (Solomon 1988:194). He reflects on this new development in philosophy as something which would be post-Christian, and post-Enlightenment, or “just more of the same, a final, negative expression of the old transcendental pretence”(Solomon 1988:196).

“Solomon’s postmodern theory neither offers access to the secret truths of the world of pure spirit nor promotes the romantic vision of the self’s power to transform history and the natural order. Instead he or she preaches the gospel of language; its saving message is that language does not lead us to any secret truth or havens of beauty and power but rather is itself the only place of safety and delight in a hostile world. In the contemporary theory, the ironic, playful consolations of language are the postmodern equivalent of a Gnostic heaven in which weary souls may find rest”(Lundin 1993:89).

Rorty echoes this thought of Solomon when he says:

“Their contribution [that of William James and Nietzsche] was to replace romanticism by pragmatism. Instead of saying that the discovery of vocabularies could bring hidden secrets to light, they said that new ways of speaking could help get us what we want. Instead of hinting that literature might succeed philosophy as discoverer of ultimate reality, they gave up the notion of truth as a correspondence to reality”(Rorty 1982: 150).

MacIntyre follows a different route in criticising the Enlightenment (modern) self. He sees this self to have failed by its own standards and that the search for epistemological certainty, objectivity and universality brought with it the downfall of the self’s search for knowledge. The appeal “to genuinely universal, tradition-independent norms... was and is the project of modern liberal, individualistic society” (MacIntyre 1988:335).

He argues then....

”the most cogent reasons that we have for believing that the hope of a

tradition-independent rational universality is an illusion derive from the history from the history of that project. For in the course of that history liberalism, which began as an appeal to alleged principles of shared rationality against what was felt to be the tyranny of tradition, has itself been transformed into a tradition whose continuities are partly defined by the interminability of the debate over such principles” (MacIntyre 1988:335).

MacIntyre, in his rediscovery of tradition in the search for knowledge and truth is following the thought of Gadamer and Ricoeur. He argues that the proponents of “post-Enlightenment relativism and perspectivism claim that if the Enlightenment conceptions of truth and rationality cannot be sustained, theirs is the only possible alternative” (MacIntyre1988:353).

He criticises this thought, as it is still based on modern/Enlightenment assumptions that knowledge must be certain, universal and objective. These pragmatic post-structuralists reject the idea that truth might reside in something else, for example in the very traditions that during modernity had been repressed, neglected, or forgotten. Therefore MacIntyre and others like Wendell Berry (Home Economics 1987) and Richard Wilbur (New and Collected Poems 1988) reject the “Gnostic detachment of the self from the traditions of the past, the communities of the present, and the mysteries of the creation” (Lundin 1993: 90).

These thinkers begin to the ask the question whether truth can only be conceived as something constructed or is it possible that truth can be imparted to us as well?

Therefore Berry criticises this absolute focus on language as an object of study in itself. When language, in the “specialist approach”, is detached from the objects it depicts and the actions it describes it becomes a study within itself. “It echoes within itself reverberating endlessly like a voice echoing within a cave”(Berry 1987:83). Although such specialist approach to language does indeed lead to very interesting and important insights it adds very little to the understanding of nature and history. It is absurd to think that one can study language isolated from the deeds and objects that language refers to, as it is in the very nature and essence of language “to turn outward to the world, to strike its worldly objects cleanly and cease to echo – to achieve a kind of rest and silence in them” (Berry 1987:83). Ricoeur says something very similar: “the structural point of view also excludes...the primary intention of language, which is to say something about something” (Ricoeur 1974: 84).

This work of language to carry back to reality is “not a specialist work but an act generally human, though only properly humbled and quieted humans can do it” (Berry 1987:80).

MacIntyre argues that one of the great errors of modernity was the total rejection of tradition as something oppressive. According to MacIntyre was a misconception of tradition and tradition can play a totally different role. Genuine tradition is not marked by unreflective rigidity but is distinguished by its very ability to respond to the various challenges of the present. In a similar way Berry sees the community not only embedded in traditions but also in nature. So Berry claims that the self is in a dynamic tension with nature and therefore he criticises the Gnostic dualism. He argues that there is no divisibility between humans and nature, but it is also wrong to argue that there is no difference between the natural and the human (Berry 1987:139). Thus the Gnosticism that had begun in modernity and influenced romanticism had been challenged.

Yet the self still stood on the centre stage of the universe. Solomon argues that this obsession with the subjective self had its origin in the very thought of Descartes. "Indeed, there is no question but that Descartes... was also the founder of the modern philosophical obsession with self" (Solomon 1988:5).

4.3.6 Hans-George Gadamer

Before we come to Gadamer's understanding of hermeneutics, I would shortly like to reflect on the word "Hermeneutics". It is a word that has its origin in the Greek mythology. It derives its name from Hermes who was the messenger between the gods and the mortals. Hermes had one task and that was to convey words of divine judgments on human affairs. The basic idea that is taken from the Greek mythology was that Hermeneutics is the practice of taking divine words and translating them into the context of human practice. In other words divine authority was translated and made relevant to certain communities. This idea has changed dramatically from its original meaning to the understanding that exists today. For example during the romantic period, after the sciences had questioned the credibility of the classic religious texts, hermeneutics was understood as seeking ways in which to find meaning in the sacred texts to explain the experiences of the individual. The understanding of hermeneutics was turned 180 degrees around. Hermeneutics was no longer the 'science' of understanding and communicating divine words into specific contexts and communities, but the 'science' of interpreting divine words with the meaning and experiences of the community/context. The meaning and understanding did not come from the divine words anymore, but rather from the community and context.

Gadamer criticised the phenomenology of Husserl as he believed that it placed too much emphasis on the methodology that is used to understand social realities. The danger that he saw in this emphasis on methodology is that the method used also

determines the way we understand reality and so the reality is reduced to the reality of the methodological framework being used to understand / interpret the social reality (Gadamer 1975: 55-146).

Gadamer shifted the emphasis away from the *Lebenswelt* to the tradition, out of which insights are formulated and thus used to understand and interpret the social reality. Insights are fundamentally part of the tradition and find their expression in the *Lebenswelt*. These insights can only be understood through the interpretation and understanding of tradition. He argued that the modern critique of authority distorted the whole role of authority given to us in tradition. Gadamer argued that the Enlightenment and its search for knowledge that is objective had one prejudice and that is “the prejudice against prejudice itself, which denies tradition its power” (Gadamer 1989: 270). He says by depicting authority to be “diametrically opposed to reason and freedom: to be, in fact, blind obedience,” the Enlightenment established an absolute “antithesis between authority and reason” (Gadamer 1989:277-279). Gadamer argued that authority had nothing to do with blind obedience, but much more to do with the recognition of knowledge – “knowledge, namely, that the other is superior to oneself in judgement and insight” (Gadamer 1989: 279).

Heidegger agreed with Gadamer in that he also criticised the belief that humans could have access to knowledge or truth unveiled and unobstructed. All perception and reflection on truth and knowledge is enmeshed in language and its history and tradition. Heidegger argues: “when we have to do with anything, the mere seeing of the things which are closest to us bears in itself the structure of interpretation... when we merely stare at something, our just-having-it-before-us lies before us as a failure to understand it anymore” (Heidegger 1962:190).

Gadamer believed that these insights from tradition lie beyond the scope of scientific methodology, but rather are to be found in the experiences that are associated with art, philosophy and history. Science and the tools of science, such as analogy, are limited and thus the language of metaphor which is the language of art and history expresses certain truths that the language of science cannot. Art, philosophy and history are “all modes of experience in which truth is communicated and cannot be verified by the methodological means proper to science” (Gadamer 1975: XII).

Human existence, for Gadamer, is limited, finite and in a sense broken and therefore humanity is dependent on authentic experiences of life and these authentic experiences are to be found in tradition as expressed in art, philosophy and history. In other words this limited, finite and broken human existence cannot find meaning that transcends its own limited and finite existence and thus needs to turn to metaphor, art and history.

Thus he argues that “history does not belong to us; we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves in the self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live” (Gadamer 1989:276).

Therefore to discover truth or knowledge the tradition that comes to us from the past must be recognised and taken seriously.

Thus the paradigm that Gadamer proposes for epistemology is a symmetrical interaction between two equal dialogue partners (Gadamer 1989). The past in the form of history and tradition enters into the dialogue as one of the conversation partners. For Gadamer there are various forms of interaction:

- 1 - Where the dialogue partner is not seen as a subject in his or her own right, this interaction leads to manipulation and the achievement of the researcher's own personal goals and objectives.
- 2 - Asymmetrical interaction where the partner is not taken seriously, thus the researcher is not open for critique of his/her personal opinions, but already knows, before the conversation, what he or she believes to be right or wrong.
- 3 - A completely symmetrical interaction where all the partners are open for critique as well as new insights and interpretations of reality (Pieterse 1993:81-82).

For Gadamer epistemology can be described as dialogue and communication/ conversation. To understand and to interpret is basic to human nature, but our interpretation is always within a tradition as humans are in a living dialogue with the past and it is our language that connects the past to the present. Truth is thus something that is to be found in true symmetrical dialogue between dialogue partners and in dialogue with the past (tradition). Truth is to be found there where the present and the past enter into a symmetrical dialogue with each other. Dialogue is the only way to truth, because of the finiteness of human existence and human knowledge (Pieterse 1993:82).

For Gadamer there is an ontological relationship between language and reality and this relationship is the hermeneutical experience. The relationship between reality and language is the basis of the hermeneutical experience. To understand and gain knowledge is only possible within the context of a dialogue (Pieterse 1993:82). Knowledge is therefore inter-subjective and based on consensus, which means the locus of knowledge is within community (Müller 1996:81).

This means that reality is no longer constructed in the mind of an individual, but is constructed within the context of an interpreting community. This is known as social-

constructionism and Paré describes this as third order cybernetics where knowledge arises within communities of knowers (Freedman & Combs 1996:3).

For Gadamer this basic principle of hermeneutics is not only appropriate for the human sciences, but for all science including natural science. In other words any science is an open dialogue with reality. Thus science or any other form of knowledge about reality is part of a continuous process within language and thus a continuous communicative process. Yet any form of understanding is based on a pre-understanding, because no person approaches reality from a neutral point of view. In the epistemological process this pre-understanding or prejudice needs to be reckoned with. "That is why prejudice of the individual far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being"(Gadamer 1989: 276-277).

This means that prejudice needs to be consciously taken into the understanding process. "Prejudices then serve as the necessary foundation of all understanding"(Lundin 1993:222). Our understanding of tradition is always an understanding from within our own horizon of our time and context. These horizons are placed in a critical dialogue with the past tradition, allowing tradition to criticise and reformulate our horizons. Thus tradition has a dynamic "*Wirkungsgeschichte*" in the present (Pieterse 1993:83). Human beings are products of this *Wirkungsgeschichte*, but are also part of the process of re-interpreting and re-writing this story.

Therefore understanding is never final, but always in process. Insights that are gained from understanding need to be practically applied to the context/situation. The context is changed as the insights are practically applied and the situation then in turn needs to be re-interpreted. This practical application is thus an integral part of the understanding process.

Hermeneutics for Gadamer is the understanding of the same tradition in a specific context and time, in other words in a specific horizon, in a new way. This new interpretation of tradition applies better to the situation (Gadamer 1975:275). Gadamer would thus disagree with Lewis' two stage approach for the encounter with texts as Gadamer would argue that there is no reception without some kind of use. In other words a text only really has power over us if we sense that it could be of use to us.

It is this understanding that Gadamer brings to epistemology that is the bridge between historical reason and practical reason. "Gadamer draws this relation when he points out that Aristotle's concept of phronesis or practical wisdom may serve as a model of the process of understanding"(Browning 1991:38).

The question that is now raised is: what is the relationship between the general

universal tradition and the specific application of the tradition within a specific context and time? To answer this question Gadamer resorts to Aristotle's distinction between *phronesis*, *episteme* and *techné* and he finds the answer in Aristotle's understanding of *phronesis* (Gadamer 1975:278-289).

Praxis in the past was understood as the technical application of rational thought and science to the objective reality. In the study I described modernity as rationalistic and where there is a division of the world into subjective rational humans and the objective reality. In modernity praxis is the application of pure rationalism on the objective reality and the only moral norm for this application was technical (rational) progress. This was part of modern relationship between rationalism and object reality and praxis was the application of the rational ideas to the objective reality, thus destroying any form of moral character within the field of praxis. The only motive was development and progress. For Gadamer praxis is practical knowledge and the doing of the right thing that will change the circumstances of human existence. Gadamer therefore saw in epistemology a certain moral or ethical dimension.

"If we relate Aristotle's description of the ethical phenomenon and especially of the virtue of moral knowledge to our own investigation, we find that Aristotle's analysis is in fact a kind of model of the problems of hermeneutics" (Gadamer 1989:289).

In the above section the integral role that practical application played in the hermeneutical epistemology was stressed. Thus Gadamer argues that human sciences are moral sciences. This interlacing between praxis and hermeneutics makes the threefold interconnection of science, hermeneutics and praxis explicit (Pieterse 1993:84).

As practical science is the gaining of practical knowledge it is the methodological model for human science. Understanding is a form of practical reasoning and thus practical knowledge (*phronesis*). *Phronesis* moves away from the differentiation between *techné* and *episteme* in other words between practical theory (*techné*) and basic theory (*episteme*) and brings them into a dialogical relationship. *Phronesis* is the value orientated discussion of the interchange between practical experiences and the knowledge and theory which is part of tradition. "When these practices become problematic, we try to orient ourselves by re-examining the classic sources that have shaped our present practices. The classic sources are generally religio-cultural texts and monuments" (Browning 1991:39).

Gadamer's concept of "effective history" also needs to be mentioned as a fusion of the whole of the past with the present (Gadamer 1989: 273). In other words, the past will always shape the present and the present is always a product of the past. The past

shapes our fore-understandings and is the basis for our prejudices and thus it is the past that influences the questions which the individual or the community brings to the texts that are in need of interpretation.

Thus Gadamer sees understanding as a fusion of horizons between the horizon of the past that shapes the questions brought to the text and the horizon which is projected by the text itself. Yet the meanings of these texts have already shaped the questions that we bring to them (Gadamer 1989: 173-174, 331-341).

In the social sciences there are certain perspectives which place the notion of practice at the heart of the dynamics of the formation and maintenance of the social order (Graham 1996:97). From this perspective society can be understood in two different ways:

- 1 Society is an agglomeration of random activities and choices of individual actors thus placing the emphasis on subjectivity.
- 2) Society and human relations are determined by the laws of history, and the forces of nature, in other words an objective structuralist approach to society where subjectivity of the individual agent plays no role.

The concept of 'practice' seems to solve this dilemma between these two opposing positions - structuralism and agency.

"Rather, practice emerges as something which mediates between structure and agency, seeing culture as a human creation which nonetheless persists over time; and of the norms of practice as in some sense rule-governed and institutional but still dependent on individual and collective agency for their maintenance"(Graham 1996: 97).

This means that humans partake in the maintenance and creation of society, but they are also at the same time imbedded in an already existing structure and culture. Ultimate truth claims are therefore to be found in purposeful practices (Graham 1996:97). Social structures are patterns of behaviour which are enshrined over time within society and not only external, but also internal like language. Praxis is therefore certain behaviour which follows certain rules and patterns, although there is also an element of agency which is not enshrined in structure. Alasdair MacIntyre develops the concept of praxis as the means by which human action carries historically rooted system of values (Graham 1996:98).

Gadamer, dialogue and postmodern

1. He introduced the idea that humans' existence in the *Lebenswelt* is dialogical.
2. Understanding is to be found in symmetrical dialogue.

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|------------------------------------------------|
| 3. Knowledge is communal and inter-subjective. |
|------------------------------------------------|

4.3.7 Paul Ricoeur, texts, structural analysis and postmodernity

Paul Ricoeur in his book *The Symbolism of Evil* argues that the Cartesian ideal of a free and indubitable starting point for all knowledge is impossible (Ricoeur 1967:19).

Ricoeur's contribution to the hermeneutical process of understanding was to bring in a critical element that was missing in Gadamer's work. Ricoeur introduced the concept of texts. He understood texts as having an autonomous existence in their own right. Ricoeur's texts are not only written texts, but also human actions. Spoken communication gets permanence in written texts and human actions find permanence in social patterns.

Social patterns and structures are more permanent forms of human communication and are autonomous in the sense that they are independent from their authors and the time in which they were created. Thus the meaning of a text can only be found in the text itself. The meaning of a text is immanent to the text itself. Critical thought cannot hold every assumption in abeyance therefore it must start somewhere namely "from speech that has already been said in some fashion" (Ricoeur 1967: 348).

Yet the interpretation of texts is subjective and into this subjective interpretation a critical objective element needs to be introduced. Ricoeur believed that this would be possible by introducing structural analysis to the understanding process. The text itself needs to be seen as a complex unit and its language system and structure needs to be analysed (Pieterse 1993:87). For Ricoeur all thought is grounded in the unconscious resources encoded in the history of language and experience. Thus language gives us the symbols, but what these symbols give is an occasion for thought, in other words something to think about. But before one can think about its meaning it needs to be received and then can be doubted and criticised (Ricoeur 1967: 348).

For Ricoeur the meaning of the texts as a whole must be seen as an interpretation hypothesis. The various units that make up the whole are then interpreted within this hypothesis. This hypothesis can be defended with various arguments and it is in this dialogical encounter that the hypothesis is tested.

<p>Ricoeur, texts, structural analysis and postmodern</p>

- | |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ricoeur understood "texts" to have an autonomous existence, 2. thus these texts need to be analysed, 3. yet the interpretation of texts is subjective. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

4. To minimise this subjective element the text as a whole must be seen as an interpretation hypothesis.
5. The various units of the whole are then interpreted within this hypothesis.
6. The hypothesis can be tested and defended in dialogue with other hypothesis.

4.3.8 The critical theory of Jürgen Habermas

Jürgen Habermas enters into the hermeneutical discussion with the search for rational knowledge that has human action as consequence (Habermas 1972:301). Rational knowledge for Habermas was to be forged out of collective speech communities (Graham 1996:144). He is very critical about the subjective agenda that is behind the search for knowledge and that if this agenda is not exposed the illusion of value-free-knowledge is created.

For Habermas all knowledge comes into existence through specific group interests (Pieterse 1993:92). In modernity it was the interests of modernity that dominated the epistemology. For him the interest of modernity was a *Zweckrationalität* (instrumental technical reason). Weber calls this entrapment of knowledge in the interests of modernity - the iron cage of bureaucracy (Graham 1996:144).

Habermas identified three different levels of approaching reality according to different interests:

- 1 - The first approach towards reality is an **instrumental** approach where the interest lies in the maintenance of reality as it is and where human actions are focussed, instrumental and effective. This approach is motivated by a technical interest of dominance over the objective reality and is seen in the empirical analytical understanding of reality.
- 2 - The second approach is a **communicative** approach as humanity seeks to understand reality. This approach is inter-subjective as the reality is understood in conversation.
- 3 - The third approach is motivated by an **emancipatory** interest. In this approach the imbalance of power is what needs to be overcome. For this third approach critical reflection is necessary (Pieterse 1993:94).

These different levels of approaching reality according to the different interests, determines the type of knowledge that is gained. Thus there are also three different types of knowledge for Habermas, namely emancipatory, practical and technical (Graham 1996: 145).

Habermas agrees with Gadamer, but criticises Gadamer's dialogical approach for not being critical towards the power imbalances that are inherent within the structure of language. The whole debate of inclusive language makes this point very clear as one recognises how bias language is towards masculinity.

Habermas also criticised the idea that knowledge is inherently good. His critique came in a time after the Second World War where it became clear how knowledge can be misused for destructive purposes.

Habermas' argument was that knowledge is not neutral, but is linked to power, which means that knowledge is dependent on who controls and who has the power within society. The dominant constructions of reality are constructed by those who have the most power within society.

Thus knowledge plays a role in the domination and exploitation of groups of people. Michael Foucault argued that scientific reason never existed independent of an associated project to objectify or dominate (Graham 1996:21). Derrida pointed out that "the human world, because it is bathed in language, is ambiguous, complex and heterogeneous that any attempt to capture it and hold it steady, as if it were an object, a physical thing, is simply not possible" (Freeman 1993:10). This attempt to get a grip on the world, Derrida described as being totalization. Many groups have done exactly that - they have 'gotten a grip' on the world and forced others to accept their *grip* on the world.

For Habermas it was important to create '*Herrschaftsfreie Kommunikation*', communication that is free of power imbalances and where the conversation partners are truly equal (Pieterse 1993:92). This is the only way in which humanity will be helped to live in a society without imbalances of power and oppression. The human sciences should be motivated by an emancipatory interest (Habermas 1972:310). The communicative actions between human beings should strive towards an ideal communication situation where there are no power imbalances and where communication is free (Pieterse 1993:93). To the hermeneutic process of Gadamer needs to be added, an ideological critical element to expose the power imbalance that are hidden within language structures.

In the communicative action the three reality domains need to interact with each other. The three reality domains are: the objective reality of things and events, the social reality of values and norms and the subjective reality of intentions, needs and emotions. Understanding takes place in the interaction of all three of these reality domains as human beings seek to understand themselves and their situation.

Habermas emphasises the importance of rationality in this communicative action which implies that in principle the interpretation that takes place in each of these domains can

be criticised. For each interpretation and understanding there are supporting arguments which can be criticised, analysed and refuted and therefore, for Habermas, rationality is to be found in this communicative practice. Habermas thus places rationality into this communicative discussion. There are three forms of discussion based on the three domains of reality. For Habermas, a theory of undistorted communication depends on how various claims of individuals and groups are validated or redeemed (Habermas 1979:2). For him communication is based on the idea that individuals or groups have the capacity to give reasons for or at least support the validity of their claims.

All communication for Habermas entails claims about the comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness and rightness of what is said. Communicative competence is based on these three claims. Humans need to be able to advance reasons for their actions that will make sense even to “outsiders”, in other words those who do not share the same presuppositions (Habermas 1979:2, 57-58).

The **theoretical** discussion is where the objective reality is discussed. The **practical** discussion is where appropriate understanding is sought for the *Lebenswelt*. The **therapeutical critical** discussion is where truth is sought and the self is understood (Pieterse 1993:93). In modernity the technical discussion dominated the other two, which in turn meant a distortion of human reason and thus an alienation of humanity. Habermas introduces an emancipatory element into the hermeneutical process that can free society from the alienation that is caused by dominant interpretations.

Feminist philosophy took up some of these ideas of the critical theory of Habermas. The feminists pointed to the ideological power imbalances that are found in the dialogical hermeneutical process and thus also in praxis and therefore in social structures and which are the cause of alienation. In the feminist context it was the andocentric values and norms which brought about the alienation of humanity as a whole. Human praxis is constitutive of identity, meaning and knowledge and therefore an emancipatory praxis needs to be found to truly liberate within all three forms of discussion.

Habermas, critical theory and postmodernity

1. Rational knowledge that had human action as consequence was to be found in collective speech communities.
2. Knowledge is formed by the interests of certain groups
3. Habermas identified three different types of knowledge according to these interests (emancipatory, practical and technical),
4. therefore reality is constructed by the interests of certain groups.
5. There is the need for a critical awareness of the power imbalances implicit in all knowledge.

6. *Herrschaftsfreie* speech communities need to be formed to develop knowledge that has emancipation as consequence.
7. Domination free speech communities are critical communities where the three domains of reality (objective reality, social reality of values and norms and the subjective reality of intentions, needs and emotions) are in equal dialogue with each other.

5. THE STORY OF POSTMODERNITY (a story in Tracy's society and church republics)

5.1 Introduction

The previous section was a reflection on the story of postmodernity in Tracy's academic (philosophical) republic. In this section the study will reflect on the story of postmodernity in the social, cultural and church republics. This includes a reflection on how the philosophic developments influenced the socio-cultural republics and also the other way around.

In the study I will reflect on two major historical events which can be seen as a turning point in modern history and the beginning of postmodernity.

5.2 Two Major Historical Events

The one event that I will reflect on is an event that had international repercussions and the other is a local South African event.

5.2.1 The fall of the Berlin Wall

The fall of the Berlin Wall can be seen as the political historical event that marked the end of the modern era (Erickson 1998:46). It marked the end of a historical era where the world was divided into socialist and capitalist countries. The Berlin wall came down and with it a whole system (ideology) that had for years been a critical challenge to the capitalism of the West. Now this system had disappeared and with it the only real challenge to capitalism. It left an ideological vacuum behind and nothing was there to really replace this vacuum. The consequence of this vacuum was that capitalism lost its conscience. Capitalism won the battle and now it didn't need to justify itself, but has complete freedom. A single global economic system (ideology) without any challenge or a conscience is dangerous.

5.2.2 The release of Nelson Mandela and the New South Africa

The postmodern in one way or the other affects the whole South African community. The old authorities of traditional rural communities do not hold ground anymore as they are exposed to the pluralism of values and various different authorities. South Africa in the past was relatively protected from the effects of postmodernism - the church and the censorship board playing an important role in this.

A number of things happened that helped to usher postmodernity into the South African community.

Firstly, Nelson Mandela was released and with this event a process began that would be the beginning of the New South Africa. This process was not only the beginning of the new, but also the end of the old South Africa.

Secondly, the church lost its credibility as an authority on values and truth as it was associated with and supported apartheid. Can the church still be trusted as an authority on values and on what is right and wrong within society?

Thirdly, the new constitution brought with it many new debates and the possibility of debating about these issues without one universal standard of authority which is accepted by all. Issues as the death sentence and abortion tumbled South Africa into a value vacuum which is characteristic of the postmodern as these issues needed to be debated in a pluralistic context without one set of authoritative values.

In South Africa the paradigm shift from modern to postmodern was not a gradual process, but it happened nearly overnight as a country and its value systems were turned upside down. The congregant is struggling with this new situation as his/her world has been turned upside down and s/he hopes that at least in the church things will remain the same. In the new South Africa cultural pluralism has its very own dimension as two worlds that were separated for years all of a sudden have become *one nation* sharing schools, job opportunities and sharing the same church bench. Two worlds meeting at a time where everything is being questioned adds to the complexity, relativism and confusion which are all characteristics of postmodernity.

5.3 The social-cultural aspect of postmodernity

5.3.1 Universal truths, norms and values as the basis for ethical judgement.

In the philosophic story of postmodernity the study reflected on the postmodern world as a world where there is no longer any non-hermeneutical basis from which to establish universal truths or norms on which individuals and communities can base their ethical

judgments. If there are no longer any universal truths or norms by which standards can humanity then judge actions and behaviour? Everything is relative from the hermeneutical point of view and there are so many options to choose from in a pluralist world.

5.3.2 Fragmentation of values and beliefs in an age of relativism and pluralism.

The end of universal truths and norms has opened the door to pluralism and relativism and at the same time globalization has brought the world's religions and ideologies into the urban centres so that the individual, family and community living in the global village within the urban centre is confronted with the confusing reality of this pluralism. The individual congregant will be confronted with this pluralism in his/her home via the Internet, TV news and other forms of media as well as on the street and at the work place. The individual needs to find some form of system of meaning in which he/she will be able to find themselves - a system of meaning which can give meaning and purpose to their lives and can make sense of the suffering and brokenness which they experience. This system of meaning is transferred to the individual via the family system, cultural system or religious system, but in a pluralistic urban centre the individual will be exposed and confronted with different systems thus questioning her/his system of meaning.

The individual in the church - although he/she has the Christian tradition as a system of meaning - is confronted and questioned by the plurality of other systems in the urban centre.

Postmodernity is described as an era of relativism and pluralism, as I have tried to describe in the section on the philosophical changes, where nothing is certain – which means that everything is equally uncertain and therefore everything is acceptable. There is no non-hermeneutical basis of certainty by which to judge anything, be it science, morals, a choice of lifestyle or religion. This lack of authority or basic certainty is a freedom which is unbearable, because for too long humans have been conditioned by modernity to hold onto absolute universal truths. We have not learnt to live or cope with this freedom and thus are experiencing numerous socio-cultural challenges. Oden does not see postmodernity separate from modernity, but as the consequence of modernity. His socio-cultural analysis is very useful. He uses the following key features to describe this period in which we live - **moral relativism**, **narcissistic hedonism** and **autonomous individualism** (Erickson 1998:46).

Moral relativism is the result of there being no certainties and thus everything is feasible and possible. This freedom together with there being no social accountability creates the space for absolute misuse of this freedom.

Narcissistic hedonism

The individual throughout the story of modernity has lost many different forms of authority. S/he lost the church as an authority, then tradition as an authority and now in postmodernity science and human rights are losing their authority - the individual is reduced to him or herself and together with the aggressive market one cannot blame humanity giving themselves over to hedonistic pleasures. The media entices humanity into this world of temporal pleasures. These pleasures are seen to have the highest value and give meaning to the human existence.

Autonomous individualism is the result of the individual losing all other forms of authority so that the individual himself/herself is the only authority. Thus the individual decides what is right and wrong for himself/herself without any regard for others.

This filters through to everyday life, where we experience rising corruption, violence and rising crime. The moral fabric of family and society has changed and many would describe this as moral decadence. Various groups have their own standards of values, yet there is no standard that transcends these groups by which to judge or guide. I do not want to oversimplify the condition of the world we are living in by saying that all the ills can be reduced to this moral relativism, but I believe that it plays an important role. As capitalism without a conscience is given the freedom to exploit and market anything, from war to violence to sexual perversions, it will – together with the psychological and emotional frustrations of the loss of ideals and values - have major effects on our society, such as ever rising drug abuse, rise in violent crimes, rise in suicide rates as well as divorce rates, etcetera. Society has not learnt the skills to live in a postmodern world and therefore the postmodern angers, frustrates and causes immense hopelessness because we cannot think beyond the terms of modernity. Our whole language is based on what we believed in modernity. Our dependence and the longing for universal absolute certainties have not disappeared with the philosophical impossibility thereof.

The socio-cultural challenges of the postmodern era are frightening and a great task lies ahead to seek responses to these challenges.

5.4 The broad context of postmodernity within church and society

Postmodernity in church and society is experienced negatively as the demise of absolute values and universal truths. This absence of a universal norm or basis raises numerous questions also for the church. Can the church place tradition and the Biblical witness as an authoritative absolute norm in a world of relativism, pluralism and value disorientation because of the loss of universal truths and absolutes?

This study is motivated by various experiences of this postmodern era as described earlier, for example the confusion and uncertainty that is found in the urban congregation of Berlin and South Africa.

Postmodernity can be described as an era of confusion as the absolutes and certainties of modernity are replaced by relativism and pluralism. There are no more absolute truths or authoritative value systems and thus each community and individual has to find its own system of meaning and values. Although an individual is socially conditioned within a certain context, which has its own values and system of meaning, the urban individual is confronted by a pluralism of such systems of values and meaning which in turn begin to question the individual's system of meaning.

5.4.1 Postmodernity and the urban context.

Postmodernity is most acutely experienced in the urban centres of the world where the latest ideas and trends are developed. It is in the urban centres where the global economy brings together people from all over the world, thus bringing with it the world's religions, ideologies, systems of meaning and interpretation. Here individuals are exposed to cultures and religions from all over the world.

The pluralism of postmodernity is to some extent also the result of globalization - the world becoming smaller and smaller as global trade and global communication unite the world into a global village. In this global village we are exposed to the whole world via television, World Wide Web, or the foreign companies and their work forces. Globalization adds to the pluralism of postmodernity.

6. IN SUMMARY: POSTMODERNITY IN PERSPECTIVE

Postmodernity can be characterised by certain understandings and interpretations of human nature (ontology), authoritative knowledge (epistemology), the trajectory of history and what is thought to be the good of life (teleology), personal identity (subjectivity) and the individual's inhabitation of the social and natural world (agency). Postmodernity emphasises the importance of language: that all that the world is, is our language. There is no direct link to reality - only language.

6.1 Postmodern ontology

In modernity it was believed that to be human meant to be a rational being based on the ideas of Descartes and Pascal (Graham 1996:27). Postmodernity on the other hand

emphasises the diversity and contingency of human nature, which is socially constructed by various factors such as class, sex, race and religion. In postmodernity there is no longer an essential or abstract universal human being, but a human being that exists within history, a specific context and time.

6.2 Postmodern subjectivity

Modernity through the ideas of the Enlightenment placed great emphasis on the subjective self as a rational self. A rational self is a self that transcends embodiment, desire or specificity and thus forms the basis for identity (Graham 1996:28). This enlightenment idea of transcendent subjective self was already questioned by Freud - who denied the possibility of unitary ego that is unaffected by desires and instincts. In postmodernity selfhood is realised in interaction with others, culture, tradition and language.

6.3 Postmodern epistemology

The changes that took place in epistemology have already been discussed in the previous section in 3.4.1. "Postmodern epistemology regards truth as a web of discourse, with rules and assumptions shaped by context and self interest" (Graham 1996:29). "Language therefore constitutes reality, rather than reality being communicated through the neutral vehicle of language" (Graham 1996:29).

6.4 Postmodern agency

In modernity the rational self was the agent of rationally planned actions in pursuit of calculated ends. In postmodernity society plays a much larger role in agency, which means all activity is governed and to a certain extent controlled by the social context in which the individual lives; a context to which the individual reacts rather than acts or creates. "There is thus an ineradicable link between will, reason and action; and language is held to be 'referential', the transparent expression of objective, external reality" (Graham 1996:29). In postmodernity there are no teleological criteria which guide human purposeful action, thus all is practice and nothing rests on metaphysical categories. "Personhood is not a set of metaphysical or ontological qualities but the discursive result of our inhabiting a culture" (Graham 1996:10). Agency can only be understood as the agent reacting to the context rather than self-actualising, and the agent is constituted by discourses of power rather than the creator of his or her own social world.

6.5 Postmodern teleology

Modernity saw within history progress and this was the teleological end purpose of all. Within a postmodern world view there are two different teleological understandings: 1- a scepticism towards any grand narrative that does not respect the local contextual issues; 2- any theoretical or historical narrative is redundant as no one can make claims that apply to more than the local, specific and provisional (Graham 1996:31).

7. THE CHURCH AND MODERNITY

7.1 Introduction

To understand the church's response to postmodernity I will need to briefly reflect on how the church responded to the developments associated with modernity.

7.2 Theology's story in modernity

The Enlightenment, which ushered in modernity, was also the beginning of the process of dethroning theology as the absolute authority. The Enlightenment placed greater emphasis on science and rational thought than on religious authorities and thus theology's struggle began with modernity. Theology had two possibilities: 1) to journey with modernity and seek to be accepted as a rational science, or 2) to seek an alternative route to modernity and establish itself separate from modernity.

7.2.1 Theology in close relationship to modernity

In the early beginnings of the Enlightenment, theology had to prove itself as a science to be acceptable to the modern times. One of the first "*modern theologians*" was Schleiermacher, who fought for theology to be recognised as a science and thus keep its academic place at the European universities of the eighteenth century. Schleiermacher was the first modern theologian who recognised the value of the Enlightenment and wanted to build a bridge to modern humanity by reflecting on the Christian faith on the basis of the experience of the subject (Heitink 1999:19). The theologians during this period of Enlightenment were pressed to demonstrate the relevance of Christian faith to the "cultured despisers", "many Christian interpreters in the Enlightenment and romanticism pared the biblical narrative into an appealing shape in their attempts to appeal to an educated and often cynical audience. Whether they were promoting a rational or a romantic God, these early modern interpreters were often willing to spend the capital of Christian belief in exchange for earning high interest in the marketplace of intellectual currency" (Lundin 1993:40).

This was the beginning of a long relationship between theology and the modern developments in science. It began very early. Soon after the great thoughts of Descartes, Benedict de Spinoza would seek to apply these Cartesian principles to theological thought. Spinoza studied the Bible and declared: "I found nothing taught expressly by Scripture, which does not agree with our understanding, or which is repugnant thereto." He believed that the Bible sets reason free, and thus he concluded,

“Revelation and Philosophy stand on totally different footings” and “that Revelation has obedience for its sole object.” Thus Spinoza brought in the schism that would separate reason and philosophy from faith. “. . .in purpose no less than in foundation and method, revelation stands entirely aloof from ordinary knowledge; each has its separate province, neither can be called the handmaid of the other” (Spinoza 1951:9-10). Spinoza opened the door for this gap to develop between faith and science, or faith and reason, which in the eighteenth century grew wider and wider with the rise of the Enlightenment. The thoughts of Enlightenment seemed to prove that religion is no longer necessary as an explanatory device, because physical science, politics and philosophy were seen to be much more effective in explaining phenomena in the world.

Schleiermacher admitted to this demise of theology’s ability to explain phenomena and that the astute people of his day did not really need religion anymore. Suavity and sociability, art, and science have so fully taken possession “of their minds that they have no room for thoughts of the Holy Being.” He addressed the cultured despisers, “you have succeeded in making your earthly life so rich and varied, that you no longer stand in need of an eternity” (Schleiermacher 1958: 1-2).

If religion did not offer anything to humanity for understanding the world out there, maybe it still had something to offer to the inner world of the individual’s soul or consciousness. This inward turn of religion opened the door for faith once again during the romantic period.

“I maintain that in all better souls piety springs necessarily by itself; that a province of its own in the mind belongs to it, in which it has unlimited sway; that it is worthy to animate most profoundly the noblest and best to be fully accepted and known by them” (Schleiermacher 1958:21).

Schleiermacher took the second step after the one that Spinoza had taken to bring a divide between theology and the sciences. Helmut Thielicke observed that the effect of Schleiermacher’s romantic reconstruction of religion was to conflate the separate disciplines of “anthropology (human conditions), theology (divine qualities and modes of action), and cosmology (the nature of the world)” (Thielicke 1974:45). Schleiermacher denied “theological rank” to any theological proposition that could not be translated into anthropological language without any loss of value. For Thielicke this was opening the door to make the anthropological analysis of experience the norm (Thielicke 197:45). Schleiermacher’s romantic understanding of theology meant that the hermeneutical task was no longer to translate divine demands or imparting revelatory knowledge to eager listeners, but rather making the historical text palatable to the enlightenment reader or listener. Karl Barth criticised Schleiermacher’s view of hermeneutics, as “nothing remained of the belief that the Word or statement is as such the bearer, bringer, and

proclaimer of truth, that there might be such a thing as the Word of God". Barth continues that Schleiermachers' understanding of kerygma is a "kerygma that only depicts and does not bring, that only states or expresses and does not declare. Truth does not come in the spoken Word; it comes in speaking feeling" (Barth 1982:210).

The modern emphasis on the subject, as a rational being, was later challenged by Freud who emphasised that the subject is also influenced by instincts and desires. This led to a whole new direction in theology and especially in pastoral theology, taking up the challenges that Freud placed before theology. Theologians that took up Freud's challenge were amongst others Jung, Tillich, and Hiltner (Heitink 1998:55-67).

Theologians who journeyed with modernity were driven by the desire for theology to be recognised and to be respected as a modern science and thus incorporated the ideas and practices from the social and human sciences without being critical of the underlying world views (Graham 1996:67). One could say that a certain marriage took place between theology and the sciences. Paul Tillich and his correlational theology saw systematic theology in the following way: "it makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions" (Graham 1996:70).

Besides psychology the rise of sociology also had an impact on theology. The social theories of Max Webber and the social economic analysis of Karl Marx challenged theology to respond.

This is the one possibility of theology in modernity namely the apologetic route of seeking acceptance as a modern science.

7.2.2 Theology in reaction to modernity

The other possibility was the route of strong critique which came from two different positions namely the protestant evangelical movements as well as from the neo-orthodox theologians.

Neo-orthodox theologians like Karl Barth and Eduard Thurneysen saw the need that theology needed to return to its Biblical roots. "Neo-orthodoxy sought to return to the theology of the Bible and the Protestant Reformers which emphasized the absolute authority of a transcendent God who could only be apprehended through the vehicle of God's own self-revelation and not the exercise of human reason" (Graham 1996:74).

From within the protestant evangelical movement developed a form of fundamentalism and a return to pre-modern acceptance of religious authorities.

Theology's relationship with modernity has been varied and certainly not an easy journey, with many challenges. Postmodernity has challenged many of the modern ideas and by doing so questioned the very system that theology has been struggling with for so long. The grand narratives of modernity have collapsed and with it the basis for value judgement and universal truths. In this context, what do the church's truth claims mean amongst the plurality of public narratives and truths? Is Christianity anachronistic with regards to its understanding of tradition, knowledge and truth? Or does postmodernity free theology from its apologetics towards modernity?

The rise of postmodernity has also opened up new possibilities for the church as modernity and its emphasis on scientific and objective truth has challenged the church tremendously. In postmodernity there are new opportunities for a re-discovery of the mystic, spiritual and numinous, thus re-opening doors within theology that seemed closed during modernity.

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8. NARRATIVE AS A RESPONSE TO POSTMODERNITY

8.1 Introduction

"...narrative and story appear to provide a cure, if not a panacea, to a variety of Enlightenment illnesses" (Hauerwas & Jones 1989:1).

The concept of narrative is very similar to postmodernity in that it is just as difficult to define and there are numerous opinions about what exactly narrative thinking is all about. In the previous section (6. Summary: Postmodernity in Perspective), five basic

philosophic characteristics could be identified as describing the postmodern story from the perspective of the academic (philosophic) story. These five characteristics are not new characteristics, but have developed and drastically changed from how they were understood in modernity to how they are understood in post-modernity.

I understand these five characteristics to describe postmodernity from the philosophic perspective. These basic characteristics of post-modernity broke down a whole world view and the way humanity understood itself and the world. I began the previous section (What changed philosophically) with the thoughts of Ludwig Wittgenstein and the limits of language. “5.6 The limits of my language mean the limits of my world”. It is in following these changes that I would like to introduce the concept of narrative and how narrative thinking incorporates these postmodern characteristics.

In the section (4.3 The epistemological story of postmodernity) various thinkers were introduced, who played a vital role in the development of these characteristics of postmodernity. I began with Wittgenstein’s (4.3.1 Wittgenstein, epistemology, language and postmodernity) argument and also discussed how his ideas could easily lead to solipsism, in other words that the subjective “I” constructs reality through language, which is also reflected in the ideas of the phenomenology of Husserl. Gadamer pointed out that the reality is constructed in dialogue with others and the past, in other words the construction of reality is a communal process.

“If the realities we inhabit are brought forth in the language we use, they are then kept alive and passed along in the stories that we live and tell” (Freedman & Combs 1996:29). The human realities are thus storied realities that one could say: *The limits of my stories mean the limits of my world*. Humanity’s understanding of reality is thus narrative. This understanding of reality is not just based on a single narrative, but various narratives (social, cultural, political, etcetera)

In a certain sense postmodernity has caused confusion and relativism and the question arises: Is there a ‘system’, without returning to modernism that can incorporate these postmodern characteristics and create the boundaries in which humanity can seek to understand itself and the world? The world is our language and this language is constructed and prone to illusion and manipulation by ideological powers. The self is a constructed self through language and this language is always a fictitious artefact and there is thus no direct empirical access to reality or truth.

Yet there is a reality out there as one does not bump into a word, but a table (a tangible real object). I can express this bumping into a table in words. These words are not one’s own, but belong to the language and cultural tradition into which one is born. Yet after all is deconstructed and analysed the feeling remains that there is more to life than

these deconstructed realities. There is meaning and purpose that lies beyond the scope of language and construction as well as deconstruction – that *wordless meaning* which Wittgenstein said should rather be passed on in silence and Gadamer said that it is passed on in the language of metaphor found in art and poetry. The postmodern nihilism does not do justice to life and something needs to be found not to reconstruct what has been deconstructed, but to find some form of reasonable response incorporating the claims of postmodernity. I believe that narrative is this reasonable response to postmodernity's claims, without denying them, but by incorporating them. I will be introducing various narrative thinkers and how they incorporated the postmodern characteristics into their narrative thinking.

MacIntyre argues that there are various diverse uses of narrative. He argues that:

- 1) intelligible human action is narrative in form,
- 2) human life has a fundamentally narrative shape,
- 3) humans are story-telling animals,
- 4) people place their lives and arguments in narrative histories,
- 5) communities and traditions receive their continuity through narrative histories, and
- 7) epistemological progress is marked by the construction and reconstruction of more adequate narrative forms of narrative (Hauerwas & Jones

1998:8).

I will look at some of these narrative uses that MacIntyre has pointed out.

8.2 Narrative and human action

In reflecting on narrative as a response or an outcome to postmodernity, I will be introducing and integrating numerous ideas from various thinkers. I will be reflecting mainly on the thoughts of Ricoeur, Crites and MacIntyre. Each of these thinkers began their narrative understanding with an interpretation of human action.

8.2.1 Action in modernity.

In modernity (analytical philosophy) actions were broken down into very small atomic segments and analysed according to cause and effect. These atomic segments are called basic actions which Ricoeur describes as those actions which we know how to perform without first having to do something else in order to perform them (Ricoeur 1992:153).

One of the changes that characterise postmodernity was the change that took place in the understanding of the relationship between cause and effect. The direct connection

between a cause and an effect was questioned and thus a new way needed to be found to understand and interpret actions for actions to be intelligible.

8.2.2 Narrative intelligibility of human actions

Ricoeur's revision of the modern understanding of action was to lengthen the action segments and not to analyse basic action, but action segments. He proposed that action segments should be lengthened to action units which he understood as units of praxis. Each unit of praxis has its own specific principle of organization and coherence. The question thus was: what exactly forms this coherence or principle of organization?

MacIntyre, seeking to answer the question of coherence, also believes that to understand actions one needs to expand the action segments.

He uses the example of a man working in the garden – a basic simple action, but this action can be characterised in numerous different ways for example digging, gardening, taking exercise, preparing for winter or even pleasing his wife (MacIntyre 1989:91).

For the actions of the man in the garden to be intelligible (to be '*correctly*' interpreted), one needs to understand the intentions behind the action. By placing human action into the context of intentions the basic action is transformed into an episode within history. This history can be understood as a narrative history in which the intentions can be clarified and the actions are found to be intelligible.

8.2.2.1 Narrative history of an action

The first step in understanding an action is placing the action into the context of intentions, thus into a narrative history (MacIntyre 1989:92).

To understand what is meant by narrative history, I will turn to the thoughts of Stephen Crites.

Crites understood actions to be "altogether temporal. Yet it has unity of form through time, a form revealed only in the action as a whole. That temporal form is what we mean by style" (Crites 1989:66).

Crites also argues that actions are conscious movements in time (Crites 1989:66). For an action to be conscious movement in time it must also be intended. To place an action into the context of the intentions behind the action means to understand the action as a conscious movement in time.

Time on the other hand exists in three modalities, namely past, present and future.

Crites refers to Augustine of Hippo who ponders on these three modalities of time and the apparent paradox that the future which does not yet exist, should pass into the past, which no longer exist through a present which is nothing more than a quasi-mathematical point (Crites 1989:67).

He solves this paradox by understanding the three modalities of time not as independent metaphysical modalities, but as the necessary modalities of an experiencing consciousness. The experiencing consciousness brings these three modalities together. It is in human consciousness that humans experience the future as anticipation, attends to the present and remembers the past.

An action as a conscious movement is thus linked to these three modalities of time by the conscious mind.

The past actions and events (experiences) are remembered and stored in memory. Crites argues that memory gives consciousness and experience its coherence, because without memory the consciousness would be locked in bare, momentary present (Crites 1989:73). Memory has coherence because it orders events and past actions by a simple order of succession which enables human beings to recall and to consult their memory. The events in memory are not stored in atomistic units, but in episodes with basic succession, thus to be able to recollect from memory it is obvious that one would do that via the telling of the story of the episode.

For Crites the most obvious way of recollecting is thus to tell a story, although the story is not just the recital of a chronicle, but meaning is given to the chronicle in the process of telling the recollected events. Thus memory is in essence narrative.

There is a distinction between memory and experience. In the chronicle of memory there is simple temporality of succession namely, duration, before and after, but not the decisive tensed distinction between past, present and future. It is this distinction between past, present and future that provides experience with its tension and demands the tenses of language (Crites 1989:76).

From the three modalities of time only the present exists, but it does not exist by itself. The present only exists as the transition of future into past.

“I want to suggest that the inner form of any possible experience (*or action*)¹ is determined by the union of these three distinct modalities in every moment of experience. I want further to suggest that the tensed unity of these modalities requires narrative forms both for its expression (mundane stories) and for its own sense of the meaning of its internal coherence (sacred story)”(Crites 1989:77).

¹I included ‘*or action*’, it was not part of the original quote.

These tensed modalities require narrative forms for their expression and I have already reflected on the narrative form of memory. The future also takes on a narrative form. The way that humans think about the future in guesses, predictions, dreams, wishes, hopes, hunches and aspirations exist in the form of stories. Crites calls these stories of the future, 'scenarios of anticipation' (Crites 1989:77).

These scenarios of anticipation are formulated to lay some plan with regard to our projected course of action. Within these scenarios of anticipation are also the intentions of actions, which is the first step in understanding an action. "We live out our lives, both individually and in our relationships with each other, in the light of certain conceptions of a possible shared future, a future in which certain possibilities beckon us forward and other repel us, some seem already foreclosed and others perhaps inevitable" (MacIntyre 1989:101). There is a certain *telos* that beckons us forward towards the future. Yet the future is not that clear, but it is in the future that the surprising and unpredictable can happen, thus one can argue that the scenarios of anticipation are composed by the coexistence of teleology and unpredictability. Therefore the scenarios of anticipation are never as coherent as the chronicles of memory, as there remains a degree of uncertainty and unpredictability with regards to the future, as life turns out differently to how things were planned and expected.

These two stories, the story of the past and the story of the future, are connected by a certain continuity and coherence. This coherence and continuity is necessary for experience or for actions to be intelligible. The past and the future must be connected in some way for present actions and present experiences to make sense. The question is: what is it that connects the future to the past without it being too determined that there is no space for the unforeseen and the unpredictable? What I am looking for is a link which connects the past to the future on the one hand, but on the other hand allows for the absolute distinction between past and future. The future cannot be determined from the past and this incoherence between future and past also needs to be taken into account.

Ricoeur introduced the idea of plot from narrative to link the past remembered and future anticipated (Ricoeur 1992: 141). Yet on the other hand the distinction between memory and anticipation is absolute because it is not a plain story line as if the present was only an indifferent point moving along a single unbroken line. Thus plot, according to Ricoeur, needs to be described in dynamic terms as a competition between the demand for concordance and the admission of discordances. Concordance is the way in which the past is remembered as an ordered arrangement of facts or events as taken from the chronicle of memory, while discordance is the misfortunes and unexpected

events that challenge the ordered arrangements of facts and events.

Before I can move on I need to clarify how the concordant past remembered and the discordant future anticipated meet in the present.

Past and future do not just meet in the present.

“Memory and anticipation, the present of things past and the present of things future, are tensed modalities of the present itself. They are the tension of every moment of experience, both united in the present and qualitatively differentiated by it” (Crites 1989:78).

In this momentary present the past is fixed, a chronicle that can be reinterpreted, but which has a basic concordant chronicle of events that cannot be changed. At the same time in the present there is the future which, contrary to the chronicle of the past, is fluid, indeterminate and subject to various alternative scenarios. Thus the two are absolutely distinct.

The present moment contains this tension of absolutely distinct and yet unifying the past and the future. This tension can only be contained in a narrative form which gives it unity of form.

“I propose to define discordant concordance, characteristic of all narrative composition...” (Ricoeur 1992:141).

The present is always the critical and decisive point in the story and gives it its dramatic character. It is in the present moment that action and experience join in what Ricoeur terms *emplotment*. *Emplotment* inverts the contingency of events (actions) in that it incorporates the action into the effect of necessity or probability which is exerted upon the event by the configuring act of plot. Thus there is a certain narrative necessity that is created and the action becomes an integral part of the story.

For an action to be intelligible there needs to be this close relation between action and narrative. This close connection is not a new invention, but was already present in Aristotle’s thinking. Aristotle defined tragedy as the imitation of action and understands action as a connection of incidents, of facts, of a sort susceptible to conforming to narrative configuration. He specifies: “The most important of the six [parts of tragedy] is the combination of the incidents of the story. Tragedy is essentially an imitation [*mimesis*] not of persons but of action and life [*bion*], of happiness and misery. All human happiness or misery takes the form of [*en*] action; the end [*telos*] for which we live is a certain kind of activity [*praxis tis*], not a quality [*ou poites*]” (Ricoeur 1992:152).

Conclusion: For an action to be intelligible the basic action needs to be understood in the light of the intentions of the action, which can only be understood within the narrative history of the action. The narrative emplots the action thus inverting the contingency of actions into the effect of necessity or probability.

8.2.2.2 The narrative history of the social setting of an action

I return to the man working in the garden.² I have lengthened this action segment by placing the action within its narrative setting. The intention of the man could be to get the garden in order before the winter or to please his wife. To understand the action of the man I will need to discover which intentions are primary to the man working in the garden. To understand which intentions are primary I need to distance myself even more from the basic action and try and understand the setting of the episode. A setting for the episode could be annual garden activities or their marriage. MacIntyre argues that each setting also has a history, in other words a story. To understand a specific action one needs to place the episode into this history of the setting, because without understanding the history of the setting and its changes through time the individual action will not be intelligible (MacIntyre 1989:92).

Ricoeur (Ricoeur 1992:156) uses the example of a simple movement of a pawn on a chess board to explain the basic action within the context of a unit of praxis within the practice of the game of chess. This basic movement of a pawn (action) only makes sense if understood within the context of the game of chess (practice/setting). Thus, it is the practice of the game of chess which gives this basic action meaning.

If we place the man working in the garden into the narrative setting of his marriage, we can interpret his working in the garden as an action to please his wife. Ricoeur, from the example of the chess game, uses the idea of a constitutive rule from the game theory. He argues that we can only understand the action within the context of the constitutive rule which gives the action its meaning (Ricoeur 1992:154). The setting of the marriage also has certain constitutive rules, but these “rules” are not set by this solitary man, gardening. These “rules” have a history and it is within this history of marriage that the man in the garden is set.

“These practices do not arise in a vacuum nor are they created by a solitary performer, but the practice has a long history be it skill/profession or game. The practice is learnt by the apprentice and although the tradition can be violated it first needs to be assumed” (Ricoeur 1992:156).

An action or human behaviour can only be identified and understood if one takes the intentions, beliefs and settings of the action seriously.

² Chapter Two: 8.2.2 Narrative intelligibility of human actions

Thus to understand the action of an individual we need “to place the intentions in temporal causal order with reference to their role in his or her history; and we also place them with reference to their role in the history of the setting or setting to which they belong “(MacIntyre 1989:94).

The narrative history of the individual or of the setting needs to be taken into account when seeking to understand human action.

A human action can only be understood within its narrative setting, which has historical as well as social implications.

It can thus be said that narrative history and setting is basic and essential for any characterization of any human action (MacIntyre 1989:94).

This narrative quality of action can be expanded to longer segments of action such as life plans and the whole of life. As Aristotle argues: “Tragedy is essentially the imitation [mimesis] not of persons but of action and life” (Ricoeur 1992:157).

Summary: Narrative intelligibility of action

- 1 Actions are temporal.
- 2 Actions are conscious movements in time.
- 3 Actions in time can only be understood in the narrative context of plot (concordance – discordance).
- 4 Actions are intelligible in their narrative settings and these settings in turn have social settings, which also have a narrative history.

8.3 Narrative understanding of human existence

In the previous section of the study I reflected on the narrative character of human action and that human actions can only be understood if they are placed within the context of narrative history as well as social narrative setting. In this section I would like to reflect on the identity of the person who is doing the action. This means that I will move from the action to the agent. What somebody is doing is closely related to who is doing it. In this section I will reflect on this “who” and by doing so I will seek to respond to the postmodern understanding of ontology, subjectivity, agency and teleology.

Postmodernity can be characterised as challenging some fundamental assumptions with regard to humanity namely ontology, subjectivity, agency and teleology. The

modern human being was seen as a rational subjective self. It understood the self as standing apart from the objective reality. This objective reality the self could experience and understand through a rational process of inquiry. Then Wittgenstein introduced his thoughts about language as the medium that stands between the subjective self and the reality (objective world). In a previous section I also discussed the ideas of Husserl (4.3.4 Edmund Husserl, phenomenology, hermeneutics, romanticism and postmodernism) and how the self constructs his or her own reality within his or her language. Later this view was challenged by the social constructionists who believed that the individual is set within a language tradition and a social, cultural and historical context. The language that the individual uses to construct his or her reality is the language he /she is born into and thus the reality is constructed communally.

The question that I seek to answer in this section is: is narrative a possible new way of understanding the human self, human agency and subjectivity?

The first question about the 'who' is: Who is this who and who is the agent of the action? This brings me to a reflection on the identity of the 'who.' The whole concept of personal identity has its own story within the philosophical debate. I will reflect on this story before seeking a narrative understanding of identity.

8.3.1 Philosophical debate on personal identity

The question on personal identity has in the past revolved around two different views of what fundamentally forms personal identity.

“Let me recall the terms of the confrontation: on one side, identity as *sameness* (Latin *idem*, German *Gleichheit*, French *mêmeté*); on the other identity as *selfhood* (Latin *ipse*, German *Selbstheit*, French *ipséité*)” (Ricoeur 1992: 116).

Now sameness and selfhood are not the same and the difference needs to be considered especially when one is seeking to understand identity with regards to permanence over time. It is exactly this permanence over time that has been at the centre of the philosophical debate with regards to identity. The debate sought the criteria by which one can judge if person X is the same person today as she or he was yesterday and will be tomorrow? This question formed the central question of the philosophical debate on personal identity.

The debate in the past revolved around the two mentioned possibilities for establishing personal identity through time.

8.3.1.1 Personal identity and sameness (*idem*)

Sameness as identity can be subdivided into two different qualities namely numerical

identity and qualitative identity. Firstly, **numerical identity** is where identity denotes oneness and is contrary to plurality. Therefore sameness as numerical identity is the possibility of identifying somebody as the same because x number of physical or non-physical attributes can be re-identified as being the same x number of times. The use of identity photos in passports and identification documents is based on this idea of identity as numerical sameness. At the passport control the officer looks at the eyes, nose and ears of the person on the photo as well as the person standing in front of him / her to see if they are the same. The officer looks for numerical identification.

In the second place there is **qualitative identity**, which is extreme resemblance (Ricoeur 1992:116). This is when two people are wearing the same clothes and are so similar that they are interchangeable without semantic loss. These two components of identity as sameness are irreducible to one another. It is only when time and the permanence of sameness in time comes into the question of re-identification that the two complement each other. As time progresses, hesitation can come into the re-identification of same. Then the extreme resemblance between two or more occurrences can be introduced to reinforce the numerical identity (Ricoeur 1992:116). If the passport photo is a rather old photo the re-identification of the person can become difficult.

In other words with the progress of time this re-identification becomes more and more difficult that there can be no proof without doubt that person X^1 today is the same as person X^2 50 years ago. To overcome this doubt the idea of *uninterrupted continuity* was introduced. Uninterrupted continuity within the notion of identity is the continuity between the first and the last stage of the developed of what one considers to be the same individual (Ricoeur 1992:117). How can uninterrupted continuity be proven? It seems that something needs to be found within the substance of the person that does not change with time to be able to prove without a doubt the sameness between X^1 and X^2 50 years later. Sameness is extremely difficult to prove with regards to permanence over time.

I will introduce a story of a young man (Sipho) to accompany the reflection on the development in the understanding of personal identity.

An accompanying story: A young man (Sipho) proposes to a young woman (Sibongile) and they plan to get married very soon. Sipho and Sibongile were both very active in an Anglican youth group. Sipho was also an active member of the United Democratic Movement. He found great inspiration in Black liberation theology which gave him hope and courage to get involved in the liberation struggle. Shortly before the wedding day young Sipho is taken captive during the

state of emergency and disappears for 15 years. He returns to a New South Africa to marry the woman he proposed to 15 year prior.

The 15 years that Siphon was gone have certainly changed him. The years have changed the way he looks. Sibongile would like to know if Siphon is the same man who proposed to her 15 years ago. Personal identity as sameness (*idem*) would argue Siphon is the same man if there are certain characteristics that Sibongile can use to re-identify Siphon, in other words if there are certain attributes that are still the same today as 15 years ago or at least an extreme resemblance. What Sibongile is looking for is something (uninterrupted continuity) that can tell her that this man she once loved and was prepared to spend the rest of her life with is still the same.

8.3.1.2 Personal identity as selfhood (*ipse*)

The question that came out of personal identity as sameness is: Is there something that transcends time on which identity can be based? Personal identity as selfhood seems to be able to transcend time and thus be a basis from which to judge personal identity.

There are two models of permanence over time which can be connected to the question “who” as well as to the question “what”. The two models are *character* and *keeping one’s word* (Ricoeur 1992:118).

For Ricoeur the character model expresses the almost complete mutual overlapping of the problematic *idem* and *ipse* while faithfulness to oneself in keeping one’s word marks the extreme gap between the permanence of the self and that of the same (Ricoeur 1992:118).

Sibongile fell in love with Siphon, she loved the way he walked and talked and she could listen for hours to what he said. She was amazed at the way in which he understood and interpreted the world. Sibongile was in love with Siphon’s character. She could identify him from far by the way he walked. If she read something in the local news letter she immediately could tell if Siphon had written it. Sibongile had many things by which she could identify Siphon.

8.3.1.2.1 Selfhood as character

“By “character” I understand the set of distinctive marks which permit the reidentification of a human individual as being the same. By the descriptive features that will be given, the individual compounds numerical identification and qualitative identity, uninterrupted continuity and permanence in time. In this way, the sameness of the person is designated emblematically”. (Ricoeur 1992:119)

Character designates a set of lasting dispositions by which a person is recognised over time. In this way character has the ability to constitute the limit point where the *ipse* becomes indiscernible from the *idem* (Ricoeur 1992:121). What is the temporal disposition of character that makes this possible?

The first notion that Ricoeur describes that makes this possible is habit. Habit exists over time in double sense namely that of habit already acquired and habit being formed. “Now these two features have an obvious temporal significance: habit gives history to character, but this is a history in which sedimentation tends to cover over the innovation which preceded it, even to the point of abolishing the later” (Ricoeur 1992:121). It is this sedimentation which gives character the permanence over time that makes the overlapping of *ipse* and *idem* possible. It makes overlapping possible, but it does not destroy the difference between the two. “Each habit formed in this way, acquired and become a lasting disposition, constitutes a *trait* - a character trait, a distinctive sign by which a person is recognized, reidentified as the same - character being nothing other than the set of these distinctive signs” (Ricoeur 1992:121). Sibongile could identify Siphoh by the way he walked and spoke or wrote - his character traits. Siphoh’s selfhood (character) was the same today, yesterday and tomorrow and it was in this character that Sibongile fell in love with.

There is also the notion of acquired identification where the other enters into the composition of the same. Siphoh identified himself with certain values and norms of the liberation struggle and black theology. The struggle and theology played an important part in who he was. It formed him as he identified with the ideas and values of the struggle and the liberated consciousness found in black theology.

“To a large extent, in fact, the identity of a person or a community is made up of these identifications with values, norms, ideals, models, and heroes, in which the person or the community recognizes itself” (Ricoeur 1992:121).

This identification with heroic figures or values is an incorporation of the other into oneself. This brings with it an element of loyalty and fidelity into character as the character seeks to maintain the self over time. It is within this aspect of loyalty that the two poles of identity *ipse* and *idem* accord with each other. One cannot consider the sameness (*idem*) of a person with regard to values, norms, ideal, models and heroes without also considering the selfhood (*ipse*) of the person.

In summary: character gives to the question of identity some stability. Character is created from acquired habits and identifications with certain norms, values and heroes. The test for identity is: can Siphoh be re-identified as the same person? Can Sibongile find enough character traits, habits, values in Siphoh’s character that she

loved and which have certain permanence, an uninterrupted continuity that she is prepared to marry this man?

This overlapping of *ipse* and *idem* is not complete, so that one should give up all attempts to distinguish between them.

“The dialectic of innovation and sedimentation, underlying the acquisition of a habit, and the equally rich dialectic of otherness and internalization, underlying the process of identification, are there to remind us that character has a history which it has contracted, one might say, in the twofold sense of the word “contraction”: abbreviation and affection. It is then comprehensible that the stable pole of character can contain a narrative dimension, as we see in the uses of the term “character” identifying it with the protagonist in a story. What sedimentation has contracted, narration can redeploy” (Ricoeur 1992:122).

8.3.1.2.2 Selfhood as keeping one’s word

There is a difference between the permanence of character over time and keeping one’s word over time. It can be seen that keeping one’s word is a denial of change and therefore a challenge to time. In other words even if the desire or the inclination should change one would remain faithful to one’s word which was given in the past.

Sipho has changed and many things have happened to him in those 15 years in which he was separated from Sibongile. Experiences that have shaped and changed his character to such an extent that re-identification becomes difficult. Is Sipho bound to his word? Or is Sibongile bound by her promise to marry Sipho?

“This new manner of opposing the sameness of character to the constancy of the self in promising opens an interval of sense which remains to be filled in” (Ricoeur 1992:124).

This interval of sense is opened by the polarity of two models of permanence over time.

It is here in this twofold sense of sameness - sameness as consistency of character over time and sameness as faithfulness to a promise - that mediation is sought within the temporal. Ricoeur believes that narrative can mediate in this interval as it oscillates between the two limits. The two limits for Ricoeur are:

- 1) the lower limit where permanence in time expresses the confusion of *idem* and *ipse* and
- 2) the upper limit where *ipse* is identity without the aid of *idem* (Ricoeur 1992:124).

Thus the only way that Sibongile can understand the change that has taken place in Sipho’s life is if mediation takes place in which he tells the story of these 15 years. The

story is the only way that Sibongile can connect the Siphos she once knew to the man 15 years later.

8.3.2 Narrative understanding of self /personal identity.

The question of identity seems to revolve around the three questions: What, Who and Why. What is person X doing? Who is person X and Why is person X doing what s/he is doing? Is person X the same today as s/he was 20 years ago, and **what** is there that connects the two? In the previous section Ricoeur introduced the idea of character as being able to connect the two questions *who* and *what*. Character for Ricoeur is the stable pole of identity as it not only expresses sameness, but also selfhood. The character has a history in which she/he has acquired certain dispositions, habits and identified values and norms, therefore character needs to be understood within the context of this narrative history. Siphos character cannot be understood separate from his history. The way he walks he learnt from his friends at school, the values he believes in he discovered in books and his activities in the liberation struggle. Siphos can tell the story of each habit acquired and each value identified with.

This narrative history takes us back to the narrative understanding of action which I reflected upon in (8.2 Narrative and human Action). Ricoeur moves from the action to the character who is the conscious subject of the action. The action receives coherence and unity as it is placed within the plot of a narrative history. Actions only make sense once the intentions of the agent are understood and these intentions are intrinsically part of the narrative history.

Ricoeur argues that the characters of agents can also be understood within the context of plots (Ricoeur 1992:143)

“It is indeed in the story recounted, with its qualities of unity, internal structure, and completeness which are conferred by emplotment, that the character preserves throughout the story an identity correlative to that of the story itself” (Ricoeur 1992:143)

Or as Crites puts it: “The self in its concreteness is indivisible, temporal, and whole, as it is revealed to be in the narrative quality of experience. Neither disembodied minds nor mindless bodies can appear in stories” (Crites1989).

Thus narrative for Ricoeur joins together the two processes of emplotment namely that of character and action. The questions who?, what? and why? form a chain that is none other than a story chain (Ricoeur 1992:146).

This concordance-discordance synthesis integrates the contingency of the event/action into the narrative necessity, which is only recognised retrospectively in the history of a personal life which is the same as the identity of a person (Ricoeur 1992:147).

In other words a person's character can only be understood within this dialectic of concordance-discordance.

In the section on personal identity (8.3.1) personal identity is based on *ipse* and *idem*. So what personal identity seeks is uninterrupted continuity. Strict identity means that "I am forever what ever I have been at any time for others - and I may at any time be called to answer for it – no matter how changed I may be now" (MacIntyre 1989:102).

The two limits that Ricoeur referred to in the previous section are expressed in this quotation of MacIntyre. Character in the previous section was one of the models which fulfilled this criterion of personal identity according to the lower limit, where permanence in time, expressed by the overlapping of *idem* and *ipse*, means that I am forever what ever I have been at any time for others. In other words selfhood (*ipse*) is the same (*idem*) through time. The narrative understanding of character, namely character as plot, gives character this unity (uninterrupted continuity) through time. This continuity is a narrative continuity of plot (concordance - discordance). The other model was keeping ones word where *ipse* is identity without the aid of *idem* which responded to the upper limit, where I have changed to such an extent that there is not much left of *idem* (sameness). In other words, where people might say to you: "Your character has changed completely!" Yet I can be called to answer for this change that has taken place. Ricoeur understood these two models as being the two limits of identity between which only a narrative understanding can mediate (Ricoeur 1992:124).

Sipho can give an account of what happened in those 15 years that has brought about the changes in his character. He can tell the story of the various events and experiences and how these experiences changed his life (character). He can tell the story of how he was in prison and then escaped and lived in exile and during this period how he was introduced to the writings of Malcolm X and how this changed the way he understood himself and the world.

Thus identity cannot be based on the continuity (sameness) or discontinuity of selfhood. "The self inhabits a character whose unity is given as the unity of a character" (MacIntyre 1989:102). This unity of character is a narrative unity – not only the narrative understanding of character, but also the narrative account that can be given of any drastic changes that have taken place in the character. Thus personal identity is narrative identity.

Narrative gives to life a certain unity and wholeness, or as Dilthey coined the concept *Zusammenhang des Lebens* (connectedness of life) (Ricoeur 1992:141).

MacIntyre argues that the narrative concept of identity requires two things:

1) the self is that which others justifiably take him /her to be in the course of living out the personal story. If personal identity is narrative identity then you are that character of your personal story. The self is the subject of a unique history which is his/her own and nobody else's and this personal history has its peculiar meaning (MacIntyre 1989:102-103). This also means that one is accountable for the actions and experiences which compose this narratable life. This narrative account links the self to different stages through time which causes the overlapping of selfhood with sameness.

“Thus personal identity is just that identity presupposed by the unity of character which the unity of narrative requires” (MacIntyre 1989:102).

2) The second aspect of the narrative concept of self is correlative. The self is not only accountable, but can also ask others to account for their narrative selves. The narrative account of the self is, to a certain extent, developed in this interaction of accountability. As humans in community give account of their actions and listen to the accounts of others their own stories develop. The accounts and explanations of what one did and the explanations and accounts that others give of my actions are the essential constituents of simplest form of narrative. It is in this interaction that actions become intelligible as selves discover meaning in the exchange of accounts. Without this accountability of the self, the trains of events that constitute these simple narratives would not be possible and without this accountability narratives as well as actions would lack the continuity required to make them intelligible.

A narrative account needs to be given of what has changed (discontinuity of selfhood), or why my character has so changed that it cannot be recognised as the same, to make any sense of the changes that have taken place.

Sibongile and Siphon used to understand the world, interpret their actions and the events of history within the dual communities of the activists and the Anglican youth group. In interaction with friends they made sense and justified their actions. The justifications of their actions in the struggle were based on what they believed to be the goal of the struggle. They identified with the goals, values and norms of the struggle.

This narrative account, to be intelligible, will need to incorporate an understanding of the teleological aim of life to make sense of the changes that have taken place. The teleological aim of life can be understood as that which the individual believes to be good and right.

Walter Benjamin, in an essay entitled “The Storyteller” describes the art of storytelling as the art of exchanging experiences, in other words practical wisdom; a wisdom which never fails to include estimations and evaluations that fall under the teleological and deontological categories (Ricoeur 1992:164).

In an above section (8.2) I have reflected on projections into the future, that the future is characterised by two aspects, namely the teleological expectations and the unexpected. These teleological expectations are in unity with the experiences of the past, which means that there is a narrative unity between the past and the teleological expectations. MacIntyre calls this unity the unity of the narrative quest (MacIntyre 1989:104). He uses the word ‘quest’ as in a quest there is some understanding of the good. It is this teleological quest for the good which helps the individual order and evaluate experiences as Benjamin says is intrinsically part of any narrative. The changes and the unexpected events that make up a life are ordered according to this teleological quest or the understanding of what compromises a good life.

Sipho changed in the 15 years in which he was away from Sibongile. When they were together they ordered their reality and their actions according to the teleology of the Christian (black) liberation struggle. For Sipho this *telos* changed in the 15 years, as he adopted a new teleological understanding which he found in the Muslim faith. Sibongile can understand this change that happened to Sipho if he tells her about the shift in his understanding about what is right and good.

To return finally to the questions of personal identity and narrative mediation between the two limits:

“Where, finally are we to locate narrative identity along this spectrum of variations extending from the pole of selfhood as sameness belonging to character to the pole of pure selfhood of self-constancy? The answer to this question would appear to have already been given: narrative identity stands between the two: in narrativizing character, the narrative returns to it the movement abolished in acquired dispositions, in the sediment of identification-with. In narrativizing the aim of the true life, narrative identity gives it the recognizable feature of character loved or respected. Narrative identity makes the two ends of the chain link up with one another: the permanence in time of character and that of self-constancy” (Ricoeur 1992:165-166).

In conclusion I agree with MacIntyre that personal identity must be understood in relation to narrative, intelligibility, and accountability (MacIntyre 1989:104).

From the above, I can argue that in order to understand the self, memory is primary, as

understanding is primarily recollection (Freeman 1993:29). It is only from the narrative of the past that one can identify character, style, plot, values, norms and the telos of the personal narrative and thus make predictions and anticipations about the future. If certain unexpected event does occur this can force the self to reinterpret the past, but he/she will be able to give an account of this re-interpretation. "... the history one tells, via memory, assumes the form of a narrative of the past that charts the trajectory of how one's self came to be" (Freeman 1993:33).

Sipho could tell Sibongile his story of the 15 years and how these years changed his character. He did this because of his faithfulness to his promise. A certain understanding of the value of promises made them keep their promise to each other and made them accountable to each other for the changes that had taken place.

Summary: Narrative understanding of human existence

1. The character of the agent of an action needs to be understood in the context of narrative.
2. The subject of an action is thus a narrative subject.
3. Narrative understanding of a character mediates between the two limits of personal identity (identity as the continuity (sameness) of selfhood and identity as selfhood without continuity).
4. Human existence is essentially narrative.
5. Memory is primary in understanding the self.
6. Human lives are texts (narratives) of lives, in other words literary artefacts.

8.4 Social setting of narrative

I have in the process of discovering a narrative understanding of personal identity reflected upon the narrative understanding of human action, character, agency, subject and teleology. In this section of the study I will reflect on the social construction of narratives. The intelligibility of personal identity narrative or the narrative in which human action is understood is based on the narratives in which they are set. These narratives in which actions and personal identity are set are not constructed in isolation, but are socially constructed. The narratives in which human identity and actions are set are the narratives of a community, tradition and context. Sipho and Sibongile could make sense of Sipho's activities in the liberation struggle, because these actions were set within the context of the story of liberation. It was the story of the liberation that made these actions meaningful. Sipho identified with the story of liberation and thus his identity narrative found meaning once it was understood in the liberation story. Sipho's character (identity narrative) is not something he created himself as he was only a co-

author of this narrative together with the Anglican youth group, the liberation movement, the South African context, Sibongile, his parents and his traditional roots amongst others. Siphos identity narrative is co-created as it is an interwoven tapestry of all these different stories.

Crites argues that there are different types of narrative/stories, namely sacred and mundane stories, in which humanity co-creates its identity narratives and creates an understanding of reality.

8.4.1 Sacred stories

Sacred stories are stories that lie deep in the consciousness of cultures, so that in a sense they form consciousness (Crites 1989:69). The cultures are not necessarily always aware of these stories, as they cannot be directly told because they live in a culture. These are stories where the meaning of the story is passed on in silence (Wittgenstein), but comes to us in the form of art, history, tradition and philosophy (Gadamer). Crites calls them sacred “because man’s sense of self and world is created through them” (Crites 1989:70).

For a story to be told it needs to be placed into a context. This context does not have to exist it can also be an imagined context.

“For the sacred story does not transpire within a conscious world. It forms the very consciousness that projects a total world horizon, and therefore informs the intentions by which actions are projected into the world. The style of these actions dances to its music” (Crites 1989:71).

8.4.2 Mundane stories

The mundane stories are the stories that pass between people when they tell each other where they have been, what they have done, etcetera. These stories find their setting within the world of consciousness. The mundane stories are thus also the stories that people use to make sense of the world of consciousness or to teach their children the “ways of the world”(Crites 1989:71). Mundane stories are the stories we tell each other to give account of our actions. They are the stories of our lives that make up our characters / identity narratives.

Between the mundane and sacred stories there is a distinction without there being a total separation. “...all a people’s mundane stories are implicit in its sacred story, and every mundane story takes soundings in the sacred story” (Crites 1989:71). It is in our mundane stories that sometimes the sacred story resonates.

The experiencing consciousness is what mediates between the sacred and the mundane stories. "For consciousness is moulded by the sacred story to which it awakens, and in turn it finds expression in the mundane stories that articulate its sense of reality"(Crites 1989:72).

The individual consciousness is moulded by the sacred story into which it awakens. The individual is born into a culture/ tradition with its own sacred stories.

In the previous sections the study took from narrative the idea of plot to understand actions and character. I concluded that life is essentially narrative.

Yet this narrative of life is not an artistic production with perfect articulation and the coherence of the narrative of a fixed script where one knows the outcome, but life is rather rudimentary. Crites argues that life also imitates art as the individual drama is not isolated, but placed within a tapestry of stories and dramas. These stories are taught to the individual from infancy through the fairy tales and other stories that are told that help the child to understand himself or herself and understand the reality around him /her. Thus the child develops an understanding of himself / herself via the stories that are told. It is via these stories that we interpret our actions and our selves. In a sense our narrative identity is not only our story, but is determined by our social history. We have a certain social identity (MacIntyre 1989:105).

Stories we hear, dramas we see performed, the films we watch and the sacred stories that are absorbed without being directly told all shape our inner story of experience. It is from this tapestry of stories that the individual stories imbibe a sense of meaning. These stories affect the form of the individual's experience as well as the narrative of his or her action. A person cannot answer the question: "what am I to do?" without first answering the question "of what story or stories do I find myself a part?" (MacIntyre 1989:101). Thus according to MacIntyre there is no way that we can understand any society as well as our own except through the stock of stories which constitute its original dramatic resources.

The dramatic resources are the resources humanity uses to interpret themselves, to interpret experiences and to interpret each other's actions and experiences. In other words this tapestry of stories, which is made up of both sacred and mundane stories, forms what Geertz calls a *world view* – a setting in which our narratives make sense. A world view is a "picture" which a group shares "of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order"(Hopewell 1987:55).

The community over time develops an idea of how things are and what is going on, yet these world views are fragile and incomplete constructions of reality and can be compared to the paradigms in science which only hold as long as they are not challenged. No world view is irrefutable. A crisis can challenge the world view of individuals as well as the world view of a community or society. Siphon understood himself as well as his world through the stories of the liberation struggle from a Christian liberation theological point of view (world view) - a world view that he shared with his comrades in the movement and in the youth group, a world view that was created in this community of comrades. Siphon's world view was challenged in the 15 years in which he was away from his friends and comrades and was introduced to a new set of stories by which to interpret his world. These new stories were set within the context of radical black consciousness from a Muslim, Malcolm X's, perspective and they helped him re-interpret his reality and thus create/construct a new world view with his brothers he found in the Muslim faith.

Geertz describes this link between crisis and world view in the following way:

“The strange opacity of certain empirical events, the dumb senselessness of intense or inexorable pain, and the enigmatic unaccountability of gross inequity all raise the uncomfortable suspicion that perhaps the world, and hence man's life in the world, has no genuine order at all - no empirical regularity, no emotional form, no moral coherence. And the religious response to this suspicion is in each case the same: the formulation, by means of symbols, of an image of such a genuine order of the world which will account for, even celebrate, the perceived ambiguities, puzzles and paradoxes of human experience” (Hopewell 1987:56)

I am aware of the differentiation that some anthropologists make between *world view* and *ethos*. I will interpret world view as the interpretation of the universe that is socially constructed within a group, while ethos reflects the values and dispositions that a social group maintains.

8.4.3 Different narrative settings

Crites argued that life also imitates art (Crites 1989:79). The drama of life is not as coherent as a stage drama played according to a fixed script, yet it seeks meaning and intelligibility from the dramatic resources available to the social group. These dramatic resources often include the written plays, films and novels we read.

If life stories and the stories of personal identity are fictitious and if life imitates art, then to understand life stories one can make use of the literary tools available to characterise

and understand life stories. I will make use of Western literary tools as these are the only tools available to me as I was educated within the Western tradition.

I will reflect on the dramatic resources that a community uses to repair or reconstruct the socially constructed settings, in the context of a crisis which threatens the setting/world view. The crisis that I will reflect on is somebody being diagnosed with terminal cancer. What are the different stories friends and family tell the patient to make sense of his/her crisis? In the Bible there is the story of a very similar situation namely the friends of Job who came up with all sorts of stories to make sense of what was happening to Job in order to protect their world view which was being threatened by Job's crisis.

Hopewell uses four different narrative genres as the four basic dramatic resources used to construct a world view, namely: comedy, romance, tragedy, irony. These four genres can be placed on a circle like the four points of a compass in a clockwise order. The structure of any literary work or any story we construct can be found on this circle, sometimes between two points (Hopewell 1987:58). I will outline some characteristics of each of these literary genres based on Hopewell's understanding of them (Hopewell 1987:58-62).

8.4.3.1 Comic tales

The essential element of a comic tale is not that they are funny, but that they have happy endings. A comic tale moves towards the direction of the solution of the problem. The problem, in a comic tale, is generally solved by overcoming a misunderstanding that existed and caused the problem. For example the comic tales told to the cancer patient are tales of people who recovered from cancer and who overcame the problem. The friends tell these comic tales to convince the patient that the fear that she/he has of the illness is an illusion (misunderstanding) and that it can be overcome and conquered. The comic tale counters the crisis of cancer by re-interpreting cancer as a problem that can easily be overcome and that to see cancer as this terrible disease is a misunderstanding. The friends of Job in their attempt to keep their world view in place, not allowing it to be threatened by the crises Job was going through, told Job that he must be misunderstanding something and that if he solves this misunderstanding things will be repaired.

8.4.3.2 Romantic tales

The romantic tales are similar to the comic tales in that they also foresee a solution to

the problem, but the road to recovery is not by a new understanding of the situation but through a heroic adventure. The crisis is seen as a challenge to go on a spiritual adventure seeking God's will and God's presence within the crisis. This is an adventure that will take the hero on a journey where he/she will have to face evil which will want to prevent him/her from reaching the goal, but in the end the hero will be victorious. The fight with cancer is seen as a journey where deeper spiritual truths can be discovered about suffering and God. It is a journey which in the end will be victorious even if there are certain set backs on the road.

8.4.3.3 Tragic tales

Tragedy unlike comedy and romance portrays the decay of life and there is an element of sacrifice of self before resolution can be found. In tragedy there is also a hero/heroine, but the hero/heroine does not conquer, but submits to the harsh authenticity of the world. The tragic hero/heroine is obedient to the Other and submits to the Other (God or world order). The story of Christ is a tragic story in the sense that His incarnation and crucifixion is a story of submission to the will of God and the harsh reality of sin in the world.

The tragic world: "It is a world that is separate from us who inhabit it; it will not yield to our desires and fantasies no matter how desperately we need it to do so. This means that in tragedy, recognition - anagnorisis, the banishing of ignorance - is a major goal. We question the tragic universe to discover its laws, since they are what we must live by. The worlds of comedy and romance, by contrast, are shaped by our hearts' desires and in history we are busy remaking the world to suit ourselves" (Hopewell 1987:60).

"The tragic hero is not cured but saved, by an identification with the transcendental pattern of tragic life" (Hopewell 1987:61).

8.4.3.4 Ironic tales

In ironic tales, good people come to the fall and good plans turn sour. It challenges any form of heroic or purposive interpretation of reality and life. Life is unjust and cannot be justified, not even by transcendental realities. The meaninglessness of life comes out very clearly in these tales.

Our personal narratives are set within these dramatic narratives which give our personal stories meaning, purpose and in which their plot can intelligibly unfold. These personal narratives can be understood by setting them within two of these narrative genres, for example comic-ironies or tragic-romances, but they cannot be set in directly opposing

genres such as comedy and tragedy.

It seems as if there are again two different sets of stories, namely the inner story of experience and the stories through which our inner stories achieve coherence. These two sets of stories cannot be so clearly differentiated as they interpenetrate each other to form a virtual identity.

Ricoeur reflects on this process of interpenetration between literary stories and our personal stories of experience. It is because of the elusive character of real life that we need the help of fiction to organize life retrospectively (Ricoeur 1992:162). All stories are thus fictitious constructions.

For Ricoeur there are some fundamental differences between life and fiction. Firstly he sees that life does not have a clear ending nor beginning as fictions have, because both our birth and our death are not really re-collectable from memory. Secondly real life experiences are entangled in the experiences of other people (*in Geschichten verstrickt*) around the individual. "We enter upon a stage which we did not design and we find ourselves part of an action that was not of our making" (MacIntyre 1989:99). In a sense we are not really the author of our own life story, but only the co-author in that we can give meaning to events and settings that we did not create ourselves, but into which we were placed (Ricoeur 1992:161-162).

Ricoeur argues that there is a dialectic between literary narratives and life experiences. "This dialectic reminds us that the narrative is part of life before being exiled from life in writing; it returns to life along the multiple paths of appropriation..." (Ricoeur 1992:163).

These social dramatic resources into which we are born give the individual dramas of experience meaning in that they give a definite sense of how the scenes (events) are connected.

"Both the content and the form of experience are mediated by symbolic systems which we are able to employ simply by virtue of awakening within a particular culture in which those symbolic systems are the common currency. Prevailing narrative forms are among the most important of such symbolic systems" (Crites 1989:79).

MacIntyre argues that it is not only the content and form that is mediated through the stories, but that in the telling of stories we are educated into the virtues of the specific culture or tradition (MacIntyre 1989:102).

"But the way we remember, anticipate, and even directly perceive, is largely social. A sacred story in particular infuses experience at its root, linking a man's

individual consciousness with ultimate powers and also with the inner lives of those with whom he shares a common soil” (Crites 1989:80).

”The sacred story in particular, with its musical vitality, enables him to give the incipient drama of his experience full dramatic dimensions and allows the incipient musicality of his style to break forth into real dance and song” (Crites 1989:81).

The critical concern of Foucault needs to be incorporated into this section - that human beings in their history force unity and wholeness in the fictionalization (construction) of the past experiences. I would like to emphasise the need for an awareness and an appreciation of the discontinuities and raptures of life stories to be critical of the totalising narratives humanity forces on the past.

The individual’s identity narrative is thus not just the construction of a narrative by the social stories of the context, but an individual is also a conscious individual who needs to express him/herself by projecting various forms of action into the world.

Thus in summary: “to speak of the social construction of the self and of the narratives used to represent the self is not to claim that we are prisoners of history, mechanically determined by our conditioning.Nor is it to claim that we are endowed with the magical ability to stand wholly apart from history, gazing at what goes on as if we didn’t always already know. I prefer to say that while what I think and feel and do and say is surely a function of the time and place in which I live, and while it would surely be audacious if I thought otherwise, I also have the power - contingent, of course, on the conditions present, whether they are stultifying or liberating - to become conscious enough of my world to shape my destiny” (Freeman 1993:217).

Summary: Social setting of narrative

1. Individual identity narratives are set within the narratives of a specific culture or tradition thus our identity narratives as well as our interpretation of reality are social constructions.
2. The meaning of the individual narratives are to be found within these cultural narratives
3. The individual is not prisoner of these social constructions, but can within the dramatic resources of his/her context, to a certain extent, determine his/her own destiny.

8.5 Narrative and epistemology

In the section (4.3 The epistemological story of postmodernity) I reflected on various epistemological crises that occurred as the nostrums of modernity were eroded away and postmodernity was hailed in. I reflected on the thoughts of Wittgenstein, Popper, Kuhn, Husserl, Gadamer, Ricoeur and Habermas. In this section I will seek a narrative interpretation of postmodern epistemology.

Knowledge in postmodernity cannot be thought of beyond language and language cannot be seen separate from its cultural-social setting. Thus epistemology, as the search for knowledge and truth, cannot search beyond the scope of language and as the previous sections have shown not beyond the scope of narrative (metaphor). Knowledge is rooted in the narratives of the social context (culture) in which knowledge is sought. Halbfas argues that only in stories can truth be found. This is a truth which escapes the rationalised subject-object scheme of modernity (Halbfas 1977:61).

MacIntyre seeks to understand what it means to share a culture.

“It is to share schemata which are at one and the same time constitutive of and normative for intelligible action by myself and are also means for my interpretations of the actions of others. My ability to understand what you are doing and my ability to act intelligibly (both to myself and to others) are one and the same ability” (MacIntyre 1989:138).

An individual may come across a totally different schemata of understanding and interpreting action and reality. In the global village this is very common as people of different cultures meet and thus different schemata meet. This is what creates an epistemological crisis when two conflicting or alternative schemata confront each other. The schemata of the other may bring about new insights which will disrupt the individual's present schemata of understanding/interpreting reality. A person is driven by two ideals namely truth and intelligibility and the other's schemata might give a more intelligible account of reality or a more “truthful” account and thus questioning the schemata of the individual. This epistemological crisis can only be resolved by a construction of a new narrative that gives account of how the person could have held onto certain beliefs and how these beliefs have misled her /him (MacIntyre 1989:140). MacIntyre thus suggests that epistemological process consists “in the construction and reconstruction of more adequate narratives and forms of narrative and that epistemological crises are occasions for such reconstruction” (MacIntyre 1989:142).

MacIntyre defends this suggestion by referring to myths as the earliest form of understanding of primitive people and that in the development of children, fairy tales

play an important role in the way a child creates order from the chaos in his /her inner life. These fairy tales help the child to order and interpret his/her reality. As the child grows older he or she goes through various epistemological crises exchanging fairy tales for other narratives to interpret his/her experiences and reality. This is not only true of children, but for the whole of humanity as we learn our beliefs and as Martha Nussbaum would argue, also our emotions, not through propositional philosophical arguments, but mainly through stories. Stories express the structure and the dynamics of the various beliefs (Nussbaum 1989:217).

In an epistemological crisis the person realises that the schema of interpretation which he /she has trusted thus far has broken down. This means that human search for knowledge, truth and understanding is always within a certain tradition, a tradition which gives the dramatic resources for interpretation and understanding.

However a tradition itself can be going through an epistemological crisis. A tradition, with its resources for interpreting and understanding reality, is confronted with challenges and scepticism and if these challenges increase the tradition will struggle to withstand the scepticism. In this chapter I have discussed how the nostrums of modernity slowly gave way to the pressures of postmodernity. Modernity as a philosophic tradition was no longer capable of withstanding the pressures of post-modern thought and it found itself within an epistemological crisis.

MacIntyre argues that a tradition is constituted by a conflict of interpretations which itself has a history of susceptible of rival interpretations (MacIntyre 1989:146). For example the Christian tradition is constituted by a continuous argument about what it means to be a Christian. Thus for MacIntyre any tradition - be it religious, political, intellectual - involves an epistemological debate as a necessary feature of their conflicts (MacIntyre 1989:146). A tradition therefore does "not only embody the narrative of an argument, but it is only to be recovered by an argumentative retelling of that narrative which will itself be in conflict with other argumentative retellings" (MacIntyre 1989:146). It is in the narratives of tradition that reason, knowledge and understanding are to be found. These traditions are confronted with epistemological crises and thus they have to undergo a revolution as the narratives are reconstructed.

In the previous sections, reflecting on narrative understanding of identity and action could only be understood within the context of dramatic narratives (concordance - discordance). Thus according to MacIntyre natural science as a human activity can be "a rational form of inquiry only if the writing of a true dramatic narrative - that is, of history understood in a particular way - can be a rational activity" (MacIntyre 1989:159).

Consequently science can only be understood in terms of historical reason.

If a certain scientific tradition comes into an epistemological crisis and is thrown over by a new theory, a paradigm shift occurs. The two paradigms are connected to each other by a historical narrative which explains the change. The new paradigm provides a narrative that not only explains and understands the object of inquiry better but also provides an intelligible narrative account of why the previous paradigm is no longer acceptable. Certain epistemological ideals and values are carried over from one paradigm to the next.

It becomes clear that any form of knowledge and the search for knowledge, no matter from which tradition – be it human science or natural science, can only be seen as being rational if it is understood within its historical narrative.

Summary: Epistemology and narrative

1. The search for knowledge is not done in a vacuum, but from within historical narratives.
2. These historical narratives are set in specific cultures and traditions
3. Therefore knowledge is set within the historical narratives of a tradition and cannot be seen apart from it.

8.6 Narrative and truths

In this section I will be reflecting on narrative's ability to respond to humanity's need for transcendental truths, be it God or some other truth that transcends the plurality and relativism that is so prevalent in postmodernity.

Postmodernity has raised numerous questions. Although these questions might still be part of a modern mind set they are very real questions, such as: Is there a reality that can be discovered which is not fashioned or constructed? If individuals (personal identity), reality and knowledge are all narrative, is everything fiction or is there fact as well? In this section I will reflect on narrative's ability to respond to these questions.

Richard Niebuhr has suggested that there are two different types of history (stories) - external history and internal history (Niebuhr 1989:29).

8.6.1 The external history (an analytical story)

Niebuhr's external history can be described as the story of natural science, human

sciences, metaphysics, etcetera. He describes it as the story of observation and discovery of occurrences from a safe distance (Niebuhr 1989:29). The tools of external history can be described as the tools of analogy. Analogy is traditionally the tool used by the metaphysician on his or her voyage of discovery. What drives the metaphysician, just like the scientist, is a belief that he/she can discover truths and facts about reality. Each step along the way of analogy is one step closer to the truth. This journey of discovery is set within a narrative history as discussed in the previous section 8.4. The journey of the scientist is set within a scientific tradition and thus a history of epistemological crisis. The crisis is solved by the re-writing of the scientific narrative. Yet the new narrative, although it gives a better (more intelligible) interpretation of whatever is investigated, is only temporary until it is refuted and a new paradigm comes into being to challenge the old paradigm. Thus ultimate discovery is postponed indefinitely (Lash 1989:117). The metaphysician can easily be discouraged or become a sceptic as true knowledge (truth) will always elude him/her. Truth is thus relative to the paradigm and the context in which it is found or in which it is held to be true.

8.6.2 Internal history (a metaphorical story)

Niebuhr argues that there is also the internal history where one “ponders the path of one’s own destiny to deal with the why and whence and whither of one’s own existence” (Niebuhr 1989:29). Metaphor is the tool used by the storyteller of internal history. The storyteller is conscious of his / her responsibility to help his/her audience to shape their lives, experiences and themselves (Lash 1989:117). The storyteller of the internal story is not discouraged like the scientist, but easily falls prey to the temptation of constructing a world according to his/her own whims and fancies and thus creating an ideology or an illusion.

Habermas already indicated the danger of social constructions of realities as power plays a too important role in these constructions. Who constructs the realities in which we live? Who dominates the narratives by which we interpret ourselves and our world? How can one protect oneself from illusion?

If these are the two paths to “truth” and knowledge they are both not very attractive as the one tends towards scepticism and the other towards illusion.

Are these the only two alternatives left in a postmodern world: 1) the road of scepticism and resignation of the analogist or 2) the social construction of reality with the dangers of ideology, or narratives without metaphor and thus meaningless narratives?

Or is there a meaning in the world that is not fashioned (constructed) but found - an

ultimate meaning which transcends human construction (Lash 1989:119)?

Ultimate meaning lies beyond the scope of language and is found in sacred stories that cannot be directly told (Crites) or is meaning passed on in art, poetry, history (Gadamer) via metaphor. Humanity uses these sacred stories to interpret and fashion our inner stories.

In this question, whether there is meaning which is not fashioned (constructed) but found, the two stories collide with each other as the question about the existence of ultimate meaning is essentially metaphysical (analytical). Lash argues that reflections on metaphor raise questions that cannot be answered metaphorically, because anthropomorphism cannot be anthropomorphically transcended (Lash 1989:119).

The inner history raises questions about ultimate meaning and thus questions about God and these questions, in the past, were sought to be answered by the way of analogy.

Lash uses Aquinas' "way of analogy" in his reflection about God to explain the function of analogy, in other words the external story, in reflections about the transcendental. Analogy cannot prove or disprove the existence of any transcendental reality. I would like to bring in Wittgenstein's analytic philosophy in the Tractatus to substantiate this point. Analogy cannot prove the existence of any transcendental reality nor can it disprove the existence of a transcendental reality. Transcendental realities are beyond the grammar of analytical language. Wittgenstein says language limits what we can speak about and the rest we must pass over in silence (Wittgenstein).³

"We cannot pretend to offer a description of a transcendent object without betraying its transcendence, "(Lash 1989:128).

Certain things need to be left for inner history or the story of metaphor to say. Metaphor functions in the midst of differences - it says what it says in a metaphorical way in the midst of the ruins of literal sense.

Thus in the midst of analytical deconstruction of language which brings it to the limits of language, metaphor speaks metaphorically about that which is beyond the limits of language.

In the internal history one can go beyond the limits of language and construct transcendent realities, but herein lies the dangers of ideology. Metaphor can tell stories of ultimate meaning and it can tell stories of God, but it must constantly remind itself that it is metaphor and not science (analogy) that is telling the story.

It is thus important to bring in this continuous critical element from the sciences (which

³ "7 What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" Wittgenstein Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus

themselves are narrative constructions within their specific traditions).

The point that Lash is making is that external history sets critical boundaries for the inner history (metaphor).

Summary: Narrative and transcendental truth

1. There are two paths to knowledge and truth – the path of analogy or the path of metaphor. The one is more at home in the external history of science and metaphysics; the other more in the internal history in the search for meaning.
2. Science in the postmodern has become very aware of its limits
3. Metaphor has become aware of the dangers of ideological construction of realities
4. The two stories need each other to keep a critical check on each other

8.7 Summary: Narrative response to postmodernity

1. For human actions to be intelligible they need to be placed within a narrative historical setting.
2. Personal identity is only intelligible within the context of the personal identity narrative which can mediate between the two limits of identity (identity as the continuity (sameness) of selfhood and identity as selfhood without continuity).
3. Identity narratives are social constructions
4. All human knowledge is set within the historical narratives of tradition.
5. The two paths to knowledge - the path of analogy and the path of metaphor – need to keep a critical check on each other.

9. POSTMODERNITY'S CHALLENGES TO THEOLOGY

Postmodernity, as described in the study, challenges theology in fundamental ways as theology seeks new ways in which to respond to the challenges that the church faces today.

Postmodernity has closed certain doors to theology, for example the door of universal absolute truths that are discovered objectively in abstract theories. Thus the church cannot resort to universal absolute truths that reach beyond the boundaries of the church to non-church members. Although certain doors have been closed, others have been reopened such as a new emphasis on spirituality, the mystical and the emotional aspects of religion. Great new opportunities have been opened, since the demise of the scientific fundamentalism of the objective and neutral rational, to symbolic and metaphorical understanding of God and ourselves (Pieterse 1993:16).

I discovered that truth, understanding and identity cannot be interpreted in isolation, but

are constructed in dialogue and in community. Therefore theology also can no longer be seen as an abstract science, but needs to be rooted within a context of the faith community as Moltmann says:

“Theologie ist eine Gemeinschaftsaufgabe: Daraus folgt, daß die theologische Wahrheit wesentlich und nicht nur zur Unterhaltung - dialogisch ist” (Moltmann 1995:14). “Theologie ist für mich keine kirchliche Dogmatik und keine Glaubenslehre, sondern Phantasie für das Reich Gottes in der Welt und für die Welt in Gottes Reich und darum immer und überall öffentliche Theologie, aber niemals und nirgendwo religiöse Ideologie der bürgerlichen und politischen Gesellschaft, auch nicht der so >>christlichen<<” (Moltmann 1995:15).

Truth is no longer found in abstract theories, but within the communities of faith, where these communities are in dialogue with each other, their faith’s tradition and their context, seeking the best possible pastoral action within the context of their community. Postmodernity also places more emphasis on practice and practical reasoning and this challenges theology to focus on its practices.

“Communities of faith are both communities of tradition and practical enactment, and their fundamental truth claims are embodied in the practical reasoning of purposeful pastoral activities” (Graham 1996:89). There is thus a basic movement from practice to theory and back to practice.

Major challenges of postmodernity to theology and church

1. The postmodern understanding that truth, Christian identity and Christian interpretation of reality are constructed within the community of faith as it struggles with the experiences of the context and its faith tradition.
2. The postmodern emphasis on practice.

10. NARRATIVE THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO POSTMODERNITY

10.1 Introduction

I have reflected on the story of postmodernity and how it developed from modernity. I have also reflected on narrative thinking as an appropriate response to postmodern thought as well as the church’s story with modernity and a brief description of the major challenges of postmodernity to theology. In this section I reflect on the possibility of incorporating narrative thought into theology, thus proposing a justification for the narrative theological orientation which I have adopted for this study.

“Narrative or story is a means of expression uniquely suited to theology...” (McClendon

1974:188).

Narrative is 'suited to theology' for a number of reasons which will be introduced in this section.

10.2 Narrative as a dominant genre in the Biblical as well as in confessional Christian witness.

The Bible does not only contain narratives about God and His people, but also contains other literary genres such as letters, poems, chronicles and prose, yet it would seem that narrative plays a dominant role within the Bible. The Biblical scholar Lohfink distinguishes three basic literary forms in the Biblical language namely: 1) *Argumentatio*, 2) *Appellatio* and 3) *Narratio*. (Weinrich 1977:47). He argues that *Narratio* (narrative) is dominant in the sense that it is determining. ".....die narrative Sprache grundlegend und bestimmend ist und alle nichtnarrativen Elemente nur sekundäre Funktion haben" (Weinrich 1977:47).

For some time scholars (Gerhard van Rad, Oscar Cullmann and G. Ernest Wright) have become aware of the importance of *Heilsgeschichte* (story of salvation) in Biblical theology. The core of Scripture is a set of salvation narratives which serve as the common denominator for the whole of Scripture (Stroup 1984:136).

Within the genre of Biblical narrative there is no uniformity as there are various different kinds of Biblical narratives such as the historical narrative, myth, sage, chronicle and parable to name just a few. Stroup gives two reasons why narrative is the dominant genre in Scripture: the one philosophical-sociological and the other theological (Stroup 1984:145).

The philosophical-sociological reason has been discussed in section (8.3.2 Narrative understanding of self/personal identity). Narrative embodies the shared memory and communal history of the faith community which binds the individuals into this community.

The second reason that Stroup offers is the theological understanding of Jewish - Christian faith as being *this worldly* and *historical*. "Redemption and salvation are not just images or ideas but realities which are understood to be rooted in events that happened in the past and realities which continue to unfold in the present and future" (Stroup 1984:146). Salvation is to be found within history in historical events, such as the Exodus from Egypt or the Crucifixion of Christ.

The story of God's salvation is a story that is intertwined with the history of people and the world. In this context of historical faith confession of faith is a confession of how

something that has happened in the past (Exodus, Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ) “lives” on today and that these past events have redemptive or transforming effects on the believer’s life today. This confession necessarily must take on a narrative form.

Dominant parts of the Bible are narrative, as the community (Israel / Early Church) confessed their faith in the historical God, who reveals himself within history.

This Christian-Jewish identity narrative is not only rooted in the Biblical narratives, but also in the narrative of their respective faith traditions. There is no gap between the historical redemptive event and the believer today, but rather a history/tradition that connects the two. In the faith tradition the historical events of Christ’s incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection have been interpreted and reinterpreted so that there is a continuous story found in tradition between the believer and the event.

10.2.1 Narrative and Torah

In the Jewish tradition the central confession around which their faith is built is the covenant between YAHWEH and the people of Israel. The covenant, as an event/action, has its setting within the historical account of the exodus from Egypt. Yet this covenant is not just something of the past, but is a living reality in the present for the Jewish community. “The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. It is not with our fathers that the Lord made this covenant, but with us, with all of us here today” Deut 5:2-3 (New International Version 1986:175). The life and faith of the Jewish faith community is bound to the narrative which accounts the salvific history of Israel’s covenant relationship with YAHWEH (Stroup 1984:147). This narrative appears in its abbreviated creed in Deuteronomy 26: 5-9:

“Then you shall declare before the Lord your God: “My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous. But the Egyptian mistreated us and made us suffer, putting us to hard labour. Then we cried out to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey;” (New International Version 1986:191).

Stroup argues that the above quoted text is not a narrative as such, as narrative is understood by Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, to require the presence of a story and a storyteller (Goldberg 1982:201). Narrative has a few generic features which

characterise most narrative forms that need to be taken into account. “There is always “movement”, “direction” or some form of “plot” in a narrative” (Stroup 1984:90). Or as Crites would understand narrative, as that which characterises human experience and emerges from the tensed unity of the modalities of time namely: past, present and future (Crites 1989:77). Narratives have a unity internal to their structure – a unity which moves and directs from what was to what will be.

The text in Deuteronomy 26 is thus not a narrative, but refers to the narrative of the exodus from Egypt, which forms the central narrative of the Pentateuch and the other narratives of the Pentateuch are theological expansions of this central narrative (Stroup 1984:148).

There are certain historical events which function as the basis of this central narrative, or creed of the Jewish faith.

The Jewish faith is not based on some philosophical, or metaphysical speculation about reality or a transcendental deity, but on concrete tangible historical events in which God’s relationship to Israel is revealed. The faith tradition refers to these specific historical events in their “collective past in which YAHWEH has been decisively and redemptively at work” (Stroup 1984:149). Therefore Israel can only confess their faith in the context of human history.

Thus narrative form as a genre is indispensable for a proper understanding of Jewish faith. If the Jewish community should ever be cut off from these narratives, it would not be able to survive (Stroup 1984:149). It is not that the faith community is called to remember the events and stories of the past, but that the community identifies with these events. Thus narrative plays a vital role in understanding Jewish theology and faith.

10.2.2 Narrative and the New Testament

In the New Testament narrative also plays a dominant role as Christian faith is based on the salvific events (Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection) in the history/narrative of Christ. I will argue that the central confession of the Christian faith community is summed up in 1 Cor 15:3-7:

“ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one normally born” (New International Version 1986:1011).

As in the text quoted from the Old Testament this text refers to certain events within history that form the basis of what the Christian community of faith confesses, without this narrative of Christ there would be nothing to confess. It is on these two fundamental narratives that the whole Bible is constructed. Stroup uses the Gospel according to Mark to illuminate the use of narrative in the Bible. He argues that the Gospel of Mark is essentially an identity narrative in a twofold sense, "It is a narrative that identifies who Jesus is and in so doing raises the questions of whether the reader is truly a disciple of him" (Stroup 1984:157). Stroup argues that the Gospel of Mark is an identity narrative about the identity of Christ as well as an identity narrative about the identity of the believer (disciple). What is important for Mark is that one cannot know the identity of Christ apart from the narrative of the Gospel. In a previous section I have reflected that identity of a person is always narrative identity, as only narrative can mediate between the two limits which make up identity. (8.3 Narrative understanding of human existence) In a similar manner the identity of Jesus merges with the events that make up the story of Jesus according to Mark.

I can conclude this section by arguing that narrative is essential for theology as it plays a vital role in understanding scriptures and in understanding who God and Christ is. The character of God is directly connected to the narratives of God in Scripture as well as the identity of Jesus as the Christ, which can only be discovered in the narratives of Jesus.

10.3 Narrative and experience, self and meaning

In the section (8.3 Narrative understanding of human existence) I reflected on the role that narrative plays in understanding experience, self and identity. I reflected on how the individual makes sense of his or her experiences by placing them in a narrative setting. Experiences, actions and events are only intelligible once they are placed within the historic (life story) narrative of the agent. Similarly human actions are only intelligible if understood within the context (setting) of the history of the agent's life. Yet the individual is not an isolated individual who constructs meaning for his/her experiences and actions in a vacuum, as the individual is not a solipsist, but makes sense of his /her reality (experiences and events) via the use of language. The language that the individual uses binds him/her to a tradition (history of the language used) as well as a community in which the language is used. The narrative that the individual constructs to understand his/her experiences is not constructed by himself/herself, but is a social construction by the narratives that make up the narratives of the community in which the individual exists as well as the history of the community (tradition).

Crites refers to these stories that we use to understand our reality as sacred stories (Crites 1989:70). The meaning and purpose of human existence is constructed from these sacred stories that exist within the communities and traditions in which humanity lives.

“The “religious dimension” of human experience is interpreted as having something to do with the narratives people recite about themselves or the narratives they use in order to structure and make sense out of the world” (Stroup 1984:72).

Thus I can argue that personal identity and the understanding of self and of experiences are only understood in the context of narrative and that these narratives are only understood in the context of the religious (meaning) narratives of the individual. From the above one can argue that a person’s autobiography, the way an individual understand and interprets his/her life, is an indication of the person’s religious story.

“McClendon suggest that theology “must be at least biography.” To that end the biographies or life-stories of specific individuals become the theologian’s primary material for investigating the meaning of the doctrines and confessional claims of Christian faith” (Stroup 1984:76).

Sallie MacFague argues that “Autobiographies give practical wisdom because they are the story of the engagement of a personality in a task, not of the task alone. It is this peculiar meshing of life and thought that is the heart of the matter with autobiographies and which is I believe, their importance for religious reflection” (Goldberg 1982:97).

The individual and his or her religious understanding cannot be understood apart from the personal identity narrative of the individual.

10.4 Narrative and the identity of community

Similarly the identity of a community such as a church (congregation) is based on the narratives the community uses to understand its collective experiences, events in history as well as dreams, hopes and plans for the future.

“A community is a group of people who have come to share a common past, who understand particular events in the past to be of decisive importance for interpreting the present, who anticipate the future by means of a shared hope, and who express their identity by means of a common narrative” (Stroup 1984:133).

Stroup goes on to say that what distinguishes a community from a mob is a common memory which expresses itself in the living traditions and institutions. The identity of a community is thus very similar to that of personal identity in that we can only understand the identity of a community, just like an individual, by listening to the narratives of the

community. Hopewell argues that a group of people cannot gather for religious purposes without “developing a complex network of signals, and symbols and conventions - in short, a subculture - that gains its own logic and then functions in a way peculiar to that group” (Hopewell 1987:5).

Webber calls this the “web of significance” and this web distinguishes one congregation from another (Hopewell 1987:46).

It is in the community that individuals find the narratives by which he/she finds meaning and understanding of their own reality. The Christian faith community would have at its centre the narratives of the Christian faith and it is with these narratives that individuals in these communities would then interpret their lives and realities.

Hopewell identifies three functions of narrative within a faith community such as the local congregation:

- 1) The congregation’s self-perception is primarily narrative in form.
- 2) The congregation’s communication among its members is primarily by story.
- 3) By its own congregating, the congregation participates in narrative structures of the world’s societies (Hopewell 1987:46).

To illustrate the second point that Hopewell makes he argues that human interaction with each other is narrative and as the congregation meets and tell stories they are in the process of fortifying the narratives of the congregation. The history and the story of the congregation is learnt via this narrative (story-telling) form. The third point that Hopewell makes is that a congregation’s stories are not unique, but are part of the stories that structure that society in which the congregation finds itself.

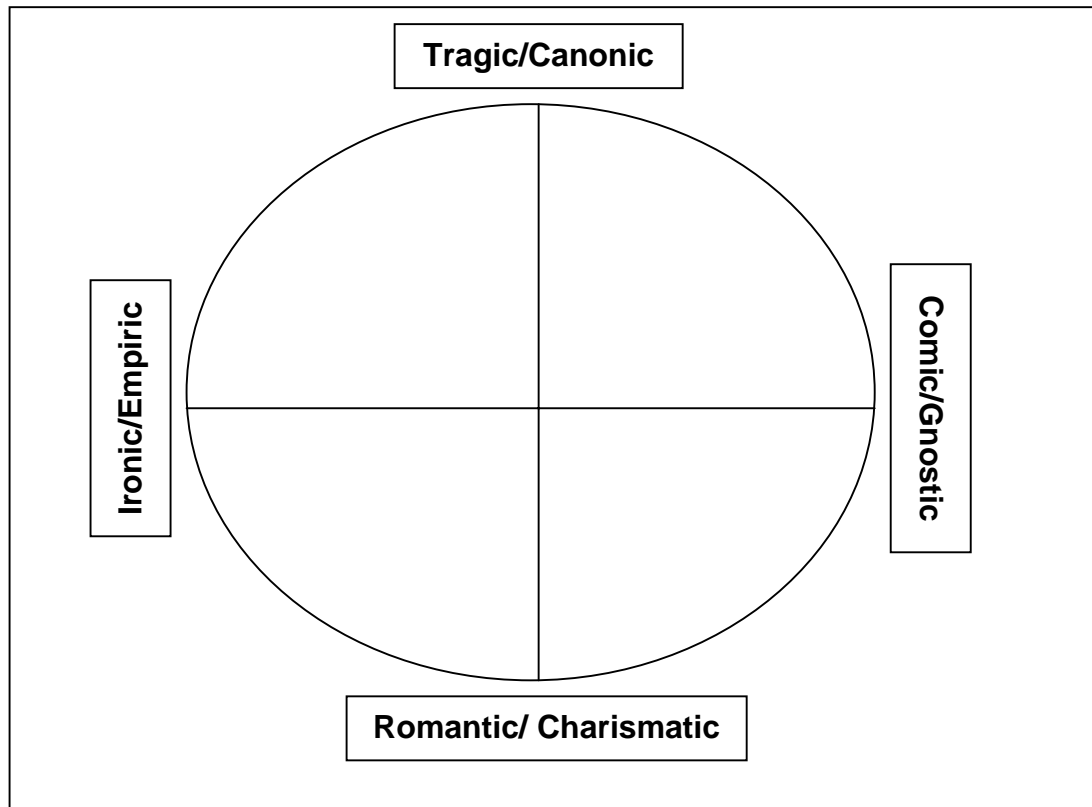
10.4.1 Congregational narrative setting

Narrative thus plays a vital role in the self understanding of each congregation which means that the identity of the congregation can only be known from the stories of the congregation. Just like with personal identity, the identity narrative is set within a narrative of meaning. These narratives of meaning can be classified according to different western literary genres. The personal narratives of the individual were set within the four compass points of literary genres: comic tales, romantic tales, tragic tales and ironic tales.

Similarly one can understand and interpret the congregation’s narratives as set within these literary genres. “Any single work of literature is a recognizable bit of the gigantic circle of human interpretation. No human being sees the whole. Each instead is oriented, by a story, towards some direction within the total horizon” (Hopewell 1987:67). Congregations adopt a similar orientation with this circle of genres.

Hopewell (Hopewell 1987:69) utilises four categories to characterise a congregation’s

orientations in understanding their faith, namely: canonic, gnostic, charismatic and empiric. In the next chapter of the study, I will seek to get some insights into these orientations that characterises congregant's understanding of faith.



10.4.1.1 Canonic (similar to tragic characterisation)

“Reliance upon an authoritative interpretation of a world pattern often considered God’s revealed word or will, by which one identifies one’s essential life. The integrity of the pattern requires that followers reject any gnosis of union with the pattern but instead subordinate their selfhood to it” (Hopewell 1987:69).

10.4.1.2 Gnostic (comic)

“Reliance upon an intuited process of a world that develops from dissipation towards unity. The ultimate integrity of the world requires the deepening consciousness of those involved in its systemic outworking and their rejection of alienating canonic structures”(Hopewell 1987:69).

10.4.1.3 Charismatic (romantic)

“Reliance upon evidence of a transcendent spirit personally encountered. The integrity of providence in the world requires that empirical presumptions of an ordered world be disregarded and supernatural irregularities instead be witnessed” (Hopewell 1987:69).

10.4.1.4 Empiric (ironic)

“Reliance upon data objectively verifiable through one’s own five sense. The integrity of one’s own person requires realism about the way things demonstrably work and the rejection of the supernatural” (Hopewell 1987:69).

These are four characterisations of the interpretive horizons which the congregant uses to create their own setting (world view). Often the congregant is caught between two characterisations and in the struggle between the two finds meaning and understanding. Ricoeur (4.3.7 Paul Ricoeur, texts, structural analysis and postmodernity) argued that only in dialogue is truth and meaning to be found.

10.5 The Narrative structure of Christian Faith/ narrative understanding of soteriology

I have reflected on the narrative understanding of personal identity and that the person makes sense of his/her world via the narratives of the community he/she comes from. In this section I will seek to understand the process by which an individual comes to faith within the context of certain “meaning” narratives (sacred stories), in other words how these meaning narratives illuminate the individual’s narrative. Stroup argues that there where the narrative identity of an individual collides with the narrative identity of the Christian community revelation is experienced (Stroup 1984:170). Crites describes this moment when these two narratives intersect:

“...and sometimes the tracks cross, causing a burst of light like a comet entering our atmosphere. Such a luminous moment, in which sacred, mundane, and personal are inseparably conjoined, we call symbolic in a special sense” (Crites 1989:81).

The individual comes into contact with the faith community’s narratives and experiences revelation and then begins the lengthy process of re-interpreting his/her past and in a sense re-authoring their identity narrative. Michael Root argues that the soteriological task of theology is to show how the stories of the Christian community is the story of individual redemption (Root 1989:265). Before I can continue I will reflect on the Christian understanding of revelation.

10.5.1 Revelation

A few reflecting thoughts need to be introduced with regards to the understanding of revelation.

Stroup makes three points about revelation (Stroup 1984:42-43).

- 1) Revelation is a disclosure of new understanding of reality and thus revelation is bound to a specific context and time.
- 2) Revelation cannot be initiated by human will, but the human being is the object of the revelation; the subject is that which is disclosed.
- 3) In revelation God is disclosed

Karl Barth described three different forms of revelation.

- 1) God reveals Himself in proclamation. Proclamation is the preaching of God's word by human words, but through the power of the Spirit God's true Word can be heard in the midst of the human words.
- 2) The written Word (Scriptures) is a witness (testimony) to God's activity in history and again, through God's Spirit He can reveal Himself through the written word.
- 3) Christ is the third form of revelation for Barth and again Christ's story is the objective reality which can become a subjective revelatory reality through the power of the Spirit (Stroup 1984: 46-48) (Karl Barth K.D. I 2 1953: 124f).

Thus I can conclude that the identity narrative collides with the narratives of the Christian faith community and "revelation" only takes place through the power of the Holy Spirit.

10.5.2 Narrative understanding of revelation

Goldberg identifies three different narrative understandings of revelation which I will shortly reflect on.

10.5.2.1 Revelation as structuring the story

Goldberg identifies the theologian Hans Frei with the idea of *structuring the story*. Frei saw Biblical narratives as realistic or history-like narratives (Frei 1989:61). Thus Frei believed that to take the structural shape of Biblical narrative seriously is to take it as the shape of reality (Goldberg 1982:162).

Sallie McFague agrees with Frei in her reflection on the parables. For her the structure of parables and the structure of reality are mirror images of each other (Goldberg 1982:163). For both these thinkers the shape (structure) of the story and the shape of

experience go hand in hand. For them it was no longer important to fit the biblical story into the other story but rather incorporating the other story into the Biblical story (Frei 1989:50). The Biblical narratives thus give a truthful account of reality and experience.

“There is an area of human experience on which the light of the Christian gospel and that of natural, independent insight shine at the same time, illumining it in the same way” (Frei 1989:49). The structures of Biblical narrative and reality coincide and therefore the Biblical narratives are illuminating to reality, revealing new insights and understanding. The stories of the Christian faith community can bear an illustrative relation to the reader’s life. “The story illustrates certain redemptive truths about self, world and God” (Root 1989:266).

10.5.2.2 Revelation as following the story

Goldberg identifies two theologians that he characterises under *following the story*, namely Paul van Buren and Irving Greenberg. Paul van Buren believes that there is only one way to have any understanding of who God is and that is through the Biblical stories. Believers will be able to discover who God is by following these stories and through them identify who God is. Rather than making abstract propositions that cannot be proven anyway he believes that in the Biblical story all is contained that there is to know (Goldberg 1982:165-168). Greenberg uses the Exodus story, as the normative perspective and the orientating experience, by which all of life and all other experiences can be judged (Goldberg 1982:169). Thus he also believes that in the story, a specific normative story, all the meaning is contained by which experiences and history can be examined and understood. The Biblical story itself reveals its meaning and by this meaning humanity can interpret reality and history.

10.5.2.3 Revelation as enacting the story

Goldberg identifies Stanley Hauerwas and John Howard Yoder as theologians whose thinking he characterises as *enacting the story*. Hauerwas begins from an ethical point of view, as for him ethics is not about doing good deeds, but about being good people. Ethics is not about good deeds, but good characters who do good deeds. A person’s character can only be discerned from a person’s narrative and this narrative in turn is shaped by the faith community to which the individual belongs. Thus there exists a storied relationship between the individual and the faith community’s narratives (Root 1989:266). Soteriology thus needs to explain how the individual’s story is included in the faith community’s story and how this story is the story of redemption. Thus the individual has a new identity story, which is the story of personal redemption.

To be a human being means to act intentionally and the way that one intends, depends on how one attends to the world (Goldberg 1982:175). What one believes about the world and how one understands the world will determine what one intends to do. Thus religious narratives play a vital role in shaping the way one sees the world and thus in the way one acts.

I will incorporate ideas from all three of these different approaches to narrative understanding of revelation.

I have argued that revelation is that moment in experience where the Holy Spirit illuminates our personal narrative in such a way that new understanding is brought about so that the personal narrative is re-written. The person can thus confess or give testimony on how the personal narrative has been re-written. Stroup argues that confession is Christian narrative in its final form (Stroup 1984:175).

10.5.3 Narrative, revelation and confession

To understand the relationship between conversion and confession I will once more reflect on the thinking of Karl Barth. Barth divides this discussion into two parts, namely the object of faith (*fies qua creditur*) and the act of faith (*fides quae creditur*) (Stroup 1984:186). The object of faith for Barth is Jesus Christ, by which the full range of Christian experience is ordered. Christ is however not only the object of faith, but also the initiator of faith. "Faith, Barth insists, is a free human act, but its human possibility has as its presupposition "the will and decision and achievement of Jesus Christ the son of God that it takes place as a free human act, that man is of himself ready and willing and actually begins to believe in Him"" (Stroup 1984:186). Christ as the object and basis of faith constitutes the Christian subject. In the act of faith the believer is constituted by Christ - but not in isolation, but within the community of faith. This act of faith can be analysed and can be separated into three mutually related terms: "acknowledgement, recognition, and confession" (Stroup 1984:187).

10.5.3.1 Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement is the acceptance and obedience to faith's object - Jesus Christ (Stroup 1984:187). Jesus Christ as object of faith is not some dogma or abstract proposition, but the revealed living Word of God in the person of Jesus Christ. Barth argued that the Word of God can be understood in three forms, namely proclamation, Scripture and both proclamation and Scripture are about Christ. Thus the individual comes into contact with the object of faith within the faith community and it's faith narratives. The individual's identity narrative collides with the faith narratives of the faith community and in this collision revelation takes place, as the faith narratives re-author

the individual's narrative.

10.5.3.2 Recognition

These different moments of the act of faith are not sequential, but recognition is included in acknowledgement as the individual, in acknowledging Christ, also recognises Him. This is no objective recognition because no objective words can be identified as Christ, but it is an inner recognition of Christ as Lord and thus determining the individual's identity and self-understanding. The story of Christ is re-enacted in the narrative of the believer and thereby the believer's narrative is re-authored by the story of Christ.

This then brings the believer to the third moment of the act of faith.

10.5.3.3 Confession

Confession is that moment when the individual believer can reconstruct personal identity by means of what is acknowledged and recognised to be the truth about Jesus Christ (Stroup 1984:190).

Confession necessarily takes on a narrative form as the individual re-authors/tells his/her identity narrative from the point of view of the collision between his/her identity narrative with the faith community's narratives through which Christ was revealed to him/her.

Stroup argues that confession is not a discourse about what it means to understand Christian faith. It is not a language about faith, but the language of faith. "Confession is first order religious language" (Stroup 1984:201). Confession is narrative and therefore the importance of narrative in theology can no longer be disputed.

10.6 Narrative roots within the Jewish tradition

One last argument in support of a narrative theology is taken from the Christian faith community's historical roots in the Jewish faith tradition.

10.6.1 Jewish understanding of revelation

The Jewish faith community believes that God revealed himself to His people on Mount Sinai. This revelation is recorded, in its written form, in the Torah (the Decalogue) or the Pentateuch and the Tanach (The First Testament). This revelation is not believed to be final, but is open-ended right until today. As the written Torah the Tanach is still being re-written all the time in the oral Torah of the Talmud, which eventually also was written down and collected (Denecke 1996:87). Both the written Torah as well as the oral Torah

are seen as the Word of God. The actual Word of God nobody would be able to write down or even hear. All that is given was the first breath of the revelation of God. When God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai He certainly did not give him the whole Decalogue as humans would not be able to grasp God's word. Tradition believes that all that was given to Moses was the first breath of the first letter of the word "I" which in Hebrew is *Alef* of the word *Anochi*. This first letter *Alef* is not pronounced, it is breathed as if to begin to speak. This is how God spoke to Moses, said Rabbi Mendel Torum von Rymanow (Denecke 1996:89).

It is up to the faith community to discover and interpret the meaning of this *Alef*. It has been interpreted in two forms namely as "law"/tradition (*Halacha*) and as narrative (*aggada*). It is in these two forms that the Word of God must be re-interpreted and re-written continually for each new context and situation.

10.6.1.1 Halacha (law, tradition)

Halacha is the law, the limits of revelation, the boundaries within which interpretation can take place and this is decided by majority vote of the Rabbis.

10.6.1.2 Aggada (narrative)

Aggada is the creative telling of stories that tell about God and the world and make sense of our world.

These two forms are in a dialectic with each other and continually develop and change each other according to the situation and the context. These creative stories seek to find meaning in the world and re-interpret tradition and the laws that set the boundaries of our being.

10.7 Summary: Narrative as an appropriate theological orientation within postmodernity

In this section I reflected on the appropriateness of narrative as a theological orientation within the postmodern world and identified a number of reasons why I believe narrative to be an appropriate orientation in the postmodern world.

Narrative and theology

1. Narrative is the dominant genre in Biblical witness.
2. The postmodern understanding of self (identity), action, human experience and meaning need to be placed within narrative settings to

- be intelligible.
3. The individual needs the faith narratives to understand and give meaning to his/her personal narratives.
 4. The identity of a faith community is also dependent on the narratives of the community. Therefore to understand a congregation's identity its narratives need to be taken seriously.
 5. Christian soteriology and the structure of Christian faith necessarily take on a narrative form.
 6. The confession of faith also necessarily takes on a narrative form.
 7. The Christian-Jewish faith is rooted in a narrative tradition.

11. A NARRATIVE THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION IN A POSTMODERN WORLD FOR "DOING THEOLOGY IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE"

11.1 Transformative praxis as the focal point of the study's narrative theological orientation

In the section on human action as well as personal identity (8.2 Narrative and human action & 8.3 Narrative understanding of human existence) the focal point was on the actual present moment of human action there where the future moves into the past. The future was described as that which can be anticipated (the story of projected teleological dreams and hopes), but which is at the same time always also unpredictable and unexpected. Thus narrative coherence and unity is found in the past from where one can identify a person's character, style and identity. It is in this present moment of action that the narrative horizons (of past remembered and future anticipated) merge, meaning is sought and revelation takes place.

The study's narrative theological orientation thus needs to focus on this present moment of praxis. I would like to place this focal point at the centre of my theological orientation. Rationality and truth can only be sought within this moment of practice and therefore theology also needs to find its place within this moment of practice. Metz argues that rationality can only find its true place within the context of social-political reason (Metz 1977:16). Any human science needs to strive towards conditions where the use of reason for all of humanity is possible, therefore the human sciences have to strive towards a transformation of social conditions (Metz 1977:15). Van Niekerk would agree with Metz in that he argues that there are two criteria for the rationality of human sciences:

- 1) that interpretation must bring about new meaningful life-possibilities and
- 2) that the theory which develops out of the interpretations must lead to new improved practical conditions (Pieterse 1993:99).

“Theology is above all concerned with direct experiences expressed in narrative language” (Metz 1989:252). These direct experiences need to be interpreted within the context of the narratives of the faith community.

The narratives that are constructed are always prone to ideological distortion in the sense that certain groups within society hold the power of interpretation and thereby totalising their interpretation and forcing other’s experiences and interpretations into submission.

11.2 The dangers of uncritical construction of narratives

Nicholas Lash argues that there are four dangers in the constructions of narratives.

- 1) Religious discourse/ narratives are shaped by the context of their construction. The Biblical narratives, as confessional narratives of peoples’ experiences with God in the past, are influenced by the context of their construction. So Paul, writing about the position of women in the church, was influenced by the social narratives concerning women of the time in which he was living. So also a person’s confession is influenced by the world view of his/her time and context and thus any confessional narrative is prone to ideological distortion (Lash 1989:120).
- 2) Religious discourse tends to attribute an unwarranted universality to the particular narratives (Lash 1989:120).
- 3) Any narrative of meaning is a construction and thus a fictional construction. The individual imposes order on events and experiences to give the overall narrative meaning and coherency and very often forces coherency on events and experiences and discards the discontinuities and incoherence of life.
- 4) “In the forth place every narrative has a beginning, a middle, and an end. But “end” ambiguously signifies both conclusion and goal, both terminus and purpose” (Lash 1989:120). Yet the individual stands in the middle of the history and thus forces incidents and events, for the sake of unity and the coherence of the plot, into a narrative unity which is determined by the goal of the narrative.

A community can thus easily create idealist or ideological stories.

11.2.1 The conflict between experience and the narratives of the community

One of the major challenges for theology is this relationship between praxis (direct experiences and the internal story of meaning) and theory (theological narratives of the faith community, such as dogmas, historical exegetical discoveries, etcetera). The challenge: what role does the concrete context play and what role does the theory (Bible theological tradition as well as other sciences, for example psychology and sociology) play?

11.2.1.1 Context (praxis) versus confession (theory)

“Practical theologians use the relationship between theory and praxis to come to grips with their subject matter” (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:23). This relationship is important as it forms the basis of the methodology used in this study.

Theory priority over praxis

There are theologians that would like to see theory maintaining the priority over praxis, but this idea is difficult to hold on to when today it has been shown that epistemology and the formation of theory cannot be seen as separate from the historical context in which it is formed.

Praxis priority over theory

Another possibility is where praxis is seen as the priority. Here the context and the experience dominates and directs the approach to doing theology. This approach runs the danger of maintaining the status quo as it does not allow theory to challenge experiences as well as the context and therefore it runs the danger of becoming an ideology. It can become an ideology if it offers no critical element that challenges the praxis and the status quo is thus unchallenged. (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:30)

Theory and praxis equivalent

Theory and praxis being on an equal basis with each other, opens a wide variety of possibilities of how they could relate to each other for example: equal but totally separate, equal and marginally touching each other, equal and overlapping, etcetera. I would see the relationship between theory and praxis as a relationship of dialectic tension where the two open up to each other as dialogue partners on a journey, arriving at various points on the journey of either unity or critical disunity.

11.2.2 Phronesis as a critical awareness to ideological distortion

I would like to argue in this study that practical wisdom or phronesis is a model which incorporates a critical awareness of ideological distortion. This coming together of the two sets of narratives has been described in the study in various different ways. Niebuhr describes it as 'external history' and 'internal history'. Nicholas Lash describes it as 'metaphor' and 'analogy' and from the Jewish tradition I reflected on the differentiation between '*Halacha*' and '*Aggada*' and Gadamer refers to '*techné*' and '*episteme*'. Although I cannot argue that episteme, Halacha, analogy and external history all refer to the same thing there are certain parallels between them.

Halacha (law, dogmas, historical critical tools) and episteme (basic theories, such as in the sciences, philosophy, psychology, sociology, economics etcetera) can all be grouped together as external history, while *Aggada* (stories of meaning - metaphor found in poetry, stories, art) and *techné* (practical theory) can be grouped together as internal history as that which gives meaning to experiences.

External history along the journey of analogy seeks to discover the boundaries of knowledge and language. It is an infinite story of discovery and of new temporary truths about the world and reality. Yet absolute truth, meaning and reality elude external history continuously.

Internal history constructs meaning and realities without the scepticism of external history. It puts into words through metaphor and narratives that which external history cannot speak of.

In other words these boundaries of external history are challenged by internal history. On the other hand external history continually reminds internal history of its limits so that for example metaphor never seeks to jump the boundaries of metaphor.

Gadamer describes this focal point as phronesis. Phronesis is not the application of abstract theological principles or dogmas on concrete situations, but a dialectical dialogue between practical experiences (*techné*) and the tradition which contains the dogmas and systematic theological propositions (*episteme*). Phronesis can be described as practical wisdom as the value orientated dialogue that takes place between the two, namely tradition (dogmas) and experience. *Halacha*, external history (science, psychology, sociology) and episteme brings into the dialogue the historical narrative of tradition (dogmas and laws) which contains the boundaries wherein theological reflection can take place while *Aggada*, internal history and *techné* brings into the dialogue the narratives of experiences that challenge the *Halacha*. The *Aggada* brings into the dialogue that which can only be said in metaphor and thus exposing the limits of the *Halacha*. The *Halacha* again reminds the *Aggada* of the limits of metaphor.

"If the history of Christian faith and spirituality is a history of exuberant metaphor (verbal, ritual, and iconographic), it is – just as insistently – a history of silence,

simplicity, and iconoclasm: of a sense that what needs to be said cannot be said. Not the least powerful of the pressures generating this apophatic dimension in Christian history has been the experience of suffering. If ‘ideology ... dulls the tragic vision’s alertness to limits,’” (Lash 1989:123).

This interaction takes place in practice there where congregations and individuals struggle with daily ‘reality’ and try to find meaning and purpose in their lives. Theology is done there where meaning narratives are written and re-written within a tapestry of the faith community’s narratives. Yet theology is not only done within the narratives of the faith community, but also in dialogue with the narratives of philosophy, psychology, sociology and economics all forming episteme.

11.2.3 Ideological critique from within the Christian - Jewish narratives

In South Africa we have experienced that Apartheid was not only a political theory, but influenced the whole sphere of human existence including the academia. Society is today still interpreted and understood and theories developed (*episteme/Halacha*) from an andocentric point of view. This is a point of view which is related to the question of who holds the power within society. The narratives that are not aware of these power imbalances are necessarily ideological.

In this study I therefore need a critical element which I can incorporate within my theological orientation to warn against these power imbalances and ideologies.

The one critical element discussed above was the dialectical relationship between internal and external history.

The other critical element is found within the Biblical narratives as well as in the experience of life itself.

The idealism that is constructed with its perfect unity and coherence is shattered by the reality of suffering. It challenges the limits of our constructed narratives and the cross of Christ stands against any form of idealism or ideology.

Besides the cross the eschatological hope of justice, peace and reconciliation also criticises any totalising or legitimising of current social narratives (Metz 1977:17). Metz speaks of subversive memory as dangerous memory which remembers past unfulfilled expectations, unfulfilled hopes, dreams and possibilities which breaks the magic of the present consciousness by reminding it of these past unfulfilled hopes, dreams and possibilities (Metz 1977:21). This memory is essentially a memory of suffering, as suffering questions the totalising and legitimising ideological narratives by showing how these narratives do not include the experiences of those who suffer as a result of the

system that is constructed by these narratives. In the South African situation it was the narratives of oppression that became louder and louder that the narratives of apartheid could not longer hold true. Therefore one needs to bring into the dialogue the experiences of those whose narratives have been marginalised and whose narratives have not been heard. An ideal speech situation (4.3.8 The critical theory of Jürgen Habermas) needs to be created in which all the narratives have equal chance to be heard.

The Biblical narrative incorporates this element of hearing the narratives of the oppressed. Internal to the Christian-Jewish faith narratives are numerous ideology critical elements, namely the eschatological hope, the cross and the Biblical bias for the marginalised. Thus these Biblical narratives will continually strive to transform social conditions as these Biblical narratives collide with the constructed narratives of society.

11.3 Summary: Narrative theological orientation for doing theology in the global village

- 1) The narrative theological orientation places its focus on practice and transformative practice.
- 2) It is in the moment of practice that the various narratives collide and meaning is sought, revelation experienced and confessions of faith constructed.
- 3) I sought a critical element that is weary of the ideological distortion in the construction of meaning narratives.
- 4) I found two critical elements:
 - 4.1 Phronesis (practical wisdom) as a critical value orientated discussion of the dialectic between direct experience and tradition (faith communities' theological tradition as well as the traditions of science such as psychology, philosophy, economics, sociology, etcetera).
 - 4.2 The second critical element is provided by life itself (suffering) which is internal to the Biblical narratives (Cross of Christ). The Biblical narratives' eschatological expectations create awareness of present conditions of suffering as well as the Biblical option for the marginalised. All bring in a critical element by which to criticise the constructed narratives of the faith community.

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12. NARRATIVE METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

12.1 Introduction

The study is not about confessional statements of faith, or dogmatic faith formulations, but about the daily experiences of congregants living in a global village and how the

congregants seek meaning and understanding of their experiences from the dramatic resources available to them from their faith tradition and faith community. The study will place itself within the tradition of practical theological wisdom as understood by Müller (Müller 1996:2); practical wisdom which can be understood with the concept *Phronesis* of Aristotle as developed by Gadamer as a value orientated discussion of the dialectic between practical experiences (context) and tradition (the epistemological story).

The faith community is not the only dramatic resource from which to construct meaningful personal narratives, but there are numerous other resources as well. I believe that the global village is such a constructed narrative setting which provides dramatic resources with which to understand and interpret ourselves and our experiences. At the workplace, the work narrative is constructed not only with the faith community's resources, but also with the resources of the global village story. I presume (a presumption that will be reflected on in Chapter Three: Insertion and the story of Need) that the global village story is the dominant story of our time, which means that it provides the dramatic resources to understanding and interpreting personal identity, personal worth and life in general. I will seek to discover in which ways the faith community's narratives offer an alternative (unique outcome) narrative to the global village narrative, in other words in which ways the Christian faith community's narratives offer dramatic resources to re-author the identity narratives of individuals living in a global village. In essence the study is narrative, yet the context of the global village plays a vital role in the study, so the study could be described as a **narrative contextual study**.

In section 8 of this chapter I defended the appropriateness of narrative thinking and theology for doing theology in a postmodern world. In this section I will introduce the narrative research methodology of the study based on ideas adapted from narrative therapy as well as ideas taken from a contextual theological research model and the Fundamental Practical Theology as put forward by Don S. Browning in his book, *A Fundamental Practical Theology, Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (D. Browning 1991).

12.2 Seeking a theological working description for narrative contextual theology

In the search for a working description for the theological approach for doing theology in the postmodern global village in South Africa I will reflect on various definitions (descriptions) which have influenced this study and then seek my own appropriate description.

Pieterse classifies the different theological approaches in South Africa into three broad

categories namely confessional approach, correlational approach and contextual approach (Pieterse 1993:99-17). David Tracy understands there to be two main poles namely the confessional approach and the apologetic approach. George Lindbeck in his book, *The Nature of Doctrine*, distinguishes between the cultural-linguistic approach and the apologetic approach. In the study I will shortly be reflecting on these different approaches to theology. I then propose a fifth approach namely a narrative approach in combination with a revised correlational approach.

1. The confessional approach

The confessional approach emphasises the importance of the traditions and confessions of faith such as Scripture. In South Africa a major advocate for this approach is Willie Jonker with his definition of theology:

“...die woord van God onder die gesigspunt van die diens van die kerk” (Pieterse 1993:103).

Tracy sees the confessional approach as an approach “which sees theology as primary witnessing to the narrative structure of the faith”(Browning 1991:44).

2. The cultural-linguistic approach

This approach sees Christian dogma having a narrative structure that creates and shapes the life and practice of the Christian congregation or community. This approach argues that the linguistic expressions of religion need to be taken very seriously, because, as was discussed in this chapter, our perception of experience is bound to language and our language structures. There is no such thing as an experience beyond the scope of language (Lindbeck 1984:39).

Thus the truth of any religious narrative, sacred stories (Crites 1989:69), can never be proven or demonstrated by any evidence outside of the story/narrative itself. The truth of the narrative lies within the narrative. Thus the truth of narrative is essentially categorical. This truth needs to be distinguished from propositional truth which corresponds to reality, or symbolic truth which gives expression to a deeper abiding experience (Lindbeck 1984:47). Narrative truth makes such inner coherence that it “makes meaningful statements possible” about what is “most important” to the faith community (Lindbeck 1984:44-45).

This cultural-linguistic approach has roots in the confessional approach or confessionalism of Karl Barth. It was partly inspired by H. Richard Niebuhr, who argued that all theology has a metaphorical base (H. Niebuhr 1963:149-160). And in contemporary theology it has found support in the work of Stanley Hauerwas, (1974, 1977, 1981), Johann Baptist Metz (1980), and Craig Dykstra (1981) (Browning

1991:45).

“These positions emphasize the way the linguistic structures of Christian stories and narratives shape the character and lives of Christian communities and individuals. They also emphasize how this happens without the help of either external philosophical categories or religious experiences independent of these narratives. This perspective attempts to advance theology without apologetics” (Browning 1991: 45).

3. The apologetic approach

The apologetic approach “defends the rationality of the faith and tries to increase its plausibility to the contemporary secular mind” (Browning 1991:44). George Lindbeck subdivides the apologetic approach into propositional-cognitive and experiential-expressive approaches (Lindbeck 1984: 16).

4. The correlational approach

The correlational approach is strongly supported by European practical theologians such as Heitink and Zerfass (Pieterse 1993:108). They view theology as a science of action as they focus on the activities and actions of the church. In this approach the Word of God plays an important, but not exclusive, role as the Word of God is heard together with other theories and sources of knowledge from the social and human sciences.

David Tracy proposed a critical correlational approach and Don Browning makes use of Tracy’s critical correlational approach to develop his own *revised correlational approach* (Browning 1991:45). Browning sees Tracy’s approach combining the best of the cultural-linguistic approach and the apologetic approach. “Of the apologetic approach it makes special use of the experiential-expressive view, although to some extent it employs the propositional-cognitive approach as well” (Browning 1991: 45). Yet this approach is thoroughly hermeneutical and therefore also cultural-linguistic as it recognises that the classic religious texts shape the faith community before they interpret them.

In other words faith and confession very often in religious communities precedes reason and a critical approach towards the classic texts, passed down to the community via tradition.

If we take Gadamer’s (Gadamer 1989: 273) understanding of “effective history” seriously (4.3.6 Hans-Georg Gadamer) then we need to take into consideration that the past and tradition will always shape the present and the present is always a product of the past. The problem with the global village is that most faith communities are exposed to various cultural and religious traditions (sacred stories). Thus the postmodern

individual has a whole variety of confessional beginning points (Browning 1991: 45). This has as consequence the questions that lead the faith community to the classic texts which have their beginning points not only within the Christian context or tradition, but come from a pluralistic background. "The conflict between contending theory-laden practices means that their questions emerge out of the conflict between the Christian and non-Christian aspects of their lives" (Browning 1991: 45).

This pluralist context in which theology needs to be done in the global village forces one to adopt a correlational approach to theology, as one cannot ignore or pretend that the other sacred stories, of other religious or ideological backgrounds, are not there and are not heard.

For this reason I would like to incorporate the Tracy's correlational approach in my thinking, because I believe it important that both the confessional context as well as the social cultural setting needs to be incorporated in the theology of this study. Yet Tracy put forward a critical or revised correlational approach (Tracy 1975:430-463).

This critical or revised correlational approach sees the task of theology to be a critical task that incorporates a critical dialogue between the implicit questions and the explicit answers of the Christian classics and the explicit questions and implicit answers of the contemporary cultural experiences and practices. A critical correlational theologian must be in conversation with "all other 'answers'" no matter from which religious or ideological background they might come (Tracy 1975:46).

5. The contextual approach

The contextual approach places the greatest emphasis on the context in which theology is done, reflecting on the social political context as well as the context of the faith community. I would like to highlight some of the ideas of contextual theology which I believe are important to bring into consideration.

- A hermeneutical commitment to the poor and oppressed and critical reflection on the construction of realities from their point of view
- The shift of focus away from the church to a broader focus of society
- Emphasis on the incarnation of Christ

These are just a few insights that specifically contextual theology brings into the theological dialogue.

6. The narrative approach

The narrative approach finds certain similarities to the correlational approach in the sense that narrative theology is the journey to reflect on human practice in the light of

the Christian faith community's narratives, to evaluate the practices and to shed new light on them. "Praktiese teologie is die sistematies-gestruktureerde, voortgaande hermeneutiese proses, waardeur gepoog word om menslike handeling, wat verband hou met die verhale van die Christengeloofsgemeenskap, teologies te verhelder en te vernuwe" (Müller 1996:5).

12.2.1 Working description

I would like to incorporate elements of the above mentioned theological descriptions into my own working description of the theological process of the study.

A working description of the narrative theological orientation of the study: The narrative theological orientation of this study can be described as a systematically structured, continuous hermeneutical process of critical reflection on Christian activities (praxis) within the social context and in the light of the various narratives that form the dramatic resources with which the faith community constructs and interprets their reality.

There are numerous terms that need to be clarified in this working description of the theological approach of the study.

12.2.1.1 Systematically structured, continuous hermeneutical process

I reflected on this in the section on narrative and truth (8.6 Narrative and truth). The importance of placing theological reflection within some form of systematically structured context brings in an element of critical awareness - this means a critical and important balance between personal existential faith experience, expressed in metaphor and the analytical reflection of this experience, placing metaphor within its grammatical boundaries. This systematic structured reflection is a reflection which incorporates other theological disciplines, such as the exegetical disciplines as well as dogmatics and other non-theological disciplines, such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, etcetera. The systematically structured disciplines, which are similar to the Halach within the Jewish tradition, forms the boundaries in which the hermeneutical process may journey. These boundaries are not stagnant but are in a dialectic process.

Continuous hermeneutical process: I described theology as a continuous hermeneutical process, in other words it is a journey of discovery. This is a journey of discovering God, oneself, the community of faith in which one finds oneself, and the relationship between God and the world. A process that is described in Exodus 3:14-15 where something of

God's identity is revealed not as an abstract metaphysical proposition, but in relationship to humanity.

Exodus 3: 14-15 "God replied, 'I am who am.' Then he added, "This is what you shall tell the Israelites: I AM sent me to you."

God spoke further to Moses, "Thus shall you say to the Israelites: The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever, this is my title for all generations" (The African Bible 1999).

God is discovered in a continuous hermeneutical process of remembering the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob remembering (interpreting and re-interpreting) His story with humanity.

12.2.1.2 ...of critical reflection on Christian praxis within the social context

Christians do not act within a vacuum, but within specific contexts and depending on how they understand these contexts they also act differently. To be able to describe Christian praxis one also needs to be able to describe the social context in which the Christian community acts. In other words the study incorporates the critical correlational approach as proposed by David Tracy (Tracy 1983:76).

12.2.1.3 a critical reflection in the light of the various narratives that form the dramatic resources with which the faith community constructs and interprets their reality.

The activities of the Christian faith community need to be critically reflected upon in the light of the dramatic resources by which they interpret and construct their reality. The dramatic resources are Scripture, denominational tradition and history and a congregation's individual history and spirituality, as well as the non-Christian dramatic resources of the context which also play an important role in how the faith community understands itself. I reflected (11.2.3 Ideological Critique from within the Christian – Jewish narratives) on the internal critique that exists within the narratives of the Christian-Jewish faith community:

- 1) The cross and suffering continually challenge any construction of reality and by doing so also challenge the constructions of idealism and ideology.
- 2) The eschatological hope inherent in the Biblical narratives also continually criticises the present conditions of suffering and injustice.
- 3) The clear thematic option in the Biblical narratives for the poor, powerless and oppressed offers another critical reflection on the construction of realities from

the point of view of the marginalised and excluded.

12.3 The research methodology

The research methodology of the study will be incorporating two related yet separate traditions, namely Don Browning's understanding of fundamental practical theology as put forward in his book, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* and secondly adapting certain ideas from narrative therapeutic models. The methodology will also be influenced by the contextual model of the pastoral hermeneutic cycle as this was the tradition that was part of my theological formation.

12.3.1 Narrative research methodology

I will be focussing mainly on the therapeutic model proposed by Müller in his two books *Om tot verhaal te kom* (Müller 1996) and *Companions on the Journey* (Müller 1999), together with other narrative therapy concepts.

Müller's model has five basic movements, which he compares to dance movements rather than strategic movements (Müller 1999: Ch 8).

12.3.1.1 The story of need

The story of need in the therapy situation is when somebody seeks a pastor or a therapist because of some problem which he/she is struggling with. They come to the therapist with a problem saturated story. "It is as if the story of the past and the story of the future has collapsed in the present" (Müller 1999: The Story of Need). This implies that there is no story line that moves from the past through the present into the future.

12.3.1.2 The story of the past

The past is the building material whereby the story of the future is constructed (Müller 1996:111). I have shown how character and personal identity can be understood from the story of the past and that no future can be constructed without identity, style and character which come into the present from the past. Müller argues that the therapist does not only accompany the individual on the journey of retelling the past, but of "re-experiencing the past" (Müller 1999). Müller proposes various techniques in this journey of discovering the story of the past namely the genogram, lifeline and the ecochart (Müller 1999). I will adapt some of these ideas from the individual therapeutic context to the context of a congregation and the whole question of how I do theology. Browning argues that if the crisis is serious the faith community will also need to look at the story

of the past. “Eventually if it is serious, the community must re-examine the sacred texts and events that constitute the sources or the norms and ideals that guide its practices.

The community brings its questions to these normative texts and has a conversation between its questions and these texts. This community of interpreters will see its inherited normative sources in light of the questions engendered by its crisis. As its practices change its questions change, and the community will invariably see different meanings in its normative texts as its situation and questions change” (Browning 1991:6).

12.3.1.3 The story of the future

“The story of the future still lies like an embryo in the womb of the past” (Müller 1999). In a problem saturated story of the past there does not seem to be a clear future story. There might not be a future perspective at all, which means total hopelessness. It is normally this impossibility of seeing a clear future that brings the individual to the therapist (Müller 1996:115).

12.3.1.4 The re-authored story of the past

The story of the past is re-experienced and re-authored.

“The difference between the telling of the story of the past (second movement) and reframing of the story of the past (fourth movement) can be explained by means of two concepts, namely *backtracking* and *looping*. The telling of the story of the past is equivalent to backtracking. If you add looping, it is similar to the one being followed succeeding to elude the follower, and the former now becomes the follower behind the latter’s back. It is similar to following yourself, to walk back on your own tracks, and to try to understand your own ways anew” (Müller 1999).

One process that is generally used amongst narrative therapist in re-authoring the story of the past is the externalisation of the identified problem and seeking unique outcomes.

12.3.1.5 The imagined story of the future

One constructs a future story in that the individual projects himself/ herself into the future and with this story can journey into tomorrow (Müller 1996:134). Müller uses the ideas of metaphor and imagination to create imaginative creative stories of the future. This aids the individual to see things in a new light and see new connections between things.

12.3.2 Fundamental practical theology

Don Browning in his book *A Fundamental Practical Theology* proposes that all theology is essentially practical.

“Theology can be practical if we bring practical concerns to it from the beginning. The theologian does not stand before God, Scripture, and the historic witness of the church like an empty slate or Lockean tabula rasa ready to be determined, filled up, and then plugged into a concrete practical situation” (Browning 1991:5). “A more accurate description goes like this. We come to the theological task with questions shaped by the secular and religious practices in which we are implicated – sometimes uncomfortably. These practices are meaningful or theory-laden. By using the phrase theory-laden, I mean to rule out in advance the widely held assumption that theory is distinct from practice. All our practices, even our religious practices, have theories behind and within them” (Browning 1991: 6).

I would like to go along with Browning that theology starts and ends in the practical context of a religious community seeking meaningful responses to practical contextual concerns. Browning bases his understanding of all theology being basically practical on Gadamer’s understanding of Aristotle’s phronesis (4.3.6 Hans Georg Gadamer). Gadamer sees understanding, interpretation and application to be intimately related to each other. Therefore we can argue with Browning that application is an essential moment in the hermeneutical experience.

“Application to practice is not an act that follows understanding. It guides the interpretive process from the beginning, often in subtle, overlooked ways. Gadamer’s hermeneutic theory clearly breaks down the theory-to-practice (text-to-application) model in theological studies as well. It implies more nearly a radical practice-theory-practice model of understanding that gives the entire theological enterprise a thoroughly practical cast” (Browning 1991:39).

Browning bases his fundamental practical theology largely on Gadamer’s understanding of phronesis and I believe Browning’s model to be an appropriate response within the context of postmodernity as Gadamer’s hermeneutic theory challenges many of the nostrums of modernity such as: realism, positivism, and various forms of Kantian or phenomenological idealism and the attempt to rid knowledge of history, tradition, finitude, and partiality. Epistemology both in the *Geisteswissenschaften* and *Naturwissenschaften* can only be understood as a dialectical movement from traditions of theory-laden-practice to theory and back to new theory-laden-practices (Browning 1991: 40). This hermeneutic understanding of epistemology is what Browning calls the envelope of practical theology.

12.2.2.1 The four movements

Browning proposes four movements in his fundamental practical theology and I would like to introduce these four movements as I will be incorporating these movements in my methodology.

1. Descriptive Theology

Descriptive theology is the first movement and is the description of theory-laden religious and cultural practices. "Its task is to describe the contemporary theory-laden practices that give rise to the practical questions that generate all theological reflection. To some extent the first movement is horizon analysis; it attempts to analyze the horizon of cultural and religious meanings that surround our religious and secular practices" (Browning 1991: 47).

This descriptive task is a multidimensional and hermeneutical dialogue between the researcher and the material being researched, describing the context as well as the horizon and then discovering the questions that are being raised within the faith community.

"The interest of descriptive theology are practical. These interest dominate all efforts to understand. The concern of descriptive theology is to capture in all their richness the basic human questions practical theology takes back to its classics. Its interests are practical because, in the end, it wants to appreciate and criticize current social, cultural, and ecclesial practices"(Browning 1991: 93).

This step is similar to the story of need in the narrative approach. The faith community can find itself in a crisis and therefore tell its story of need. "When a religious community hits a crisis in its practices, it then begins reflecting (asking questions) about its meaningful or theory-laden practices" (Browning 1991:6). A faith community finds itself in a crisis as there seems to be a gap between the tradition, the dramatic resources and the context and the ethical demands of the context, which is the exciting starting point of any theological journey and the journey of this study.

This is a continuous process and not a once off event. "Religious communities go from moments of consolidated practice to moments of deconstruction to new, tentative reconstructions and consolidations"(Browning 1991:6). It is for this reason that I will be using the metaphor 'journey', as I see this theological process as a journey for both the individual as well as for faith communities.

Questions will emerge from the theory-laden practices and they need to be posed to the central texts and monuments of the religious community's faith, which is then the

second step.

2. Historical Theology

“Historical theology, asks, What do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis when they are confronted as honestly as possible?” (Browning 1991:49). This second step of historical theology is a *critical* dialogue or conversation with the classic texts of the faith tradition. I stress the word critical as Browning would also see it as being vital that the exegetical critical tools be used to bring the texts into a critical dialogue with the faith community (Browning 1991:49). This turning towards the historical texts is also not something that should be done in isolation, but within the faith community. The early hermeneutical schools were rather individualistic in their hermeneutic approach. I agree with Browning that the approach should be rooted in a faith community. It is only later in the works of the American pragmatist, Charles Pierce and pragmatic idealist Josiah Royce that the hermeneutic process was seen as a social process, rather than an individual one. This is a movement away from the early beginnings of the hermeneutic understanding of epistemology in Heidegger who saw the isolate individual in his work *Sein und Zeit* in the search for understanding and knowledge.

Within the narrative understanding of individuals as well as actions we cannot go this route of the isolated search for understanding. “Our knowledge of reality is mediated by signs. To gain relatively reliable knowledge we need to rely on the interpretive skills of entire communities” (Browning 1991: 51). This brings this approach in line with the critical theory of Jürgen Habermas as discussed in 4.3.8 The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas.

3. Systematic Theology

“Systematic Theology when seen from the perspective of Gadamer’s hermeneutics is the fusion of horizons¹ between the vision implicit in contemporary practices and the vision implied in the practices of the normative Christian texts” (Browning 1991: 51). This fusion between the present and the past is not just an application of the past to the present, but it is a critical dialogue between the two.

“Systematic theology tries to gain as comprehensive a view of the present as possible. It tries to examine the large encompassing themes of our present practices and the vision latent in them. The systematic character of this movement comes from its effort to investigate general themes of the gospel that respond to the general questions that emerge from such general trends of modernity, liberal democracy, or technical rationality (Browning 1991:51). Browning sees this process to be guided by two

fundamental questions:

1. What new horizon of meaning is fused when questions from the present practices are brought to the central Christian witness?
2. What reason can be advanced to support the validity claims of this new fusion of meaning? (Browning 1991: 51-52)

The second question is the obligation of systematic theology to bring in a philosophical and critical element into the journey of doing theology in the postmodern context. Browning believes that this is the task of theological ethics to test the validity claims of systematic theology (Browning 1991: 52). These validity claims can never be absolute truths, but they can constitute good reasons and thereby open the door to conversation and dialogue between competing perspectives, which is vital in a pluralistic context. In the twentieth century systematic theology was seen as a discipline mainly concerned with how religious belief can be meaningful for the modern individual.

It seemed to have been very concerned with the grounds for belief:

- Schleiermacher was concerned with religious experience
- Kant, Ritschl, and Bultmann were concerned with moral experience
- Barth and Brunner, the neo-orthodox, turned towards revelation.
- Tillich, Tracy and Ogden turned towards metaphysics
- The followers of Wittgenstein turned towards linguistic systems

Browning's view on contrast sees systematic theology to concern itself with the concrete themes of praxis specific to a particular context. "Further, it would be concerned with how modernity undermines these common themes of practice; its attention to how modernity threatens our beliefs would be subordinated to this (Browning 1991: 53-54).

4. Strategic Practical Theology

A crisis arises in a faith community and this, if described and interpreted brings, forth certain questions that can then be brought to the historical texts. Browning sees there to be a least four basic questions that drive us to strategic practical theological thinking:

1. How do we understand this concrete situation in which we must act?
2. What would be our praxis in this concrete situation?
3. How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation?
3. What means, strategies, and rhetorics should we use in this concrete situation? (Browning 1991: 55-57)

The first question deals with the "special histories, commitments, and needs of the agents in the situation. It consists of the interplay of institutional systems and how they

converge on the situation. And it includes an analysis of the various religio-cultural narratives and histories that compete to define and give meaning to the situation” (Browning 1991: 55).

The second question seeks to answer the question strategic practical theology needs to build on after the first three movements of theology within a practical context. “It brings the fruits of descriptive theology and practically oriented historical and systematic theology back into contact with the concrete situation of action. It brings the fruits of historical and systematic theology into contact with the analysis of the concrete situation first begun in descriptive theology and now resumed in strategic practical theology” (Browning 1991:55-56).

The third question is where the correlational approach differentiates itself from a simple confessional narrative approach or cultural linguistic approach. It is a question that incorporates the critical theory of Jürgen Habermas and seeks to provide “validity claims” (Habermas 1979:2) that practical theology can enter into dialogue with other critical disciplines and other faith communities.

Browning proposes an alternative to Habermas’s approach to validity claims, as he contrasts his five dimensions of practical theological thinking to Habermas’s four validity claims (Browning 1991: 56).

Validity claims can seem to be a return to some form of foundationalism, or absolute claims to truth, but that was not the intention of Habermas or Browning.

Validation does not mean returning to some form of foundationalism as was the case in modernity, but rather to put forward critical reasons and arguments “which are themselves embedded in the practices that have been developed in the course of history,” (Bernstein 1983:163) to support the claims that one makes. Only then is true dialogue possible in a pluralistic society.

The five validity claims that Browning puts forward are intended so that faith communities can enter into dialogue with the other religious communities, without having to resort to absolute relativism.

Browning’s five claims are:

1. the visional level (which inevitably raises metaphysical validity claims);
2. the obligational level (which raises normative ethical questions);
3. the tendency-need level or anthropological dimension (which raises claims about human nature, its basic human needs, and the kinds of premoral goods required to meet these needs);
4. an environmental social dimension (which raises claims that deal primarily with social-systemic and ecological constraints of our tendencies and needs);
5. the rule role dimension (which raises claims about the concrete patterns we should enact in our actual praxis in the everyday world) (Browning 1991: 71).

The fourth question is a communication question as it asks the question of where people are and now ministry in its various practical forms takes the initial steps in the process of transformation. “These arts of ministry should not only be concerned with the church’s internal worship and preaching; they also should be concerned with both the public liturgies and rhetorics of the church and the liturgies and rhetorics of the public” (Browning 1991: 57). This is done within the context of a broadened understanding of Tracy’s revisionist correlational approach. This happens when theology critically correlates its investigations and interpretations into the two principal sources of theology. These two sources are “Christian texts and common human experience and language” (Tracy 1975:43). If we take this understanding into practical theology it can be said: “the mutually critical correlation of the interpreted theory and praxis of the contemporary situation” (Tracy 1983:76).

When Tracy speaks of common experience he is referring to common cultural experience (Browning 1991: 61). This common human cultural experience needs to be unpacked a bit. James and Evelyn Whitehead did this in their *Method in Ministry* (1980) as they differentiated this common human experience into two separable poles of reflection, namely *personal* and *corporate* experience (Whitehead 1980:12). Browning proposes to go even one step further and differentiate common human experience into three poles:

1. interpretations of the practices, inner motivations, and socio-cultural history of individual agents
2. interpretations of relevant institutional patterns and practices
3. interpretations of the cultural and religious symbols that give meaning to individual and institutional action (Browning 1991:61).

These three poles can be compared to the different levels of understanding human action within the narrative context (8.2.2 Narrative Intelligibility of Human Actions).

Descriptive theology should include these poles so that a fuller description can be given of the personal history behind the practices, and thus will also guide the interpretations of the questions that will be posed to the classical texts as well as offer a deeper understanding of the prejudices or pre-understanding with which we approach the classical texts.

5. A concluding remark on Browning’s Fundamental Practical theology

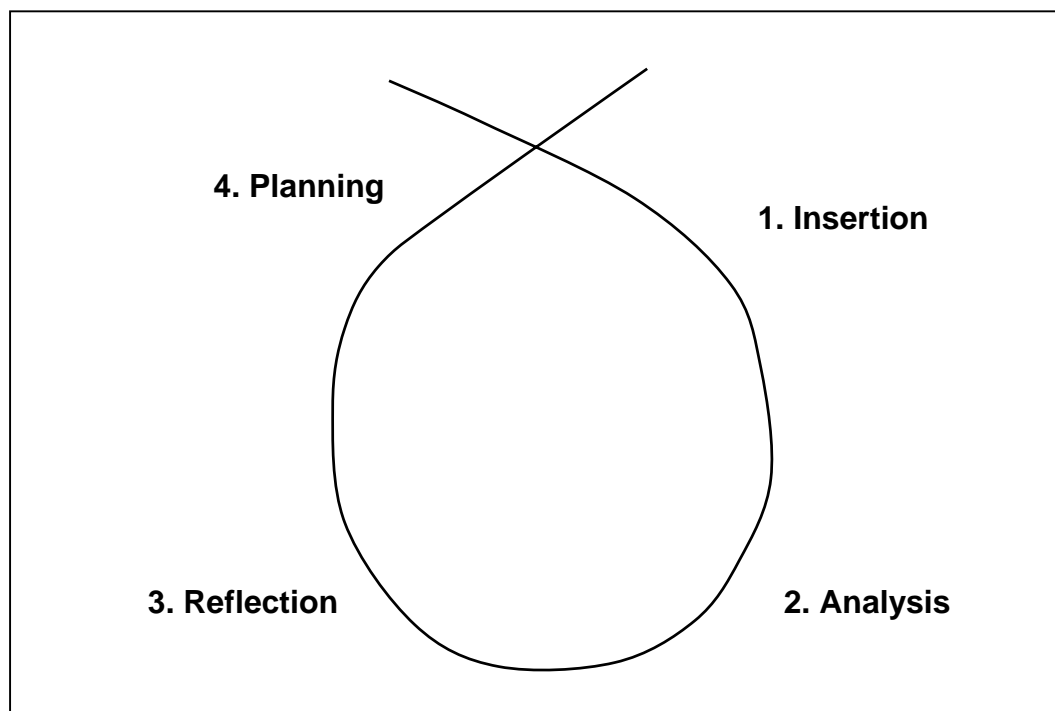
This approach is a combination of wisdom of the cultural-linguistic approach, narrative and confessional viewpoints.

12.3.3 A contextual approach (pastoral hermeneutical circle)

It was mentioned earlier that I believe certain elements from the contextual approach to be very important and therefore I will shortly reflect on the contextual approach, although I find my proposed approach more in line with the ideas of Browning. I will integrate some of the ideas of the methodological approach from contextual theology - the pastoral hermeneutical circle – with the narrative therapy ideas of Müller and into the research approach of the study. This circle was introduced within contextual theology by Segundo (Segundo 1976) and developed by Holland and Henriot and adapted for the South African context by Cochrane, De Gruchy and Peterson (1991: 13-25). It was also adapted for the urban context by De Beer and Venter (De Beer and Venter 1998:47-119).

12.3.3.1 The pastoral hermeneutical circle

The pastoral hermeneutical circle consists of four movements. In contrast to the five movements of Müller these four movements do follow each other in a strategic manner although the process is circular or a spiral as it is a continuous process.



1. Insertion

Insertion is the first phase of this method of doing theological research and involves describing the context of research, describing the personal experiences of the subject of the research as well as the experiences of the faith community being studied.

2. Analysis

Analysis is a deeper analytical understanding of the context as described by the first phase (insertion). In this phase the economic, social and political elements of the context are analysed and described and the ecclesiastical analysis is done.

3. Theological Reflection

Theological reflection takes place in this phase, where various sources (Biblical, tradition, theological books as well as spiritual journeys and experiences) are brought into dialogue with the context described and analysed.

4. Pastoral Planning

In this phase a pastoral plan of action (transformative praxis) is developed and the findings of the previous phases are incorporated into the pastoral plan.

One aspect that I would like to incorporate into the study, from the pastoral hermeneutic cycle as understood by Segundo, is the partiality to the poor as being central to the Christian witness (Segundo 1976:33).

12.4 A combination of a contextual, fundamental practical theology and narrative approach

12.4.1 Insertion/ descriptive theology / story of need

In the study I will seek to understand or at least describe the story of the global village as I see and interpret it. I believe (and at this point in the journey I am aware that it is a prejudice or a pre-understanding) that the stories constructed with the dramatic resources (the story of the global village) are problem saturated stories. This perception has prompted this study. I will in Chapter Three: Descriptive Theology / Story of Need listen to these problem saturated stories of the global village as experienced in Pretoria. This chapter will be a descriptive chapter where the context will be described with the aid of the stories that people tell. Stories of both those who partake in the global village such as business people as well as those who have been marginalised from the village such as unemployed homeless individuals will be listened to.

12.4.2 Descriptive theology / analysis / retelling the story of the past and the darkened story of the future.

This will be Chapter Four of the study. In this chapter of the study, I will further describe the stories told in Chapter Three. I will retell the story of the past in order to understand

and interpret how things developed and use descriptive tools to describe power relationships and developments. This process can be described as unpacking the story of the past to try and understand why the stories told in the global village are problem saturated stories. In this section of the study I will be working intra-disciplinary by bringing in descriptive tools from various other disciplines such as sociology and economics, and then integrating these insights into the theological approach of the study, or as Browning would say that if the other disciplines, such as sociology, were conceived hermeneutically they would eventually also ask the descriptive theological questions, as eventually the questions need to be asked: “What reasons, ideals, and symbols do we use to interpret what we are doing? What do we consider to be the sources of authority and legitimation for what we do? For those who claim to be Christian, this process inevitably leads to a fresh confrontation with the normative texts and monuments of the Christian faith (Browning 1991: 48). If sociology is understood hermeneutically then eventually it will be confronted with the sacred texts that amongst other things determine human action (8.2.2 Narrative intelligibility of human actions). It is in this section that I will also be looking at the other factors that influence and determine the faith communities’ actions, besides the religious stories. The economic and the political and the ideological stories also need to enter into the conversation and in this section of the study the horizon of these “other stories” will be described so that they can enter into dialogue with the Christian stories in the following chapters. It is in this context that the study adopts the critical correlational approach. I will conclude the descriptive theological journey in Chapter Five by bringing together the reflections of Chapter Two (postmodernity) and Chapter Four (global village) and thus describe the *postmodern global village*.

12.4.3 Historical Theology / theological reflection

This will be Chapter Six of the study. In this chapter I will reflect theologically on the issues raised in Chapters Three, Four and Five by bringing into the conversation various theological resources such as the Bible, theological books, personal faith experiences, meditations and spiritual journeys.

12.4.4 Systematic Theology / re-authored story of the past

In the second part of descriptive theology, unpacking the story of the past, the general questions that characterise the situation of the present context had been described. These questions now need to be brought into dialogue with the general themes of the Gospel and theology. Certain Gospel themes and insights will have been developed from the historical theology of the previous chapter and these insights will be brought into dialogue with the questions of the *postmodern global village* under certain

systematic theological themes. I will focus on the systematic theological themes of Eucharist as the central element of worship and meaning within the faith community and secondly reflecting on various Biblical models of ecclesiology.

12.4.5 Strategic Practical Theology / imagined story of the future/model of pastoral action

This will be Chapter Seven of the study and here I will reflect on a practice of reconciliatory ministry in the postmodern urban South African context, thereby reflecting on a creative imagined possibility of being church in the global village with both villagers and marginalised.

This movement of the study will not be done in isolation, but this journey will be a journey with the faith community. I will make use of group discussions, congregational council reflections on various texts and Bible study reflections on texts and in this way bring into the dialogue the faith community. I will seek to incorporate Habermas' idea of ideal speech communities where knowledge can be extracted from the classic texts which are emancipatory and creative.

12.5 The theological story of the study: clarifying my own roots and theological story

I need to conclude this chapter by telling my story – the story with which I embark on my journey of discovery.

12.5.1 The theological roots of the story

12.5.1.1 Lutheran story

My life story is closely linked with the Lutheran church in South Africa. I was born and grew up in a Lutheran family and home. My father worked as a farm manager for the Berlin Mission Society on a farm in the Northern Cape in the vicinity of Barkley West. The closest city was Kimberley approximately 30 km from the farm. The farm, being a mission farm, brought us as family into close contact with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa which was the "black" Lutheran church in South Africa.

I was baptised and confirmed in a small German speaking Lutheran congregation in Kimberley.

I believe myself to be called into ministry and studied theology in Pietermaritzburg where I lived in a commune of Lutheran students from all over Africa as well as a few

students from Germany. I did various internships in Lutheran congregations and was ordained into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa.

This close contact with Lutherans has formed my thinking to appreciate and to be critical of certain aspects of my tradition. I believe that the Lutheran story will certainly be one of the main dramatic resources from which I interpret and construct my theological story.

12.5.1.2 Ecumenical story

The white Lutheran community in Kimberley / Barkley West was small and the congregation did not offer many activities besides church services twice a month. I started my schooling in a Catholic school and attended their catechism classes for first communion.

In Pietermaritzburg during my theological training I stayed in a Lutheran community yet the School of Theology at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) was ecumenical and in class we were from all sorts of denominational backgrounds ranging from Evangelical (Evangelical House of Studies - Ethos), Anglican, Methodist to Catholic students. This ecumenical context of study forced us to reflect critically on ones own tradition, but also widened the perspective to incorporate the other traditions.

The lectures at the School of Theology at Pietermaritzburg came from various denominational backgrounds and the study material they offered came from a wide ecumenical perspective.

After completing my theological training I married a Dutch Reformed minister, so in a certain sense I got married to the ecumenical story.

This ecumenical emphasis in my theological story, which was not so much choice as it was circumstance, has formed my theological thinking so that ecumenical perspective in doing theology has become very important to me. This perspective will be reflected throughout the study as the study will be integrating sources from various theological backgrounds. The research for the study as well as the spirituality that carries the study comes from various denominational backgrounds so that I believe this study will be an ecumenical study although its focus is a Lutheran congregation.

In short, the various traditions have formed the various aspects of this study. The contextual and liberation traditions have influenced my emphasis on taking the context and specifically the poor and marginalised seriously and analysing (describing) the constructed realities from their perspective. The Lutheran Reformed background will

play an important role in the theological Biblical reflection seeking a sound systematic theological approach to the challenge of the global village. The Catholic influences will come into the story when seeking a new spirituality and the Evangelical influence when seeking appropriate praxis. The traditions will not be confined to the above description, but in a broad context the various traditions have influenced me to incorporate these various aspects.

12.5.1.3 Contextual theological story

The School of Theology at Pietermaritzburg placed a great emphasis on contextual theology, liberation theology, black theology and feminist theology which all formed part of the curriculum for systematic theology. This theological approach provided for me the dramatic resources to make sense of the South Africa I was living in. It provided the resources to make sense of my experiences in the inner city of Pretoria where I worked for nearly three years.

The theologians who were my companions on this journey through their books were Maimela, Cone, Nolan, Gutierrez, Ruether and Daly.

12.5.1.4 Urban concern story

The urban context that has been chosen for the study is also part of my theological story. I have worked in various urban congregations and never in a rural congregation, although I grew up on a farm. It is these urban experiences in Germany and South Africa that have been woven into a story that has become a passionate drama within the story of my calling.

It is this passion for the urban church that has motivated this study as well as the belief that in the urban centres of our world the crises of our times are experienced. It is my belief that theological reflection in these times needs to be urban theological reflection, thereby not ostracising the rural areas, but considering that the majority of the world's population lives in urban centres. I believe this bias is justified.

The urban centres of the developing world are growing at tremendous rates and philosophical, cultural and social developments seem to be most acute in urban centres.

12.5.1.5 Integral and holistic approach

The influence of contextual theology as well as the experience of inner city ministry has made me very aware of the need for holistic ministry - a ministry that sees the individual

as a whole within his/her context and not just as a *soul* that needs to be saved. In the past, many of the mainline churches stayed away from a holistic approach in fear that they might mix politics with church matters.

A holistic ministry goes beyond these dichotomies of private and public (political) or soul and body and sacred and secular. I will seek a method of ministry which integrates the personal with the public and the secular and the sacred.

I will seek to develop a holistic ministry that addresses the personal emotional needs of the urban individual, but also the social public as well as environmental spheres in which this individual lives, in other words a ministry that embraces the totality of the person with all the systems and spheres that influence him/her. It is this whole story that I would like to incorporate and therefore the need for an integrated, holistic approach.

12.5.1.6 Shared journey

This study is not an individual process but a shared journey of discovery. Besides the academic reflection on theological ideas and theories these theories and ideas are internalised and lived out in the process of journeying with friends, family, colleagues and congregants.

It is a community's journey as theology can only be done in community (Moltmann 1995:14). The theological journey/story that has led up to this study was not an isolated journey in a vacuum, but was influenced and determined by the various communities in which I have found myself.

I therefore suggest that the theological journey of this study is a shared journey of people bound together searching for God in the confusion of the *postmodern global village*, people coming from various different backgrounds – from professionals benefiting from the global village to those who are marginalised from these benefits. All will journey together seeking to listen to God's story in the global village.

DESCRIPTIVE THEOLOGY PART ONE - INSERTION: DESCRIBING “GLOBAL VILLAGE” BY LISTENING TO THE STORIES OF NEED TOLD BY THE VILLAGERS AS WELL MARGINALISED.

1. INTRODUCTION TO DESCRIPTIVE THEOLOGY

Don Browning understands descriptive theology to be the first task in all theology.

“It is to describe the contemporary theory-laden practices that give rise to the practical questions that generate all theological reflection. To some extent, the first movement is horizon analysis; it attempts to analyze the horizon of cultural and religious meanings that surround our religious and secular practices” (Browning 1991: 47).

In this study I will subdivide this first step of theology (descriptive theology) into two parts.

The first part of descriptive theology of this study is listening to the stories of need. In this section of the study I will be listening to the problem stories which provide the study with the questions which will then be beginning of theological reflection.

The second part is unpacking the story of the past. In this section of the study I will be unpacking the story behind the questions and the crises (stories of need) and thereby describing¹ the horizon of cultural and religious meanings that surround our religious and secular practices.

Insertion is the first step of the theological journey of this study. The purpose of this first step of this journey is to describe and to tell the stories of the context as thoroughly as possible. In this description I will firstly be telling my own theological story and how various experiences have challenged my theology thus leading to the formulation of this study. In this sense this study is also a narrative study as it tries to unpack my own spiritual/theological journey and discover a theological way forward within the context of ministry in the global village.

I will also be reflecting on the stories that I have heard in the various contexts, both locally as well as globally, as well as stories from other sources such as books, articles, etcetera.

This first step of the theological journey is primarily a very subjective step whereby the context is described from my point of view, by telling and re-telling the stories of need.

¹ I would prefer to use the term *describing* rather than *analyzing* as Browning does, as the term analyses does not fit the narrative approach the study has adopted.

Chapter Three: Descriptive Theology part one: Insertion – listening¹⁵⁹
to the story of need within the global village

It is my own subjective journey as I enter the context of ministry and hear the stories of others. I enter with a certain prejudice and hear the stories of others with the ears of prejudice, but it is also true that the stories of need, told by others, challenge my dominant story. This study can be seen as the narrative process of my theological story or spiritual journey as the story of the past is challenged by the stories of need. This challenged story then becomes my theological story of need, which is in need of unpacking and re-authoring. This first phase of insertion is the entry into the context and describing this context with its stories of need.

De Gruchy quotes from Holland and Henriot with regards to the first phase of the pastoral hermeneutic cycle - insertion:

“This locates the geography of our pastoral responses in the lived experience of individuals and communities. What people are feeling, what they are undergoing, how they are responding - these are the experiences that constitute primary data” (De Gruchy 1986:87).

Thus I can say that insertion refers to my initial experiences within the specific ministry contexts, as well as the initial experiences of those travelling with me in this context. Insertion reflects on our initial struggles, responses and actions as the community seek to relate their faith to the specific context.

“That is where we usually start. We respond to the context from a perspective of faith. I live my faith in response to the things I encounter in the context” (De Beer & Venter 1998: 50).

Gutiérrez (Gutiérrez 1991:xxxiv), using the hermeneutical cycle which I am also partly using together with a narrative approach, describes the first step on the journey of theology “lived faith”.

“To live the faith means to put into practice, in the light of the demands of the reign of God, these fundamental elements of Christian existence. Faith is here lived “in the church and geared to the communication of the Lord’s message” (Gutiérrez 1991: xxxiv).

In this study I will seek to combine the hermeneutical cycle with a narrative approach. Lived faith could be understood as the story of faith within a community that is interpreted, authored and re-authored by the dramatic resources available to the community (church) with which we seek to understand and interpret our experiences. These dramatic resources are made up of: the Bible, tradition, dogma, the teachings of

Chapter Three: Descriptive Theology part one: Insertion – listening¹⁶⁰
to the story of need within the global village

the church as well as the religious dramatic resources of society. The study's context is a pluralistic context therefore the dramatic resources of the other faith traditions and secular ideologies will also play a vital role in interpreting and reinterpreting the practices of the local faith community.

It is here within the lived faith that I would like to start the theological journey of the study – My lived faith, the dramatic (theological) recourses by which I seek to minister to a congregation within the global village, together with the lived faith of the people I journey with. I believe that it is within this lived faith that the stories of need arise because sometimes the lived faith lacks the dramatic recourses to interpret the day to day experiences of life in the global village.

Insertion is the story of our initial experiences within a specific context. It is the story of our struggle with this context. It is the story of need, in other words a story which is in need of interpretation or re-authoring to be able to journey forward into the future with hope. This phase of the theological process is hermeneutic and narrative as it tries to understand, interpret and retell the personal story of a journey into the context and into the world of church and theology.

This phase of insertion, the journey into the context, is guided and accompanied by the metaphor from Christ's story – **the incarnation** – Christ who entered into our context - our world - and walked our streets with us and listened to our stories of brokenness, our stories of woundedness, our stories of sin and the search for meaning. He did not only listen to the stories, but took these stories upon Himself. I believe insertion as a theological process is guided by this metaphor as we enter into the context of study, to listen to the stories of brokenness, sin and the search for hope and meaning. The metaphor of incarnation will not only guide me in the first phase, but all the phases of the study will be guided by this metaphor.

1.1 Practical way forward on how the context of need will be described.

The primary story that I have access to is my own story as the subject of the study. My story of need is a story of varied experiences and how to bring these various experiences into a theological story of unity and coherence. Yet one does not construct stories of meaning or understanding nor experience in a solipsist vacuum, but experiences are understood and interpreted together with others. The study will incorporate the stories of those who have journeyed with me, or with whom I have journeyed. The stories of those with whom I have journeyed will form the secondary stories. I will in this section use two sets of stories, namely the primary story as well as secondary stories. The primary story is a subjective story of my personal experiences and how I tried to interpret these

experiences, although I did not interpret them in an isolated vacuum, but within and from a faith community's tradition. The secondary stories are also subjective in the sense that they are stories that I chose to include in this study and secondly they are stories as I heard (with my prejudiced ears) them being told.

1.1.1 Primary story

The primary dramatic resources for this study will be the story of my journey into the global village.

1.1.2 Secondary stories

The secondary stories are the stories of those who have shared this journey into the global village with me, both villagers and those marginalised from the global village.

These secondary stories will be made up of the following:

1.1.2.1 stories of the sojourners. (The re-telling will thus be my subjective re-telling of their stories). This will be done on the basis of stories gathered through unstructured interviews, discussions with individuals, council meetings, fellowship groups and meetings.

1.1.2.2 stories of people that I have read about in books and articles

1.1.2.3 descriptions of the context both personal (subjective descriptions) as well as descriptions of others.

2. THE PRIMARY STORY OF NEED LEADING UP TO THE STUDY

2.1 The story of my journey

The primary story is what Don Browning calls “the third, personal pole of descriptive theology” (Browning 1991:62) where I, as the subject of the study, tell my story thereby describing what Gadamer calls ‘our practical prejudices’.

After leaving school I was determined on following a career in medicine and went to the University of Stellenbosch and begin the first year B. Sc. I entered a new world, but coming from a German/ English (English school) background I was an outsider looking in. 1988-1998 was a time of political uncertainty in South Africa at the end of the P. W Botha era and the beginning of F. W de Klerk era and I became more and more involved and conscious of the social ills that were tormenting our country. There were numerous new experiences which questioned and challenged my story. My story was the story of a white South African, who had grown up with all the privileges of white South Africa. These challenges brought to my attention the need for a new story with which to understand and interpret my world, myself and my past.

It was during this time that my interest grew in Philosophy and Religion so that Medicine

and Science became more and more difficult to concentrate on. This time in my life was the first real confrontation with my own story being a story of need. I could no longer see myself studying medicine or science. The story of my past and my dreams for the future no longer coincided. I eventually turned to the traditions of the Christian faith to find new understanding and coherence for my story. It was during this time that I believe to have been called into the ministry.

The beginning of the end of the Cold War and the New South Africa.

The year ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall and therefore the beginning of the end of the cold war. This event was for us as family of extreme importance because I have family living in East Germany who could now for the first time travel across the border to West Germany. That night the borders were open they climbed into their East German car and travelled across the border and arrived on the doorstep of a sister in the West. The sister in the West was watching history in progress on television. My sister was staying with the Family in West Germany at that time and so we personally, as family, partook in this great moment of history. Christmas 1989 was filled with hope – a hope that in this dark world of division, of Nuclear War, exploitation and growing poverty there was a new light of peace and reconciliation between old enemies.

When Nelson Mandela was released in February 1990 things could not get any better. Could this be the end of an age of violence and oppression and the beginning of a new world of hope, reconciliation and peace? At a time like this I thought it very appropriate to start studying theology as a new age of hope had dawned on the stage of world history. Yet before I left for Pietermaritzburg the director of the community of Lutheran Theological Students in Pietermaritzburg, Pastor Landman, was murdered. The newly born story of hope was challenged by a story of violence. This story of violence became more and more dominant during the years in Pietermaritzburg as it was the dominant story of the Natal Midlands in those years.

2.2 The theological story

The story of theological formation did not begin with the theological studies in Pietermaritzburg, but already early in the family home. I was born into a German Lutheran home and my father worked as manager of a Berlin Mission Farm near Kimberley. I grew up within the Lutheran tradition and learnt the basic Lutheran doctrine in Catechism, but was also influenced by going to a Catholic Primary School. My father's work for a Mission society also influenced us and exposed us to the world of the churches that arose out of the missionary societies.

My theological studies began in a time of hope at the University of Natal within a multiracial community of Lutheran theological students at 29 Golf Road.

29 Golf Road is a community of Lutheran theological students, who come from all over Africa to study theology in Pietermaritzburg. This community started a few years earlier and the idea was that it should be a community of unity and reconciliation. This exposure to various different cultures and stories challenged my story and my prejudice that had guided my story thus far.

The Cold War had ended and did not usher in an age of peace, but rather of rampant capitalism. The fall of the Berlin wall was no longer a victory for humanity, but a victory for one ideology over another. There was no longer any counterbalance to the rapid growth and expansion of capitalism. In South Africa there were the frustrations of the multi-lateral talks and the euphoria of Nelson Mandela's release soon faded as the feeling became ever stronger that for the people living at the grass roots not much will change, besides a new constitution. The hope of the new era soon exchanged places with a new and bitter cynicism about the world and the "new South Africa".

At the school of Theology we were exposed to contextual theology, liberation theology, black theology and feminist theology, each bringing with it a new hermeneutic and thus a new language. We sat together in the class with Catholics, Evangelicals, Anglicans, Methodists and Pentecostals from all sorts of backgrounds debating the Bible, ethics and the purpose of the church. The different theologies, the ecumenical context as well as the context we were living in, shattered horizons, and opened up new worlds and out of it all grew the feeling of uncertainty.

It is out of this context that certain basic themes for my personal theological story developed:

1. Contextual approach to theology.
2. An attempt to be inclusive with regards to gender and class.
3. An ecumenical approach to ministry and theology.
4. Holistic integrated ministry that breaks down the walls between spirit and material as well as public and private.
5. Bias towards the poor and marginalised.
6. Praxis orientated ministry,
7. rooted in Biblical Witness and tradition.

I had a keen interest in Philosophy and Religious Studies which I took as extra subjects. In the final year of Philosophy I studied Wittgenstein's Tractatus and I believe that this had a tremendous influence on me. It brought about deeper understanding of language, truth and reality, but it also brought with it a sense of the mystical.

It was in these theologically formative years that I became aware of the influence of postmodernity on my personal story. This personal story was a world of confusion and fragmentation as a part of me was trying to hold onto traditional values and dogmas, but not being able to deny the rightful critique of feminism and various other liberation theologies. The world outside was also experiencing the frustrations of the postmodern era - of a world

turned upside down by the historical events of the last few years. Yet I had a sense that within this context the church's role had become all the more relevant, yet I needed to discover what this role is and for that I needed hands-on experience.

The theological story of need that arose from the theological formation in Pietermaritzburg:

- What remains as truth within the context of all this uncertainty and critique?
- What role could the Bible have within the context of the church and in a postmodern world?
- How can one opt for the poor and marginalised without excluding anyone, but taking them along?

2.3 The ministry story

My first experience of ministry was within the context of the inner city of Pretoria doing a practical year with Pretoria Community Ministries (PCM). I later came back to Pretoria Community Ministries and worked there as spiritual director for two years.

2.3.1 Inner city of Pretoria – a ministry to those marginalised from the global village

The city became my mentor who taught me so much about the world we are living in. The training in Pietermaritzburg had given us certain tools by which to look at the constructed realities in which we live. With these tools I started on a journey of discovery. I discovered a totally different world to the one I had lived in before. The city is the place where different narratives clash and to me it is the centre of the cultural, political and economic developments of the world. It is here in the city where trends are set and new ideas become a reality. It is in the cities that the “New South Africa” was becoming a visible reality.

In the inner city one could see that the group areas act was no longer in place. The people living in the flats were no longer white only, the people selling goods on the pavements were mainly black hawkers and foreigners. Pretoria was changing into a global African City. This idea was exciting to some but certainly not to all as numerous people wanted to get out of the city and move to the suburbs.

The churches had similar ideas. As their members moved out to the suburbs they felt the need to move out after them. The inner-city started to become a no go zone for many who lived in the suburbs. Many saw the inner city as a place of crime and overcrowding. The inner city, as I experienced it, is a place of suffering and poverty. It is a place where homeless and unemployed individuals try and make a living from the scraps of society, where economic and political refugees seek a living for themselves, where hawkers try and

earn some money to feed their families, where teenagers flee from their families and social conditions only to end up in prostitution and drugs. It is a place of brokenness, where people try to construct and reconstruct their lives on the margins of society with the broken bits that society throws to them.

2.3.2 Inner city of Berlin

After my studies and the practical year with Pretoria Community Ministries I had the chance to work and live in the old eastern part of Berlin a few blocks away from the Brandenburger Thor. In South Africa I experienced how the hope of the story of the New South Africa faded into cynicism as the story of the “New South Africa” did not have the resources to interpret the daily experiences of life in the New South Africa.

In Berlin I experienced how individuals struggled to interpret their lives within the setting of the story of the united Germany. However the story was not a story of a united Germany, but of West Germany who had “bought” East Germany. The individuals had to struggle with the notion that everything in the West was better and is better as they became witnesses to their own story of the past being stolen from them. The world was no longer divided into two and socialism was no longer a viable critique of capitalism. Yet critique was necessary, but from where, from what basis? There was no value system from which to criticise the “West”. People felt excluded from the system and for the first time unemployment became a reality for many.

The congregation in which I worked was situated on the borders of three areas of Berlin - Berlin Mitte, Prenslauerberg and Friedrichshain.

We, Ronél (my wife) and I, entered the congregation five years after the unification of Germany, yet all around us there were the signs of a time gone by. Prenslauerberg is a suburb of Berlin with beautiful old buildings, yet with a history of being a working class suburb. It was the suburb where Käte Kollwitz and her husband lived. The buildings were broken down as nothing seemed to have been done in the forty years of socialism. Friedrichshain on the other hand together with Berlin Mitte had seen socialist development. Much of the old historical buildings had been destroyed and new socialist residential facilities had been built. In Prenslauerberg many alternative communities (multi-racial couples, punks, homosexuals and artists) found a home, but many of the residential buildings were run down and illegally occupied by youths who lived together in alternative communities. In Friedrichshain in the socialist residential housing blocks there were many families who had privileges in the old socialist systems because of their involvement in the system, yet now that that system had broken down they adapted quite quickly to the new system of the West.

In the congregation we heard stories of frustration and a sense of *loss of meaning*. Many in the community were angered by the arrogance of the West, yet they had never really accepted the propaganda of the East either. Now the East was gone, yet they were not

accepted by the West, but first needed to be “*westernised*” before they were accepted socially and professionally. Many of the congregants found themselves in an ideological vacuum - not accepting the ‘western’ system fully, but not really having an alternative. They found themselves in the relativity of postmodernity.

It was during the winter of our stay in Berlin that we became aware of a group of youths who had moved into a broken down residential building. The building had no electricity, nor water, nor central heating, yet the youths wanted to create their own alternative community in this building. They had chosen a simple form of lifestyle as an alternative to the *rat race* of Western capitalism, of the global village. The group of youths were thrown out of the building as they were illegally occupying it. It was at this point that we got involved. Pastor Winkler from a neighbouring congregation had an interest in these youths and got involved as a facilitator between the youths and the city council. I accompanied him on several visits to this youth community and so we became involved.

The youth very strongly expressed their critique of the present system and were searching for an alternative by living together in community. These communities could offer them alternative resources with which to construct their reality.

The people we met and spoke to in Berlin were people in search for ways in which they could intelligible re-construct their lives. They were searching for dramatic resources to do this. The church did not seem to be able to provide these resources as the churches were empty. The story of the west did not provide the resources either.

2.3.3 Congregations in Port Elizabeth, Pretoria and Johannesburg.

I have worked for short periods of time in three different South African congregations. First in Port Elizabeth in Springfield, then St. Peter’s by the Lake Parkview Johannesburg and St. Peter’s Skinner Street Pretoria. In these various congregations I came into contact with mainly white South Africans and their stories. I listened to their stories and together with them tried to search for meaning within Biblical and Lutheran tradition through Sermons, Bible Studies and pastoral conversations.

I will try to describe the challenges and problems that the members in the congregations faced, in the secondary stories of need.

2.4 Summary: The primary story of need.

These different events in the chronicle of my life have shaped the story of need to which this study seeks to respond. The story of my ministry has been a journey into the global village. The story of need is a theological story that has entered the field of ministry and there in the different realities has been challenged by the stories of those with whom one wishes to journey with, within the context of ministry. It is a story that is in need of creative new resources by which to re-author the past (tradition) and enter with hope into the future.

What is needed is a narrative where the experiences of the inner city poor as well as the experiences of the congregants of urban congregations can be meaningfully understood and not exclude each other. I experienced both groups struggling with their own stories and in need of creative new narratives.

The primary story of need can be summarised in the following way:

2.4.1 The personal story of need: is a story of personal experiences within various contexts that challenged the story of the past and calls for a creative new story with which to enter the future with hope.

2.4.2 The theological story of need: is a story of my theological formation from childhood experiences through theological training to the reflection of this theological formation story in the context of the ministry needs of congregants as well as the inner city poor.

2.4.3 The story of need is based on two very different experiences: one the experiences of the congregants and secondly the experiences of those who are not members of the congregation namely the poor (economically marginalised). They both form part of the ministry, yet their situations are so different and thus the question arose: How can one minister to both the villager and those marginalised from the global village?

3. THE SECONDARY STORIES OF NEED - GLOBAL VILLAGE EXPERIENCES

3.1 Introduction

In the past eight years I have been exposed to various ministry contexts in various cities both in South Africa and Germany. In these eight years I have worked in congregations as well as in inner city ministries and thus have heard various stories of people's experiences and struggles. The stories that I will be reflecting on are these stories of need, in other words stories of individual's struggles with the present or the past or where there is a clouded story of the future.

These are the stories of actions and of concrete practices within congregations and ministries struggling with the reality of the global village.

These secondary stories of need can be divided into two categories. Firstly the stories of need of those who are part of and benefit from the global village – the stories of the villagers.

Secondly the stories of need of those who do not benefit and are marginalised within the global village – the stories of the marginalised.

I have selected secondary stories of need which I will use to describe the story of the global village (villagers and marginalised).

3.2 The stories of need from the villagers.

3.2.1 The story of unemployment – a villager’s story of need

The story of unemployment is a story of need that seems to have become more frequent within congregations as the number of people finding themselves in this predicament increases.

It was especially in the congregations in Port Elizabeth and Berlin that I encountered numerous stories of unemployment. It is not only the actual reality of unemployment but very often the fear of unemployment which is a dominant theme in people’s stories of need. The church is more and more confronted with her members coming forward and seeking pastoral guidance through the various psychological (emotional) and social stages of unemployment.

In Port Elizabeth, the need was so great that in the congregation a care group was started with those in the congregation who had lost their formal employment. It is from these experiences and stories (the stories from the group), that the study will describe the story of need caused by unemployment and the fear of unemployment.

There are often differing factors that lead to a situation of unemployment, the study will reflect on these stories, with differing factors, which lead to the situation of unemployment.

a. The story of retrenchment

This is the story of Peter². Peter is a family man in his mid fifties and he has ascended up the corporate ladder to a senior position in the car manufacturing industry. He is a father of three children. The children have all left the family home and have started their own families. Peter’s wife is a teacher, who never worked as a full time teacher, but mainly did substitute teaching.

The company had to downsize, as the production in South African was no longer competitive enough to compete with the same company in other areas of the world and this affected not only the labour force, but also middle and even some levels of upper management. Peter was asked if he would consider going on early retirement. Peter agreed to go on early retirement, but this had major financial implications for him and his family. The pension would not be enough to accommodate the needs of the family, nor was he emotionally prepared to go on pension. He had to find alternative employment.

This was very difficult for the whole family. Peter was the first in the congregation who had

² The names used in the re-telling of these stories of need are fictitious.

lost his employment. He had to face the stigma of being unemployed and had to face the numerous emotional phases that he went through. It took two years before Peter found employment in a totally different sector of the economy. The family relocated to begin this new phase of their family life in another city.

After Peter there were numerous others who told similar stories, men and women who had built a career and just when they are well established they are forced to change direction and start all over again.

b. The story of the company closing down

This is the story of a young woman, Lucy, who had come to the city to look for employment. She had obtained a degree in economics. In the three years that I knew Lucy she had found and lost her jobs three times. Lucy worked in the finance world and three times the company she was working for was liquidated. The employees were either dismissed or were relocated to other sectors or if they were lucky some staff members were taken over by the new company that had taken the failing company over. Lucy's story tells the story of the economic instability of the world and especially the developing world. It is a story of insecurity and uncertainty.

c. The story of affirmative action

James, a young man just turned 38, was working for a communications company, one of the larger communications companies in South Africa. He worked in the personnel department. He lost his position because the company's lower management did not reflect the demographics of South Africa. James, being a young man, believed that he would easily find another job. It took him four years before he finally had another full-time job.

d. The story of a graduate who does not find employment

This is a very common story of many young graduates who come to the city with diplomas and degrees and start looking for formal employment, only to be frustrated as they lack one requirement namely experience. This story is very common in the young adult group in the congregation as they often express their frustrations in this regard.

3.2.1.1 Some characteristics of this story of need

a. The feeling of worthlessness

The person who has lost his/her formal employment goes through a period of feeling worthless especially if the period of unemployment is extended over years. It is only after the loss of employment that one realises the value of employment. Work is the standard by which individuals in society are judged (Kramer 1982:74). Peter, after realising that he will not be able to re-enter the sector of the economy he had left, soon started equipping himself for something totally different. James, on the other hand, sent numerous applications off to various companies in the hope to find something similar to what he had done in the past. To all his applications the response was negative. James started feeling unwanted and that there was no place for him in this world. He felt that his skills, gifts and talents were not needed. Emotionally the labour market pushed James to the margins.

b. Depression

James was in a situation where he could no longer see a future. His future was completely darkened by the reality of not being able to find another employment opportunity. We spoke for many hours about this situation and one question which was continuously on his mind was: where is God in all this?

James was soon caught in a terrible depression, which also made it difficult for him to continue looking for other opportunities.

c. Loss of self-esteem

James lost all confidence in himself, so much so that to some interviews he did not even bother to go. He did not think that he had the necessary skills to even go to the interview. This is very characteristic of people who have been unemployed for a longer period of time (Kramer 1982:74).

d. Feeling marginalised

If you do not have any work you feel useless and not really part of society, but rather excluded from society as you feel that you are not contributing anything to society. One of the characteristics of work is to contribute to society. It is a human need to feel that you are developing yourself and the world around you. “Das andere aber ist, daß Arbeit ohne Zweifel auch dazu dient, das individuelle Bedürfnis nach Selbstentfaltung durch Leistung zu erfüllen. Jeder soll nach seinen Gaben und Fähigkeiten mittätig sein dürfen an der menschlichen Kulturschöpfung, an dem, was notwendig erleichternd und verschönernd ist“ (Fütterer 1984:17).

3.2.1.2 The story of unemployment – a story of fragmentation

The story of unemployment within the global village is a story of tremendous need – as the

individual feels worthless as he/she feels that there is no place for them in the world and that they are unwanted and unnecessary. They feel marginalised, pushed to the outskirts where nobody wants them. They sometimes even believe that God is no longer interested in them and they feel forsaken by God.

James eventually started studying again and after completing his diploma soon found a stable position in a totally different sector of the economy.

Having heard the story of need, there are some theological questions that are raised:

- * Can the church offer dramatic resources to respond to the experience of unemployment?
- * 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?
- * What kind of Christian presence was needed to be able to re-author stories of need?
- * What does this tell us about the kind of church that is needed in the global village context?

3.2.2 The story of emigration – a story of the global labour market

In the last few decades the tourist industry has boomed, but also the opportunity to work overseas has become a lot more viable than what it was in the past.

This is a global village experience that people are travelling around the globe a lot more both for work as well as for pleasure.

The study will like to look at the stories of people travelling overseas because of work.

3.2.2.1 International job market and multi-national companies

In the past few years South Africa has seen the exodus of numerous young adults. Many of them left for socio-economic and political reasons, as they did not see a future for themselves here in South Africa. Yet there is also another group of individuals who are qualified professionals and are working in multi-national companies. These companies have interests or outlets all over the world and thus there is a lot of movement of professionals globally. Individuals are requested to move from one continent to another for shorter or longer periods of time, fathers or mothers having to stay for two to three months in a foreign country because the company for which they are working has certain interests there, or is establishing contacts in those parts of the world.

There is the story of a congregational council member who had to resign from council

because he would not be able to attend the monthly council meetings. He said that he wouldn't be in town most of the time. He was in the finance department of a multi-national company and this meant that part of his job was to visit the various sites of the company all over the world. He has been all over the world. One evening he told me about the various cities and places where the company has offices. I asked him what it was like to travel so much and see the world. His answer was: "We do not really see much of the world, because we fly to the country, drive to the hotel and then attend the conference. The hotels, conference facilities and company offices look pretty much the same all over the world and there hardly ever is any time left to go sight seeing, so you quickly buy something for the children in the duty free shops."

He also shared that his family suffers from him not being at home for a large portion of the year, which means that he misses crucial moment in his children's lives.

Another young couple both have good jobs, but this also meant that both are continually away from home. It is not uncommon that they both are away on a trip but never to the same continent. They realised that they could only live this lifestyle for a limited time as "it took too much out of them!" Their plan was to make enough capital as quickly as possible so that they could settle down, go on very early retirement and then start a family.

There are the stories of families whose children have taken up permanent or semi-permanent jobs overseas. This brings with it major challenges as the weak Rand makes it very difficult to fly overseas to visit the children and grandchildren, so parents feel that they are missing out on major developments in their children's lives. I was surprised again and again how this situation both in South Africa and in Germany forced parents, who had an aversion to computers, to all of a sudden buy computers so as to communicate via the internet with their families all over the world.

I have so often heard: "yes it is very difficult that they are so far away, but today with the technology it makes it so much easier. We speak or write to each other just about every day." Many of these families are descendents of German missionaries who came out to Africa and they compare their situation with the situation of their grandparents, or great-grandparents. "In those days there was no communication for months. Parents didn't even know if their children had arrived safely. Only after 3-6 months did they receive a sign of life."

The families are connected electronically, but are fragmented all over the world.

When I asked about their children and how they are coping overseas the response very often is that the children feel they did the right thing and that economically it is going really well, but that they miss home, that they feel homesick and that they are not really coping with the cultural differences. There is a general feeling of homesickness.

3.2.2.2 The international job-market – a story of fragmentation

After listening to these various stories I realised that although the opportunities of life in the global village were amazing, it is at a very high cost. The people that I spoke to shared that the cost was high and mostly it was the family that had to pay this price, so in a sense they were connected to the world, but fragmented at home. I asked myself, what role does the church play in these families' lives? And how can the church minister to them effectively?

Having heard the story of need, there are some theological questions that are raised:

- * Can the church offer dramatic resources to respond to the experiences of family fragmentation and global village citizenship?
- * What kind of Christian presence was needed to be able to re-author stories of need?
- * The story of need cries out for a certain kind of church within the global village. What kind of church is that?

3.2.3 **The stories of families in the global village**

These stories are stories of families with whom I have journeyed in the various congregations that I have worked in. They are stories that I encountered during home visits or after meetings, and some are stories of families who came forward with their story of need seeking guidance and help.

3.2.3.1 A story of marriage in the global village

This story of need arose after trying to start some form of ministry to young adults. The young adults were invited to a meeting where they could share their needs and interests so that appropriate activities could be planned. This meeting was held in Lyttelton, April 2000. The young married couples expressed a need for some form of activity or programme that addresses specifically their needs, but the immediate problem that we discovered was time. A weekly activity was impossible as nobody in the group felt that they could commit themselves on such a regular basis. The meeting settled for an activity once a month.

When asked about what exactly their needs were, the following came up:

- Time management.
- Christian financial and business ethics
- Relationships

When asked to explain why these topics were of interest to them, very interesting global village stories were told.

Time management:

The young adults said that their work takes up so much of their time that there is little time left for other things, or they are so tired after work that they have no energy left for other interests. The stories focussed around the issue of work. Most of the young adults are working as professionals. One recurring story was the story of overtime that is expected, without necessarily being paid for it. The complaint was that the work load had increased to such an extent that they were expected to do this extra work in their own time. There are various reasons given why the work load had increased, one reason being the rise in competition between companies, so that in order to stay in the market the company had to do more for less and quicker than the competitor. Some young couples complained that they hardly ever saw each other except over weekends and then they had so many other commitments. There was also a rather comical story when they shared their eating habits. The majority of the group shared that they eat fast food at least four to five evenings a week. The telephone numbers of these fast food outlets were programmed into their cell-phones so the only question left was, is it pizza, McDonalds, KFC and who is going to pick it up on the way back from work? Is this the cultural diet of life in the global village?

Christian financial and business ethics:

Many of the young adults are confronted with ethical questions at work. The company they are working for has a very aggressive competitive approach as “the business world out there is hard and harsh”. Sometime these professional young adults find themselves in positions where they are expected to do things which are against their ethical upbringing. This does not include illegal activities but expectations that go against their ethical fibre. When asked further about it they also agreed that the company/business has to have such an approach, because that is the way the world works and if they didn’t have this approach they would probably not survive. So it was a situation where they struggled with certain issues but could not really do anything about them.

Relationships:

The problem of relationships goes together with the problem of time. The young adults do not have enough time for each other and that is causing stress within their relationships. The stressful situation at the work place affects the relationship.

3.2.3.2 The global village's young families' stories of need

The young family in the global village on the one hand lives the exciting life of being connected and exposed to numerous opportunities. They have a freedom of choice, as the whole world is open to them and a lifestyle of apparent luxury in comparison to previous generations is accessible. Yet there is a story of need crying out as they seek continuity and time for themselves and each other.

Having heard the story of need, there are some theological questions that are raised:

- * Can the church offer dramatic resources to respond to demanding life expected of professionals in the global village?
- * What kind of Christian presence was needed to be able to re-author stories of need?
- * What does this tell us about the kind of church that is needed in the global village context?

3.2.4 The story of the young person in the global village

A whole new generation is developing within the global village – the “*global village kids*”. These are children, youngsters, who are growing up in the media and information age. It is the first generation which is growing up in a media drenched world (Sindode Oos-Transvaal 1999:98). It is a new generation which is growing up in a totally new environment.

This new environment is where they have everything that their hearts desire with regards to material needs and the physical and material conditions are probably the best ever in the history of the world. Yet there are numerous signs that are telling us that the youth in the global village is not healthy. There are differing signs ranging from physical ailments to psychological and emotional disturbances. The physical ailments are allergies, where the immune system of the children is breaking down. In Germany 20% of all children suffer from one form or other of allergy (Hurrelmann 2002:8). Children who live in the global village and eat the food of the global village, namely the food of the fast food chains, have weaker immune systems.

Emotionally children do not learn to cope with the demands of social interaction as they grow up in homes where there is very little balance between recognition, stimulation, and rules and regulations (Hurrelmann 2002:9). This imbalance is the result of the pressures within the family. When both parents have to work they do not have the time to spend with their children to develop a healthy sense of self, nor is there enough stimulation as the children are bombarded with all that the global village has to offer in entertainment, as the parents allow them to watch whatever the media world has to offer. The children have to discover their own value system with which to navigate through the stormy waters of growing up. The only values they receive from home are the pressures to perform so that they will be able to find a place within the job market. The entry into the competitive job market already begins in primary school (Hurrelmann 2002:9).

The dominant social relationships which are then formed are amongst friends, and depending on the circle of friends this social group could end up in a downwards spiral, such as the misuse of drugs, etcetera.

These youngsters are connected to the global village in numerous ways:

- Their absent parents working in the competitive global job-market.
- The absence of values, beside the value to compete which is a survival value in the global village.
- The connection to the media industry, via television and the internet
- The connection to the communications global village via internet.

An example of this connection to the information and communications technology was when the St. Peter's youth group went on a youth camp and each one of the teenagers arrived with their own mobile phone. They are well acquainted with the internet and therefore are exposed to the great diversity of the internet. The internet is probably their greatest source of information. This diversity of information also makes the group very diverse as each teenager follows his or her own interests, thus accentuating individualism and a form of egocentrism (Hurrelmann 2002:9). Besides the physical signs of allergies there are also the other signs such as depression, headaches and eating disorders mainly in teenage girls but also in boys, hyperactivity as well as aggressive criminal behaviour (Hurrelmann 2002: 9).

"The latchkey kids"

This is a generation that has arrived home to an empty house with both mom and dad working (or a single parent home where the parent has to work to survive). This is also the generation that has spent every other week or weekend at their other parent's home. They live and experience various different relationships, such as dad's girlfriend, mom's previous ex-husband, my second stepfather. This has caused young people to be sceptical of relationships. Peers and friends become surrogate families as a small number of dependable relationships are valued highly (Sinode Oos-Transvaal 1999 Agenda: Jeugverslag 1999:96).

It is also a generation for whom fashion labels have become very important as the St. Peter's youth groups explains why certain labels are cool and others not. One afternoon a girl came late to a youth meeting wearing new sunglasses. Immediately two of the boys asked: What label is it? This was then a wonderful opportunity to start discussing the whole matter of labels and how labels can determine if you belong to the in-group or not. In this discussion they also told their stories of competition between the teenagers, how important labels are and that there is a competition between the friends about which make of mobile phone they have.

These labels have become the new religion says Frei Betto a theologian from Brazil (Betto 2002:41). Labels dictate if you are "cool" and "in" and if you do not have these labels then you are "not-cool" and "out". The story of Sebastian, below, illustrates the pressures of being cool. This topic has come up again and again at our youth meeting and I was surprised how little empathy there is amongst teenagers. The story of Mark's dad's funeral tells how pain is dealt with.

The story of Sebastian

Sebastian is the third child from a family of five and he was in Mark's class. Now Sebastian did not have any fashion labels to wear because his family was struggling economically. He wore the clothes that his mom made or that he got from his two older siblings. This excluded him from the in-group. "There is no grace for somebody who is so completely out of the trend!" Sebastian was ostracised and victimised often by groups of 6 to 7, who would regularly make fun of him and laugh at him. The interesting thing about Sebastian and his school was that the group which made fun of him was liked by the teachers. The reason that the "cool group" was liked by the teachers was that they were eloquent, charming and quick to respond, they knew exactly what the teachers and people in authority wanted and they responded positively. "Input has to equal output!" They were fast, could outtalk nearly anybody and they always had a good joke to tell. They were made for success. Not only in school, but also after school cool equals success. Mark, one of the cool group, lost his father in an accident. Many of his friends were at the funeral and found it extremely cool that he did not show any emotion at the funeral, not a single tear. "He kept his cool!" This story tells of a totally different story namely the story of pain. What role does pain play in the story of being cool? Is your own pain and the pain of others something to be scoffed at? This maybe explains why it is so easy to make fun of Sebastian as weakness and pain are something that is look down upon. The story of Sebastian is a combination of an article I read by Doris Weber (Weber 2002 3) and a journey with a young teenage boy who was facing certain challenges at school.

At a Bible study meeting a concerned mother told the story of the latest craze with regards to children's birthday parties. She told us that there seems to be a competition amongst the parents to out perform the other parents by giving birthday parties. These little ones grow up into this competitive consumer society where labels are important. The mom told us of certain parents, who fly their children to Disney world in Florida for their birthday party and now this has become the latest fashion for birthday parties.

Having heard the story of need, there are some theological questions that are raised:

- * Can the church offer dramatic resources to respond to the stories of need that the youth experience?
- * Can the church offer parents alternative dramatic resources to guide them in the task of parenting?
- * What kind of Christian presence was needed to be able to re-author stories of need?
- * Can the church offer an environment where the children learn a different story to the dominant story of the global village?

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

3.2.5 The story of flexibility

One of the characteristic stories of life in the global village is the story of flexibility. A flexible human being is needed to survive in the flexible economic reality. As seen in the above stories it has become very common that people have to change their careers and they have to be flexible to be able to cope with the demands of the fast moving world. Those who are working in a stable job often experience the demands of this job changing as the demands of the economy changes. You can be working on one project and the next month on a totally different project.

Every young American, who has studied for two years, will be expected to change jobs 11 times in 40 years and at least three times completely re-orientate and educate him/herself to be able to respond to the new challenges (Richter 2002:46). Employment contracts will be short term with very few long term contracts. Many people working as professional engineers are responding to these short term contracts and are no longer employed for long terms at certain firms. The new 'buzz' word is *out sourcing* and *contracting in*.

This obviously has certain consequences as people learn to live in short term relationships and loyalty is no longer seen as a value that is useful within the global village. What is seen to be of value is a chameleon character that can change depending on the demands that need to be met. This obviously has consequences for the human character in the global village – a short term character that is only interested in short term relationships, that can respond to the needs of the moment (Richter 2002:46). The kind of person that the global village needs is one who thrives on chaos. "Das is der Typ des neuen Siegers, der nicht unter der Fragmentierung seines Lebens und seinen chamäleonartigen Anpassung an den Wandel leidet, sondern in dem Hin und Her jeweils rasch seine Bindungen an Umstände und Leute zu lösen versteht, um oben zu schwimmen" (Richter 2002:46).

Having heard the story of need, there are some theological questions that are raised:

- * Can the church offer dramatic resources to respond to the experiences of fragmentation as the self loses him/herself as he/she seeks to be flexible in response to the demands of the economy?
- * Can the church offer a place where long lasting relationships can be built which offer stability and a foundation?
- * What kind of Christian presence is needed to be able to re-author stories of need?
- * The story of need cries out for a certain kind of church within the global village. What kind of church is that?

3.2.6 The story of no hope

The story of not much hope with regards to the future is a recurring story. In my first year in Pretoria (2000) I visited numerous members of the congregation in their homes and I was confronted with one very dominant story and that was the story of crime and violence. Each home had at least one story to tell of violent theft that either they had experienced themselves or a neighbour or a relative had experienced it. At home-fellowship meetings this was very often the main topic of the informal discussions during the coffee break. The result of these stories was very often that families contemplated leaving the country as they no longer saw a future for themselves here. The interesting thing was that when we went to Germany in 2000 we encountered similar stories. People were complaining about the rise in crime and that certain areas in the larger cities were totally unsafe. It seems to be a global story that villagers feel unsafe because of the rise in crime and violence.

Having heard the story of need, there are some theological questions that are raised:

- * Can the church offer dramatic resources to respond to the experience of there being no hope?
- * What kind of Christian presence was needed to be able to re-author these stories of need?
- * What kind of Christian presence is needed that would create room for the stories of hope to be told as a counter balance to the stories of no hope?
- * What does this tell us about the kind of church that is needed in the global village context?

3.2.7 The story of the church in the global village

In and amongst all these stories of hopelessness, unemployment, crime and violence the church is called to proclaim the good news of hope. Yet the church in South Africa was confronted with its own challenges as its authority was being questioned. Its authority as custodian of truth was under attack for the following reasons:

1. The legacy of the past.

The other theme that kept coming up in the years 1999-2000 was the past and the stories that were revealed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Stories that turned a whole world view upside down and showed the immorality and absurdity of the past system. This was a system in which so many had believed and had even fought for. The church's role and her support of this system was also revealed, thereby questioning her role as an authority on ethical questions of what is right and what is wrong. If the church in the past

could consciously support a system that was wrong, how then can we trust the church not to do the same in the future?

2. The diversity of faiths and beliefs

Within the global village there is a greater awareness of the diversity of faiths and all around the individual there are people living with different beliefs and value systems, thus questioning ones own beliefs and values. South Africa in the past was protected from this diversity by the censorship of information. Today, in the New South Africa, in the evenings there is no longer only Christian meditation on the national television broadcaster, but also that of other faiths. The president is no longer inducted with a Christian prayer, but a multiple-faith prayer. The schools can no longer exclusively teach Christian faith principles but need to incorporate the other faiths as well. This diversity has brought with it a great uncertainty with regards to the authority of the truth claims of one faith over and against the other truth claims of different faiths.

3. The New Constitution - rights and values.

Most South Africans welcomed the new constitution, but were confused with the debates that arose concerning conflicting rights. These debates focussed on big issues such as the death penalty and abortion. They asked the question: who has the final authority on these issues? The church which had been in the past the authority on all major ethical and moral questions no longer could play this role in South Africa. Was there no authority above the constitution that could discern between what is right and what is wrong? No standard of value that is true and all need to adhere to? This poses the question: Is everything relative – even what people believe?

4. The challenges of life in the global village

We come back to the first question: How can the church proclaim the story of hope against the stories of hopelessness, unemployment, crime and violence?

Winter writes that the church, especially the protestant church, has failed to really respond to the challenges of modern culture in the cities and I believe the same is true with regards to the challenges of post-modern culture in the global village.

“Protestantism failed to penetrate the culture of modern cities, it has largely refused to take that culture seriously, and it has withdrawn from the task of relating the Christian faith to the problems and needs of human being in contemporary urban society” (Winter 1962:37).

Having heard the story of need, there are some theological questions that are raised:

* Does the church need to be an authority to give guidance?

- * How can the church guide when all is relative?
- * What kind of Christian presence is needed to be able to re-author stories of need, especially the church's own story of need?
- * What does this tell us about the kind of church that is needed in the global village context?

3.2.8 Theological questions that can be raised from the villagers' stories of need within the global village:

- * Can the church offer dramatic resources to respond to the experience of unemployment?
- * 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?
- * Can the church offer dramatic resources to respond to the experiences of family fragmentation and global village citizenship?
- * Can the church offer dramatic resources to respond to the experience of the demanding life in the global village?
- * Can the church offer dramatic resources to respond to the experience of there being no hope?
- * What kind of Christian presence is needed that would create room for the stories of hope to be told as a counter balance to the stories of no hope?
- * Does the church need to be an authority to give guidance?
- * How can the church guide when all is relative?
- * What kind of Christian presence was needed to be able to re-author stories of need, especially the church's own story of need?
- * What does this tell us about the kind of church that is needed in the global village context?

3.3 The secondary stories of need from those on the margins of the global village.

3.3.1 Stories from the homeless community

The stories that will be retold in this section are stories taken from individuals during unstructured interviews. These interviews took place during my time at Pretoria Community Ministries – at the street centre, or stories shared at support group meetings, from other members of the various communities of Pretoria Community Ministries as well as from books and articles. The homeless community is a diverse community and therefore the study will reflect on a number of differing stories.

3.3.1.1 The story of a business venture in economic difficult times

This is the story of Alfred. What makes Alfred's story so interesting is that his story is not far removed from the stories of congregational members. Alfred could easily have been part of the support group I started in Port Elizabeth for those faced with the challenge of unemployment. Yet Alfred's story took a different turn. For many years he worked in a government department and in 1997 he was asked if he wouldn't like to go on early retirement as the department was restructuring. Alfred decided not to take early retirement, but to rather take the "package". The package was a large sum of money that was paid out to him. With this money Alfred dreamt of starting a small business that would generate an income for him and his family. Alfred did not really have any business skills and the business did not do well at all. The family had invested all their money in this business venture and now that the business was not succeeding it caused a lot of stress in the family. Alfred, realising the financial crisis he and his family were in, struggled to cope and in order to calm his nerves he began drinking. The drinking became a problem and the downward spiral began.

He lost his business and his wife divorced him which only aggravated the drinking problem. His family was angry with him for drinking and therefore rejected him. Within four years Alfred's life had changed from a respected family man working in a government department to a homeless man on the street with a severe alcohol problem – a man marginalised to the pavements of our cities.

3.3.1.2 A story of terrible trauma and nowhere to go

This is the story of John. John is a teacher who lost his wife and daughter in a terrible car accident. John could not cope with the trauma of the loss and began drinking. The drinking started becoming a problem in his work and therefore the school dismissed him. When I met John he had already been living on the streets for three years. He had been in and out of rehabilitation centres but he struggled to find formal employment once out of the rehabilitation because of his alcoholism. So whenever he came out of the centres he was again on the street and it did not take long before he would start drinking again.

3.3.1.3 A global perspective: a story of a homeless man in Berlin, Germany

Hans-Jürgen is 35 years old and an insurance broker in Berlin.

"Two years ago I could never have imagined living like this. Now I know that one can live like this. With a few breaks I have been living like this now for one and a half years. This is a very short time. I know of people who have lived on the streets for 5 or even 6 years.

My story: Broken marriage, no work, no flat.

After our divorce I had a flat separate from my ex-wife. But I could not really work anymore

and so I lost my job and then I could no longer pay for my flat, so I lost that as well. Yes, where do I sleep? There are many places in roofs of houses, public toilets, in the basement of buildings and off course the forest, but it all depends on the season. Nobody needs to see that you are on the streets, because you can look after yourself. There are places where you can wash and clean yourself. How do I live? Get up very early in the morning so that nobody catches you. That means to get up at 4:00 AM or 5:00 AM. You can easily find out at what time people start getting up and there is movement and therefore you have to leave before they catch you. Then you need to start looking for a meal. Get onto the train and drive to Zoo to get a warm cup of coffee. Then spend the rest of the day in warm places, depending on the weather. Alcohol? That depends, if one is really frustrated then one drinks more, if it is cold one needs it to fall asleep. With me it is in phases. There are certain phases that I need it, but then again I am okay without. Most of the others believe that with alcohol they can forget their problems or at least drown their problems for a night. I am not really sure if that helps. I have made the experience that it doesn't." (This is a freely translated and adapted story from Drommer's book: "...und segne, was du uns bescheret hast") (Drommer 1993:26-27).

3.3.1.4 The story of a homeless refugee

It is the story of a man who has come to South Africa with the hope of a better future. He had left behind his family and his country. The reason why he has left his country was political as his home country was plagued with a civil war. He was a qualified engineer, but he could not go out to seek employment until his refugee status has been clarified. The clarification of refugee status takes some time as there are too many people applying for refugee status, many for political reasons but also many for economic reasons. He cannot go out to seek employment until his status has been clarified so until then he was living on the streets.

His story is a story of need, hopelessness and desperation aggravated by an increasing xenophobia in South Africa. Africa being the continent that is traumatised by civil wars, genocide and conflicts there is a continuous movement of refugees. So there are people and whole families who are fleeing adverse conditions at home and then seeking a better future elsewhere.

Having heard the story of need, from the homeless community there are some theological questions that are raised:

- * Is the church open to the needs of the homeless community?
- * Can the church offer the dramatic resources to help re-author the story of need?
- * What kind of Christian presence is needed to be able to re-author stories of

need?

- * What does this tell us about the kind of church that is needed in the global village context that also reaches out to those on the margins?

3.3.2 The story of a shack dweller

This is the story of Maria who has come to this the city from the Limpopo Province in the late eighties in the hope that she will find enough money to look after her family.

She had many dreams and one being that she will earn enough money to build a house in her village for her family. Maria came to the city without anything but for the money that paid for the transport to get to the city. Now she is here with nowhere to stay and nothing to do, and so the first stop is to find a place where she can sleep. One possibility is to sleep on the station, but that is not safe as the little bag that she has with her will probably be stolen. But where else should she go?

Eventually Maria found a place not far from the station in an informal settlement where she was taken in. After a long story of abuse, violence and many tears, she eventually managed to get a job in helping in an informal restaurant that sells “pap en vleis” to the commuters.

Now that she has a stable job, she also has money with which to build her own shack. Maria does not earn much like most of her neighbours and certainly not enough for her to build a home in her village. Her neighbours are in all sorts of “businesses”. There are many who make a living by selling a variety of things from roasted peanuts, maize or vegetables and fruits, and others have opened a shebeen where beer and other drinks are sold and then there also is a lot of prostitution in the area. Maria always has at least one new story of violence and crime to tell when one visits her. She would tell these stories in a lot of detail even pointing to the places where it all happened. At night she says she is very frightened because at night all sorts of things are happening, but she prays and hopes that nothing will happen to her.

Maria lives on the margins of the city in an informal settlement trying to make a living from the informal economy on the margins of the formal economy of the city.

I would like to add an article that was written in the News Letter of Pretoria Community Ministries May 2002 “Inkululeke!” that continues the story of Maria in that it tells the story of her informal settlement.

“MARABASTAD the struggle continues.

Although two social housing projects are currently being planned in the vicinity of Marabastad, and although at least 500 of the 2000 people living informally in Marabastad are estimated to qualify for housing subsidies, local government prefers to remove the people to an unknown venue far from the city centre. This is about to happen!!

This does not make sense at all; but then – without any consultation with the local

community, what else can one expect. It would make so much more sense to work with those in Marabastad who qualify for social housing, in order to integrate them into the envisaged housing projects. The new housing projects would provide more than 900 families with security of tenure. Why not starting at our doorstep?

If the people of Marabastad only arrived yesterday, but many of them are now well established after some years in the area. Marabastad is not just a collection of people, but has become a community. The informal economy is sustaining many families in a way that government can never do, because it lacks the resources. But instead of affirming the informal residents of Marabastad and the informal economy that has emerged there, government wants to wipe it out.

And they do it in the name of disaster prevention, better options for the poor –yet, don't speak to the poor themselves at all. This is an archaic method of dealing with inner city poverty. The new South Africa is not so new after all.

We have presented local government with proposals and suggestions. But no constructive discussion. It was clear that our suggestions were not welcomed because government had their minds made up. And that was that the poor has no place in the centre of the city.

We had one meeting with the Executive Mayor, two from his Mayoral Committee and the local ward councillor, where they told us how we had to use the proper channels. The proper channel for speaking about Marabastad was the Ward Committee. But at the Ward Committee the Ward Councillor said we can't discuss it until the Mayor and his committee have not made a decision. So, if they made a decision, what is there then to discuss? And what is the purpose of a Ward Committee, so-called participative governance, and so forth, if nowhere at any level of government they respect their own policies?

The people of Marabastad are not yet free; in fact, their freedom – which is to live in a place where they can at least create income for themselves – is now also under threat. And those threatening it are the very ones that are supposed to carry the principles of freedom and democracy... But they play with these principles as they wish... and think we are fools.

Somewhere the bubble will burst! Let's wait and see!" (written by Stephan De Beer in the Pretoria Community Ministries News letter Inkululeko! May 2002).

This article takes the story of Maria further and describes how those living on the margins and trying to make a living there are marginalised further and continuously live in fear, because they do not even have a place on the margins.

Having heard the story of need, there are some theological questions that are raised:

- * Is the church on the margins of the global village?
- * Does the church have the dramatic resources to re-author the story of need?
- * What role does the church play in telling alternative stories (prophetic stories) which challenge the dominant stories that marginalise people from the village?
- * What kind of Christian presence is needed to be able to re-author stories of need?
- * What kind of Christian presence is needed to proclaim stories of hope which challenge the discourses of marginalisation?
- * What does this tell us about the kind of church that is needed in the global village context?

3.3.3 The story of a young girl in crisis

This is a story of one of the girls living in Lerato house which is a community of Pretoria Community Ministries.

The story is written by the girl and thus her words and style is used.

I am very sorry for myself But Proud.

This is just a summary of my life.

Firstly I don't know whether I was born in Pretoria or in Transkei and I am not really sure about my father either, but one thing for sure is that it doesn't matter now. Okay this is what I'm sure about.

When I was nine years it was when I knew my father (the one I am not sure about) then life was sweet and fine, and that was on 1993 June. I was then in grade 4 okay everything went well until after my moms birthday month by then I was eleven years. Just before 1995' Christmas there was a fire in my parent's bedroom and they were inside. Okay by then I didn't know anything about rescuing someone and were in the kitchen and to go out we had to go pass through the fire on the passage. Okay I managed to take my sisters and brother by wetting blankets and take them out, but the scary thing was that I couldn't see anyone of them when we were out.

After five minutes then came my father, then my mom's friend thereafter a while my mother. As she came running the skin was falling from her body and naked too. Okay I ran and called my grandmother then we made a plan for them to go tot hospital. After two weeks on the 18th my mother passed away and my father survived but he was still in hospital.

Okay my mom's brothers took her with them and buried her at their home since then we never heard from them they took her on January 1996 hence we were staying with my father's parents until we decide we wanna go back to our home. On 1997 we went back and my father was going out or dating three woman. I don't know what happened to the other two. He continued dating this other one with three children. After they broke up.

Thereafter he started dating this other one. She have the same name as my mother. It went on and on until he started changing on 1999 by then we were still staying with her parents. 2000 we started staying with both my parents in Soshanguwe ext 4 until 9 August he started abusing me. Okay it went on till 2001. Maybe April he forced himself inside me I tried to tell all my family member only one listened to me and that was my uncle. Others never believed what I was saying until I decided to take action after thy hated me all besides my uncle. They arrested him. After I decided to drop the charges on July okay everything went fine until 2002 January on the 7th we were arguing about my love life I don't know what happened but the next thing I was telling him that is telling me shit then he said to me then I will show you shit. He forced himself into me then the following day I decided I must call my uncle and tell him therefore I then decided I must go tell my pastor and on the 9th I came to Lerato house I stayed here until I say my father on the 29th of July we tried to talk but I wasn't fine about it. So I decided I must go visit home with Mildred. Okay everything went fine accept with my mother. She was swearing at me telling me that I will go back where I come from cause that is her house.

My brother was washing school shirts I tried to help him and she was telling me that if I came to spoil him I must get out of her house. This is how I lived my life.

These are the stories of many in the inner city of Pretoria – stories lived out on the margins of the city, in the streets or in the informal settlements of Marabastad or in the bushes of Salvokop and for many young girls in the Budget Hotels of the inner city of Pretoria. They

are stories of need, stories of brokenness in search of wholeness, healing and hope, stories without a future, empty of hope in search of a dream and to be able to dream again. These are personal stories of individuals, but their stories are affected by the stories and histories of families, cultures, societies, countries, economies and eventually the story of the global village. They are stories of need.

The words cry out for the Gospel and for the Body of Christ. Yet where is the Body of Christ? Where is the light to the world?

3.3.4 The story of the church and those on the margins of the global village

The inner city poor and the church

The church in the inner city of Pretoria has reacted to the inner city poor in different ways. The church is forced to hear these stories of need, because not a day goes by without somebody knocking on the door of the church, telling the story of need and crying out for help. The members of the churches are challenged by these stories, because they have people coming to their doors crying out for help, people standing at traffic lights crying out for help and people approaching them as they do their errands in the city. The church hears these stories and is certainly challenged by them. The question that the study will be asking in this section is: How does the church respond to these challenges?

There is not a single response to these challenges and therefore the study will look at some possible responses.

3.3.4.1 Flight from those on the margins

The first option is to flee if challenged, in other words to move out of the area as a church or as individual member and join another congregation in the suburbs. *The church does not want to hear the story of need of those on the margins.*

Many churches have chosen to take this route and have moved out of the areas where they are confronted with those on the margins, like the inner city.

Many members of congregations, which are physically situated in an area where one is confronted with those on the margins, have left the congregation to go to different congregations. In St. Peter's congregation we have lost many members, who preferred to go to a suburban congregation where they are not challenged by the realities of the inner city. This is not the official reason given. Some of the reasons given, are:

- * They left St. Peter's because it is no longer safe to travel to town, especially at night.
- * The membership of St. Peter's has changed and this change has brought about a cultural change which does not agree with them and therefore they have found a new spiritual home.

3.3.4.2 Fight against those on the margins

The second option is to fight if challenged by the stories of need. This is a very aggressive ministry to those living on the margins. It is a ministry that believes the cause of the story of need is personal sin and that the only way to respond is personal conversion. This kind of response is a form of aggressive evangelism, exorcism and aggressive prayer as the ministry is seen as spiritual warfare. The solution to poverty and brokenness is seen in the exorcism of personal moral evil and sin and conversion. The systemic evil and injustice of society is not addressed at all. Nor is the story of need unpacked. *The church does not want to listen to the story of need of the marginalised, because they have the answer already.*

3.3.4.3 A ministry towards those on the margins

Many churches have a ministry or support a ministry **to** the poor. This ministry is a ministry where the church reaches out via a soup kitchen, clothing handouts or food parcels. The church listens to the story of need and tries to respond, but does not seek to understand and unpack the setting of these stories of need.

3.3.4.4 A ministry with those on the margins

The church listens, seeks to understand and shares in the story of those living on the margins of the village, in other words the church allows the story of need to become part of the congregation's story and together they seek THE STORY OF HEALING AND HOPE.

Having heard the story of need, there are some theological questions that are raised:

- * How can the church truly listen to the stories of need?
- * Is it possible to develop an ecclesiology that will include both the villagers and those on the margins of the village?
- * How can the church listen to the discourses behind the stories of need?
- * How does the church position itself with regards to these dominant discourses?
- * What kind of Christian presence is needed to be able to re-author stories of need, especially the church's own story of need?
- * What kind of Christian presence is needed to proclaim and re-claim the story of the future as a story of hope?
- * What does this tell us about the kind of church that is needed in the global village context?

3.4 **The primary story of need together with the secondary stories of need.**

After listening to the stories of those on the margins a new world was opened for me, but

most important of all these stories opened the Gospels for me in a totally new way. Never before had the stories of the Gospels been so real and relevant than in the Bible studies with the homeless or in the shacks of Marabastad. I became very aware of the vital importance of holistic ministry, the need to work together ecumenically and that the church needs to be involved in the practice of theology in the concrete context of daily life. It was during this time that I also became aware of key themes within my Lutheran tradition.

Listening to these stories I felt caught between two worlds, the world of the villagers and their stories of confusion, fragmentation, loss of meaning and pain caused by the various realities of life in the global village and on the other hand the world of those marginalised from the village. Could this be two worlds in one country - a postmodern South Africa in a global economy trying to heal the wounds of the past?

There must be a way in which the Gospel of Christ can enter into this context and bring healing, reconciliation, hope and meaning to the whole community.

3.4.1 The primary and secondary stories of need within the five dimensions of action or practice

Don Browning saw there to be five dimensions to our actions and our practices. I would like to place these stories into the context of these five dimensions (Browning 1991: 110).

3.4.1.1 The rule role dimension

The stories told in this chapter are stories that reflect the practices and actions of individuals living within the global village. They are stories that tell us about these actions, be it the action of looking for employment, or trying to start a family, or making ends meet on the streets of the city. These action tell us about rules and the roles within the global village and the communication patterns that have developed.

3.4.1.2 The tendency need dimension

These stories also tell of the needs and tendencies of individuals and groups, the need for employment, the need for time, the need for new resources with which to interpret and re-interpret lives and events.

3.4.1.3 The environmental and social dimension

These stories also tell the story that these needs and tendencies cannot all be met, but that there are certain constraints, environmental, but also institutional constraints that force certain obligations on the individual. A mother might want or might need more time with her

children, but the institutional patterns of the economic world rule out more time for children.

3.4.1.4 The obligational dimension

The individual and the company find him/herself in a situation that if you want to remain part of the system you have to play according to the rules and regulations. If you want more time to be with your spouse and children then you need to get out of the system, because the system says you have an obligation to put in the extra hours of work.

2.4.1.5 The visional dimension

These stories also tell that the vision of the global village is not sufficient. Although it might be exciting and promising for some, the reality is in stark contrast to its promises.

3.5 Tentative theological reflections on my insertion experience, describing the stories of need of both the villagers and those marginalised from the global village.

These are tentative reflections on my ministry experiences in the various ministry contexts and after listening to the various stories of need from both the villagers and those living on the margins of the global village. These reflections can be seen as a summary of the theological questions and issues that these stories of need have raised. These theological reflections and issues are tentative and need to be explored in greater detail. The next few chapters will be a journey of exploration, but especially in Chapters Five and Six I will come back to these questions.

- I have found it very helpful in the various contexts of ministry to be guided into the ministry context by the story of Christ and to have **the story of Christ as the guiding metaphor** that leads and accompanies one on the ministry journey.
- The first phase in the story of Christ can be seen as the incarnation. Christ that enters the world and enters the brokenness of the world as he is born into poverty and political and social turmoil. He did not shy away from the brokenness and the systemic sinfulness of his context, but entered it and experienced the harsh reality thereof. This I would like to call an **Incarnational Ministry** that allows the brokenness of the context to affect the ministry and even lead the ministry so that the ministry can enter the brokenness.
- I have found the narrative approach very useful for various reasons. The first

reason being that our faith is based on the narrative of Jesus our Christ and secondly that humanity is best understood through our stories. **A narrative approach to doing theology within the community from which we draw our dramatic resources.**

- From listening to the various stories of need I discovered the need for a **holistic ministry**. This journey towards a holistic ministry is a journey of struggle as one finds oneself caught within the false dichotomies of the dominant religious discourses – the dichotomies between private and public, spiritual and material, physical and emotional, etcetera. The church needs to relearn the relevance of the story of Christ for all areas of life and needs to face the challenge of allowing the story of Christ to question all spheres of human existence.

This holistic ministry needs to be guided by the story of Christ, who did not allow these dichotomies to influence his ministry of the kingdom of God.

- Listening to the stories of need of those living on the margins of the global village I became very aware of the need of any ministry in the global village to respond to the call for social justice. The ministry in the global village will need to have **advocate social justice**. The church as a language community will need to create space for the marginalised voice to be heard, so that this voice is not lost.
- After listening to the stories of need of both the villagers as well as those marginalised from the village I became very aware of the dominant dramatic resources with which individuals (both villagers and marginalised) construct their realities. The ministry in the global village will need to be aware and critically aware of these powers and the **dominant discourses** which are rife with **power imbalances**.
- In the context of these dominant discourses and power stories a space needs to be created where the other stories can also be told. **The alternative stories need to be told.**
- The dominant discourses and narratives seem to create the global village, but the global village is fragmented and rife with power imbalances. The alternative stories that need to be told will thus create alternative realities. These alternative realities could be understood as **alternative communities** offering the global village an alternative.

- These alternative communities, being different to the global village, would be **inclusive communities** where everybody is included both villagers as well as those marginalised from the village.
- Communities need to offer an alternative to the global village as they offer the global village inclusive communities including both villagers and those marginalised thereby challenging the fragmentation of the global village. These communities could be seen as **redemptive communities** as they offer the global village a redemptive alternative.
- The dominant discourses need to be challenged on the public stage. The ministry cannot be seen as a private matter. The dominant discourses need to be challenge there where they affect peoples lives, for example at the workplace and in public ethics. The ministry needs to understand itself as a **public ministry**.
- The scriptures have a certain bias to the poor. So also I believe there needs to be a **bias towards the stories of brokenness**, because it is in these stories of brokenness that the truth of the dominant discourses is exposed.
- Many of the stories of need were stories of no hope. The church as the messenger of God's hope needs to understand her ministry as **liberation from the enslavement** of no hope narratives of the global village.

These are just a few ideas, tentative theological reflections, at the end of the first step of this descriptive theological journey. I will now proceed with the second step of the descriptive theological journey and seek to unpack the stories of need of both the villagers as well as those marginalised from the village.

DESCRIBING AND UNPACKING A STORY OF THE PAST AND THE CLOUDED STORY OF THE FUTURE

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND STEP OF DESCRIPTIVE THEOLOGY: UNPACKING THE STORY OF THE PAST AND THE CLOUDED STORY OF THE FUTURE

In the previous chapter, Chapter Three, I listened to the stories **within** the global village, the stories **of** the global village, the stories **of the villagers** as well as the stories of the **marginalised**, and thus the problem story/ies of the global village were told.

The stories that I listened to were stories of need as well as stories of crises which can be understood as the problem stories of the global village. They were the stories that generated the questions that need to be reflected on theologically. I will come back to these questions again in Chapter Five and Chapter Six, but first these questions need to be unpacked and fully described within their narrative setting. These problem stories were told by both the villagers as well as the marginalised. In this chapter I will unpack, or as Don S Browning (Browning 1991:8) would say describe these problem stories by listening to them within the context of their global setting.

This brings me to the second part of descriptive theology as mentioned in the introduction of chapter three.

The second part of descriptive theology in this study is unpacking the story of the past.

In this section of the study I will be unpacking the story behind the questions and the crises, thereby describing the horizon of cultural and religious meanings that surround our religious and secular practices.

Before I can unpack these problem stories within their global setting, I will need to describe this global setting, or as Browning would say, analyse the cultural religious horizon (Browning 1991:47). I will not only describe (unpack) the global setting, but I will also reflect on the discourses and ask the question: What understanding of the world brought about such interpretations?, in other words the problem stories **will be mapped**, within the various spheres of human existence, namely economic, social, political, etcetera. "In any case, discussion of globalization touches just about every aspect of the academic disciplines, including their moral foundations and implications"(Robertson 1992:9).

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These different aspects I would like to bring into dialogue with each other in this chapter and thereby seeking a **fuller description** of the problem story of the global village, thus “thickening” the problem story. “To describe situations thickly, it is useful to understand the formal pattern of practical thinking. To describe situations is to describe how people think and act practically in specific contexts. To describe situations is to describe the forms of phronesis that actors use in concrete situations” (Browning 1991: 97).

This is not denying that I, as subject of the study, bring my own questions and thoughts to the situation that is being described and thereby the description is biased towards my subjective questions and therefore I would like to see this chapter not only as a dialogue between the different disciplines, but also a dialogue or conversation between myself and the material I have gathered.

I would agree with Browning that this step in theology is a multidimensional hermeneutic enterprise or a dialogue between myself, my prejudice, the material that I have gathered and the various disciplines that will be brought into the conversation. “To describe these practices and their surrounding meanings is itself a multidimensional hermeneutic enterprise or dialogue” (Browning 1991:47).

The chapter will begin with a description of the terms *globalization* and *global village* and a reflection/description of life in the global village. This will be a description of the narrative setting of the problem stories. Then the story of the global village will be described and unpacked as the story of globalization, as well as the story of those marginalised from the village. Finally in this chapter I will reflect on the global narrative setting as a possible metaphoric tool for understanding the stories in the global village.

In chapter three the problem stories were told and in this chapter the focus will be on describing the theory-laden religious/ideological and cultural practices of the global village.

The questions that will be guiding this chapter are:

- What, within a particular area of practice, are we actually doing?
- What reasons, ideals and symbols do we use to interpret what we are doing?
- What do we consider to be the sources of authority and legitimation for what we do? (Browning 1991: 48)

It could be asked what this still has to do with theology and whether these chapters should be understood as *Descriptive Theology*? These chapters and specifically chapter

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four will be making use of the other disciplines of the humanities such as sociology, economics, political economics, history and to a certain extent psychology. How does this fit into the field of theology?

If I look at the discipline of hermeneutic sociology, the sociological task is seen as a conversation/a dialogue between the researcher and the subjects being researched (Browning 1991: 47-48). The researcher, in this case me, brings to the study all the pre-understandings and prejudice with regards to the global village and these are brought into dialogue with the pre-understandings of the villagers and the marginalised. David Tracy argues that social-systemic material, and psychological determinants are traced and described as well as we can, but they need to be placed into a larger set of meanings that give them direction and in the scheme of human action (Tracy 1981: 118). Crites called this larger set of meanings sacred stories which I reflected on in Chapter Two (8.2 Narrative and Human Action). Browning argues that these “larger meanings that constitute the theory embedded in our practice invariably have a religious dimension. That is why hermeneutic sociology, when properly conceived, fades into descriptive theology” (Browning 1991:48).

Therefore a chapter that will mainly be focusing on disciplines such as sociology, economics and psychology can be seen as a theological chapter within the theological journey, if these disciplines are seen as being part of a larger hermeneutic process. If they are conceived as neutral and objective disciplines as was the case in modernity then certainly they could not form part of the theological journey and that of practical wisdom, or phronesis.

2. DESCRIPTIVE THEOLOGY AS THE HERMENEUTICAL LINK BETWEEN THE NARRATIVE THEOLOGICAL APPROACH AND THE “SECULAR” DISCIPLINES OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES

One of the legacies of modernity was the dualism between secular and profane and thus theology’s status as an academic discipline was questioned. Could theology still be in dialogue with the secular disciplines? The natural and the human sciences were seen as the true objective disciplines that dealt with objective verifiable facts while theology was seen to be dealing with subjective experiences and therefore seen as a lesser science.

“Theologians and churches have increasingly both used and envied the human

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sciences” (Browning 1991: 80). Browning argues that this envy can be seen in how the various disciplines have influenced each other.

1. Psychology has influence pastoral counselling
2. Sociology has influenced liberation theologies and political theologies as well as church growth programmes and projects
3. Anthropology, especially the study of ritual and initiation processes have influenced liturgics and religious education.
4. The psychology of moral development (Kohlberg, Gilligan) and the developmental psychology (Freud, Erikson) have had tremendous impact on the theological understanding of Christian maturity (Browning 1991: 80-81).

Theology has in the past and still today been very uncritical in the implementation of these thoughts of the ‘other’ human sciences into its thinking. It has been uncritical of the scientific nature and methodology of these disciplines. Theology has been uncritical of the implicit values and the stories behind the stories of these disciplines, in other words the sacred texts in which these theories are embedded.

Many theologians adapted these thoughts without realising that the theory-laden practices behind these theories are totally contrary to the theory-laden practices (the monuments of the Christian faith) supporting the practices of the church. It is not my intention in this study to demonise the modern human sciences, but rather put forward a critical relationship based on critical dialogue or conversation and in this study I would like to engage in such a critical dialogue with the various other disciplines in the human sciences.

2.1 How is such a critical dialogue/conversation possible?

I believe that the answer to this question can be found in the postmodern hermeneutical character of all knowledge. I understand all knowledge to include both the human as well as the natural sciences.

Therefore I will reflect shortly on the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer once more within the context of the relationship between the different disciplines and the role of hermeneutics.

In Gadamer’s influential work, *Truth and Method*, the word ‘method’ refers to the method of induction which was used both by the natural sciences as well as the social sciences. The method of induction based its theories “on the basis of uninterpreted observations of the phenomenon being studied. After repeated observations, it is believed that patterns in the data will begin to emerge. These patterns will suggest

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theories, models, and laws about the object of study” (Browning 1991:81). This concept of induction was then incorporated in the human sciences by great thinkers such as David Hume, John Stuart Mill and Herman Helmholtz. Yet this method does seem to be inadequate for the human sciences for the following reasons:

1. It creates ‘objective’ distance between the researcher and the object being researched.
2. It creates ‘objective’ distance between the cultural and religious traditions that form and shape both the researcher and the object of study.
3. The scientific theory of induction seeks to create enough objective distance to liberate the researcher from the pre-understandings that he/she might have.

Paul Ricoeur agrees with Gadamer on this point when he says: “The methodology of the sciences ineluctably implies an assumption of distance; and this, in turn, presupposes the destruction of the primordial relation of belonging – Zugehörigkeit – without which there would be no relation to the historical as such” (Ricoeur 1981:64-65).

Therefore to really grasp the relationship between theology and the sciences we need to understand the relationship between hermeneutics and epistemology (Browning 1991:82). This was at the heart of the hermeneutic debate between Gadamer, Heidegger and Ricoeur. It is the basic question of epistemology and the relationship between understanding and epistemology, interpretation and explanation, or narrative and theory, or to place it in the context of the Jewish tradition discussed in Chapter Two (10.6.1 Jewish understanding of revelation) the relationship between Halacha and Aggada.

2.1.1 This critical conversation within the field of psychology

Ricoeur developed the idea of the relationship between understanding and explanation or narrative and theory from within the context of psychoanalysis by building on the work done by Freud. Ricoeur in his work on Freud, *Freud and Philosophy*, interprets Freud to be working with a mixed language, namely the language of energetics and the language of meaning or narrative (Ricoeur 1970:5-7).

The language of energetics comes from the physical sciences as they seek to explain how energy systems function within the material world. Thus in psychoanalysis the language of energetics explains how libidinal energy works according to a rhythm and pattern of tension increase and discharge. These energies can in a certain sense be seen as the law of nature that our meaning-making capacities respond to with the use of

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narrative or interpretation. Therefore Ricoeur would distinguish between theories and language of our biological givenness, 'laws of nature' and the narratives humans invent to respond to and guide these natural needs, wants, drives and tendencies.

Yet we only have access to these biological givens as Wittgenstein would say through language, and the very moment these givens are put in theory or language already interpretation has taken place as we cannot experience these givens beyond the boundaries of language.

Ricoeur argues that through observation a certain level of regularity can be identified so that a theory is feasible. Therefore Ricoeur proposes that the two, understanding and explanation or narrative and theory, be kept in tension with one another. Browning goes along with this understanding of Ricoeur and therefore he keeps a distinction between the narrative—obligational dimensions of practical reason and what he calls the tendency-need dimension, which was discussed in Chapter Two (12.3.2 Fundamental Practical Theology) (Browning 1991:84).

2.1.2 This critical conversation within the field of the social sciences

Kenneth Gergen sees the social sciences "as a protracted communications system" (Gergen 1973:310). His argument is based on the idea that the values of social psychologists shape both the questions and the answers in their research (Gergen 1973:311).

He also demonstrates how social psychology influences the values within society. This to him is the fundamental difference between the natural and the social sciences, because the social sciences are in dialogue with their subjects, while the natural scientists do not communicate with their subject matter (Gergen 1973:312). Therefore psychology is not a science that seeks to dominate, control and predict, but to be in conversation and thus to open the minds to wider and more creative possibilities.

Gergen's ideas find a parallel in the social sciences in the work of Robert Bellah (Bellah 1983a). Robert Bellah moves away from the understanding of social science as a technical reason and moves towards an understanding of sociology as a moral and technical discipline designed to establish the ends and the necessary means to accomplish these ends (Bellah 1983b 45-46). It is a discipline that makes assumptions about the nature of persons, the nature of society and the relationship between persons and society. This is a technical discipline and yet it is also moral as it makes assumptions about what is a good person, a good society and how a good person can

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function in a good society or at least promote the good of a society. These moral assumptions are culturally and religiously rooted and contestable. These assumptions are rooted in the narratives and sacred stories of communities and vary from context to context. Therefore social science would need to enter into a public conversation on these matters (Bellah 1985: 301).

Thus social scientist cannot ignore these stories and narratives that are at the very heart of these assumptions. Therefore they must “take responsibility for understanding the stories and narratives which shape the present. They must come to know the ideals within the narratives from the past (our effective history) that provide the values by which the present is judged” (Browning 1991: 86).

On the other hand the social scientist cannot ignore the technical side of this discipline either. There is a place in social inquiry for analysis and collation of research data. It is this combination of hermeneutical and technical that places Bellah into the school of *critical* social science. A critical social science seeks to break down the walls between social science and social ethics. “It is an approach to social science that puts explanation and methodology into the service of the norms and values that would guide social transformation” (Browning 1991:88). This approach has an element of the critical tradition of the Frankfurt school seeking the transformation and the liberation of society and therefore never a value free, or value neutral approach to social theory. Yet Bellah does differentiate himself from the Frankfurt school in the sense that he seeks to anchor the norms and values within the tradition itself, as the hermeneutical process is unpacked, rather than impose values and norms from an ideological point of view.

Habermas, as a representative of the Frankfurt school, consults tradition and then goes beyond hermeneutics and grounds his norms and values not within the tradition, but in the norms and values of his social theory of communicative action (Habermas 1979:202-205).

Bellah would rather seek these values and norms within the tradition and thus according to Bellah’s understanding of sociology it would always inevitably lead to the religious-cultural narratives of tradition and history. “All the human sciences are, at least their horizons, a kind of descriptive theology... Social science research is in part a dialogue between the religious horizons of the researchers and the religious horizon of the subject of research” (Browning 1991: 89, 91).

2.1.3 The focus and horizon of social research

“All research in the human and social sciences has a focus and a horizon, a foreground and background, a center and periphery,” (Browning 1991:91).

It is also true that all human perception is made up of these two parts, the horizon and the focus, the centre and the periphery. These two are in relationship with each other and are not mutually exclusive, because the periphery continuously influences that which is at the centre or the focus. The periphery is the effective history of the researcher as well as the effective history of the subjects being researched according to Browning. I would like to add one more and that is the effective history of the model of research being used. Thus all human science fades into religious dimensions at the periphery.

In the fundamental practical theological model proposed by Browning this periphery or this horizon needs to be made explicit. So what is implicit in the secular human sciences in fundamental practical theology becomes explicit (Browning 1991: 92).

I will incorporate these ideas of Browning’s understanding of the critical conversation with the other sciences in this chapter of descriptive theology.

2.2 Validity claims in the context of descriptive theology and the common human experience in the global village

David Tracy speaks of common human experience, which was discussed in Chapter Two (12.3.2 Fundamental Practical Theology). It was clear that this common human experience needs to be unpacked which I will attempt in this chapter. I undertake in this chapter to unpack specifically the common human experience of the global village. I will make use of Browning’s differentiation of common human experience into three poles:

1. interpretations of the practices, inner motivations, and socio-cultural history of individual agents
2. interpretations of relevant institutional patterns and practices
3. interpretations of the cultural and religious symbols that give meaning to individual and institutional action (Browning 1991:61).

These three poles will be unpacked within the context of the validity claims that Browning put forward, with which a faith community can substantiate and defend its interpretations and its chosen course of action. He also suggests that these five claims be used already in the description of the theory-laden practices of a community (Browning 1991: 71).

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Browning's five claims are:

1. the visional level (which inevitably raises metaphysical validity claims);
2. the obligational level (which raises normative ethical questions);
3. the tendency-need level or anthropological dimension (which raises claims about human nature, its basic human needs, and the kinds of pre-moral goods required to meet these needs);
4. an environmental social dimension (which raises claims that deal primarily with social-systemic and ecological constraints of our tendencies and needs);
5. the rule role dimension (which raises claims about the concrete patterns we should enact in our actual praxis in the everyday world) (Browning 1991: 71).

1. The visional level

"It seemed to me, that the narrativists were quite right that our moral thinking begins in the context of specific traditions and that these traditions are carried by particular narratives, stories, and metaphors that shape the self-understanding of communities that belong to the tradition. I came to call this the visional dimension of practical moral thinking" (Browning 1991: 105).

2. The obligational level

Browning believes that within these traditions and between the conflicts of particular traditions, human reason will gradually elaborate general principles of obligation. These principles of obligation have a rational structure. Yet these principles, although embedded in certain traditions, can gain a certain degree of independence from the narratives of origin. Thus these principles can be compared to each other although they might come from different traditions of origin. This possibility of comparison opens the door for dialogue between traditions in a pluralistic society (Browning 1991:105).

3. The tendency-need level

Browning believes that all moral practical thinking in some way takes into consideration the basic tendencies and needs of human beings, although these theories that took these basic tendencies and needs into consideration were very often quite unsystematic and implicit. Elaborate systems can be devised to order these basic needs and tendencies (Browning 1991:105-106) George Pugh has developed such a system where he divides human values into selfish values, (values associated with individual welfare and survival), social values (values that motivate individuals to contribute to the welfare of the group), and intellectual values (values that motivate efficient rational thought) (Pugh 1977:115).

There are also still other needs which can be seen as psychologically induced needs.

4. The rule-role dimension

The rule-role dimension seeks to explain the rules and roles within which moral actions are understood within certain traditions and societies. Browning sees this as the most concrete level of actual practices and behaviour (Browning 1991:106).

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5. The environmental-social dimension

All actions and moral thinking is placed within certain constraints. There are environmental constraints as well as social-systemic constraints. These constraints limit the actions of society and therefore also limit the moral thinking behind the actions.

I will attempt to combine these three poles with the five dimensions.

The third pole, interpretation of the cultural and religious symbols that give meaning to individual and institutional action, can be compared to the visional level.

The second pole, interpretations of relevant institutional patterns and practices, can be compared to the environmental social dimension as well as the obligatory dimension.

The first pole, interpretations of the practices, inner motivations, and socio-cultural history of individual agents, can be compared to the tendency-need level or anthropological dimension as well as the rule-role dimension.

I will begin the unpacking/describing of the common human experience in the global village by looking at various descriptions of the global village and globalisation. Then within the context of these three poles and five claims I will be describing the practices as well as the history of these practices and the ideological horizon which is the effective history of these practices. Each human action or practice can be seen within the context of these five dimensions of practical reason. "Action is:

- 1) made up of concrete practices (rules and roles, communication patterns);
- 2) motivated by needs and tendencies;
- 3) limited and channelled by social-systemic and ecological constraints;
- 4) further ordered by principles of obligation; and
- 5) given meaning by visions, narratives, and metaphors" (Browning 1991:110).

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE TERMS: 'GLOBALIZATION' AND 'GLOBAL VILLAGE'

3.1 Description

To define a term like globalization would in essence be modern therefore I will rather seek to describe **my¹ understanding** of the term *globalization* than try to define it, this being a postmodern study.

The term ***globalization*** has developed recently although the process of globalization

¹ I will describe **my understanding** of Globalization without presuming that this is the general or a 'universal' understanding.

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has been in progress over centuries. The noun 'globalization' came up in the mid 1980's and in the second half of the 1980's it was generally being used. The term **global village** was introduced by Marshall McLuhan in his book *Explorations in Communication* (1960) (Robertson 1992:8). McLuhan uses the term 'global village' to describe the notion that the world is shrinking because of the impact of international media.

Globalization is a word that describes the world in which we are living in. "Far from being an abstract concept, globalization articulates one of the dominant characteristics of today's existence" (McGrew 1995:63).

To describe something like globalization is an impossible task as globalization is too large to comprehensively capture it in a brief description. Therefore I will begin my description of the global village by describing certain aspects which are seen to characterise today's existence in the global village. I will tell more stories of life in the global village although some of these stories have already been told in Chapter Three.

3.1.1 Broad descriptive characteristics

Globalization describes the process of the globe becoming '*smaller*' and '*smaller*', as the people living on this globe are brought '*closer*' together. There are various reasons why people across the globe are brought *closer* together and I will identify some of these reasons.

- 1) People around the world are brought *closer* together by the information and communications technology 'being connected to the world wide web'.
- 2) People are brought *closer* together by the international media industry via satellite communication. Sometimes people living in Pretoria know more about what is happening in London than what is happening in Marabastad. Satellite television brings us into intimate contact with happenings all over the world, 'CNN keeps us informed by the hour'. On Tuesday the 11th of September 2001 the whole world was watching the collapse of the Twin Towers of the World Trade centre – 'USA UNDER ATTACK!' Internationally local programmes were abandoned to give the CNN report preference. Within half an hour the whole world was talking about what had happened in New York. The world is connected and united into a media and information village.
- 3) This network of communication and information brings with it a certain uniformity of culture - *the culture of the informed and connected*.
- 4) Economically the globe is being brought closer together by the trans-national companies, which have production sites and outlets all over the world. A well known example is the McDonalds fast food chain. Trans-national companies are

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not bound by national laws, but are regulated by one principle only - the greatest possible profit, in other words national boundaries and politics give way to trans-national economic interests. Many issues in politics today are no longer issues on the national political agenda, but global issues, such as international terrorism, arms control, debt, ozone, environmental issues and currency crises, etcetera. The political agents are no longer governments, but multinational organisations, trans-national corporations, international non-governmental organisations, etcetera.

5) Global finance markets have never before in history had so much power to dictate the future of the globe.

These five characteristics, describe in broad terms, what I understand the term globalization to mean. I will focus on the last two characteristics, the economic description of globalization, as I believe this to be the driving force behind globalization which unites the globe into a village. It probably also has the strongest influence on our practices. It is the economic forces of globalization which give the reasons, ideals and symbols with which to understand, interpret and justify what is happening in the global village – a village which can be described as a financial, communication, information and business village.

“...., there is the issue of the processes which brings about globalization - the ‘causal mechanisms’ or the ‘driving forces.’ What happens here to arguments about the dynamics of capitalism and the forces of imperialism which have undoubtedly played a large part in bringing the world into an increasingly compressed condition?” (Robertson 1992:28)

Although Robertson speaks about ‘causal mechanisms’ which bring about globalization I would rather see these as dominant stories/discourses which bring about a certain interpretation of reality which can be described as the global village.

A global village is a village where you are globally informed and connected, have a McDonalds down the road and can buy the same United Colours of Benetton clothes in China, India or South Africa, or even better – order them over the net.

These describing characteristics are still rather abstract and therefore I will tell the stories of daily experiences in the global village, thereby giving descriptive colour to these broad characteristics.

3.1.2 Daily global village experiences – action in the global village

In November 2000, the USA presidential elections were being held. The close contest between the two candidates and the controversy surrounding the election outcome had an effect beyond the borders of the United States of America. These effects were not only because the USA is a military and economic superpower, but also because of the interconnectedness and interdependence of the globe. There is an interconnection and interdependence that your personal vote in one country's presidential elections has ramifications for the whole globe. The USA terror attack in September 2001 had a similar effect on the global village.

Never before in history has a democratic election in one country affected consumer prices in another country which is thousands of miles away. This is just one experience of the interconnectedness of the global village on a political-economic level.

Our daily shopping expedition to the shop around the corner or the mall in your area has developed in the last few decades to a global village experience. The items we pack into our shopping basket tell the story of a unified global village. We enter the supermarket and the variety of products on the shelves is overwhelming. There is a selection of coffees from various continents, tea from various others and in the electronics department you will find kettles from Taiwan and microwaves from China and a light bulb designed in Holland, but made in South Africa. A shopping expedition to any mall or store is a journey into the global village. The products from the global village find their way into our homes and so the family home becomes an expression of the global village.

In the lounge there is an Italian designed leather lounge suite, with genuine leather imported from Brazil and put together in Korea. The Phillips Television is designed in Holland, but has been assembled in China. The computer is designed and developed in USA by Indian IT technologists and put together in Taiwan. Our homes have become an expression of life in the global village.

Even the shack of the homeless family on the streets of our cities has become an expression of globalization, as they build their shacks with the scraps of the global village. Very often one sees the remains of an old billboard as part of a shack wall.

These daily experiences transform the individual citizen of a national country into a global villager, even if he/she might belong to the marginalised community within this village. Our lives are no longer only connected to the factory workers within our own

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country, but we have become connected to factory workers throughout the globe. The simple experience of buying a computer with the necessary soft-ware is a global issue.

The price of the computer is connected to:

- 1- An USA software company
- 2- IT technologists in India, who are paid half of what their colleagues are earning in the USA, because they are working in “*cheap production sites*”.
- 3- These cheap labour production sites have an effect on the environment - as the increase in income and the amount of people employed brings about a general improvement in lifestyle and buying power in the area and thus places greater demands on the environment.
- 4- The effect on the environment in turn has global ramifications - global warming, etcetera.

Our daily life, our practices and even the simple little activities like going shopping, have become global activities or global practices.

The daily experience of friends and family moving overseas, because of job opportunities is another experience of the global village’s labour market. This competition in the global labour market, is affecting everybody. Every individual who seeks employment does not only enter the local or national labour market, but enters the global labour market and therefore has to compete globally. The social security funds, pension funds, medical aid funds are all connected to the global finance markets, where daily billions of US dollars are moved across the globe placing pressures on the companies in which the average citizen seeks employment. We live in a complex global intrigue of how the coffee that I buy, the work that I seek, the money I bank is all connected and effects families and communities all over the world.

The lifestyle a person chooses² is directly connected to the struggle for survival of families across the globe. Never before in history has life been so connected and interdependent across the globe. There are no longer communities in foreign countries who have very little to do with us, but we are all connected to the same market where we buy coffee, sugar, or a T-shirt and they are no longer in a foreign country, but could be just a block away. This situation challenges us to take the story of the global village seriously.

I need to interpret how it came about that the world can be described to be so

²1 include myself in this as a person who lives in the global village and has access to the information, communications and finance networks.

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connected when so few of the world's population actually benefit from this connection and in a sense are marginalised from the benefits of the global village, and when there has never before in history been a time where society has been so **fragmented**. This fragmentation is another dominant experience and is experienced in various differing forms:

- The division of the world into rich and poor communities, the ever widening gap between rich and poor (villagers and marginalised).
- The rise in cultural religious conflict. Most of the conflicts of the last decades have been either religious/ideological or cultural.
- The rise in genocide.
- The rise in fundamentalism
- The environmental impact on the planet.
- A general feeling of nostalgia
- A loss of values and standards.

“‘Today we are living in the midst of a worldwide revolution,’ former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali hammers away in his addresses. ‘The planet is in the grip of two vast opposing forces: globalization and fragmentation’” (Martin & Schumann 1998:28).

Although all communities are connected and are affected by the global village not all communities benefit and actively participate in the functioning of the global village. Some communities are marginalised and even excluded from the village. This means that certain communities benefit while others suffer the consequences of the global village, therefore I will need to differentiate between the different stories within the global village. There are the dominant (ideological) stories and the fragmented or marginalised (problem) stories. The ideological stories dominate as they form the dramatic resources by which we understand ourselves³ as well as interpret the world around us. These dominant stories have the necessary technological means to export *The Global Village Story* throughout the world. I will unpack and share my perspective of these dominant stories – stories which I understand to be mainly economic and ideological and how it came to such a situation of domination and marginalisation.

Globalization is often equated with globalism and is perceived in some quarters as negative as it is understood as ‘one-worldism’ or ‘cosmopolitanism’. There are certain groups who would like to understand themselves as anti-globalization or

³By ourselves I am referring to the modern westernised individual - my intention is not to exclude or to generalise.

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deglobalization, yet even these *anti*- trends are in essence global, just like anti-modern gestures are inevitably in a sense modern.

“...anti-global gestures are encapsulated within the discourse of globality. In that particular sense there can be no foreseeable retreat from globalization and globality” (Robertson 1992:10).

I will not position myself with regards to globalization or anti-globalization, but will seek to gain a deeper understanding of globalization itself.

In the process of unpacking the story of globalization I will place my main empirical focus on the increasing acceleration in both concrete global interdependence (economic technological) and consciousness of the global whole (global narrative setting).

I will focus on two working descriptions of globalization:

“Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (Robertson 1992:8).

Giddens offers the following description of globalization:

“the intensification of worldwide social relations which link localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa” (Giddens 1990:64).

The global village is a description of the world in the process of globalization. A world compressed together into a village where everybody is connected and interdependent on the rest, but at the same time marginalising millions to the margins of this village. “In the real world the two phenomena are inextricably bound up with each other, because only global integration confers upon technological progress that penetrative force which is today driving millions to the margins of society” (Martin & Schumann 1998:152).

4. UNPACKING THE STORY OF THE GLOBAL VILLAGE - GLOBALIZATION

4.1 Introduction and the problem of unpacking the phenomenon- “Globalization”

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I will argue that globalization as experienced today is far too complex to reduce it to a single story or description. It is a complex phenomenon which can be described from various perspectives. I will in no way be able to give a complete description of globalization. Therefore I will attempt to describe two complementary perspectives on globalization.

The first perspective: The story of the development of the global village which I understand to be globalization. This perspective includes the economic and political stories which can be interpreted as the main themes (discourses) in the story of the development of the global village or the driving forces of globalization. The economic and political perspectives are closely related to the themes of modernity, which I will reflect on. This first perspective will include Browning's third pole which I compared to the visional level. It will also include the second pole, which I compared to the tendency-need level as well as the obligational level.

I will describe the practices (stories) told of in chapter three within the context of the inner motivations and socio-cultural history as well as economic and political history of the global village within which the individual agents act. As well as placing these stories into the social systemic context.

The second perspective: The global narrative setting of the global village

The second perspective shares various themes with postmodernity.

My main interest is in the second perspective as this perspective describes the global narrative setting in which our individual stories are set. Yet to be able to unpack this narrative setting I thought it important to first describe the development of the setting and the main driving forces behind its development, which is described in the first perspective. The second perspective will include Browning's first pole which I compared to the tendency need level. The study will place the stories told in chapter three into the context of the ideological validity claims, the basic dramatic resources that are at the disposal of the postmodern global village to make sense and interpret his/her practices.

5. INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST PERSPECTIVE: THE STORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL VILLAGE – GLOBALIZATION

In this chapter I will tell the story of the global village using history-as-argument, thereby exposing the failures of the global village not by proof or analysis, but by telling its story, based on the method used by MacIntyre (MacIntyre 1984) where he used history to

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expose the failures of the Enlightenment project.

The story of the development of the global village is not a recent story but has its roots in the last few centuries and in recent times this development has accelerated (Robertson 1992:8). Some will argue that to a large extent this story can be seen as being closely related to the story of modernity, which was discussed in Chapter Two. In Chapter Two I reflected on the great themes of modernity, namely science, Enlightenment, secular democracy (nation state) and industrial capitalism. The story of globalization shares these themes with modernity. This does not mean that globalization can be equated with modernity and that one can say that globalization is modernity on a world wide scale. "The concept of globalization should not act simply as a synonym for a new phase in modernization or for Westernization" (Scott 1997:3).

Yet there is a relationship between globalization and the themes of modernity, but they are not synonymous. This relationship with the themes of modernity can be described in two different ways, namely the **convergence theory** or the **divergence theory** (Robertson 1992:11). The convergence theory argues that all societies at different speeds are moving towards modern society. The divergence theory argues that there are different paths and forms of 'modernity'. There are also others who would argue that there is a combination of the two so that in certain aspects societies are converging towards modernity (economic and technological) and in other aspects diverging to modernity (social relational) (Robertson 1992:11).

Giddens (Giddens 1990:64-65), who describes globalization from the perspective of the convergence theory, believes there to be four dimensions:

- 1) the nation state system,
- 2) the world capitalist economy,
- 3) the world military order and the
- 4) international division of labour.

These four dimensions are interwoven into the story of globalization and these four dimensions closely relate to the themes of the story of modernity. In this sense globalization can be described as the process where these aspects of modernity are seen on a world wide scale. These four characteristics of modernity were once used to characterise the modern society (Gesellschaft) within the nation state, as a movement from Gemeinschaft - to - Gesellschaft (Robertson 1992: 13). Today they characterise the modern global world as a whole - the global village.

If one only describes globalization from the perspective of these four themes then

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globalization can be described as if the world has been united (converged) into a single modern global village. The study recognises that the global village is much more complex than a global modern society and therefore there are certain discrepancies in the convergence theory. Yet one has to take into account these dominant themes which to a large extent describe the development of the global village and these dominant themes coincide with the four themes Giddens uses to describe the process of globalization.

Giddens described the story of globalization along the lines of four dimensions which the study will follow, namely: 1) the world capitalist order, 2) the demise of the nation state, 3) the world military order (who has the power) and 4) global division of labour.

Ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Communism there is one economic system which dominates the world markets and one can argue that economically the world has developed into a global capitalist order. This capitalist order has transformed the world into a global market where everything has become marketable, from labour to cultural diversity. The advertising industry as well as the media and information industry play a major role in these converging tendencies of the global economy. This certainly is a dominant and powerful theme in the story of globalization and I will reflect on this economic theme, but globalization as a phenomenon is much more than this economic story. I will later on in the chapter in the second perspective describe and unpack this, *“more than the economic story,”* to express the complexity of the situation we live in today.

6. UNPACKING THE STORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL VILLAGE – THE WORLD CAPITALIST ORDER

In this section I will be unpacking the story of the development of the global village with its dominant story of the world capitalist order. I will be describing the social cultural and economic context which forms the social economic horizon of the individual's or communities' actions within the global village.

The fall of the Berlin Wall can be seen as the political historical event that marked the end of the modern era (Erickson 1998:46). It marked the end of a historical era where the world was divided into socialist and capitalist countries. The Berlin wall came down and with it a whole system (ideology) that had for years been a critical challenge to the capitalism of the West. Now this system had disappeared and with it the only real

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challenge to capitalism. It left an ideological vacuum behind and nothing was there to fill this vacuum. In Chapter Three (2.3.2 Inner city of Berlin) I refer to this ideological vacuum and how it affected the people living in Berlin.

The consequence of this vacuum was that capitalism lost its conscience. Capitalism had won the battle and now it didn't need to justify itself, but has the full freedom to develop to its full potential. A single global economic system (ideology) without any challenge or a conscience is dangerous. Socialism arose because of the failures of capitalism (Nürnberg 1998:1). Now that socialism has failed, what lies ahead for the globe?

“The economic context in the late twentieth century is one of unfettered capitalism on a world scale. Local, national, and continental economies have restructured within an integrated free market system. The imperatives of “globalization” compel all members of the human family to secure their livelihood in competition against each other, in a global marketplace. A consolidation of this “global economy” has been proposed by the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), negotiated secretly in closed sessions around the planet, by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)” (Rumscheidt 1998: ix).

After the fall of the Berlin wall there is one global economic order, yet the world is not united, but anybody can see that there are poor and rich people, as well as poor and rich countries. Therefore although there is one economic system there is division and fragmentation as the world is divided into rich and poor communities and countries. The global village has one economic system, but this one system does not bring about unity, rather it causes ever more fragmentation. To understand this, I will need to unpack the economic story of the global village.

6.1 The early beginnings of the story

6.1.1 Aristotle and economics

The word ‘*economy*’ comes from the Greek word - *Oikonomia* which means the science of household in other words household management/administration (*oikos*) (Duchrow 1994:21).

Aristotle found that there is a difference between this management of the affairs of the home, which is the management of basic necessities necessary for the household and a striving towards an increase in money (Duchrow 1994:20). Fundamentally Aristotle sees economy to be the management of the home so as to satisfy all the basic

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necessities of the inhabitants within the context of a political community, in other words the basic aim of economy is the satisfaction of basic needs of a community to make life possible.

Aristotle distinguished between two different forms of business:

- 1) the production of products from raw material, which are taken from nature, and sold or exchanged on the market. In large centres money could be used for this exchange. This form of exchange trade Aristotle calls - **metabletiké**
- 2) the accumulation of money which he calls **chremistiké** (Duchrow 1994:21). As soon as the accumulation of money comes into the picture there is a movement away from basic necessities for life to the desire of eternal pleasurable life and with money the necessities for such a life can be bought.

Chremistiké can again be divided into two categories:

- 1) the use of money for profit, in other words where money is no longer used as an exchange medium in the satisfaction of basic needs but to gain profit,
- 2) and the use of money to make money through interest.

Both of these uses of money have an inherent danger in them namely:

- 1) the profit business tends towards monopoly and the manipulation of prices and
- 2) the interest business tends towards usury.

These uses of money Aristotle saw as being destructive to home and society, thus destructive to the *oikos*.

“Denn durch Geldvermehrung um ihrer selbst willen entreiße ich anderen ihren Gewinnanteil beim Wirtschaften. Dadurch wird das Gemeinwesen zerstört. Diejenigen, die endlos, durch grenzenloses Wachstum des Reichtums in Form von Geldanhäufung leben wollen, verfehlen das >>gut leben<<, d.h. das >>in Gemeinschaft leben<< und zerstören sich schließlich selbst” (Duchrow 1994:21).

Very early in history already the inherent dangers were known if an economy is based on making profit or the increase of interest.

For Aristotle the production should be to satisfy the basic needs of the home and not driven by a profit motive. There is always the possibility of surplus production, but even this Aristotle did not think should be a problem, because the surplus taken to the market should not endanger the *Oikonomia* (economy of the home) as long as money and profit remained secondary to the satisfaction of the needs of the home.

6.2 The early beginnings of markets up to the middle ages

Aristotle's description of a market is a description of a local market of a subsistence community where the farmers and the artisans produce for their own households (Duchrow 1994:22). They cannot produce everything themselves therefore they take some of their produce to the local market and exchange with others until the basic needs of the household are taken care of. In larger centres they might have used money as an exchange medium on the markets as direct exchange was not always possible. This kind of market, which was relatively free from profit motives, did not only belong to antiquity, but existed right into the 18th century. These markets were imbedded in community life with cultural rites and ceremonies. These rites and ceremonies controlled the market and embedded it into the life of the community. In other words the market served the community.

These kinds of "community markets" existed right into the 18th century in Europe and they were part of a community and embedded in cultural rites and ceremonies which also protected the market from misuse (Duchrow 1994:22).

The market Aristotle warned about, where profit and interest were the determining factors, were the foreign markets which were involved in credit trade. These foreign markets only came into being where trade routes met, namely in harbour towns and along rivers (Polanyi 1978:93). On these markets the basic necessities for the household were not exchanged nor sold, but luxury items and resources for the wars of the rich and wealthy were bought. The local markets and the foreign market were kept completely separate right into the middle ages.

<p>In summary many communities existed without markets and there where markets did arise they were under the control of <i>Oikonomia</i> (economy of the home) and embedded in the community and the social relations of reciprocity. Yet already there was the emergence of foreign markets where the focus was on luxury items and military resources.</p>

This historical view challenges the inevitability of the market forces today. Thomas Hobbes and John Locke view humanity as being beings which naturally strive towards more profit and that the idea of a profit and interest market is natural to human society (Duchrow 1994:23). This idea is not only refuted by the long story of markets embedded

in the community, but also by the markets of the middle east which are still to some extent embedded in the family and social systems and thus not driven by interest nor profit.

6.3 The mercantile markets

What gradually developed after the middle ages was mercantilism. The local markets slowly disappeared and in their place developed the national markets. The national markets promoted the development of power in the various states with regards to their foreign affairs. The instrument of this power was capital. Private accumulated capital was invested in the expansion of trade. This new development opened the door for monopolies to develop, but the mercantile state did everything in its power to prevent this from happening. In other words the state intervened in the market to protect the state from the market forces (Duchrow 1994: 24).

Private property started playing an important role on the markets as various property owners would use the market to gain greater power over other property owners. In this context of ownership there arose the need for laws to protect property and human life. The state played an important role to take on this responsibility to protect property, life and interpret and enforce contracts. So the market was controlled and kept in check by the state so that the market could still serve the interests of society (Duchrow 1994:24).

The question is: What happened so that the market stopped serving society and that society began to serve the market and that the market started regulating itself without the control from community, society or government? In other words how did the capitalist market arise?

6.4 The capitalist market

One cannot reduce the rise of the capitalist market to a single phenomenon, but the story of its development includes numerous factors and players. Karl Polanyi sees industrialisation through advances in technology as one of the main causes behind the development of a commercial society and the market economy, where the market regulates itself (Duchrow 1994:25). Industrial capitalism as market capitalism can be seen as the combination of commercial society, technological advances and the rise of factories. Commercial society can be described using Marx's formula:

Capital – Product – Capital (more

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The profit seeking dealer buys a product and then tries to sell this product at a higher price than she or he bought it. At first the buying of products was only possible on foreign markets, but eventually on all markets.

The above formula is very simple and with the advances of the industrial revolution this formula became more and more complex as the number of factors which play a role in production increased.

The production of a product included numerous new factors and each of these factors has a price attached to it.

“The economic enterprise consists of five major stages: the **extraction** of raw materials from the resource base, **processing** of these materials into usable commodities, the **distribution** of these commodities, their **consumption** and their ultimate dumping as **waste**. We can also add **services** to commodities” (Nürnberg 1998:9).

Each new stage/ factor in the production of a product becomes a commodity on its own to be sold. This means that to produce a basic utensil like a stainless steel spoon the production goes through various phases each demanding a price. For example the production of stainless steel spoon involves the following:

- 1) the mining of the steel ore (**extraction**) which involves mining costs (labour as well as ore become a commodity);
- 2) factory work to refine the steel into stainless steel (**processing**) which involves factory labour and factory costs;
- 3) the marketing of the spoon;
- 4) the running costs of the shop that sells the spoon.

Each of these different phases has certain costs involved and these phases can be sold, thus commodified.

If the dealer does not calculate all these factors, which cost money, she or he will not make any profit.

So the dealer needs to consider all the factors that go into the production of a product which she/he is buying to sell again later. The time span between the investment in the product and the actual completion of the product needs to be calculated as interest.

This changes the formula:

$\text{Capital} - \text{Production commodities (labour, raw materials, credit capital)} - \text{Production using machinery} - \text{Product} - \text{Capital (with profit)}$

This change in the formula does not only affect one part of society, for example the

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production, but changes the whole of society. The society changes into a society of intertwined complex markets, therefore a market economy and society (Duchrow 1994:26).

Not only the production is determined by the prices which are regulated by the law of supply and demand, but these prices also determine the income, which again forms the basis of distribution and consumption. In other words the price of the product determines how much the worker will earn. This is the basic idea of how wealth is to be circulated - the workers earn money and in this sense wealth is distributed throughout the population. The producers will want to pay their workers enough money as this will create a larger consumer population, who in turn will buy the product the producer intends to sell. It was believed that this system will regulate itself. The worker's pay is balanced by the profit margin on the one hand and on the other hand if you have a well-paid worker, you have a consumer who will buy the products.

I will clarify some other terms that play a role in this market economy.

- 1 - **Interest** is the income for the money dealers who provide capital.
- 2 - **Rent** is the money that comes in from the use of land. The land owner can demand money for the use of his or her land.
- 3 - **Salary** is the income for the workers.
- 4 - **Profit** is the income for the owners of the businesses (Duchrow 1994:26).

These are the four different elements of the market and it was believed that these elements of the market would regulate themselves and balance themselves so that everyone can benefit from the capitalist market. Adam Smith was a very strong supporter of this idea as he believed it was possible that a self regulated market would over time benefit all within a society.

Yet Aristotle already warned against a market which is driven by profit and not driven by the basic necessities of the community.

6.4.1 The reality of the market economy

Adam Smith believed that the market would keep itself in check, that the various players on the market would compete with each other and this competition would function as an inherent control in the market (Duchrow 1994:27). This idea could only work if all the factors and players in the market have equal amount of power. Yet the market is drenched with power imbalances. The various factors in the market are not equally powerful and therefore cannot keep the market in check.

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“As the power of some grows the power of others becomes more confined. The loser may become totally dis-empowered. In other words, economic development is “asymmetrical”, or “unbalanced”” (Nürnberger 1998:10). This power imbalance in the market opened the market up for exploitation and the powerful made sure that they “*win the game*” and thus the market soon produced winners and losers. There are two losers in this *game*, namely nature, which is exploited more and more and people who are dis-empowered (Nürnberger 1998:10).

The losers were kept in check so that the winners could continue winning by earning ever greater profits. The market will always have winners and losers and therefore the market will always divide and fragment the world. This is what happens if monopolies are created who alone write the rules of the game for their part of the market.

In early industrial capitalism money, land and labour became commodities on the market. This is an abstraction as not one of these three can be seen as commodities that can actually be sold if one thinks about it. **Labour** is human activity which is an integral part of our being human and not a product that can be sold. **Land** is part of nature, which we did not produce, but which was created and is given. **Money** is not a product either, but is a symbol for the power to buy. The whole capitalist market was based on these three abstractions.

Capitalism can be described as having certain basic elements that need to function together to set the stage for ideal market capitalism (Thomas & Potter 1995:20). I will describe these basic elements of capitalism necessary for ideal market capitalism.

6.4.2 The different elements of capitalism

6.4.2.1 Private ownership

“Capitalism means private ownership: the ownership of the means of production is private and individual” (Thomas & Potter 1995:20). The true capitalist owns his/her labour, land (raw materials for production) and money.

The story of labour

In South Africa with the ever rising unemployment we need to understand the role that labour plays within the market economy and before we come to the global labour market I need to look at the story of the labour market from its beginnings.

The labour market seemed to be the weakest link in the market economy. It was this

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part of the market that could be driven to the lowest possible costs (wages) so as to lower the production costs and thereby increase the profits. In a certain sense the labour market was doomed to be pushed to the lowest (a poverty mechanism – if the market is left to itself it will push the price of labour to the lowest possible level) and thus cause widespread poverty.

In history there have been attempts to reverse this *poverty mechanism* by introducing into the market structures and regulations that protect the labourers and at least insure them of a liveable wage. One of these regulations came into effect in 1795 in England – the so called Speenhamland-law (Duchrow 1994:29). The idea was to ensure that the poor worker at least got a minimum wage which the market was not allowed to push lower. In other words a bottom barrier was placed in the way of the natural workings of the market as the *invisible hand* (Adam Smith) of the market was not benefiting everybody equally.

Although this law was introduced to protect the labour market, it had the exact opposite effect, in that it increased poverty. The companies misused this law and brought all the wages down to the minimum so that even those who had been paid better wages in the past now only received the minimum. As a result of this, the law was reversed and the free labour market was introduced which consequently caused immense suffering to thousands of labourers throughout the world. This phenomenon is known as Manchester Capitalism. This system had numerous social consequences for the workers. The freedom of the labour market doomed the workers to be the weakest link in the production of goods. The land owners with the natural resources had a lot of power in their hands, because natural resources were limited. The company owners wanted the greatest possible profit for that is why they are in the business, so they also had power in their hands. The workers are a basic necessity to produce the product and thus actually also should have a lot of power in their hands, but the problem is that there are always other workers who are prepared to work for less. What added to the problem was the population growth which meant a population growth in the labour market. Labour was not a limited resource, rather the exact opposite - there was a labour surplus and thus the labourers had no power in their hands.

Karl Marx, who based his dialectic critique of capitalistic economy on Adam Smith's theory, argued that this system of the three role players namely money, land and labour would have as consequence the estrangement of labourer and labour, because capital and land owners hold the production in their hands (Duchrow 1994:30). In this system the labourer is pushed to survive with a minimal wage and forces numerous others into unemployment and extreme suffering and poverty. Poverty, unemployment and low

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wages are the consequences of a mechanism that is inherent in the market economy of capitalism. Within this mechanism the worker is the weakest link in the process of production and therefore the link that is easiest to exploit. To prevent the exploitation of labour the local governments need to have social laws in place which protect the labourer and his/her family as well as those who have been excluded from the labour market, namely the unemployed.

The story of land

To understand land, which is a resource that sustains life on earth, as a commodity with which one can generate profit, is an abstraction. This abstract notion that land, which is part of nature, is a commodity that can be exploited is already inherent in the dualistic thinking of Descartes. He divided the world into two spheres, namely the human as a rational being and the rest of the physical world as mechanistic objects. Land is seen as matter and the animals on the land as little machines, working according to the dictates of nature. Rationality of humanity was seen as having the power to technically subordinate the “matter”. This thinking soon made use of Genesis 1: 26-28 that it is ordained from God that humanity is superior and that all nature is sub-ordinate and needs to be dominated. So nature becomes a commodity that can be exploited for the increase in capital. Land thus received a money value just like labour.

One can only imagine the ecological danger that is inherent in this thinking, a danger that we are becoming more and more aware of as our planet is ecologically destroyed.

The story of money

Where exactly the idea of money comes from historically is debated, but money began to play a role in the transaction of goods.

Aristotle understands there to be two functions for money:

1. Money used as an intermediary tool in the exchange of goods. The value of the money is directly related to the goods exchanged.
2. Money used for the purpose of creating more money and profit (Duchrow 1994:33).

It is on this differentiation that European history was built and for a very long time the second use of money was seen as morally inferior and was suppressed with laws and traditions. The major change came with mercantile capitalism in the 17th century where money was used to accumulate more and more property which in turn meant more money (Duchrow 1994:33). In other words, money was used to accumulate property or some other form of production and then this changed into a money value, which in turn was used to increase money (profit). Everything was capitalised, which means it got a

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money value.

Within this context of accumulation arose the idea of interest and money capitalised. Interest is justified, because the person who takes a credit can, if she or he uses this credit wisely, increase his/her money so as to have more than enough to pay back the initial credit. The creditor wants to see that the money given works for him/her and therefore asks interest. The same is true for rent. The land owner rents his/her property out. This land then is worked and capital is generated more than the rent, but the owner of the land shares in the money generated on the land by asking rent.

In summary: The three market mechanisms, labour, land and money (capital) can each be exploited if the national government does not have certain laws in place to protect the land and the labourer from the mechanism of the market. In most of the former Western European countries these social laws were in place and strong social security systems protected the individuals from exploitation by the market.

6.4.2.2 Regulation through the market via commodification and competition

The basic philosophy of the capitalist market is that the market regulates itself and not via state intervention although, as has been shown above, state intervention is a necessity. Ideally, under capitalism there is no state control and the government should not intervene on any level. The state should not set price controls or set quotas for production, nor have quality checks (Thomas & Potter 1995:21). All these interventions are not necessary because the regulatory measures are thought to be intrinsic to the market, 'the invisible hand of the market', which is in this case *commodification* and *competition*.

"Under capitalism all goods and services are in principle turned into commodities for exchange rather than for the producer's own use. Individual producers and firms can then produce what they like, decide on quality and set what prices they like, but the assumption is that competition between firms, together with consumer choice between competitive versions of the same commodity, will force them to set the 'right' prices and produce what is actually required" (Thomas & Potter 1995:21).

6.4.2.3 Distribution

Under an ideal capitalist system there is no welfare or any social security, because the market will regulate also this section of society. The market will ensure that there will be distribution of wealth throughout the population via wages paid to the labourers at the

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various levels of production. In the previous section I showed that labour is a commodity which is sold on the market (labour market). The labour market regulates the wage rates and ensures that wealth is distributed (Thomas & Potter 1995:22).

6.4.2.4 Enterprise management

Any production in a capitalist system is run with the aim of making a profit in order to accumulate capital (Thomas & Potter 1995:23). The management of an enterprise is driven by this goal and not the needs of the labourers, nor the needs of the community, but only the enterprise's need for greater profit, therefore, profit is the driving force behind any enterprise management.

6.4.2.5 Legitimation

“All these elements fit together to form a global system that also functions in an ideological fashion to legitimate actions taken in particular ways” (Thomas & Potter 1995:23). The market and the needs of the market legitimises everything that politicians do. I will later reflect on the demise of the nation state and how the politicians legitimised what they were doing by passing the responsibility to the market.

6.4.3 The development of a global market economy

The development towards a global economy has its roots in early trade and the colonisation as countries went beyond their local/national boundaries in search of greater wealth. The colonial power's search for more wealth brought the world closer and closer together. At first the traders discovered different worlds and these worlds opened new trade opportunities. Later during the time of colonisation the colonies with their masses of raw material brought the world even more into contact with each other, but mainly with the economic needs of Europe in mind.

Today there is a situation where the whole world is involved in trade on the global market, trading in raw materials, labour, technology, information, media, manufactured goods and money. This is trade that goes beyond national boundaries and is in the hands of trans-national companies and the finance markets, which trade with money. This is a process that unites the world financially into a global village. The development of this village is motivated not by notions of unity or tolerance, but by trade.

Over the years trade has changed tremendously, I would like to point out three different phases:

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- 1) Trade with products. In the past the industrial countries would import raw materials and then produce the goods at home which could then be exported.
- 2) Trade with production. The industrial countries no longer produced only at home, but moved their companies into other countries. They move their production sites to those countries where production costs (land, labour and tax benefits) are the lowest.
- 3) Trade in money. The financial markets trade with billions of US Dollars daily as money is sent around the globe.

Today 1.500 billion US\$ of foreign exchange circulates the world every 24 hours. These global finance markets are dominated by speculative money (Martin & Schumann 1998:48-49). The world has never in the past been so connected that if something happens in one part of the globe everybody is affected. A war in Iran can affect interest rates in South Africa - we are living in a global village. The global village is exciting as never before in the history of our world have people around the globe been so connected to each other. Yet, as already mentioned, not all people benefit from this global village as numerous communities are excluded and are being excluded ever more from the benefits and the developments of the global village and are thus doomed to increasing poverty.

6.5 The final stage in the development of the world capitalist order- the market of the global village

The process of globalization was accelerated with the end of the cold war. The end of modernity has been linked with the fall of the Berlin Wall and therefore to the end of the 'Cold War' between the two differing economic systems/ideologies. The official end of this war was declared on 19 November 1990 by the member states of the North Atlantic alliance and the Warsaw Pact when they met in Paris for a joint declaration of the end of the Cold War (McGrew 1995:56). This meant the end of the global struggle between capitalism and socialism. A new global order needed to be established as the world had grown ever closer together with trade and communications. What developed was a world of free trade and as Rumscheidt says of *unfettered capitalism* (Rumscheidt 1998) there was no critical alternative anymore and this led to extreme exclusion of so many communities throughout the world. The economic order of the world today has also been described as '*turbo capitalism*' a term first used in 1995 by American economist Edward Luttwak (Martin & Schumann 1998:9).

The world capitalist order of the global village has three main actors namely the trans-

national global economy, the world banks and the finance markets.

The companies are concerned with the increase in capital from production and the banks are concerned with the increase in capital on the monetary market.

One can identify three phases in this process of becoming a global economy (Duchrow 1994:68). I will be reflecting on these three phases as they describe the story of the development of the global village.

6.5.1 The beginning of the story of the global market (the first phase): the transnationalisation of the markets and the market players

The first phase began after the financial crisis of 1929 and the collapse of the liberal economic policies. This collapse brought the national states to the realisation that they needed to increase their influence over the market to ensure that another crisis does not arise. This meant that the market needed to be controlled and not left to its market mechanisms (Duchrow 1994:66). The economic crisis that started in 1929 had different effects in the various parts of USA and Europe. In Germany and Austria it led to the rise of Fascism and the Second World War and after the war the division of the world into capitalist and socialist zones. After the war certain precautions had to be put in place to ensure economic growth as well as social stability. This was a time in which politics still had power over the economy.

After the war a new form of capitalist enterprise appeared – the multinational or transnational capitalism. “The transnational, originally associated with US hegemony for which it promoted the ‘free enterprise worldwide’ argument (socialist countries excepted), operated in a world side by side with the robust elements of national policies; specific fiscal policies, tolerated protectionist policies, sectorial subsidies (especially in the agricultural sector), autonomous monetary controls regulated within the framework of fixed exchange rates and the gold standard, etc” (Amin 1997:13).

Various international organizations and agreements were developed to regulate the market economy. Global institutions came in place to regulate international trade and the international market.

6.5.1.1 International Institutions of the Global Market – The Bretton Woods - institutions

In 1944 there was a conference held at Bretton Woods in the USA which for the second half of this century had a greater impact than the famous Jalta meeting (Duchrow 1994:90). The political division of the world at Jalta was not as long lasting as the

economic ordering of the world which began with Bretton Woods.

The aim of Bretton Woods was to learn from the mistakes of the liberal economic systems that came to a fall in 1929.

The four Bretton Woods institutions are:

1) IMF International Monetary Fund and the World Bank

J. M Keynes, an English delegate, brought to this meeting a plan of how the future world economic system could be structured. He proposed a world bank which is not controlled by local national politics and whose task it is to control international capital, to balance trade imbalances and to protect the weaker economies so that there could be balanced economic growth everywhere (Duchrow 1994:91). The USA did not accept this plan and being the strongest economic power after World War Two they had little difficulty getting their own 'White Plan' onto the table and passed. The USA economically benefited from the war and owned 80% of the world gold. The European countries were dependent on USA for aid, so they had to accept the USA plan. The main differences between the 'White Plan' and Keynes' plan was the role of control mechanisms to insure balanced growth and prevent extreme discrepancies between rich and poor. The solution to the economic crisis was a move from national-centred economic behaviour to internationally co-ordinated finance and trade (Hewitt 1995:41).

The Bretton Woods era can be divided into two periods: the first up until 1971/73 and then the second period till today.

The aim of the first period was to rebuild Europe after the war and this was done with:

- 1) short term bridging credits and
- 2) a system of fixed exchange rates. The dollar became the one monetary unit on which the exchange rate would be based at 1 ounce of gold = 35 US\$.

The other member states' monetary systems were connected to the dollar at a fixed rate. They were allowed to vary between 1% up or down and then the national central banks had to intervene. The structure that was put in place to regulate this world monetary system was not a world bank, as proposed by Keynes, but the International Monetary Fund. The financial base of the IMF was the quotas which the member countries paid to become members. This is what makes the IMF a completely undemocratic institution, because the rich countries have all the say, as the voting rights are determined by the number of quotas bought. (Duchrow 1994:92) The IMF then

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established the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) later to be known as the World Bank (Hewitt 1995:41). The World Bank was to provide finance for long term investments, while the IMF was to be a source of short term finance to compensate for balance of payments deficits and exchange rate fluctuations (Hewitt 1995:41).

This system collapsed in 1973 and the way that they thought to solve this crisis was to give the IMF a new policing function to squeeze money out of the poorer countries. This money was the interest accumulated from money owed to the rich countries by the poorer ones. I shall be looking at the Bretton Woods institutions again when looking at the story of marginalised countries. What is important to understand is that the rich countries control the IMF and its institutions. The countries with the most voting power in the IMF are USA, Germany, Japan, England, France, Italy, Canada, Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland, thus excluding the poorer countries from any say in world economic matters (Duchrow 1994:93-96).

6.5.1.2 GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs)

The United Nations is a forum through which international decisions are taken and by which international political and military stability was to be maintained. In the same line of thought there was a need for an international organization which would regulate international trade and insure the stability of commodity prices. This was the role assigned to the GATT.

In 1948 the United States and Western Europe agreed to the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), which for the first time established a common international regime for trade between participating states (Martin & Schumann 1998:108). After eight rounds of negotiations the GATT members brought about a reduction in tariffs to a level in favour of trade between developed countries (Martin & Schumann 1998:108). It is an agreement that benefits the strong and protects the strong from competition from the weaker economies. It basically gives the powerful economies the freedom to enter the markets of the weaker yet at the same time protecting the powerful countries' markets from competitive products from the weaker economies (Duchrow 1994: 98).

GATT was replaced in 1994 by the World Trade Organization (WTO), where the different governments do no longer argue about trade agreements and tariffs, but about the restrictions to trade and how they best be removed.

6.5.1.3 G7 (Group of the 7 largest industrialised nations)

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This group includes the USA, Germany, Japan, Great Britain, France, Italy and Canada. The leaders and finance ministers of these countries come together annually for an economic summit. They come together to manage the world economic system. Nobody voted them into this position and they only represent 12 % of the world's population, yet they have taken upon themselves the right to manage the global economy (Duchrow 1994:99).

Gradually the GATT regulations relaxed and this led to the weakening of national productive systems because the various phases of production were de-localized and the barriers of foreign investment were reduced (Amin 1997:13). The market thus moved beyond the control of national governments (and their specific interests) and an international institution became necessary. Yet these international institutions are largely controlled and dominated by the richest countries in the world thereby excluding the poorer countries.

These international institutions are supposed to regulate the global market, yet in the 60^s and 70^s the relationship turned around and no longer did politics regulate the market, but the market started to dictate to politics. The new theory was no longer regulation of the market as in the time of GATT, but liberalising and deregulation (Duchrow 1994:66).

“Deregulation instead of state controls, liberalization of trade and capital movements, privatization of public enterprises - these were the strategic weapons in the arsenal of market-trusting governments and of the international economic organizations under their sway, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization”(Martin & Schumann 1998:8).

Story: The trans-national story of Ford

The highly valued Ford engineers work at Dearborn in Michigan for the world's second largest car manufacturer. Here these engineers work in a glow of various computer screens in the information age of the global village. The chassis designer draws with his electronic pen on his designer board designing the latest new Ford which will be seen on our roads within the next few months. All of a sudden an anonymous voice is heard coming from some multi-media speaker beside the monitor offering some alteration to the design. Then on the screen the design changes as if drawn by some ghost hand. This ghost hand is sitting half way around the globe in Cologne Germany at Ford's European headquarters. People are working together on the same project in the Global village, yet they are thousands of kilometres away from each other. This connects the project to the

whole globe, but at the same time also connects the project to various different time zones and therefore the work never stops. This has increased the speed in which cars are produced tremendously (Story adapted from Martin & Schumann 1998: 96-97).

Work in the global village does not only save costs, but it also saves time. This new Ford project saved the company billions as numerous jobs could be done away with, including highly skilled jobs such as engineers, managers and salesmen, as well as save the company tremendous amount of time in the development of the new model. For the last world-marketed model, the Mondeo, Ford designers still needed two months and twenty international working conferences to complete the project. For the most recent model, the Taurus, fifteen days' work and three control sessions were all that was necessary before the board gave the green light for production to start - an efficiency leap of more than 100 per cent" (Martin & Schumann 1998:97).

"The UN trade organization, UNCTAD, calculates that there are some 40,000 companies with headquarters in more than three countries. The hundred largest alone account for a turnover of roughly 1.4 trillion dollars per annum. TNC's⁴ today carry two-thirds of world trade nearly half of it within their own company networks" (Martin & Schumann 1998:112).

The shift that took place in the first phase is a shift away from production capital to money capital, in other words finance capital. Finance capital became the dominant force within the world market. Finance capital is capital that is not linked to production, but capital that is linked to the money markets. These two factors together have as consequence that capital growth is the last authority on all matters - economic, social, political, ecological, etcetera (Duchrow 1994:67).

6.5.2 The second phase

In the economic system of the global village there are two main actors, namely the Trans-national corporations and the finance markets, with their shares and dividends trade.

A few statistics

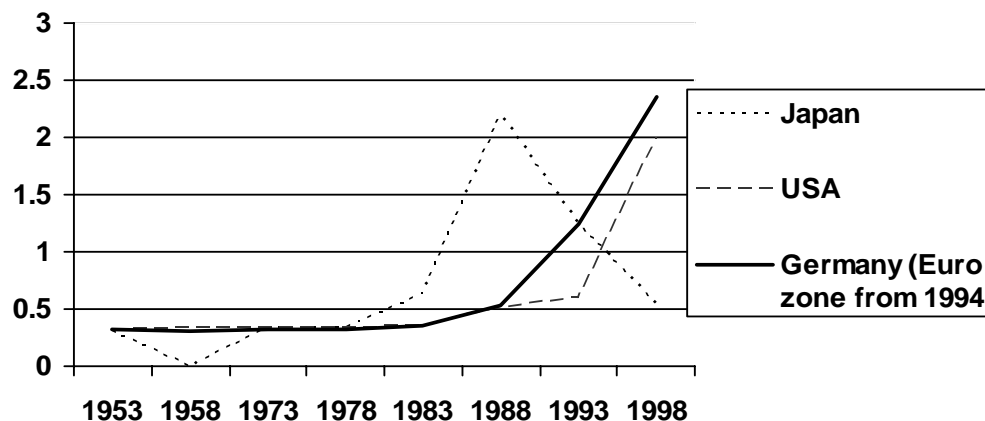
- 1 - Since 1985 transactions in foreign currency and international securities have increased more than tenfold.
- 2 - Within 24 hours some 2.5 million million dollars changes hands.
- 3 - "Dealings in shares, corporate loans, treasury bonds and countless special

4 TNC is the abbreviation for Transnational corporations

contracts (so called derivatives) have been moving in the same order of magnitude” (Martin Schumann 1998:49).

- 4 - Ten or so years ago there was one market in Frankfurt for German government bonds, one in London for British and one in Chicago for futures each with its own national legislation. Today all these share markets are linked and can be called up anywhere in the world at any time. This means that share prices throughout the world are connected and that if Dollar prices fall in the USA this has repercussions throughout the global village.

These statistics show that everybody is in competition with everybody else in the market and nobody can control the market, but the market controls itself. Not the Federal Reserve Bank or any government can determine the state of a currency, because each currency is globally sold on the global finance market. This new situation became very clear in South Africa in 2001 - 2002 after the drop in the value of the Rand, where the government could do nothing but have an inquest into the matter. There is an army of professional money-multipliers rushing electronically around the globe seeking the best financial opportunities. Pension fund and insurance fund managers can move billions of dollars from yen to Swiss francs and back to dollars within hours all around the world with just one push of a button on a keyboard. From the middle of the 1980s the amount of shares on the international market increased dramatically as the graph (Herr 2000:6) shows and is an indication of the increase of finance capital on capital markets.



Story: Patrick

Patrick is nine years old and is one of those who pushes buttons on keyboards and allows billions to speed across the globe on the electronic data highways of the global village. He works together with 400 colleagues ten hours non-stop in the trading halls of Barclays de Zoete Wedd investment bank and manages the business of Swiss francs. His work station is a modest little space three metres

wide amidst a babble of voices and bellowed orders. Before him he has three screens and two speakers, which constantly supply him with necessary information. There is another four colour screen which is produced by Reuters and which connects Patrick via special cables, satellite channels and its own mega-computer in London to 20 000 finance houses and all the major stock exchanges around the globe. This screen tells Patrick the last three offers or supplies of Swiss Francs, the highest and lowest rates of the last few hours for all the currencies, as well as the latest news from the currency world. Patrick can contact any other users by keying in a code and immediately conclude a deal. Before he can conclude any deal he also needs to keep in mind any information that his two independent brokers communicate to him via the speakers. Every couple of minutes he himself makes a bid, either by telephone or his keyboard. This is Patrick's world where he works shifting millions around the globe. On a Thursday in January 1996 he complains: The "market is nervous!" Before he came to work he studied the daily edition - and therein he discovers that there will be an important meeting of the Bundesbank directors in Frankfurt. If this meeting should decide to still lower the bank rate further, the dollar and franc should rise. They are not sure what the outcome of the meeting will be. The in-house economist guesses that the interest rate will remain the same. Patrick sets of to work and begins by buying 70 Marks for 575 Swiss francs at the Swiss UBS Bank. He does this by using an electronic pen as he enters the deal at high speed into the house system through the dots on the console: 70 million marks for francs at 0.81575 francs per mark. Not long after this the price falls by a hundredth of a centime; in other words Patrick has lost 7000 francs. But luckily the interest rates at the Bundesbank stay the same and within seconds his loss is converted into gain twice as large. He characterises his work as 'educated gambling'(Adapted from Martin & Schumann 1998:49-51).

Unpacking Patrick's story

The rate of a share is determined by two factors. Firstly the most important factor is the expectation of future development of the specific company shares on the share market (Herr 2000:6). If for example Patrick can expect an increase in profit for a company then the share value of that company will increase. It increases because there is a greater demand for its shares and therefore the higher the demand the greater the price of the shares. On the other hand if a rather dim future is expected for the company then the share value will drop as all share owners will try to get rid of their shares and there will be a surplus of the specific company's shares on the market at very low prices. Secondly the other determining factor is the interest rate. If the interest rate is good, people will rather invest their money in high interest rate deposits than buy shares. This

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means that if the interest rates rises the share value will decrease and the other way around (Herr 2000:6).

This is where the 'educated gambling' begins that Patrick spoke about. The most important factor on the money market is this expectation, or should I call it speculation, with regards to the future. Nobody can know the future so we are dealing with subjective opinions about the future. Patrick has to interpret these subjective opinions about the future and interpret them faster than the other players on the market, so that he can sell/buy his shares before the others interpret these subjective opinions about the future. This speculation about the future has been structured in that technical analysis with regards to trends and assumptions are produced and most market players work from this technical analysis (Herr 2000:8).

Since 1973 and the abandoning of the Gold-Dollar-Standard there have been flexible exchange rates between Dollar, Deutsche Mark and Yen as well as all other currencies. This flexibility adds to the instability of the markets as the exchange rate also influences the share value. Patrick has a screen which continuously tells him the latest exchange rates which he continually needs to be aware of. The share trade and the dividends trade continually influence each other (Herr 2000:8).

"With this derivatives trade 'the financial world has emancipated itself from the real sphere,' argues the banker Thomas Fischer, who had ridden the market tiger for years as trading manager of the Deutsche Bank" (Martin & Schumann 1998:53).

Only 2.7 % of the money on stock exchanges has anything to do with the actual product on the trade market (Kessler 2002:3). 80% of this money exchanges from one owner to another within 8 days (Kessler 2002:3).

Story: The derivatives business-dealing in the story of the future

Across the room from where Patrick is practicing his educated gambling there are those who work in the derivatives business, they do not deal in the present, but they deal with the future. They deal with what the market participants expect the price of shares to be in 3 or 12 months or in 1 or 5 years. The products they work with have rather strange names such as swaps and collars, futures and options, dingos and zebras and each month new ones arrive on the market. What these products have in common is that their price is 'derivative' based on rates paid now or later for real securities and currency. For example: *If you believe in the German economy and you want to bet on its future you do not need to buy any German shares directly. You as a client can sign a futures contract on the German share index; "a contract which for a premium promises payment of the difference if the index rises above an agreed level" (Martin & Schumann 1998:52). The bank needs to cover itself if this should happen by having a counter-contract on its own stock of shares. Now you as*

client may also insure yourself against further fluctuations in the exchange rate by swapping the interest on the long-term deposits for short-term interest payments to the bank, or visa versa. What actually happens here in these deals is that they detach the risk of a rate drop or debt default from the purchase price of real securities or currency. And so risk itself becomes a tradable commodity. This is a tremendous change from the past, where risk business was only there to insure the real economy and was never an “economy” on its own. The information age and high technology has made it possible for this trade to take off. This trade really took off in the years between 1989-1995 when the nominal value of contracts doubled every two years and reached the sum of 41 000 billion dollars (Adapted from Martin & Schumann 1998:52-53).

This is a whole new dimension of trading when you trade with the future economy, but which has become larger than the present real economy. “There could hardly be a better example of this than Siemens which earns more from its financial transactions than from its world-famous products” (Martin & Schumann 1998:53).

The financial markets and their trade in the future have begun to dominate the trade in real economy. In other words the share market and derivatives market dictate to the real economy to increase profits so that the share value of the company can increase. The share value has the final say in all matters – “‘shareholder value’ was the only yardstick of corporate success” (Martin & Schumann 1998:121). The management of corporations have to work with this new yardstick, the share holder value, on all levels of management (Herr 2000:8). “Grässlin: Diese Werte müssen zählen. Allerdings haben wieder Ferdinand Piëch noch Jürgen Schrempp das erkannt. Beide setzen andere Werte – Stichwort: Shareholder value” (Schnellbach: 2002:10). Jürgen Schrempp is the CEO of Daimler-Crysler and Ferdinand Piëch is the CEO of Volkswagen and both would agree that the shareholder value is what counts (Schnelbach 2002:10).

The economic news headlines these days are dominated by stories of Corporate financial crisis, the absurd salaries for top management, crashes in share value as well as aggressive takeovers, for example in South Africa, in the late 1990’s, the possible take over of Standard bank by Ned Bank was long in the news. In February 2002 the collapse of Saambou bank is another example of these trends.

For corporations and companies there has to be some form of control and governance and this governance is what is understood by the term “Corporate Governance” (Tyrell 2000:9).

Corporate Governance: Describes the totality of factors and regulations that determine how in large corporations decisions are made and how the profits are distributed. This includes the following: corporate constitution which includes community and corporate law, but also includes the various stakeholders in the corporations and to what extent their interests play a role in the decision making process (Tyrell 2000:9).

Corporations (companies) are to a large extent financed externally by banks or capital markets as well as having their own investments which means that the banks, the various financial intermediaries as well as the capital market have a say in the corporate decision making process as they have a stake in the corporation. The corporation is dependent and imbedded in the financial system (Tyrell 2000:9).

The financial systems which have an influence on the corporate decision making process can be divided into two groups, namely the capital market dominated or the bank dominated.

The corporations in Britain and the USA are capital market dominated, while in Europe and Asia they are bank dominated. There is also a differentiation between the corporate governance within these different dominated systems, namely “insider control systems” and “outsider control systems”.

Insider control system: the influence over the corporation as well as the control over the management of the corporation rests essentially on mechanisms which have the presupposition that there are market players who have inside information of the corporations and can have an influence in the management of the corporation, without being directly part of the decision making process. This system works within a bank dominated system.

Outsider control system: the influence over the corporation rests on mechanisms which presuppose that the market players do not have insider information and a more distant relationship to the corporation and are therefore outsiders. It is a system that works within a capital market dominated system (Tyrell 2000:9).

In a corporation there are various different stakeholders for example the employees, the share owners, the banks and the national government. Ideally, in the insider control system all the various stakeholders and their interests need to be well informed and

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represented at top level management. The various stakeholders have varying amounts of power within the decision making process. Again ideally it would be if there was an equal distribution of power within the decision making process.

In the outsider control system the various interests of the stakeholders are not that important as the control is solely based on anonymous market mechanisms. The management of the corporation has only to respond to the needs of one group of stakeholders namely the shareholders and their interests in higher profits. The shareholder-value is therefore the only criterion on which management is based.

Now if one company's share holder value decreases another company can buy the majority of the shares and thereby change the whole management team of the company. This is what is known as aggressive takeover.

This places extreme pressure on the management of corporations to keep the share - holder-value as high as possible. The only influence that the corporation has on the share-holder-value is the profit that it makes.

Within this historical context of the dominance of the share-holder-value as well as globalization, the major companies had to come up with solutions as the old idea of an increase in production that would increase profits no longer worked. The only way to increase profits was to decrease production costs. The answer to their crisis was to go trans-national and to seek internationally the lowest possible production costs, which included raw-materials, labour and favourable production conditions.

The second phase was when the Trans-national Corporations (TNC's) began a process known as *global sourcing* which is a process by which globally the best and most favourable production sites are sought. Favourable production sights include sites with the lowest labour costs. This means that on a "global level there are more than 40,000 trans-national corporations of varying shapes and sizes playing off their own employees (as well as different nation states) against one another" (Martin & Schumann 1998:7).

This is best seen in the example of the high-tech movement away from the USA and Europe to India. A few years ago the chief planners of companies such as Hewlett-Packard, Motorola and IBM began to employ new specialists in the various fields from India at much lower wages. This is called 'brain shopping.' The universities are good in India, but the pay is low (Martin & Schumann 1998:99). Not only does brain shopping take place, but also re-location to better production sites, where the different nation sates compete with each other to offer the corporations the best possible production sites with the lowest costs (labour, rates and taxes, etcetera). For example, the New

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Delhi government, to entice the software giants, had to offer them something that they could not refuse. They provided the whole infrastructure from air-conditioned open plan laboratories to satellite links at almost zero costs. The major giants responded to this offer and now Siemens, Compaq, Texas Instruments, Toshiba, Microsoft and Lotus all have set up branches on the Indian sub-continent (Martin & Schumann 1998:100). Siemens, a firm that once started in Germany, now produces more capital outside of Germany than inside.

For example they have:

- * A company that creates software in India - Bangalore.
- * In Brazil, Argentina and Mexico cheap labour produces Osram bulbs.
- * In England North Tyneside there is a company that produces micro-chips.

All these companies belong to Siemens and are all over the world with 400 production sites in 6 different continents (Spiegel 1996:80). No longer do these large companies only export their goods all over the world, but they produce their products in those countries where they find cheap labour and favourable labour laws.

“Grässlin: ‘Bei der suche nach einer neuen Produktionsstätte für Automobile geht das Spielchen so: Sie wählen das Land mit den niedrigsten Standards aus, um dort allerdings immer ein bisschen besser zu sein als die anderen und damit die Public-Relations Karte zu ziehen. Warum wird der Smart nicht in Deutschland gebaut, sonder in Hambach in Frankreich? Weil dort die Ökostandards und die Löhne viel niedriger sind. Warum wird die M-Klasse in Alabama gefertigt? Weil dort die größten Steuererleichterungen gewährt werden und die Gewerkschaften eine marginale Größe darstellen” (Schnellbach 2002:10).

6.5.3 The third phase

The third phase started with the TNC moving across the globe and there was an increasing need for international credit. In the past this money was given via the national banks who would then work out the credit via the US\$. Already in 1957 the British banks started dealing in Dollars themselves without going via the Pound, in other words ‘free bank zones’ were created also known as “Offshore”, “Euro” or “Xeno”.

This must not be seen as a geographical development, but what actually happened was that the bank of England or Frankfurt split its books (Duchrow 1994:70). One part of the books was controlled by the national balances and the other part was for the uncontrolled trans-national transactions. This development had numerous benefits for

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the banks, but it also meant that the volume of capital on the trans-national money markets increased tremendously. Money was moving around the globe free from any national political control as well as free from any tax system (Duchrow 1994:71).

These offshore havens for tax avoidance are found scattered all around the globe stretching from the Caribbean through Liechtenstein to Singapore (Martin & Schumann 1998:61). These offshore tax havens promise zero taxation and that the identity of their clients will never be revealed. Now this is not only a haven for banks and insurances seeking tax-free investment, but also a haven for international crime, where large sums of crime money can just disappear and no traces can be found of it.

Never before in human history has there been so much money in the world and so much profit earned by the trans-national companies. “Share prices and corporate profits rise in double-digit leaps whereas wages and salaries sink” (Martin & Schumann 1998:7). Yet wage drops are continuous and governments struggle because of tax avoidance as “profits are revealed only in countries where the rate of taxation is really low. All around the world the owners of capital and wealth are contributing less and less to the financing of public expenditure” (Martin & Schumann 1998:7). If all the offshore-centre’s money would be added up it would come to more or less 50 billion Marks per annum, which is the same as the new public debt added each year. IMF statistic: “a total in excess of 2000 billion dollars is managed under the flag of various offshore mini-states”(Martin & Schumann 1998:63).

Whose money is this that is invested, that gambles with the future and refuses to pay tax in the country in which it was earned? It is investment money:

Investment funds – 7 trillion Marks world wide Pension funds and insurance companies – 10 trillion Marks (Martin & Schumann 1998:70).

This means that the middle class citizen is at the same time victim and perpetrator, winner and loser of this financial system. He or she invests in these funds as they put money away for pension and for insurance purposes. This money is invested in the derivatives trade, which places pressure on the companies in which these middle class citizens have their jobs and lose their jobs, because they are made redundant. The middle class citizen also has to pay increasingly more tax because his or her tax is the only tax that the government can lay their hands on because of these offshore tax havens.

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This trend increased in 1973 with the oil crisis and the flood of the so-called petrodollars. Two consequences can be seen as a result of this situation:

1) The trans-national flood of Dollars strengthened the inflation development of the Dollar, which the US-Government started with the financing of the Vietnam War. US-Government was therefore forced to end the Dollar-Gold Standard in 1973. With the end of the Gold-Dollar Standard all the fixed exchange rates between Dollar and other currencies also fell. The so called floating Dollar meant the opening up of the dividend market, therefore more and more trans-national money was speculated with on the money market.

2) The banks had to find investment opportunities for this extra capital that was on the global markets. The bank targeted the developing countries to invest in. The investment was focussed as it did not want to create competition for the industrialised countries, thus the focus was not on production of export goods, but on luxury projects such as big dams and Atomic power plants.

The interest rates for these credits increased and rose to above 20 % (Duchrow 1994:72). This high interest rate was driven by the arms race in the industrialised countries, as they needed money for arms development. The consequence of this was that many of the developing countries fell into the debt trap. “This transformation was boosted by the ideological offensive of the 1980s, which accelerated privatization and systematic deregulation: in a word - the incredible rise of so-called ‘neo-liberalism’ boosted by the Thatcher-Reagan style which apparently convinced even Social Democrats to abandon many of their traditional fundamental humanistic values in the name of so-called ‘economic efficiency’”(Amin 1997:13).

The finance markets gained more and more power so that they could influence everything, from national politics to social systems and even ecological debates were dictated to by the power of profit.

The world had moved towards the creation of a single international economic system - the financial markets of the global village.

In summary: the final stage in the development of the world capitalist order – the market of the global village – can be summarised in three phases. The first phase was when the capital markets became trans-national. It was in this phase that various international institutions arose. The second phase was the emergence of financial markets and the trade in money. The third phase was the trans-national companies competing internationally for the best (cheapest) production sites

because of pressure from the finance markets. These finance markets form the social-cultural and economic horizon within which individuals and communities act and need to understand themselves and their actions. It is within the context of the global village, as a metaphor that is guided by the ideological story of the finance markets, that the secular individual has to understand his/her actions and practices. The economic story of the global village is the visional dimension of the practices within the global village which places certain demands on companies and individuals which they need to oblige to in order to survive and have their basic tendencies and needs fulfilled.

Conclusion

In this section I have tried to retell and interpret the story of the global village by unpacking the dominant story – the economic story of the development of the global village. This dominant economic story forms the social economic history of the global village and thus forms the economic, political and ideological horizon. This horizon determines the obligations of individuals within the global village.

Early markets: In the early beginnings many communities existed without markets and where markets did arise they were under the control of *Oikonomia* (economy of the home) and embedded within the community and social relations of reciprocity. Yet already in these early days there was the emergence of foreign markets where the focus was on luxury items and military resources.

Capital markets: The three market mechanisms: labour, land and money (capital), can each be exploited if the national government does not have certain laws in place to protect the land and the labourer from the mechanism of the market. In most of the former Western European countries these social laws were in place and strong social-security systems protected the individuals from exploitation by the market.

Trans-national capital markets and finance markets: the final stage in the development of the world capitalist order – the market of the global village – can be summarised in three phases. The first phase was when the capital markets became trans-national. It was in this phase that various international institutions arose. The second phase was the emergence of financial markets and the trade in money. The third phase was the trans-national companies competing internationally for the best (cheapest) production sites because of pressure from

the finance markets.

If one looks at the development of the market of the global village it is a story where economics gains more and more power over politics and the market moved further and further away from the community it is meant to serve. It is a story of fragmentation as economics is separated from the rest of society and has a life of its own. This separation between economics and the rest of social life has drastic consequences for both villager and marginalised. In this section we only looked at the stories of villagers. In the next we will also look at stories of the marginalised. The story of Ford: the trans-nationalisation of Ford has increased productivity for the company, but the people working in the offices are placed under tremendous pressure as the speed of work has also increased. This connectedness to the global village has certain consequences for the people working there:

- Pressure at work as the projects move forward at greater speeds as 24 hrs a day around the world people are working on the same project.
- The employees of these trans-national companies have to compete globally for their jobs. If a certain section of the company does not perform there are others internationally that can replace it.

The story of Patrick: A high pressure job on the financial markets a single mistake and it can cost him billions of dollars. Again Patrick just like the employee at Ford experiences pressure at work and continuous competition globally for better 'gamblers'. We can only imagine how the situation at work influences their family and social life. Yes they are connected and financially benefiting from the global village yet they experience fragmentation. It is in this context of the economic story that each individual is forced to reflect on numerous ethical questions about work, family and security within the global village and I understand this to be in line with Browning's obligational level.

7. UNPACKING THE STORY OF THE GLOBAL VILLAGE - THE DEMISE OF THE NATION STATE

7.1 Introduction

In the previous section I reflected on the story of the development of a world capitalist economy which I understand to be the global economy of the global village.

This story of development is a story where economics gains more and more power over politics. In this section I will unpack this story of a power struggle between economics and politics. I will tell the story of how the national governments opened their borders for trans-national global capitalism thereby reducing their own powers to control the

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economy. I will reflect on this reduction of control over the market by the national government. It is the story of the demise of the power of politics over economics. In this section I will also be looking at the various institutional patterns and practices of the global village and how they form and shape the actual practices within the global village and in a certain sense prescribes the rules and the roles that villagers should enact in

the global village. Before I can reflect on the demise of the nation state, I will first describe the nation state and its role in society.

7.1.1 The functions of the nation state

1. Regulate affairs within its boundaries
The state has the right to regulate the affairs within its own boundaries as well as to defend these affairs from foreign intervention (Thomas & Potter 1995: 26).
2. The State has the monopoly to use force within its boundaries
In other words the state has the right to use force to enforce rules and regulations by which it governs within its boundaries.
3. The State provides identity and cohesion
The state plays a major role in providing the people with a national identity and protecting this national identity.
4. The State is both agent and structure within society
The State sustains relationships with other agents within society such as the family, religious organisations, etcetera (Taken from Thomas & Potter 1995:26-28).

I will retell a story of an incident which describes the demise of the nation state. The Mexican Peso crisis:

Story: The Mexican Peso crisis in January 1995

The story begins just before the winter holidays in the USA and four days before Christmas. The Mexican government announces that it has to devalue its peso for the first time in 7 years, which means one peso will cost 5 US cents (15 % decrease). This news spread havoc all around the world because international banks and funds had invested more than 50 billion dollars into the Mexican government bonds, shares and debentures. The reason for this investment was because Mexico had been declared a financially sound country for investment. This means that the Mexican Government had met all the standards for investment set by the IMF. Now all of a sudden foreign investors were faced with massive losses for their invested assets. The news spread so fast and everybody who could was withdrawing all their money from Mexico which meant that the peso lost in three days not 15 % but 30 % of its dollar value. In the USA a crisis committee was formed with representatives from all areas of government dealing with foreign and economic policy. The economic development of Mexico was one of President Clinton's projects, as he thought it wise to stabilise a neighbouring country so as to stop the millions of economic refugees entering the USA through the southern border. For three weeks there were uninterrupted negotiations with the Mexican government and the outcome was a short term solution to the problem. The Mexican finance minister had to be replaced together with immediate rectification of the government finances and in return the USA presidency announced that they would stand by Mexico with loan guarantees to the value of 40 billion dollars. These "solutions" did not quieten the uncertainty on the international financial markets with the

result that the dollar outflow from Mexico was not stopped and the situation worsened. Investors were not sure that Clinton would get the money which he had promised as there was a hostile new Republican majority in congress. On the 12th of January a dramatic change came about as on this day Clinton and Zedillo (the Mexican president) announced their financial closing of ranks. This had global consequences as all the world's stock exchanges came under pressure and especially all the up and coming markets lost extensively. Countries which had no link to Mexico, such as Hungary and Indonesia all of a sudden were part of the Mexican crisis. Heads of South-East Asian central banks had to make their currencies artificially more expensive by raising interest rates in order to keep investors happy. Argentina, Brazil and Poland soon followed. "From 20 January onwards, the end of the fourth week of the crisis, the dollar also went into free-fall". Then on 30 January shortly before 8 P.M, Clinton's chief of Staff Panetta received two telephone calls: one from Mexico's new finance minister, Guillermo Ortiz, and one from the leader of the Republican majority in the House of Representatives, New Gingrich. There was no time to consult with the other contributors, namely Germany, France, Britain and Japan, because in the morning the failure of Clinton's plan would be made public and the market would come down.

So Camdessus (World Bank) had to make a decision on his own, although this would be unconstitutional and by that evening he told Clinton that the IMF would pay another 10 billion dollars. Clinton eventually got together 50 billion dollars. "In under twenty-four hours, then, half a-dozen people acting outside all parliamentary control had used taxpayers' money from the industrialised West to launch the largest credit aid programme since 1951, exceeded only by payments under the Marshal Plan with which the USA had supported post war European reconstruction" (Martin & Schumann 1998:45). This was a real gift from the tax payer to the rich, so that they would not loose too much money invested in the world market (Story adapted form Martin & Schumann 1998: 41-46).

7.2 Unpacking the story

There are numerous actors in this drama and I would like to highlight them and then to unpack the plot and the role of each of the actors within the story. I will also be looking at the various institutional patterns and practices.

7.2.1 Actors and the plot

7.2.1.1 The global finance market and its functionaries - the investors.

The main actor in this story is certainly the unseen presence of the global finance market who dictated the plot of this story. The plot, put very simply: the global finance market wants more profit, they want their share values to increase. The global market has its agents, namely the investors, who need to act according to the plot of getting the

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best share value, in other words the best increase on capital invested. “Their trading departments provide only mercenaries for the electronic finance armies, while the commanders issue orders from quite different heights. They sit in the headquarter boardrooms of the investment trusts and pension funds” (Martin & Schumann 1998:53).

7.2.1.2 The Mexican government

The global finance market invested in the Mexican government, which means they invested in government projects which were probably prestige projects like power stations, etcetera. The investments did not bring the economic growth that they had hoped it would and the Mexican government fell into an economic crisis as the pressure of the global market escalated.

7.2.1.3 The USA government

The USA government as global superpower is powerless to the pressures of the global finance market and cannot prevent the crisis.

7.2.1.4 The IMF

The IMF does in the end get the money together to stop the world wide crash, but whom does it serve? The members of the contributing countries and their tax payers, as it is using tax money, or is it serving a power beyond the member countries, namely the global finance markets?

“The Mexico crisis (30 January 1995, the crash of the Peso) lit up with rare clarity the face of the new world order in the age of globalization. As never before, the main actors demonstrated the force with which global economic integration has changed the structures of power in the world. The government of the American superpower in the world, the once omnipotent IMF and all the European central banks seemed guided by an unseen hand as they bowed to the dictates of a higher power whose destructive capacity they were no longer able to evaluate: namely the international money market” (Martin & Schumann 1998:46).

7.3 National political framework for capitalist market economy

The liberal theory of the market economy understands the market to be an entity which regulates itself and that the government’s only function would be to ensure that the market is left alone and that it is not disturbed by outside factors. Yet the government also has the function to protect the individual from the market. In the previous section I

have shown the importance of certain political controls. These controls are important to protect the labourer from the market and the environment from destruction. The market without these controls has only one law and that is greater profits and therefore it has no respect for rights of individuals or the environment. The government is caught between these two needs. On the one hand the market that needs freedom to grow and to be able to compete and on the other hand the citizen who needs to be protected and has a right to a liveable wage.

7.3.1 Politics over economics - Fordism and Keynesianism

In the past there have been some attempts to keep the market in check from within the market.

Fordism can be described as the accumulation process where the production is rationalised by the introduction of the conveyer belt. This means a smaller labour force, but a better paid labour force, therefore a certain section of the labour market enters the middle class bringing with it a split in the labour market. The incentive to pay the worker more is that in this way a bigger consumer market is created (Duchrow 1994:63).

The economist John Maynard Keynes also responded to the dangers of the market. He was specifically concerned about the increasing unemployment and therefore introduced the idea of invest so as to prevent rising unemployment. This was not a purely social concern, but was also a market incentive as unemployment causes social and political upheaval which endangers the market, so it is in the interest of the market to invest in labour intensive projects (Duchrow 1994:63-64).

7.3.2 Economics over politics – Neo-liberal finance market

The social mechanism that Fordism and Keynesianism tried to introduce to balance the accumulation of wealth with social factors was the role of the politics of the national governments. It was the task of the politicians who had to create the framework and the boundaries in which the market could function. In the sixties and seventies this relationship changed, as it was no longer the politicians who dictated to the economy, but the economy which dictated to the politicians.

This change came about after the 1979 and 1980 elections in the USA and Britain which were both won by the conservatives. The conservative politicians had a different economic dogma known as neo-liberalism. The economic advisor of Reagan namely Milton Friedman and Thatcher's advisor Friedrich August von Hayek were the driving force behind this neo-liberal dogma which the two countries adopted. The theme of neo-

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liberalism was deregulation, in other words freeing the market from the power of the politicians. The key to this shift in power was that accumulation and regulation of capital was no longer bound by national boundaries, but became trans-national. Yet the political boundaries that could keep the market in check were national and bound to national politics and thus powerless to the trans-national market activity. The international organisation that was in place had certain bias towards the powerful market players. Giddens compares this freeing of the market from politics to the “Dschagannath Wagon” (Jähnichen 2000:12). The image of the “Dschagannath Wagon” is taken from India and the Hindu religion and vividly describes the loss of control over the market by the national governments.

The Story of the “Dschagannath Wagon”

In the history of the Hindu tradition once a year an image of Krishna would be placed on a wagon. This wagon is not really controllable, but rushes through the streets driven by its own momentum and choosing its own direction. The people would throw themselves off the wagon or in a moment of religious ecstasy throw themselves under the wagon thereby sacrificing themselves as the wagon runs over them killing them in the process (Adapted from Jähnichen 2000:12).

I find this metaphor very apt as the global market is running wild and is only minimally controllable and continuously runs the danger of destroying itself together with all that is around it.

“Whether it is a question of securing social justice or defending the environment, or restricting the power of the media or combating international crime, the individual nation state always finds itself overstretched, and attempts to coordinate international efforts just as regularly break down” (Martin & Schumann 1998:10).

The story shows that in the end the market dictates to the national governments and no longer the tax payers who elect the national governments, thus questioning the whole democratic process.

“Globalization turns out to be a trap for democracy itself” (Martin & Schumann 1998: 10).

What went wrong, that the market started to regulate itself and the nation-state lost its political power?

The basic thesis that brought about this change was that the market is inherently good and state intervention bad (Martin & Schumann 1998:8).

“Basing themselves on the ideas of the leading representative of this school, the

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American economist and Nobel prize winner Milton Friedman, most of the neo-liberal governments of the West made this dogma their guiding policy principle in the 1980's" (Martin & Schumann 1998:8).

The collapse of the socialist system added fuel to this thesis and the world was freed from the "dictatorship of the proletariat" to be placed under the "dictatorship of the world market" (Martin & Schumann 1998:9).

From the story of the Mexican crisis it becomes clear in whose hands the power is and also in whose hands our future lies. Is it really a democratic process that indicates the direction nations will be moving into the future or is it the brokers and the investors on the stock exchanges? Could this global economy be the end of democracy?

Jacques Chirac says that the speculators on the money markets are the "AIDS" of the global economy (Spiegel 1996:93). They hold the power over local governments as the governments can be blackmailed to offer better deals and subsidies or else the company leaves the country. The competitions of sites will become a competition for the best subsidies and tax relief thus governments become the puppets of the global economy.

Billions of US\$ are moved around the globe daily on the international stock exchanges. These financial powers will change the world in which we are living as the national states hand over the power to these global players. The head of the World Trade Organization, Renato Ruggiero, calls this new global development the "Geopolitical Revolution" (Spiegel 1996:81).

The topology of powerful economies will change completely according to the International Monetary Fund vision of the future as totally different countries will be leading the race as top producers. In the year 2004 they foresee the developing countries producing more as the industrialised countries together (Spiegel 1996:84). Spiegel estimates that a worker in Europe and USA will not earn more than a worker in Malaysia (Spiegel 1996:84). If this continues there will be no winners, only losers and extremely cheap labour which would not pay a liveable wage, because somewhere in the world there will be someone who will be prepared to work for less. Never before in history has the Marxist slogan of the Communist Manifesto been such a necessary truth. The workers of the world must unite - or else be doomed to ever growing poverty (Marx 1967:121).

There are some that do not see the future so negatively, but rather see this global economy as a time of opportunity. This optimistic world view is based on the economic theory of David Ricardo of the 19th century. His theory can be understood in the

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following way: The world economy should develop so that every country produces that which they can best produce and in this way everybody will eventually benefit from the growing profits. Eli Heckscher and Bertil Ohlin later developed this theory by saying that countries with capital should concentrate on producing specialised high-tech goods, which are technology and “know-how” intensive and leave the labour intensive products to the poorer countries (Spiegel 1996:85). For the industrialised countries this theory holds true for in the past decades there has been a constant increase in capital growth in these countries. Many of the poorer countries, especially after the fall of socialism, followed this liberalisation.

The poorer countries opened themselves up for the Multinational companies, by liberalising the necessary laws. It is estimated that within a time period of 4 years 368 financial laws were liberalised in the poorer countries of the world, thereby opening the doors for multinational companies to enter. The whole world was opened for world trade and production no longer was dominated by Europe, USA and Japan. With the liberalising of the laws the multinationals moved across borders and fused together with other companies from other countries, with only one thing in mind - more profit. Profit was the only criteria and the only law that dictated to these multinationals. The US economist Thurow says that only the minimising of costs and the maximising of profits is at the heart of capitalism (Spiegel 1996:85).

The developments in technology made this global economy possible - fax, e-mail, Internet and glass fibre cables gave the necessary technological basis for the global market. You no longer need to be on the site to manage production. These production sites are no longer dependent on raw materials, but on cheap labour and the necessary know-how, but know-how is sent around the world in seconds.

The theological magazine Publik-Forum held an interview with Jürgen Grässlin who wrote the Biographies of Jürgen Schrempp (Daimler-Chrysler) and Ferdinand Piëch (Volkswagen) and they discovered the following with regards to the relationship between politics and economy, or one could say the demise of the nation state.

Publik-Forum: Wie groß ist der Spielraum der Spitzenmanager für eigene Entscheidungen?

Grässlin: Der Spielraum ist gewaltig, gerade in Zeiten der Globalisierung. Inzwischen sind Manager weit mächtiger als Staatshäupter. Mit 162 Milliarden Euro ist das Umsatzvolumen der Daimler-Chrysler AG größer als das Bruttosozialprodukt eines jeden schwarzafrikanischen Staates.

Grässlin: Für mich sind selbst die einflussreichsten Politiker Deutschlands Marionetten der deutschen Großkonzerne. Gerhard Schröder verkauft sich sogar

selbst als >>Autokanzler<<, also als Vasallen der Autoindustrie.

The European Union had agreed to develop an ecological tax and this is how the automobile industry responded in Germany.

Grässlin: “Diese EU- Altautoverordnung wurde von der deutschen Autoindustrie vor allem in Person von Ferdinand Piëch ausgehebelt. Mit einem einzigen Privatbrief an Bundeskanzler Schröder – den ich zu seinem Unwillen in meiner Piëch-Biographie publiziert habe – hat der VW-Chef erreicht, dass die Verordnung erst 2006 in Kraft tritt.“

Grässlin: Die Politik verabschiedet die Gesetze, etwa im Umwelt- und Sozialbereich. Aber in Wirklichkeit wird der Primat der Politik durch das Diktat der Großkonzerne ausgehebelt. Die Wirtschaftsführer geben die Rahmenrichtlinien vor, und die führenden Politiker lassen sich zu Marionetten degradieren“ (Schnellbach 2002:10).

The context in which we are living often makes one feel rather powerless against the economic market mechanism of our world. This powerlessness comes from a deep-rooted belief that we can't really change anything, because it is naturally determined to be this way. The market economy determines the rules and the roles that individuals as well as institutions need to act by. There is an element of determinism as if society, as we know it, is structured by natural laws that cannot be changed. This is often also the argument for the market economy that it is the way it is because of intrinsic laws within society and humanity. History has a different view of this determinism and has warned about the intrinsic dangers of certain processes that are taken for granted and inevitable today.

“Global economic integration is by no means a natural process; it is consciously driven by a single-minded policy. In every new piece of legislation, it has always been the decisions of governments and parliaments which have removed the barriers to cross-border movement of capital and goods” (Martin und Schumann 1998:8).

“Now there is no ideology, no pop culture, no international organization, no ecological interest even, which binds the nations of the world more closely together than the electronic network of global money machines of the banks, insurance companies and investment funds” (Martin & Schumann 1998:48).

Globalisation of the economy has certainly brought with it many “winners” but sadly still many more “losers”. It does not only force people who are marginalised into absolute poverty, but also the environment is being threatened by the environmental impact of the rampant economic globalisation. George Bush has declared war on terrorism, but José Lutzenberger says that the consumerism that drives the global capitalism is a far

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greater form of fundamentalist terrorism than Bin Laden's fundamentalism (Bultmann 2002: 16). José Lutzenberger: "Der Terroristische Fundamentalismus richtet sich – schlimm genug – gegen einen Teil der Menschen. Die Konsumgesellschaft hat sich vorgenommen, den gesamten Planeten bis aufs Letzte zu plündern" (Bultmann 2002:16).

Summary: The market needs to be controlled in some way, either through national government policies or through economic theories that try and influence the market. In the story of the development of the capitalist market it became clear that the market was moving beyond the boundaries of national governments and national banks. This brought with it the need for international organisations to regulate the international markets.

Conclusion:

The national government abdicated power to the international markets of the global village. Although they only abdicated power with regards to economic decisions these economic decision influence all spheres of social life, such as: social–security, government spending, tax laws, and in a certain way also government policies on numerous issues. Thereby national identity has been eroded away as individuals realise that their democratic vote has become relative to the needs of the global economy. This is another form of fragmentation within the global village. The individual as well as institutions are forced to act according to the rules and roles of the financial markets.

8. UNPACKING THE STORY OF THE GLOBAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

Story: The final victory over the labour unions

The story begins in 1991 when Caterpillar, the world's largest producer of construction machinery and bulldozers, had a tremendous turnover and profits hit an all time high. These profits needed to be increased even more and for this extra increase the work force was just not profitable enough anymore. The shareholder value placed pressure on Caterpillar to perform even better and that meant that the wages were too high and the production needed to be improved. Other construction companies in different parts of the world had higher productivity at lower prices. This meant that Caterpillar had to cut wages by 20 % and add two hours to every working week. The Union, the United Auto Workers (UAW), organised a nation wide strike as

an answer to these wage cuts. The union organised strikes, walkouts and shop-floor sit-downs which lasted up to 18 months. This organised strike, one of the largest in USA history since the war, cost the union 300 million dollars in stoppage money to its members and brought the union nothing. Caterpillar was not touched by the strike. It was during this strike that the Caterpillar management sent office staff, engineers, the whole middle and lower management, and above all 5000 or so part time workers into the assembly halls, as well as ordering as much as possible from foreign subsidiaries in the global village and got the desired results and Caterpillar actually increased output and sales during the long strike (Adapted from Martin & Schuman 1998:115-117).

This story of construction giant Caterpillar makes us aware of how the division of labour has changed in the global village. Labour was no longer a local/national negotiable in the formula for profit, because it is globally negotiated.

This story highlights the shift in power and shows that it is possible to put an end to union power and that unions can try what they like, but will no longer be able to demand higher wages. There are a number of reasons for this loss in power.

The companies went trans-national.

Caterpillar in the early 1980's was still a classic USA company producing everything on national ground with national workers. Then in 1981 a Japanese company Komatsu started producing at much lower costs, because labour costs in the Far East were much lower, and therefore they could dump products on the US market at much lower prices. In response Caterpillar started buying smaller parts from smaller companies and no longer producing everything by themselves. The Company went trans-national, having smaller plants all over the world where wages were favourable. Caterpillar integrated overseas factories into the production and invested 1.8 billion dollars into the automation of local original plants (Martin & Schumann 1998:116).

8.1 The story behind the story

This global world is filled with possibilities and numerous dangers. It has become a global shopping centre as things are produced and sold at the same time 24 hours all over the world. This possibility creates tremendous pressure to produce better, faster, cheaper and 24 hours a day, because somewhere in the world somebody is producing faster or cheaper. Pressure that is experienced in the workplace pushes wages and employment opportunities to its limits. The production costs in Germany are much higher than in Brazil, because of labour regulations. The head of Audi worked out that for every car produced in Hungary the company saves 100 DM (Spiegel 1996:105). This

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opens up the global labour market to total exploitation by forcing cheaper and cheaper labour. The battle begins between multinational companies and countries who are trying to defend their labour laws while trying to fight growing unemployment.

The world is financially dominated by a few multinational companies and the international stock exchange. It is these companies that put pressure on the local national governments to change their labour laws, reduce social security or else they will move their company to another country. In Germany workers were forced to work three extra days for the same pay, or else the company would be forced to retrench thousands of workers, or as mentioned in Chapter Three (3.2.3 The stories of families in the global village) extra hours are expected without any extra pay. The law of profit dictates to the companies and to the national governments. If government do not want to loose all investment and struggle with the social evil of ever growing unemployment they need to comply with the demands of the market as expressed by the trans-national companies.

The companies are registered on the stock exchange and sell shares. Every shareholder wants to get value for his or her investment. In other words for each share that you have in the company the shareholder receives interest. This is the leverage that the 'all powerful' stock exchange has on the multinational companies. The stock exchange is open 24 hours around the world and shareholders want to get the best profit from their shares, therefore the stock exchange can place tremendous pressure on the companies. If the profit margin of a company is down the investment companies will place pressure on the companies to get the profit margin up, in other words to produce cheaper for more profit. This in most cases means downsizing and the loss of jobs, for example Fidelity Investments manages 548 Million US\$, which is 8% of the New York stock exchange (Spiegel 1996: 92). Similarly pension funds invest millions in the stock exchange and expect high returns. The investment companies pressurise companies to perform and to seek the cheapest possible production and achieve the highest profit. Daily 1.5 Billion DM rush across data lines – money that is not connected directly to any product, but that is invested as a speculation on the future.

Summary: In the global village the division of labour has certainly become global. No matter at what level, management, or labourer the market has opened up globally. Companies can employ managers from all over the world and seek the best (cheapest) labourers all over the world as the companies have become trans-national. This opening up of the global labour market has opened the doors for companies to produce cheaper and better. In the global village there is one global labour market from which the trans-national companies can choose from, thus

taking away the power of labour unions.

Conclusion: The global labour market opens up numerous opportunities for the trans-national companies to really seek the cheapest and most sufficient employees, but at the same time this situation places tremendous pressure on the labour market, as the price of labour is pushed to its lowest limit. Governments struggling with unemployment have to adapt their labour laws to attract the trans-national companies, thereby opening the doors to exploitation and minimising social security. The top management of the companies are placed under tremendous pressure by the financial markets and the share value of their company. If the company does not perform there could be an aggressive take-over by another company. This places tremendous pressure on management as they could also loose their employment. In the global village the competition within the labour market has increased, continually placing pressure on all levels of employment, thus fragmenting the market by bringing the villagers into competition with each other. The global labour market raises numerous ethical questions with regards to our tendencies and needs and the pre-moral goods and how these goods are being used and distributed in the global village and at what cost to the environment.

9. UNPACKING THE STORY OF THE WORLD MILITARY ORDER

9.1 Introduction

Who has the power in this global village and whose interests are being protected? These are the questions that I will be seeking to understand and unpack in this section of Chapter Four.

9.2 World military order

To use military power to secure economic interests is not something new, but has always been part of world history. Yet the 500 years of European and Western history have added a new dimension to this world military order and that is the possibility to destroy the whole planet with its atomic weapons.

The first phase of this development went right into the seventies and it was legitimised through the threatening presence of communism (Duchrow 1994:101). This threat of communism and the “defence of the free world” allowed the Western countries to

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intervene in various countries where there were important raw materials or strategic geo-political locations. In a world with so much inequality between those who have and those who don't have one has to think about defending this inequality. Hand in hand with the policy of deregulating the markets and the neo-liberal financial policies, there had to be strategic security policies in place to "protect" these economic policies. These strategic security policies can be described as Low Intensity Conflict Strategy (LIC) and of late also Mid Intensity Conflict Strategy (MIC) (Duchrow 1994:101).

I will not go into the detail of these various strategies, but thought it important to mention them as according to Giddens the World Military Order is part of his understanding of globalization.

9.3 Whose power

"When the cake stops growing", says Lester Brown, 'the political dynamic changes.' Two hundred million tons of grain is currently exported per annum throughout the world, half of it from the United States. 'That means', Brown concludes his remarks in San Francisco, 'that food to the USA will be the major power in years to come - with the prospect that food will be misused as a means for political pressure.' Thus according to the latest calculations, China will want to import roughly 37 million tons of wheat in the year 2000, more than the total of all US grain sales of any kind" (Martin & Schumann 1998:37).

Summary: Military power is used by those benefiting from the global village to protect the economic interest of the global village as well as expand the ideological discourse on which the global village rests. This power is not only a military power, but also a power based on resources, where the resources include anything from food to development aid. Food support and development aid is only given to those countries who have 'bought into' the story of the global village and its economic policies.

Conclusion: The military power protects the economic and ideological interest of those who benefit the most from the global village. There are tremendous power imbalances within the global village. The military imbalances were seen so clearly in the USA attack on Afghanistan, where the world's super power attacks one of the poorest countries in the world. Yet there are other power imbalances. There are economic discrepancies which influences global decisions, as only the economically powerful are invited to the G8 summits who make decisions about

development and global economic policies.

Food and development aid has also become a tool with which to pressurise poor countries to change their economic policies. The global village is a village characterised by power imbalance. This power imbalance is reflected in the numerous battles, wars and acts of terrorism seen throughout the globe.

10. UNPACKING THE STORY OF THE IDEOLOGICAL MEDIA STORY OF THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

10.1 Introduction

Together with the spreading of multinational companies into all corners of the world there is an aggressively growing global culture of Hollywood films, McDonald's fast foods and the "American way of life" which for me is characterised in the 'Marlboro man' advertisements. Throughout the world you can see the posters of the Marlboro man riding into the sunset or a Coco-Cola sign used to keep a shack together in some rural poverty-stricken area of Africa.

The Big-Mac tastes the same in New York or in some small town in the middle of Eastern Europe or in India. There is a certain culture which is exported to the whole world via the global communications networks. The television networks, dominated by USA, bring via satellite into homes across the world, 39 or more channels of USA dominated television. Even for those families who cannot afford satellite television the national television stations have "Bold and the Beautiful" as well as "Dallas" translated into many local languages.

A survey was done by a London advertising agency, Young & Rubicam, to discover which labels are the best known amongst the youth and young adults. This survey was conducted with 45 444 youths from 19 different countries and best known labels are Coca-Cola, Disney, Nike, BMW, Porsche, Mercedes Benz, Adidas, Rolls-Royce, Calvin Klein and Rolex (Betto 2002:41). All these labels belong to a certain culture.

Fukuyama says: "there has emerged in the last few centuries something like a true global culture, centring round technology and driven by economic growth and the capitalist social relationship necessary to produce and sustain it" (Fukuyama 1992:126). Can one really speak of global culture or is it national culture that has become global? In a sense it is a trans-nationalization of a very national culture, namely images and values of the "American way of life" (Golding & Harris 1997:9). This way of life is sold by

the advertising industry on the global markets.

Is it a way of life, a culture that is sold, or is it more?

The South American theologian Betto, sees these commercial markets to have become more than just a culture, but a new religion. He argues that the labels, the products marketed and sold on the commercial markets, help humanity in their search for meaning and purpose (Betto 2002:41). The individual self defines him/herself by the labels that they use. The manager of the London advertising agency, Young & Rubicam, says that in these labels there is so much passion and dynamics that they can change the world and convert human sense of meaning and purpose (Betto 2002:41). Humanity is judged and identified by these labels and therefore by the dictates of the consumer markets, for example if I would go to a friend travelling in a bus my social value would be less than if I came to my friend's house driving a BMW. The product that I use, wear or drive establishes my position within society. Maybe one can change Descarte's proposition to: "I consume therefore I am." And then what I consume says who I am.

Fitch, a London designer office, said that these markets have godly characteristics (Betto 2002:41).

This is the paradox of globalization that on the one hand it has brought us into contact with cultures from all over the world as the world has grown closer together. Never before in history have so many people travelled across the globe with an ever growing tourist industry. Yet on the other hand different cultures have become commodities for sale in the global culture dominated by the West. Culture as become commercialised in a global commercial culture. The culture of the global village is a culture of commercialisation as we live in a consumer society. There are those that argue that the religion of the global village is this consumerism, or as Carl Amery call it 'the religion of the total market' (Amery 2002: 29) – a new religion of consumerism/capitalism, as Karl Marx already argued in the previous century, that capitalism will eventually lead to a form of world dominating religion. Walter Benjamin wrote an essay in 1921 in which he argues that capitalism is a religion (Amery 2002:29). Can I argue that capitalism is an ideology that rises up as a world religion – the religion of the global village?

It is a religion with a very aggressive missionary drive.

10.2 Global village - ideology and media and cultural imperialism

No global power can exist without the necessary legitimation thereof and the instrument

of legitimation is ideology (Duchrow 1994:105).

“It is an established fact that the activities of imperialism are not confined solely to the political and economic fields, but also cover the cultural and social fields, thus imposing an alien ideological domination over the peoples of the developing world” (Jankowitsch and Sauvart 1978:226).

This global power legitimised by a certain ideology needs to be spread across the globe and in the global village and with the information and communications technology this has become an easy task. In the previous section I discussed the power relations within in the global village and how this power is maintained through the world military order, but here is another medium by which this power imbalance is kept in place and that is the media.

The USA as the only super power in the world, as well as the greatest beneficiary of the neo-liberal economic system, has national interests in the capitalist economic system becoming the single global economic world system. Media is also one tool that can ensure global dominion. It is not just any economic system and lifestyle which is exported throughout the world, but it is the lifestyle and economic system of the industrialised countries (Kessler 2002:2). It is the lifestyle and values of the villagers which is exported through the global village.

“Centre dominated periphery, imperialists held dominion over dependencies, and all was increasingly held in place by the power of the media above all else” (Golding & Harris 1997: 5). I would like to reflect on Schiller’s understanding of cultural imperialism as Schiller describes it: “...sum of the process by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced and sometimes even bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating centre of the system” (Schiller 1976:9).

Although this is an oversimplification and does not really describe the reality of international media, it does describe a certain tendency. Cultural imperialism today would need to take cognisance of the impact of colonization on the Third World countries in the export of culture and world culture.

The United Nations Development Decade spanning from 1961-1970 was implemented to help the marginalised countries to develop. The thought behind this decade was that the advancement of technology had brought the industrialised countries tremendous wealth so if this technology was exported into the developing countries their wealth would also grow. It proved to be the opposite, for the only ones who profited from this exercise were the producers of the advanced technology (Hamelink 1997:70).

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It was during this period that the information/communication technology was also transferred from the industrialised developed countries to the developing countries. The advanced technology was not so much introduced to meet the needs of the people, but to meet the needs of trans-national companies who had re-located into the developing world (Hamelink 1997:70). This also had as consequence that the information/communication conglomerates developed and thus the world's news and entertainment began to be controlled by ever fewer companies.

10.3 Media in the global village and the failed MacBride recommendations

The MacBride commission was appointed in 1976 following the recommendations of the 19th General Conference of UNESCO⁵ held in Nairobi (Hamelink 1997:74). The commission had the task of investigating the conflict around Mass Media, which was dominated by the media conglomerates in the industrialised countries.

The MacBride commission produced a series of 82 recommendations (Hamelink 1997:75). These recommendations can be grouped into five core areas of concern, namely: communication, technology, culture, human rights and international cooperation. I will only focus on the first three of these core areas as to help describe the story of the global village from a media/ideological point of view.

10.3.1 Communication

The MacBride recommendation focussed on the idea that each country and especially the developing countries need to look at their own communication needs and not allow the market to be swamped by the media giant's products and their perspectives.

The idea was that communication and its development should not be left to chance, but should be linked to policies which are linked to social, cultural, economic and political goals of the specific country (taken from UNESCO, 1980a, International Commission for the study of Communication Problems, Recommendation 1, pp 254-255).

Yet today very little can be seen in reality of this recommendation. One reason for this is that communication is seldom on the political agenda of developing countries. There are so many other struggles that they are battling with, that communication is not on the list

⁵UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. "The specialized UN agency created in 1946 to contribute to world peace by promoting international cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture and communication" (Golding & Harris 1997:237).

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of priorities. Communication is also not a hotly debated issue that could win a party seats in government. There are other issues which are hotly debated and therefore focussed on. The new economic era into which the world has developed was one of deregulation and not of policy regulation and therefore the market was left to decide what should be done as many of the State run media corporations were privatised in the last few years. This trend towards privatisation was also a recommendation made by the donor countries, such as USA, UK and France as well as donor agencies such as IMF, USAID and the World Bank (Hamelink 1997:77). The MacBride recommendation was that the national governments should regulate the media influence via policies that it has in place, but this recommendation is impossible in the light of the demise of the nation state within the global village. In other words it is becoming more and more difficult for national government to get policies in place that oppose the economic “*development*” of the global village.

10.3.2 Technology

The MacBride recommendation: policies need to be in place to evaluate the impact of imported advanced technology.

“The preparation of technological impact surveys can be a useful tool to assess the consequences for lifestyles, relevance for under-privileged sectors of society, cultural influence, effects on employment patterns and similar factors”(International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, UNESCO, 1980a, Recommendation 24, p 259).

The 1980s, which can be characterised as the information decade, brought about the idea that in communication/ information lay the future to prosperity and thus the doors were opened to all the latest developments in technology without any regard for the recommended policies, “the political leaders in Africa, Asia and Latin America have made statements reflecting the urgent need to catch up with the electronic world and their concern about lagging behind” (Hamelink 1997:78).

Story: High-tech communications technology in Mexico

Within three years of negotiation among a selected number of agencies, namely government, the secretariat for communication and transport, and the commercial television company Televisa, an announcement was made on the 24th of March 1983. They said that from 1985 Mexico would have its own national satellite called ‘Morelos.’ The whole process of launching the satellite as well as the manufacturing was all given to foreign tenders, thus the satellite did nothing for the local population besides provide them with another 39 channels of USA television (Adapted from Hamelink 1997:79).

“More than 500 active satellites are meanwhile sweeping the globe with the signals of modernity. Uniform pictures on a billion television screens nurture the same longings on the Amur, Yangste, Amazon, Ganges and Nile. Even in areas far from electricity, such as the Niger in West Africa, satellite dishes and solar panels have plunged millions of people’ from their village life into a planetary dimension...”(Martin & Schumann 1998:13).

10.3.3 Culture

Recommendation:

“We recommend establishment of national cultural policies, which should foster cultural identity and creativity, and involve the media in these tasks. Such policies should also contain guidelines for safeguarding national cultural development while promoting knowledge of other cultures. It is in relation to others that each culture enhances its own identity.

Communication and cultural policies should ensure that creative artists and various grass-roots groups can make their voices heard through the media. The innovative use of film, television or radio by people of different cultures should be studied. Such experiments constitute a basis for continuing cultural dialogue, which could be furthered by agreements between countries and through international support “(International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems UNESCO, 1980a, Recommendations 28, 29, pp 259-260)

Today looking back on this recommendation one has to conclude that it was not very successful in its implementation. The trend internationally has been away from local culture and to global culture and hardly any serious cultural dialogue (Hamelink 1997:80). This recommendation did not take the reality of the international media market into consideration. More and more countries have become dependent on imports and only the largest companies could respond to the demand by supplying the necessary goods.

In South Africa this is experienced as the production of local films costs much more than to import a soap opera from USA.

“In 1983, the leading US companies exported half a billion dollars’ worth of TV products, often in co-production or in disguise of national production firms. The promotion of a universal homogeneous visual code has probably fostered global cultural integration rather than cultural dialogue” (Hamelink 1997:81).

Twenty years after the MacBride Commission the most successful single company which can be found in any corner of the globe is McDonald's (Hamelink 1997:81). McDonald's is not only a fast food chain, but it is symbolic for a way of life – maybe a symbol of life in the global village?

The same television shows are seen all across the planet, the world is connected into a global village by the homogeneous visual cultural code. A homogeneous visual code which is influenced by the *soapies* people watch as well as the chart buster movies shown. "Their pictures govern people's dreams, and dreams determine action" (Martin & Schumann 1998:16).

Story: Opening the doors for cultural invasion

The story takes place in Kenya, a country which in 1989 embarked on a journey to launch a second TV channel. This second TV channel was going to be financed by advertising and Ted Turner's CNN. On the 15th of November 1989 the chairperson of the Kenya Times Media Trust stated: "This will be a global commercial television channel that will run for 24 hours throughout the country. We have already negotiated contracts with leading television companies to ensure satisfaction to our subscribers. These companies included Cable News Network and Sky TV. We have also negotiated contracts with various motion picture companies" (Winsbury 1990:36) (Story adapted from Hamelink 1997:81).

Not only is the globe influenced by the feature films, sit-coms and soap operas, but also by the advertising industry. The trans-national companies spend millions on advertising to export their goods into all corners of the globe. The trans-national companies export not only their goods, but also a certain way of life. "Just ten big firms currently pay for nearly a quarter of all the TV advertising in Germany. A ninety-second commercial that can be used in several continents costs as much as an average European feature film" (Martin & Schumann 1998:16).

This has as consequence that there is a certain visual code, which influences the needs and the dreams of the global village, both of those benefiting as well as those who are marginalised from the village.

"If the nearly 6 billion inhabitants of the planet could really decide by referendum how they wanted to live, there would be an overwhelming majority for the kind of middle-class existence lived in a suburb of San Francisco" (Martin & Schumann 1998:14).

Martin and Schumann continue by asking the question: Why has the Californian ideal of

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life imposed itself all over the world? Why did Disney come out on top? The size of the American market, together with the geopolitical position of the United States after the Second World War and its strength in the propaganda battles of the Cold War, played a central but not all-decisive role. To put it another way: Stalin wanted omnipotence, but Mickey Mouse achieved omnipresence” (Martin & Schumann 1998:14).

One reason for this development is the technological superiority of the USA and the availability of USA products on the international media markets. “On average the US film industry spends 59 million dollars on a feature film - a sum which European or Indian producers cannot come close to matching” (Martin & Schumann 1998:16). Economic superiority allows for cultural imperialism, because the economic superior countries have the necessary means to export their cultural goods.

“The decisive victory of the ‘Disney-colonization of global culture’ rests, according to Barber, upon a phenomenon as old as civilization itself: the competition between hard and easy, slow and fast, complex and simple. The first term in each of these oppositions is bound up with amazing cultural achievements, while the second corresponds to ‘our apathy, weariness and lethargy. Disney, McDonald’s and MTV all appeal to the easy, fast and simple” (Martin & Schumann 1998:15). The sin of this new religion of consumerism in contrast to the other world religions is that it is not altruistic, but egocentric. It does not further the idea of solidarity, but rather competition. It sees life not as a gift, but as a commodity and as property (Betto 2002:41).

A few last thoughts and the ideological media story of the global village:

- * “Neo-liberal economists and politicians preach the ‘American model’ to the world, yet this is frighteningly similar to the propaganda of the old GDR (German Democratic Republic) regime....” (Martin & Schumann 1998:9).
- * “The ‘transformation of thirst into a need for Coca-Cola is now complete” as Ivan Illich said in an interview in Bremen (Martin & Schumann 1998:18).
- * “The expression on everyone’s lips is Zbigniew Brezezinski’s ‘tittytainment” (Martin &Schumann 1998:4). “He thinks of ‘tittytainment’ (‘tits’ plus ‘entertainment’) in terms not so much of sex as of the milk flowing from a nursing mother’s breast. Perhaps a mixture of deadening entertainment and adequate nourishment will keep the world’s frustrated population in relatively good spirits” (Martin & Schumann 1998:4).

In Summary:

The world has become smaller and the different cultures of the world have been

brought into contact with each other. Yet within the global village, with its different cultures, there is a certain dominant cultural tendency, which coincides with the ideological tendency of the global village. This cultural domination was the result of availability of the necessary communications and media technology and the economic means to develop the technology as well as to mass produce media products which can then be sold internationally.

The trans-national companies who were producing internationally also embarked on a global campaign to advertise their products globally.

This dominant cultural tendency could be seen as cultural imperialism and United Nations realised this tendency and therefore a commission was established to make a few recommendations to prevent this from happening. Yet these recommendations came at a time when national governments were losing their power to the economic process of the global village and therefore could never really be implemented.

I am not saying that there is a homogeneous global culture, but what I am saying is that there is a global cultural tendency. Each individual culture responds in its own unique way to the global visual code that is dominated by the media giants.

Conclusion:

The global village does not have a homogeneous culture, but what one could argue is that there is an ideological visual cultural code developing which is promoted by the media giants of our time. These media giants have the necessary technology as well as the necessary funds with which to export their visual code throughout the globe.

This visual code is made up of:

- International news is dominated by certain News Giants so that in some countries people are informed about their own country through the eyes of foreign News agencies.
- International advertising, which is dominated by those who can afford to produce international advertisements, namely the trans-national corporations. They do not only advertise their product, but also an ideology which sells their product.
- Feature films, sit-coms and soap operas, which are translated and shown throughout the globe.

Each country within the global village then responds in a unique way to this global cultural visual code. Within the global village there is a dominant cultural visual code, but each culture responds to this code in their own way. For many living, on the margins of the global village they need to reconcile their daily reality of poverty

with the global cultural visual code of Californian wealth that they see on television. In this sense the global visual code emphasises the fragmentation of the globe.

Summary: Unpacking the story of the global village

In this section I have tried to describe and interpret the story of the global village, by unpacking the dominant story namely the economic story of the development of the global village.

Early markets: In the early beginnings many communities existed without markets and there where markets did arise they were under the control of *Oikonomia* (economy of the home) and embedded within the community and social relations of reciprocity. Yet already in these early days there was the emergence of foreign markets where the focus was on luxury items and military resources.

Capital markets: The three market mechanism: labour, land and money (capital) can each be exploited if the national government does not have certain laws in place to protect the land and the labourer from the mechanism of the market. In most of the former Western European countries these social laws were in place and strong social-security systems protected the individuals from exploitation by the market.

Trans-national capital markets and finance markets: the final stage in the development of the world capitalist order – the market of the global village can be summarised in three phases. The first phase was when the capital markets became trans-national. It was in this phase that various international institutions arose. The second phase was the emergence of financial markets and the trade in money. The third phase was the trans-national companies competing internationally for the best (cheapest) production sites because of pressure from the finance markets.

If one looks at the development of the market of the global village it is a story where economics gain more and more power over politics and the market moved further and further away from the community it is meant to serve. It is a story of fragmentation as economics is separated from the rest of society and has a life of its own. This separation between economics and the rest of social life has drastic consequences for both villager and marginalised. In this section we only looked at stories of villagers. In the next we will also look at stories of the marginalised.

The demise of the Nation State: The national government abdicated power to the international markets of the global village. Although they only abdicated power with regards to economic decisions these economic decisions influence all spheres of social life, such as social security, government spending, tax laws, and in a certain way also government policies on numerous issues. Thereby national identity has been eroded away as individuals realise that their democratic vote has become relative to the needs

of the global economy. This is another form of fragmentation within the global village.

The global labour market: The global labour market opens up numerous opportunities for the trans-national companies to really seek the cheapest and most sufficient employees, but at the same time this situation places tremendous pressure on the labour market, as the price of labour is pushed to its lowest limit. Governments struggling with unemployment have to adapt their labour laws to attract the trans-national companies, thereby opening the doors for exploitation and minimising social-security. The top management of the companies are placed under tremendous pressure by the financial markets and the share value of their company. If the company does not perform there could be an aggressive take-over by another company. This places tremendous pressure on management as they could also lose their employment. In the global village the competition within the labour market has increased continually placing pressure on all levels of employment, thus fragmenting the market by bringing the villagers into competition with each other.

The world military power: The military power protects the economic and ideological interest of those who benefit the most from the global village. There are tremendous power imbalances within the global village. The military imbalances were seen so clearly in the USA attack on Afghanistan, where the world's super power attack one of the poorest countries in the world. Yet there are other power imbalances. There are economic discrepancies which influences global decisions, as only the economically powerful are invited to the G8 summits, who make decisions about development and global economic policies.

Food and development aid has also become a tool with which to pressurise poor countries to change their economic policies. The global village is a village characterised by power imbalance. This power imbalance is reflected in the numerous battles, wars and acts of terrorism seen throughout the globe.

The ideological media story of the global village.

The global village does not have a homogeneous culture, but what one could argue is that there is an ideological visual cultural code developing which is promoted by the media giants of our time. These media giants have the necessary technology as well as the necessary funds with which to export their visual code throughout the globe.

This visual code is made up of:

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throughout the globe.

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11. UNPACKING THE STORY OF THE FRAGMENTED AND MARGINALISED FROM THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

“In history up to the present it is certainly an empirical fact that separate individuals have, with the broadening of their activity into world-historical activity, become more and more enslaved under a power alien to them, a power which has become more and more enormous and, in the last instance, turns out to be the world market” (Marx 1845:49).

11.1 Introduction

In the process of unpacking the story of the global village I have become more and more aware that this is not the only story of the global village, but that there is another story – not as dominant, but certainly constantly present. In the previous chapter I listened to stories not of a unified world, but of a fragmented world. It is a world where people felt lost and confused. I can describe their feeling as a feeling of homelessness. Many of the villagers did not feel like villagers, but felt homeless in their fragmentation. As they did not have time to be with their families, they experienced the stresses of the workplace and many young people grow up without their parents. I also listened to the stories of those who were physically homeless, who were economically marginalised from the global village. In this section of this chapter I will unpack these stories - the stories of fragmentation, marginalisation and of homelessness in the global village.

I unpacked the story of the global village by looking at different perspectives of the story, namely the historical economic development, the world economic order, the division of labour, the demise of the nation state, the world military order and the ideological media story of the global village.

In this section I will also begin with the historical setting of the stories of fragmentation and marginalisation.

11.2 Unpacking the historical setting of the stories of marginalisation and fragmentation in the world capitalist order

In the previous section I discovered that the development of a global market economy and global finance market marginalised certain portions of the global population. Within the global economic system there are certain population groups who are ever more doomed to live in abject poverty. I will unpack the historical development of this process of marginalisation and fragmentation and I will unpack/describe the story of a divided world, namely those who live in and benefit from the global village and those who are marginalised from the village and hardly survive on the scraps of the village.

In the process of unpacking the story of the global village I will seek to describe the role which the poorer countries played in the story of a capitalist world economic order.

11.2.1 Unpacking the story of the marginalised from Bretton Woods to the end of the Cold War

By the 1960^s most of the poorer countries which were once under colonial rule have been liberated and have won their independence. Many of these independence struggles were violent with military intervention and left deep scars within these countries. These countries did not only bear the scars and the high costs of the independence wars which won them political freedom, but they also remained economically and culturally dependent on the old colonial powers.

I will give a brief outline of certain global events and how these events affected the global economy and especially changed the fate of the poorer countries.

I will focus on the 50 years between 1945 and 1990 – the years where this process of marginalisation was most visible as the poorer countries systematically became poorer and poorer and the rich became richer and richer.

11.2.1.1 Post Second World War

I have already mentioned in a previous section that Bretton Woods conference came together to solve the problems of the collapse of the liberal-economic system in 1929. In the 1930's there was rising unemployment and heavy protectionism resulted in a decline

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in world trade of 65 % in value terms between 1929 and 1933 (Hewitt 1995:40).

The Second World War destroyed Europe and Europe and the USA were in economic chaos. It was in this context that the Bretton Woods conference was held. It was an emergency meeting to solve the economic chaos that had arisen in Europe and the USA.

The Bretton Woods institutions, which arose out of the conference, did little to help the poorer countries, but were mainly there to protect and give greater freedoms to the industrialised countries. GATT, one of the results of the Bretton Wood conference, was supposed to bring about international stability for commodity prices. Yet GATT only protected the industrialised countries' interests and did very little to stabilise commodity prices, which would have helped the developing countries as they were producing numerous basic commodities.

At the same time after the Second World War the Cold War began and the foreign politics in the USA changed likewise. The hatred of Communism in the USA brought with it the conservative politics of the McCarthy era (Hewitt 1995:41).

Throughout the Cold War period the world revolved around Cold War politics and the East-West axis of the competing ideologies, namely capitalism and socialism. Everything was divided according to these lines of East-West relations and the North-South relations were marginalised or manipulated in the power struggle of the superpowers in the Cold War. In the 1960's the interest grew in the poorer countries as the South became the arena for superpower rivalry.

“.....with over 140 conflicts, costing 20 million lives, the Third World has remained an area of conflict..... in which the USA and the USSR have repeatedly been involved (Halliday, 1998, p13)” (McGrew 1995:58)

Many of these countries were struggling to gain independence from colonial power and this struggle was exploited by the superpowers in their East-West conflict.

These countries were united in their struggle for identity and their struggle to give birth to an independent nation. This unity culminated in the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The NAM started in 1955 at the Bandung conference and soon became the pressure group for the poorer countries. They struggled together to defend themselves against exploitation from the superpowers after they had freed themselves from colonial exploitation.

Out of the NAM emerged the Group of 77 (the G 77) which united the poorer countries

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into a powerful voting block at the United Nations. The strength of the G 77 was their numbers as they easily had a democratic majority in the UN. The G 77 was a democratic counterbalance to the G 7 within the United Nations who held the economic and military power in their hands. The G 77 also had a few successes within the United Nations, such as the *'Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples'*. They also tried to balance the imbalance between the rich and the poor countries through the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (McGrew 1995: 58). Developments like these brought within the United Nations a new axis in world politics, namely a North-South axis.

11.2.1.2 The Golden Years

The years between the 1950's and 1960's can be described as the golden years for development. These years can be described as a time where in the developed world there were low unemployment rates and low inflation and this lasted for about two decades. It was a time of optimism for economists and developers. It was believed that the economic system of the OECD⁶ (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries would save the world. There was great faith in modernity as the goal of all development and the road to modernity was economic growth and the trickle down effect, until the whole population benefits from the economic growth.

Economic growth is measured in Gross National Produce and therefore the GNP is the indicator of development. In these golden years the lower and middle class economies averaged higher growth rates than the OECD countries. This growth rate dropped again and at that stage the developing countries' exports were 70-90% primary commodities and 50-60% were manufactured goods. This made balance of payments very difficult (Hewitt 1995:41-42).

The developing countries realised this danger and tried to industrialise and this development gave birth to an era of import substitution industrialisation. In other words, instead of importing manufactured goods, rather develop industries which produce these previously imported goods locally. These industries were either private or government industries and some where international companies who had invested in the developing countries as part of the trans-nationalisation of the international economy. In the late 1960^s 70% of capital flows into developing countries were from investments of trans-national corporations (Hewitt 1995:42).

⁶The OECD formed in 1961. Its members are drawn from 25 developed countries, mainly from Western Europe and North America, but including Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Today the group of seven is the most powerful political and economic grouping within the OECD (Hewitt 1995:41).

The developing countries, with their poor infrastructure and often unstable political situation, were not always the first choice for international investments. In order to attract companies to invest, the governments needed to make sure that they had favourable investment conditions within their countries.

On the other hand the industrialised countries did not want products produced in the developing countries on their markets, because these products, *produced in favourable investment conditions*, lowered the prices. The industrialised countries protected their markets, thus forcing the developing countries to look locally for markets to sell their goods.

Besides these difficulties of entering the international market the developing world can not be seen as a homogeneous group.

Each developing country's process of industrialisation was very different, thus aggravating the already existing diversity amongst the developing world and fragmenting the developing countries as the competition between them increased. This competition was incensed as they competed for markets on which to sell their products that were not allowed on the developed countries markets.

Summary: The golden years of development did bring about growth, but it was not sufficient to establish social and local economic development. The reason for this was that most of the development was due to the trans-national corporations who were setting up local industries to export products. Yet these trans-national corporations' development had very little linkage to the overall economy of the country (Hewitt 1995:42).

11.2.1.3 The debt-led growth in the 1970's

The 1970's brought a new understanding of growth and development which moved away from the failed economic growth development idea of *"trickle down development"* of the previous decade. The new idea was *"Redistribution with growth"* (Hewitt 1995:46). The industrialisation in the developing countries took place mainly in the urban centres and thus brought about large scale urbanisation as people streamed into the cities in search of employment and thus agriculture was neglected. The slow industrialisation was in no way able to employ these masses of people from the rural areas. Within this context of urbanisation the United Nations' International Labour Office published its research on employment in the various countries.

This rapid urbanisation brought with it tremendous unemployment and urban poverty,

with the accompanying social problems. In these years (1970's) urban centres developed throughout the developing world, larger than the cities of the developed world, but these are urban complexes with immense social and ecological challenges. "Bombay and New Delhi are replacing Mexico city and Sao Paulo in the headlines as examples of the nightmare cities. Each already has more than 10 million people living within it, and the figure is due to double again in fewer than twenty years" (Martin & Schumann 1998:27).

The urban explosion

This is the century of the great urban explosion. In the 35 years after 1950, the number of people living in cities almost tripled, increasing by 1.25 billion. In the developed regions, it nearly doubled from 450 million to 840 million, and in the developing world it quadrupled, from 285 million to 1.15 billion.

In the past 60 years the developing world's urban population increased tenfold, from around 100 million in 1920 to close to 1 billion in 1980. Meanwhile, its rural population more than doubled.

- In 1940 only one person in eight lived in an urban centre, and about one in 100 lived in a city with a million or more inhabitants.
- In 1960 more than one person in five lived in an urban centre, and one in 16 in a city with a million or more.
- In 1980 nearly one person in three was an urban dweller, and one in 10 living in a city with a million or more.

The population of many of sub-Sahara Africa's larger cities increased more than sevenfold between 1950-1980, for example Nairobi, Dares Salaam, Nouakchott, Lusaka, Lagos and Kinshasa. During these same 30 years populations in several other Third World cities – Seoul, Baghdad, Dhaka, Amman, Bombay, Jakarta, Mexico City, Manila, São Paulo, Bogotá and Managua – tripled or quadrupled. Immigration has usually contributed more to their growth than natural increase. This growth has been far beyond anything imagined only a few decades ago and at a pace that is without historic precedent (UNDP, 1980 (Hewitt 1995:47).

From these statistics it is clearly seen that the crisis of the developing world is an urban crisis. The urban complexes have to come up with new ideas of how to handle the social problems that necessarily come with the population explosion. In trying to alleviate the problem of unemployment the developing countries had to shift their development emphasis to labour intensive technologies and development. Growth with employment was sought to counter the social problems that were growing in the urban complexes.

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This constant process of urbanisation was aggravated when in the 1970's the free convertibility of the US\$ to gold at fixed rates was suspended. This had important financial ramifications for the developing countries, since this suspension was linked to the growing structural crisis in the OECD countries. The OECD countries, who were the strong supporters of the ideology of free trade, were now protecting their markets more and more from cheaper products coming in from the developing world and thereby bridging all GATT agreements (Hewitt 1995:48).

The oil producing countries (OPEC) started flexing their oil power muscles in 1973 when the first oil crisis fuelled the already tense situation. Oil prices remained high after the sharp increase in 1973 and this led to growth in the oil producing countries.

While the increased oil prices brought with it increased growth in the OPEC countries, it added to the economic recession in the OECD countries. This slow growth in the OECD countries and consequently the low demand for credit together with the surplus profits from the oil in the OPEC countries caused a surplus of capital that needed to be invested somewhere. The commercial banks thus turned their attention to the developing countries to lend them money. The OPEC countries also made money available to the developing countries through what was called the Euro dollar (oil dollars deposited in private European banks)(Hewitt 1995:49).

This surplus money forced the interest rates down, thus an ideal time for taking up credits. The developing countries on the other hand were struggling economically because:

- 1) they were losing export markets in the OECD countries as these were protecting their markets and
- 2) the import costs rose.

The developing countries thus eagerly accepted these loans at very low interest rates which the various banks were offering them.

They got capital at very low interest rates, until the OECD countries started to adjust to the recession. One of these adjustments was to increase the interest rates which had terrible consequences for the developing countries.

11.2.1.4 The 1980's

Story: Kabula Mboje and the debt trap in Tanzania

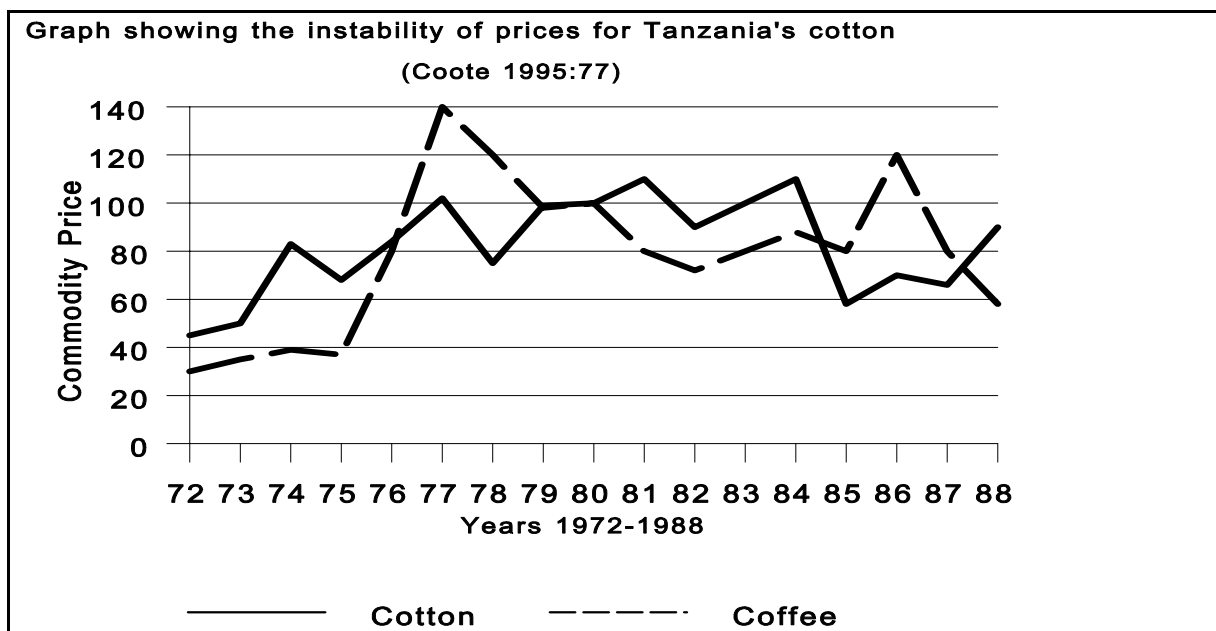
We meet Kabula Mboje who looks at us proudly, yet with great sadness in her eyes, showing a piece of beautiful, brightly coloured cloth - kanga. This is the garment which is traditionally worn by women and men in Tanzania. "Look!" she says: "This was very cheap, yet it cost me 800 shillings, not very much less than I

earned from this year's cotton harvest". It was a bad year, but none the less she had grown enough cotton on her two-acre-plot to make 720 kangas. Kabula lives in a village called Mwabuzo, a rather scattered rural settlement in the Shinyanga region of West Central Tanzania. A fertile area of the land and until the 1940s it had been a thickly forested area, but now there are only a few baobab trees left. One can only imagine the soil erosion that has taken place in this area. The cotton harvest was over and along all the roads carts were drawn by oxen bringing in the cotton to overfilled sheds. By law each adult member of the community is required to grow at least one acre of cotton. "Cotton is the only cash crop we can grow around here," she explains. "We have to grow something for cash so that we can pay our local taxes and buy essentials such as salt, clothes and shoes". The little farming community does not really have the technical resources to produce cotton on a large scale, so they have to pay for the tractor to do the ploughing, pay for the spray of the crop and eventually pay for the transport of the cotton to the village storage sheds. Thus not much money is left if any for the essentials (Story adapted from Belinda Coote 1995:75-76).

Unpacking Kabula's story

The 1980's have been described as the worse decade for development. This decade has been described as the decade of the "debt trap". The OECD countries slowed down their economies thereby depressing commodity prices as well as the demand for commodities and this allowed interest rates to rise. In Kabula's case the price for cotton dropped internationally. The reason for this depression in the cotton prices was that the cotton market was flooded. All over the developing world people were producing cotton, trying to get into the cotton market. The reason for this over production of cotton can be found in the structural adjustment programs of the IMF and World Bank who forced over 70 countries throughout the world to produce cotton thus flooding the international markets. The cotton was exported to the OECD countries, where it is processed and then various products made from it. Now two things happened in the OECD countries:

1. Their economies slowed down and therefore the demand for primary commodities also diminished.
2. The flooded markets meant that the OECD countries could depress the prices to suit their needs (Coote 1995:77).



The above graph shows how unstable the prices for these basic commodities were and therefore making it impossible for a country such as Tanzania to plan for the coming year. The prices were totally unstable and beyond the control of the developing countries.

The 1980s was a decade in which the average real prices of commodities fell to their lowest level recorded in the twentieth century, with the exception of the Great Depression of 1932 (Coote 1995:78). For the developing countries who relied on commodity exports and borrowing money this turn about was pernicious.

“Between 1981 and 1985, this loss has been estimated at US\$ 553 billion, equivalent to 122 per cent of the total value of the commodity exports of developing countries in 1980” (Coote 1995:82). The developing countries were exporting mainly primary commodities and still needed to import advanced technology and manufactured goods. The price of manufactured goods did not drop as did the prices of primary commodities, but to the contrary they increased.

The burden of structural changes and inflation control in the industrialised countries was carried by the developing countries. The developing countries were financing these changes in the OECD countries by paying back the loans which they had borrowed at low interest rates during the years of surplus oil money, now at extremely high interest rates.

“Developing countries had to pay out more and more to service their debt while receiving less and less for their exports. As these contrasting movements aggravated their financial difficulties, commercial banks decided to stop lending

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them new money, and the result was the international debt crisis of the 1980s” (Hewitt 1995:50).

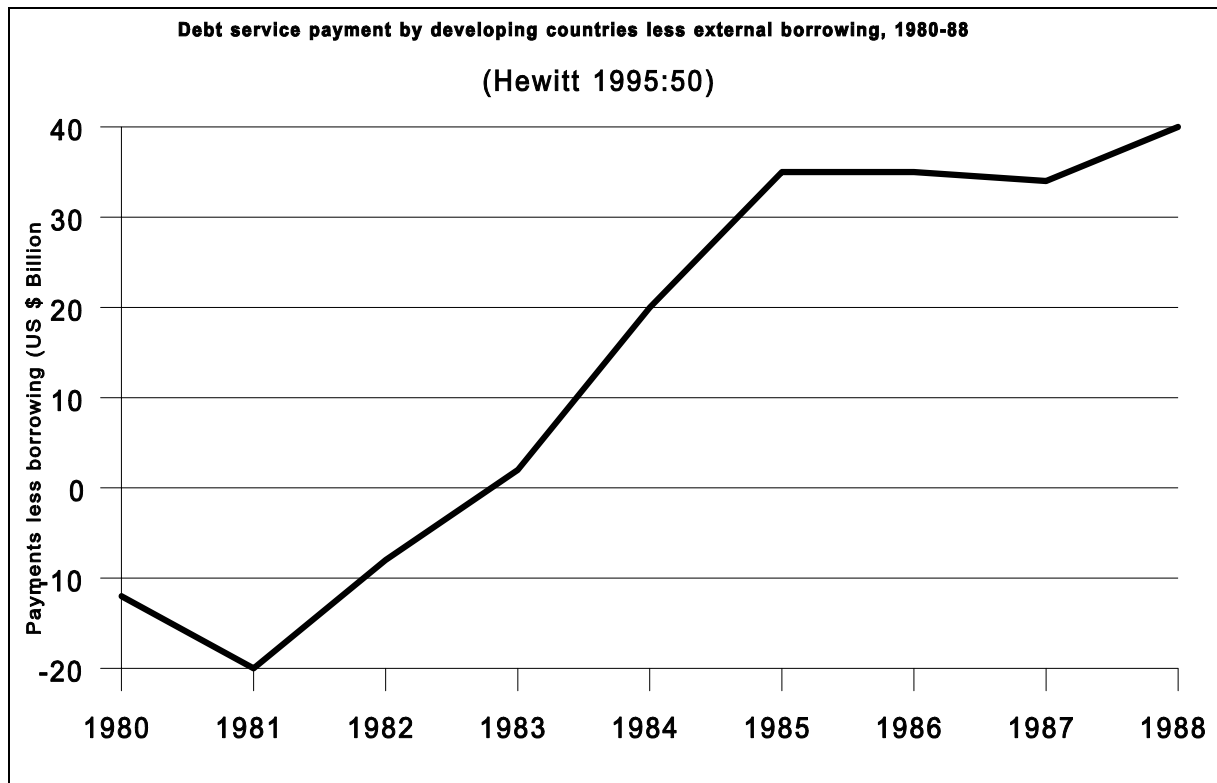
The developing countries were paying back much more in service charges than they had borrowed initially.

“From the onset of the debt crisis in 1982 through 1990 (as of this writing the last year for which complete figures are available) each and every month, for 108 months, debtor countries of the South remitted to their creditors in the North an average six billion five hundred million dollars (US\$ 6,500,000,000) in interest payments alone. If payments of principal are included in the tally, then each of the 108 months from January 1982 through December 1990 witnessed payments from debtors to creditors averaging twelve billion four hundred and fifty million dollars \$12,450,000,000)” (George 1995:188).

There are a number of reasons that led to this situation:

- Direct foreign investment declined by some two-thirds in the early the 1980’s, and there continued to be a net outflow of profits from the least developed countries.
- Non-oil commodity prices continued to decline rapidly through the 1980’s.
- Growing protectionism in the OECD further mitigated against other developing countries exports, such as auto parts, steel, electronic, textiles, petrochemicals and agricultural products. This was perhaps the greatest irony for the developing countries in the 1980s while the neo-liberal ideology of free market took firm root, its proponents – OECD countries – were making their own economies more protected, not less (Hewitt 1995:50).

“According to the OECD, between 1982 and 1990 total resource flows to developing countries amounted to \$927 billion. This sum includes the OECD categories of Official Development Finance, Export Credits and Private Flows - in other words, all official bilateral and multilateral aid, grants by private charities, trade credits plus direct private investment and bank loans. Much of this inflow was not in the form of grants but was rather new debt, on which dividends or interest will naturally come due in the future. During the same 1982-1990 period, developing countries remitted in debt service alone \$ 1345 billion (interest and principal) to the creditor countries. For a true picture of resource flows, one would have to add many other South-to-North outflows such as royalties, dividends, repatriated profits, underpaid raw materials and the like. The income-outflow difference between \$ 1345 and \$927 billion is thus a much understated \$ 418 billion in the rich countries favour” (George 1995:189).



The consequence of this was a continuous decline in developing countries, because the few industries they had developed were not allowed to sell their products on the European and USA markets. They had accumulated a lot of debt in the process of developing these industries, following the advice from the OECD countries who said that this was the way to modernity and prosperity. Now they could not balance the payments with low exports and rising imports. In the 1980's the number of least developed countries grew from 31-42 (Hewitt 1995:51). The separation between rich and poor was getting worse and worse and countries were being excluded by rising poverty.

The international institutions intervened to make sure that the creditors got their interest on the money they had given as loans. So the IMF and World Bank introduced stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes. These programmes were only aimed at short term improvements in the balance of payments and not an overall improvement in the economies of these countries.

The basics of structural adjustment programmes were: reduced public spending on social and health services as well as education and reducing the subsidies on basic foods (Hewitt 1995:51). The countries were doomed with these cut-backs in public spending and the future looked even bleaker. The countries had to focus again on agricultural products which they brought onto the market, but they had no say in the

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prices of these products. Many of these countries began to focus on cash crops as demanded by the adjustment programmes. This form of agriculture had tremendous impact on the environment and the farming communities. The farming communities produced the cash crops on every little piece of land that there was, thus having no land left to produce food for the community and therefore the little money that came in from the cash crops had to be spent on importing basic foods. The downward spiral began.

11.2.1.5 The poorer countries and their attempt to restructure the global order

Both NAM and G 77 did not only try to counteract superpower dominance, but also sought to remove the numerous barriers that stood in the way of development in the poorer countries.

“This translated into a desire to restructure the institutions, relationships and mechanisms which governed the world capitalist economy in which, for historical reasons these states were inescapably embedded” (McGrew 1995:59).

Within the system there were inbuilt inequalities that stood in the way of effective development in the poorer countries. The systems that were in place to regulate trade, finances and technology of the capitalist world order are: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These three institutions had the needs of the industrialised countries at heart and not the needs of the poorer developing countries. These institutions were viewed by many poorer countries with suspicion as they tended to reinforce the structures of economic dependency with regards to the relationship between the poorer countries and the affluent countries of the North (McGrew 1995:59).

The G 77 had some achievements in the beginning with regards to the revisions to the GATT agreement in 1964. When some of the poorer countries discovered oil, this gave them a new sense of power within the global economic order, but at the same time it split the block of poorer countries into those who produced oil and those that needed oil. There were two other splits as well:

- 1) Between the newly industrialised countries and the still poorer countries.
- 2) The rise of Islamic fundamentalism brought about another split in this group.

The majority block began to vaporise together with the economic recession in the early 1980's and the process of restructuring, debt and recession seemed to seal the fate of the poorer countries. Then finally the end of the Cold War also changed the fate of the poorer countries as they were no longer of interest in the battle between East and West (McGrew 1995:60).

Some facts of an economically fragmented world

“A Total of 258 people own as much wealth as 2.5 billion people own together – nearly half the world’s population” (Martin & Schumann 1998: 23).

The living standard of an average USA citizen is 240 times higher than that of a person living in Nepal, and the German living standard is 140 times higher than that of a person living in Nepal (Mendt 2002:42).

The industrialised countries use three quarters of the world’s energy and produce 80% of all the lethal waste products. A North American burdens the world’s environment 280 times more than somebody from Nepal (Kessler 2002:2).

The wealth of the three richest people on earth is more than the Gross National Product of 48 of the world’s poorest countries (Kessler 2002:3).

In the world there are 514 Multi-million Dollar Millionaires. 276 of these millionaires live in the USA, 115 of them are in Europe, 77 live in Asia, and 14 are from the Middle East, or the previous communist countries or Africa (Kessler 2002: 3).

“The wealthiest fifth of nation’s dispose of 84.7 per cent of the world’s combined GNP; its citizens account for 84.2 per cent of the world trade and possess 85.5 per cent of savings in domestic accounts. Since 1960 the gap between the richest and the poorest fifth of nations has more than doubled –“ (Martin & Schumann 1998:29).

“The most affluent 20 per cent of countries use up 85 per cent of the world’s timber, 75 per cent of processed metals, and 70 per cent of energy” (Martin & Schumann 1998:29).

“The intensification of processes of globalization in the 1980s has had profound effects within the Third World. In the economic sphere, the aggressive restructuring of global capitalism the emergence of new international division of labour, the integration of financial and the growing power of multinational capital have fostered deeper division and conflict within the Third World while simultaneously widening the North-South ‘gap’” (McGrew 1995:69).

Summary: The story of marginalisation and fragmentation of the developing world can be described in various phases. The first phase was the era of liberation from the colonial powers. This was a phase of struggle which was very often embedded in cold-war politics. The second phase was a phase of optimism where the story of modernity had reached its peak and there was confidence that through economic development the social and economic discrepancies would be solved. The third phase began when the developed world went into recession when the gold dollar standard was abandoned. It was during this time that some of the developing

countries discovered oil and this plunged them into new found wealth. This “oil money” was invested in international banks. At the same time the economies of the developed world slowed down, therefore there was little demand for credit from the developed world in other words the international banks had surplus money. This surplus money was offered to the developing world at very low interest rates. The developing countries took these loans and when the economies of the developed world tried to recover by raising the interest rates the developing world was soon caught in the ‘debt trap’. They tried to unite in a democratic power with the G 77 and had a few achievements. Yet the G 77 was tearing apart because of different rates of development of the developing world and religious differences between the countries, especially the Islamic countries.

The story of the developing world is truly a story of marginalisation and fragmentation within the setting of the world economic order.

Conclusion: In the process of globalisation the developing world was marginalised from the very beginning, although there were moments within their story, but the dominant theme in this story is systematic marginalisation and exclusion. The developing world does not really have much say in the major economic decisions that are made which will influence the globe as these decisions are taken by the developed countries. The fact that the USA refuses to sign the Kyoto agreement is an expression of the power imbalance between the villagers and those marginalised from the village.

11.3 Unpacking the story of fragmentation and marginalisation - the division of labour

Story: Jesús Conzález

Jesús Conzález was a man who had slaved hard for years to get a position within the company as an electrician with regular income and some security for him and his family. He was employed in the Mexican motor vehicle industry. He worked in a factory which assembled shock absorbers for motorcycles and tractors. Then Mexico went through one crisis after the other, first the currency crisis, then trade and finally the whole national economy fell. The factory in which Jesús was working went bankrupt. Today we meet Jesús, 39 years old with a family, sitting by the road side on the pavement of a noisy dirty Avenida San José in the centre of Mexico City. He sits on an old metal crate and advertises his trade –“electricista” hand written on a piece of cardboard (adapted from Martin & Schumann 1998:139).

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The losers of this process of globalization are the unskilled labourers and the unemployed - all those who lost their jobs because of downsizing, etcetera. IMF president, Michel Camdessus, warns that there are poor countries which did not have a connection to this process of globalization and will be marginalised more and more (Spiegel 1996:95). Countries which have nothing to offer, no products to sell and even less money with which to buy products will be excluded from the global economy. The contact between rich and poor will be lost as the law of profit drives the rich further and further away from the poor. This is not just a gap between rich countries and the poorest countries in the world, but it is a gap that is growing within the countries themselves and even in single cities. In USA the middle class is disappearing. In the industrialised countries more than 30 million people are unemployed (Spiegel 1996:95).

Story: VB-dialog

At VB-dialog the direct banking subsidiary of the Bavarian Vereinsbank, the pay scale negotiated with the unions no longer holds. Instead of the usual 23 to 30 Marks, the pay is only 16 Marks an hour, little more than what is paid in the cleaning trade. The big Munich bank saves on holiday money for new employees, as well as on the Christmas bonus, and it requires staff to be prepared to work at any time of the day or night, including weekends, with no extra pay” (Martin & Schumann 1998:98). “In a study of the plans of fifty leading banks around the world, they forecast that half of all the people currently employed in the money business will lose their jobs in the next ten years (Martin & Schumann 1998:99).

There will be an ever growing population of working poor – people who have jobs but the wages have been forced so low that they can hardly survive with the pay they receive.

The finance markets are very volatile and this volatility influences millions of lives. When the word was out that in the Asian countries there had been some bad investments the whole market came down and the result was that 1.5 million people in Indonesia lost their work. The loss on the margins of the village is much greater than the loss of those speculating on the markets (Kessler 2002:3).

The social security systems (medical aids, etcetera) of countries will crumble away as the pressure increases. These trends are visible in South Africa with the ever rising costs of medical aids, while they pay out less and less. How long will they be able to continue and how long will people and employers be able to afford medical aids? More and more hours and work is demanded for the same salary (Chapter Three: 3.2.3). Less and less people are employed to do the same and more work. The global market

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pressures that are being felt in South Africa are aggravated by the process of affirmative action thus creating immense pressure at the work place. This pressure of the global economy affects the family life and society at large (Chapter Three: 3.2.3). This global market has pressurised the local firms to reduce the wages as seen in the story of VB-Dialog. The local companies, to be able to compete on the money markets, need to reduce their labour costs. "In 1995 four-fifths of all male employees and workers in the United States earned 11 percent less an hour in real terms than they did in 1973" (Martin & Schumann 1998:117). These same companies, who reduced their labour costs, are the companies who are earning record profits and doing extremely well on the money markets. "...between 1973 and 1994 per capita GNP in the United States grew by a full third in real terms. At the same time, for the three quarters of the working population that have no managerial or supervisory responsibility, average gross wages fell to 19 per cent less than they earned twenty years ago" (Martin & Schumann 1998:118).

Story: Jürgen Schrempp and Daimler-Benz

Jürgen Schrempp took over Daimler-Benz in May 1995. The previous year was not the best financial year as the company lost 6 Million Deutsch Marks. Schrempp responded to the losses by closing down the AEG division as well as the aircraft manufacturer Fokker and together with this closing down came the announcement that 56,000 staff members would lose their jobs within the next three years. This loss in employment for thousands of workers was good news to the markets and the Daimler shares soared to new heights with a 20 percent increase. The company was soon 10 billion Marks better off, although it could no longer 'afford' the 56,000 employees. Jürgen Schrempp was a man who was seen by his own staff as a failure, but by the Wall Street Journal and Business Week he was hailed as a revolutionary who was breaking up Germany's cosy employer-employee relations and reorganizing the company around shareholder interests (Adapted from Martin & Schumann 1998:130).

It is rather ironic that after the fall of communism and the end of the cold war the words of Karl Marx are so true. He was speaking at the First International in London when he said: "The general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the value of labour more or less to its minimum limit" (Martin & Schumann 1998:7).

Story: Blackmail against the worker

The Viesmann boiler makers in Kassel are a highly efficient company with an

annual turnover of 1.7 billion marks with a workforce of 6500. Yet the company announced that the next gas water-heater models would be produced in the Czech Republic. The workforce in Kassel, concerned about their future, agreed (96% of the work force agreed) that they would rather work an extra three unpaid hours a week (adapted from Martin & Schumann 1998:13).

“An economic and social earthquake of unheard-of dimensions is now looming on the horizon. Whether in automobile or computer construction, chemistry or electronics, telecommunication or postal services, retail trade or finance, wherever goods or services are freely traded across borders, employees seem to be sinking inexorably into a morass of devalorization and rationalization. Just in the three years from 1991 to 1994 more than a million jobs were lost in West German industry. And Germany is still not badly off in international terms. Elsewhere in the OECD, the number of well-paid jobs shrank even faster. In 1996 more than 40 million people in the OECD countries are looking in vain for work” (Martin & Schumann 1998:102).

The division of labour in the global village

- “According to the United Nations International Labour Office, just under a fifth of all employees work at wages beneath the official poverty level – ‘the working poor’” (Martin & Schumann 1998:122).
- “Germany, 1996. More than 6 million job-seekers – more than at any time since the founding of the Federal Republic – can find no secure employment. The average net income of West Germans has been declining for the past five years.”
- The leading management consultant Roland Berger estimates that at least 1.5 million additional jobs will be lost in industry alone, ‘probably including every second job in the middle management.’
- “In the next century, 20 percent of the population will suffice to keep the world economy going. ‘More manpower won’t be needed, thinks Washington SyCip. A fifth of all job-seekers will be enough to produce all the commodities and to furnish the high-values services that world society will be able to afford. This 20 percent in which ever country, will actively participate in life, earnings and consumption - to which may be added another 1 percent or so of people who, for example, have inherited a lot of money. And the rest? Will 80 percent of those willing to work be left without a job? ‘Sure’, says the American writer Jeremy Rifkin, author of the End of Work. ‘The bottom eighty per cent will have almighty problems (Martin & Schumann 1998:4-5).

“What Marxist’s argued a hundred years ago and was then absolutely wrong, is today a reality. The capitalists are becoming richer and richer, while the working class is being impoverished.’ Global competition is putting ‘people through the mill’ and destroying the cohesiveness of society”(Silvio Bertolami in Martin & Schumann 1998:123).

In summary: the story of fragmentation and marginalisation within the context of the global labour market is a story where the world is not divided into rich and poor countries, but where the global labour market is fragmented as the competition rises for the employment opportunities. It is not only the cheap labour that is affected, but this cuts through the whole spectrum of society, even management positions are affected by this global competition. Those who are out of the labour market, in other words not economically active, are pushed to the margins.

Conclusion: The labour market in the global village fragments the village into villagers and those marginalised from the village, in other words the unemployed who do not have a place in the village. In Chapter Three (3.3.1) the story of the homeless community was told as a story of persons who had lost their employment and thus were ostracised to the pavements of the global village. The fragmentation is not only between those who have employment and those who don’t, but also amongst the villagers themselves as those with employment continuously live in fear of losing their employment. This fear is also exploited by the companies to demand overtime without pay. This fear fragments the villagers as they live in competition with each other, but also their families, as very little time is left for family life (Chapter Three: 3.2.3).

11.4 Unpacking the story of fragmentation and marginalisation - the demise of the nation state

I have shown the demise of the nation state within the global village as even the powerful governments of the world have handed over control of the economy to the market. These governments did this willingly and knowingly with the various policies that they implemented such as the de-regulation of the market.

In the developing world the governments have always been vulnerable to external forces as they continuously had to adapt to external pressures. “The permeability of all nation states to trans-national forces, combined with growing interdependencies, has eroded the scope of any state to pursue autonomous foreign and domestic policies”

(McGrew 1995:65).

The demise of the nation state cannot only be seen as a consequence of the de-regulation of the market, but also needs to be seen as a social reality caused by mass unemployment and poverty. These social challenges need to be taken into consideration as they make countries ungovernable.

“My thesis in this respect is that the polarization produced by ‘really existing capitalism’ creates in the peripheries such dramatic conditions at all levels (economic: growing poverty; social: massive marginalization; cultural: frustration, etc) that makes democratic rule almost impossible. Therefore I do not accept this fashionable idea of today that ‘market’ (read, capitalism) generates (for needs) democracy. No really existing capitalism needs autocratic powers in the peripheries. That is after all the lesson of history. Democracy appears here, in a truncated and weak version, from time to time (as in the case now) as an expression of the crisis of autocracy, its failure to deliver, rather than an objective need of the system. In that sense autocracy in the peripheries is not a ‘vestige of the past’ but a consequence of the modernization operating in the frame of global polarization of wealth and power” (Amin 1997:22).

These social conditions of fragmentation break down the democratic processes within the nation state. Together with the demise of the nation state I would add the instability within the nation states.

11.4.1 The instability within the nation state.

The global village with one international money market and labour market places such pressure on the individual employee that it causes the social fabric of society to tear apart. This pressure is affecting those jobs which previously were seen as stable jobs, for example engineers who now are continuously under performance pressure. As soon as their performance ratings are down their position is threatened. This pressure is brought back into the home and affects family life.

Employees are living in the continuous fear of losing their jobs and this creates an atmosphere of insecurity and a feeling of hopelessness with regards to the future.

“Insecurity and fear for the future are spreading; the social fabric is tearing apart” (Martin & Schumann 1998:103).

These limited employment opportunities as well as the economic instability adds to the

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feeling of insecurity which again fuels various other fears. Although the global village has united the whole world there are cultural and ethnic tensions which have been rising in the past few years which are fragmenting the world.

“It is not the really destitute who are rebelling; rather, it is the fear of losing position - a fear now sweeping the middle layers of society - which is politically explosive to an incalculable degree. Not poverty but fear of poverty is the danger to democracy” (Martin & Schumann 1998:11).

It is this fear that is fragmenting a society as everybody becomes a threat to everybody else and fear becomes a dominant story.

“The attack on the whole middle class is fresh kindling for a fire that has already swallowed up large parts of the world’s leading society. Unresolved racial conflicts, well-known drug problems, equally well known crime rates, the collapse of once – famous high schools where teachers work for a wage that not even a home-help would accept in Germany. There seems no end to the disintegration, and so the revolution of those at the top continues against those at the bottom” (Martin & Schumann 1998:169).

This fear will be translated into all sorts of social ills and problems. As the competition rises so will the fear and as consequence also the violence potential. The amount of violence is seen in the rise of violent crime, family murders and road rage.

“Canada and Belgium are hamstrung by the quarrel between their linguistic groups. In the United States, whose waves of immigrants long ago accepted a common national language, millions of Hispanics down to the second and third generation now reject English. Tribalism is everywhere gaining strength, and in many regions it threatens to slide into violent nationalism or regional chauvinism” (Martin & Schumann 1998:25).

The conflict potential is rising no longer between countries, but within countries themselves and breaking down the nation state and making it ungovernable.

“Unlike the wars of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most wars in future will be fought not between but within states. In 1995 a mere two out of fifty armed conflicts around the world followed the familiar pattern: the wars between Peru and Ecuador, and Lebanon and Israel. Yet the new conflicts within national boundaries receive little international attention. In South Africa, for instance, 17,000 people lost their lives through acts of violence in the year following the end of apartheid - more than during the thirty years of armed struggle against

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apartheid”(Martin& Schumann 1998:25).

Together with Rwanda, Burundi, and Zaire, other African countries are becoming the epitome of racial and civil war. Since 95 percent of world population increase is concentrated in the poorest regions, the question is hardly whether there will be new wars, but rather what they will be like and who will fight whom.

Those in authority and in positions of government are helpless in the face of these global tendencies so they shift the blame and seek scapegoats.

“It is not we but foreign competition that is to blame - every second news broadcast says as much from the mouths of those who are supposed to defend the citizens’ interests. From this (economically false) argument, it is but a short step to open hostility towards everything foreign. For a long time now, millions of newly insecure middle-class citizens have been seeking salvation in xenophobia, separatism and disconnection from the world market. The excluded are responding with exclusion” (Martin & Schumann 1998:10).

In a time where the future is continuously threatened there is a need to place the blame somewhere and the obvious place for the blame is on the outsiders, “who are taking away the jobs”, which explains the rising xenophobia. This is a phenomenon which is becoming more and more real both in the developed world as well as in the developing world. The new radical right which is growing in Europe is just one expression of seeking to place the blame on those who are foreign. Newsweek said that it is fear of all that is foreign that is driving the new right in Europe (Schneider, T 2002:8).

In the developing world there is continuous population growth and uncontrolled urbanisation which makes governance of these urban complexes extremely difficult. The New Dehli authorities often realize first from satellite photos where their metropolis is currently growing - unplanned, uncontrolled and unauthorized” (Martin & Schumann 1998:27).

It has become clear that the story of the democratic nation state looks rather bleak unless politics again gains control over the market. The primacy of politics over economics needs to be restored. If this is not done then, although the global village through technology and communication has brought humanity together, it will soon crack-up.

Summary: Unpacking the story of fragmentation and marginalisation - the demise of the nation state

There are two factors that are a threat to democracy. The first is the demise of the

nation state as politics abdicates power to the market and the demands of the market which affects both the developing and the developed world.

Second is the social, economic and cultural impact of globalisation on the nation state which brings with it so many social challenges that the fabric of society tears apart. Society is faced with too many challenges both economic and social and the governments' hands are too tied by the market to really address these challenges nationally, thus creating a sense of insecurity and hopelessness amongst the population making governance even more difficult.

Conclusion: In the global village democracy is being threatened because the market is dictating to politics. The needs of the global market are dictating the political agenda of the national governments. In a certain sense human rights are giving way to the rights of the market, suggests economist Franz-Josef Hinkelammert (Börger 2002:20). This causes a great amount of helplessness and frustration amongst the villagers as they feel helpless and caught and thus seek scapegoats to blame. This searching for scapegoats has caused an increased xenophobia and a rise in fundamentalism, thus creating more tensions within the village and fragmenting society. The nation state is faced with numerous social, economic and political problems which it cannot really address as the political agenda is determined by the pressures of the market. This frustration is then expressed in various forms of political unrest and social instability.

11.5 Unpacking the story of marginalisation – the cultural and media story

I have looked at the media story of the global village in a previous section and in this section I will reflect on the media story of marginalisation and fragmentation.

The global village can be described as a world connected through communication and information technology. The world is connected via satellite and cable TV, but who has actually benefited from this transfer of technology?

“...the results of processes of transfer suggested, by the late 1960s, that the primary beneficiaries (of telephony, educational television and satellite communication) had been foreign manufacturers, foreign bankers and national administrative and military elites”(Hamelink 1997:70). The developing world has received all the necessary technology, but with this technology also comes the ideological influence of the exporting country.

One can actually go further and say that the introduction of the advanced “global village technology” has not resolved any of the problems, but rather been more of an obstacle

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in the path of independent and self-reliant development, as it does not really cater for the needs of the people, but rather for the needs of trans-national corporations - providing them with the necessary communication and information infrastructure so that they can broadcast their material. The globalisation of the media world in a certain sense plunders the local cultures (Scheider, N 2002:8). The local productions are too expensive to produce, so the local broadcasters import “foreign culture” which influences the local cultures, thus limiting the possibilities of developing local cultural identities.

Another aspect of the cultural fragmentation within the global village is the sense of homelessness. Yes, the world is connected and there are thousands who have exchanged their local/national job for a global job and are continuously travelling around the globe. They work in the global village, travelling on intercontinental flights from one conference facility to the next. “Lost to everyone and to themselves, the career travellers then pour out that crippling sense of emptiness and solitude which takes hold after the eighth intercontinental flight of the year. The familiar surroundings in which they take their rest are global indeed, but in the end also monotonous and unbearable” (Martin & Schumann 1998:19).

Summary: Unpacking the story of marginalisation – the media story

The global media is controlled by ever fewer media corporations and thus the world is united as it is exposed to a single visual and information code. This single visual information code marginalised local cultures and local news. CNN is broadcasted in hotels across the globe and thus the global villager is at home everywhere, but also nowhere. The culture of the global village with all its benefits is a culture of homelessness as the individual is at home nowhere, but in the abstract global village.

Conclusion: The media story of the global village is on the one hand the story of ever greater unity as the smaller media corporations are being bought up by the media giants and thus ever fewer corporations are operating globally. In the global village there is developing a single visual code which is expressed in advertising as well as in the film industry. Yet this single visual code does not achieve unity, but rather brings about fragmentation as this global visual code is incorporated into the local narratives and very often is in conflict with the local narratives. The global culture that is developing amongst the villagers who are working for the trans-national companies and thus are jetting around the globe is a culture of homelessness and fragmentation as they are at home everywhere and thus nowhere.

Summary: Unpacking the story of marginalisation and fragmentation

Unpacking the historical setting of the stories of marginalisation and fragmentation in the world capitalist order The story of economic development In the process of globalisation the developing world was marginalised from the very beginning. Although there were moments of hope within their story, the dominant theme in this story is systematic marginalisation and exclusion. The developing world does not really have much say in the major economic decisions that are made which will influence the globe as these decisions are taken by the developed countries. The fact that the USA refuses to sign the Kyoto agreement is an expression of the power imbalance between the villagers and those marginalised from the village.

The labour market in the global village fragments the village into villagers and those marginalised from the village, in other words the unemployed who do not have a place in the village. In Chapter Three (3.3.1) the story of the homeless community was told as a story of persons who had lost their employment and were thus ostracised to the pavements of the global village. The fragmentation is not only between those who have employment and those who don't, but also amongst the villagers themselves as those with employment continuously live in fear of losing their employment. This fear is also exploited by the companies to demand overtime without pay. This fear fragments the villagers as they live in competition with each other, but also their families, as very little time is left for family life (Chapter three: 3.2.3).

The demise of the nation state: In the global village democracy is being threatened because the market is dictating to politics. The needs of the global market are dictating the political agenda of the national governments. In a certain sense human rights are giving way to the rights of the market, suggests economist Franz-Josef Hinkelammert (Börger 2002:20). This causes a great amount of helplessness and frustration amongst the villagers as they feel helpless and caught and thus seek scapegoats to blame. This searching for scapegoats has caused an increased xenophobia and a rise in fundamentalism, thus creating more tensions within the village and fragmenting society. The nation state is faced with numerous social, economic and political problems which it cannot really address as the political agenda is determined by the pressures of the market. This frustration is then expressed in various forms of political unrest and social instability.

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12. INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND PERSPECTIVE: THE GLOBAL VILLAGE AS A NARRATIVE SETTING

In the first perspective of Chapter Four: “Unpacking the story of the global village”, I described the global village by telling and retelling the stories from various points of view. The first point of view could be described as the ideological story or the dominant discourse of the global village. These are the stories told by those who benefit or support the processes of globalization. The second point of view is developed from the stories of those who are marginalised from the global village namely those who feel fragmented and lost within the processes of globalization. These stories from the two differing perspectives were told under various themes, namely economic, labour and nation state. The ideological story (discourse) of the global village is a story of a unified homogeneous world, which has been united into a single entity through economic development leading to economic interdependence and the spread of information technology throughout the world linking every part to the world wide web. I also reflected on the stories of the interconnectedness of the labour market in the global village. Besides the economic and technological stories which have united the world there is also the environmental story of the survival of our planet which also unites the globe together in a basic struggle for survival. This first ideological story can be described as the visional dimension – that dimension which provides the villagers with the symbols and metaphors with which to understand and interpret reality within the global village.

Yet the personal stories of individuals, families and communities were stories not of a unified world, but stories of fragmentation and marginalisation. These stories are not stories of a unified world or of a cosy global village where everybody lives in harmony, but they are stories of homelessness - spiritual, psychological and social homelessness as well as physical homelessness. These personal individual stories are in contrast to the visional stories of the global village. These are the stories of concrete practices and realities of the rules and the roles that people enact in their daily lives as they try to

respond to their tendencies and needs.

In this section of the study I will seek to describe and understand this global narrative setting where on the one hand we have stories of unity and homogeneity and on the other hand stories of marginalisation, fragmentation and homelessness. There is a stark contrast between the ideological stories of unity, the benefits of the global village and the “*real*” stories of homelessness. I will be looking at Browning’s first pole (Browning 1991: 61) which seeks to interpret the practices of individuals within the narrative field of experience.

13. GLOBAL VILLAGE AS A NARRATIVE SETTING – A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PHENOMENON

13.1 Introduction

Before I can unpack the story of the global village as a narrative setting, I will first have to seek to understand globalization as a cultural phenomenon and thus as a possible narrative setting. In the previous section I reflected on culture in the global village, but from the media point of view. In this section I will reflect on the ‘culture’ of the global village from a sociological point of view.

I will seek to understand the global social setting in which individuals live.

The question I am seeking to understand in this section is: **“Can an individual understand him/herself (personal identity) or socially construct their reality without considering the processes of globalization?”**

13.2 Globalization and experience of self

In Chapter Two (8.3.2 Narrative understanding of self/personal identity) of the study, I reflected on the understanding of personal identity as an interaction of various narratives. The individual self understood him or herself within the setting of the narratives of the society into which she / he was born. In a world that is compressed into a global village the individual self needs to understand him/herself within this global narrative setting. The individual’s future story is no longer only dependent on the story of his / her society or nation, but is dependent on the world as a whole namely as a global village. Certain things have developed in such a way that the individual person is linked to the global story, therefore Robertson can speak of a consciousness of the world as a whole. Is the global village a symbol with which to understand oneself and one’s actions?

13.2.1 A few examples of how the individual story is connected to the global story

13.2.1.1 The global economy

The individual's economic future is dependent on the global finance markets as his or her financial security is dependent on these markets. The financial security is not only the investments of capital on the finance markets, but also the availability of employment opportunities. If the finance markets should collapse then directly and indirectly, as a result of this collapse, everybody's lives are influenced – both the global villager as well the marginalised. The inflation rate in one country is influenced by the oil prices in another country. Economically we cannot see ourselves in isolation, but need to see ourselves within the economics of the global village. Therefore the individual's economic story is set within the context of the global village's economic story.

13.2.1.2 Global military order

If atomic war should erupt, that would mean the end of the world as we know it. This possibility is a real possibility and determines the way the individual interprets his or her story of the future.

13.2.1.3 Global environmental factors

The destruction of the rain forests in South America and central Africa, the pollution of the oceans, the plundering of the natural resources and the pollution of the atmosphere are just a few of the environmental issues influencing the whole globe. The individual living in the global village is either conscious or unconscious of these issues, but it forms part of the setting in which he/she has to make a living.

13.2.1.3 Global pluralism

The compression of the globe into a global village has created a new heightened awareness of other cultures and religions. In the past an individual might have objectively been aware of the existence of other cultures and religions, but in the global village he / she is subjectively confronted with the reality of a Muslim or a Buddhist at the work place, on the school bench or on the street as an Islamic economic refugee seeks shelter. Stanley Fish call this multiculturalism "boutique multiculturalism, which is "the multiculturalism of ethnic restaurants, weekend festivals, and high profile flirtations with the other in the manner satirized by Tom Wolfe under the rubric of 'radical chic'"

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(Fish 1997:378).

The world cup fever that seized South Africa was experienced by everybody and created a world consciousness. The individual for the first time in history has to define himself/ herself within the setting of world consciousness (global consciousness) which can be described as a global field of experience.

In the last few years social scientists had become more and more aware of trans-national social processes (Kilminster 1997:257).

Martin Albrow, gave a sociological definition of globalization: "This is the process whereby the population of the world is increasingly bonded into a single society" (Albrow 1992: 248).

Albrow is not saying that the world is becoming a single unified society or that it will inevitably become one, but what he is saying is that there is a sociological process or a trend which can be identified that is bringing people closer and closer together and bonding them into a single society namely a global society.

Globalization, as a social phenomenon, forces social scientists to rethink their most fundamental category namely society. In the previous perspective the study reflected on the demise of the nation state and in the old social theories society was equated with the nation state (Scott 1997:4). If the nation state does not really exist anymore, within the global village, it forces social theory to rethink this category. In the past it was within the nation state that cultural identity and homogeneity were sought, but within the global village the state has abandoned this task to the market forces (Scott 1997:4).

"The substantive analysis which lies behind and is thought to warrant such dramatic proposals rests upon a general diagnosis of late/postmodernity which focuses not on increasing cultural homogeneity and universalism - as the theory of modernity typically did - but upon diversity and fragmentation. It is this emphasis which has drawn globalization theory into the general domain of the social theory of postmodernity" (Scott 1997:4-5).

There are differing theories with regards to globalization. Some of the theories connect globalization to modernity and others to postmodernity. I would like to agree with Robertson (Robertson 1992:53) as he argues: "I also argue that globalization is intimately related to modernity and modernization, as well as to postmodernity and postmodernization.'

I would briefly like to unpack this statement by looking at the connection to modernity and postmodernity.

13.3 Globalization and modernity

Theories which closely connect globalization to modernity see globalization as the globalizing of modernity, in other words, that a specific model of modern society is globalized, for example the ‘*American way*’ (Scott 1997:5). In the previous section I reflected on the cultural imperialism that is certainly taking place because of the dominance of certain countries with regards to media and media technology. The question is, What is it that is globalized? Is it a certain culture, for example the American way, or western culture which is globalized or is it something else which is determining global culture? Scott believes that it is not a specific culture which is being globalized, but a certain way of life. In other words there is no specific culture such as Western culture which is spreading throughout the globe, but there is a global culture that cannot be seen to be Western, or Eastern, or African, but in a sense it stand above local cultures and sees cultural diversity as something which can be marketed and sold. This culture can be seen as an economic culture which is the cultural context of the economic order of the global village. Some have described this global economic culture as consumerism.

“That ‘solution’ centres on the idea of economic culture, the ideas, values, symbols, and so on, which are more or less directly available for and implicated in economic action. While implied by Marx’s concept of commodity fetishism and even more clearly suggested by Weber’s devoting most of the last ten years of his life to the analysis of the ‘economic ethics’ of the major religious traditions, the notion of economic culture has had a surprising ring to many modern ears precisely because it puts together (again) that which had previously been analytically rendered asunder (*the materialism-idealism schism*)” (Robertson 1992:45).

It is this economic culture which is spreading around the globe as the dominant culture of the global village.

“What is being sold in all cases is the idea of selling - of consumerism - itself; the idea that the world is a market of cultural artefacts and resources from whose vast range the consumer must choose” (Scott 1997:5). Consumerism is the economic culture of the global village. A ‘good society’ is no longer determined by the public discourse or public values and standards, but by the consumer preferences.

In this sense globalization is closely related to modernity as a single economic culture has emerged which is the value context within which the economic activity of the global village can function.

13.4 Globalization and postmodernity

In modernity there was the movement from the particular to the universal. Even in social theory the particular discoveries were universalised and became universal principles. In the process of globalization there are two processes working at the same time, namely localising tendencies as well as globalizing tendencies (Scott 1997:7), thus in the global village there is a lot of room for diversity. Yet, what makes globalisation interesting is that the local tendencies come into contact with other local tendencies within the global village and this brings about the diversity of the global village. These differing local tendencies interact with each other as they become aware of each other in the global village and therefore a process of relativization begins a movement away from universalism and absolutes towards relativity, as that which once was seen as absolute within a specific local context is confronted with absolutes of a different local context and thus is questioned. In this sense globalisation and postmodernity have much in common. “An argument I have been making all along is that one of the major consequences of globalization is the relativization of ‘narratives’ “..... If one of the major features of globalization is the compression of the world, one of its main consequences is an exacerbation of collisions between civilizational, societal and communal narratives” (Robertson 1992:141).

As these narratives collide with each other they also become relative to each other which is also the story of postmodernity.

“Or, to put it in a very different way, there is an eerie relationship between postmodernist theories and the idea of postmodernity, on the one hand, and the geopolitical ‘earthquakes’ that we (the virtually global we) have recently experienced, on the other” (Robertson 1992:50).

Yet although the nation state is losing its influence, each society has its own particular situation, circumstance and story to tell and so it is not possible to place a universal model of globalization on all societies. But I will propose a way of understanding the situation of the individual as well as community within a global world and how these individuals and communities make sense of their reality with the various stories they have at their disposal. This means that the individual or community lives within the global field of experience where the converging tendencies of the global world system interact with the divergent tendencies of the specific context. There is an interaction of the global stories with the individual community stories within this field of experience. In Chapter Two of the study, personal experience was placed within the narrative context and understood within the context of various narratives, the narrative of the individual

experiencing, the narrative of the community (context) as well as the sacred narratives which run through all the stories.

Summary: The global village can certainly be seen as a narrative setting in which the individuals have to understand and interpret his/her identity and reality. There are various global realities which makes it impossible not to take globalisation into consideration, namely:

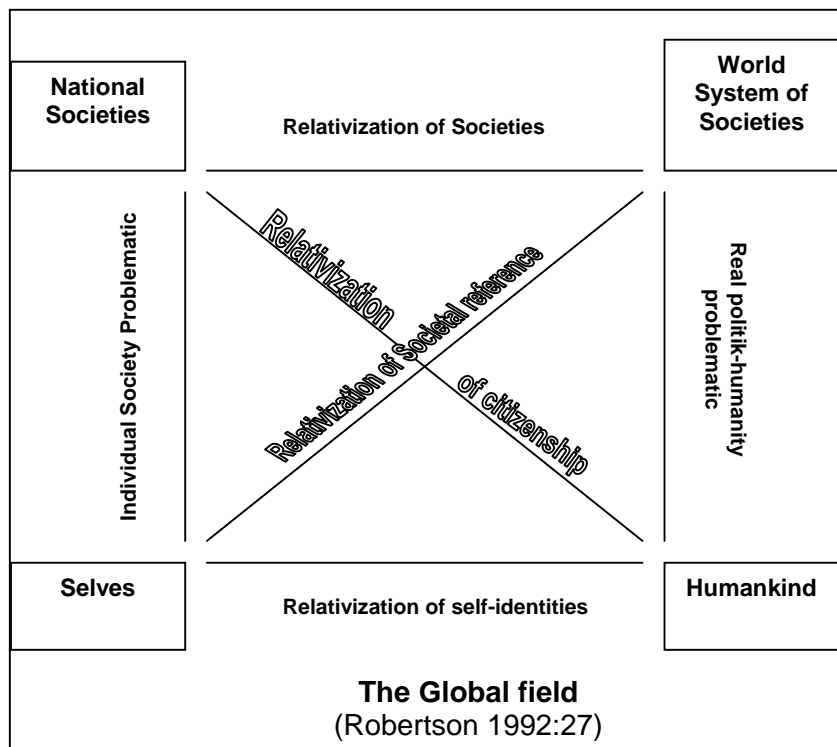
1) global economic reality, 2) global military order, 3) global environmental factors and 4) global pluralism.

14. GLOBAL FIELD OF EXPERIENCE/ GLOBAL NARRATIVE SETTING

Robertson, (Robertson 1992: 25) makes use of a model which takes four aspects (reference points) into consideration.

“These are national societies; individuals, or more basically selves; relationships between national societies, or the world system of societies; and, in the generic sense, mankind, which to avoid misunderstanding, I frequently call humankind” (Robertson 1992: 25).

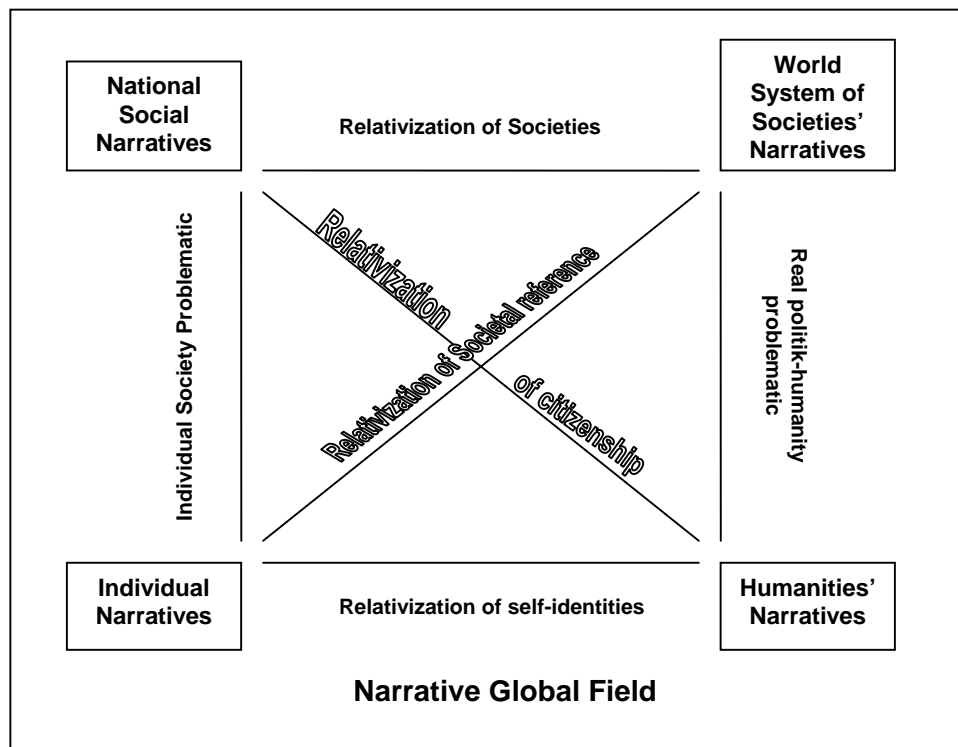
The average citizen of the globe is forced to think of the world as a whole or more specifically he/she has to relate to the global economy (Robertson 1992:26). Therefore it is important that I bring in the global field in which the individual needs to interpret his or her experiences. Robertson used this model mainly in an analytical sense for interpreting the experiences of individuals and collective communities. Below is Robertson’s model (Robertson 1992:27):



“This model gives the basic outline of what I here call the global field, but which for other purposes I call the global-human condition. The figure indicates the four major components, or reference points, of the conception of globality, the basic way in which we are able as empirically informed analysts to ‘make sense’ of globality, as well as the form in terms of which globalization has in the past few centuries actually proceeded” (Robertson 1992:27).

This model of the global field is a useful tool as it allows for the complexity of globalization and does not confine globalization to one single aspect. It creates space to describe globalization from a cultural perspective. This cultural perspective can also be understood as the narrative perspective as it is within this cultural description of globalization in which individuals and communities tell their stories, in other words where they find the resources to understand and interpret themselves as well as order their world as villagers of a global village.

I will not use Robertson’s model as an analytical tool, but will adapt his model as a possible metaphoric tool to be used to describe and understand the narrative setting in which individuals and communities makes sense of their lives within the global village. My adapted version of the **Narrative global field**:



Summary: The global narrative field of experience is a very useful tool with which to describe globalization as it does not reduce globalization to a single aspect, but understands it within various different relationships and on various levels.

15. NARRATIVE GLOBAL FIELD OF EXPERIENCE

The stories which I reflected on in Chapter Three as well as the stories reflected upon in this chapter are all stories which are consciously or unconsciously set within the global field of experience. Globalization is a reality which cannot be denied and thus needs to be taken into consideration when seeking to understand the stories that are told.

The stories I have reflected upon in this chapter are stories of individuals and of groups (companies) who are trying to interpret their reality and their lives within the global setting. The globalization process, taken from the point of view of economics and technology, can be described as a unifying story which cumulates in the global village. Yet the stories are not stories of unity, but stories of division, fragmentation and homelessness. One only needs to follow the news to become aware of rising competition in the global labour market, escalating ethnic violence in various parts of the world, an increase in fundamental groupings, an increase in far right groups and conservatives and an escalation in religious conflicts. The dominant characteristic of the

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stories told by individuals in the global village are stories of 'homelessness', which is in contrast to the dominant story of the global village itself which is a story of unity and connectedness.

I have unpacked the possible dominant themes and discourses of these fragmented and marginalised stories and I will now place these stories within a global narrative setting.

If I look at Robertson's Global field of experience I see the four main reference points (national societies, world system of societies, selves, humankind). Between these reference points I see processes of relativization which takes place as the world is brought closer together. The national society is relativised by the world systems as I have reflected on in this chapter – how the nation state is relativised by the economic world system. The individual self is relativised by having to discover him/herself within not just one culture, but the various cultures of the globe.

When Thomas Kuhn was working on his theory of paradigm shifts within scientific revolutions, Talcott Parsons (1961) was working on a similar theory with regards to cultural reorganisation. Parson's model can be described in the following way: from time to time societies are confronted with disparities between cultural models and the reality they are living in. This situation then calls for cultural reorganisation and this can be understood as a cultural paradigm shift.

If I take Parson's theory and place it into the global field of experience I can only imagine the amount of cultural reorganisation that takes place. In the global village realities do not only change at a tremendous speed because of technological development, but localised interpretations of realities are continually being confronted with other localised interpretations of realities. Each individual is born into a certain narrative setting (cultural setting) and from this setting he/she receives the narrative tools (symbols, metaphors and beliefs) by which to order, interpret and understand reality. Within the global village these local narrative settings are placed into the context of the global narrative setting, which continually challenge the local narratives with regards to the ordering, interpretation and understanding of reality.

This is a characteristic consequence of globalisation and it affects the individual living in the global village.

A possible result of this process can be that the individual no longer feels connected and at home, but rather disconnected and 'homeless' as his or her narrative setting is continually being challenged and thus relativized.

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“Insofar as [present realities] have brought us a global present without a common past [they] threaten to render all traditions and all particular past histories irrelevant” (Arendt 1957:541).

The global village is experienced not as a unity or a connected world, but as a disembedded world (Altvater & Mahnkopf 1997:306).

Therefore the story of globalisation, which essentially had economics as its main theme, has in the process affected every aspect of human life.

In the previous section of this chapter the study described the development of the economic story as the main theme of globalisation, therefore one can argue that the economic story was the dominant story (discourse) from which individuals/societies received their symbols, metaphors and beliefs by which to order their reality and justify their actions (Robertson 1992:45).

“...the idea of a self-adjusting market implied a stark utopia. Such an institution could not exist for any length of time without annihilating the human condition and natural substance of society; it would have physically destroyed man and transformed his surroundings into a wilderness. Inevitably, society took measures to protect itself, but whatever measures it took impaired the self-regulation of the market, disorganized industrial life, and thus endangered society in yet another way. It was this dilemma which forced the development of the market system into a definite groove and finally disrupted the social organization based upon it” (Polanyi 1957:3-4).

It is this story of disembeddedness that I will reflect on within the context of the global narrative setting.

This disembeddedness has its roots and origins in the economy, but filtrates into all the areas of human and social life. The economic story with the technological development brought the world together into the global village with its finance markets and global markets playing the dominant and central role. It is the development of the global and finance market that brought about this “*great transformation*” and the disembedding not only of the economy, but of all social relations

“Thus the historical process of ‘disembedding’ is indeed a ‘great transformation’ from traditional to modern relations. In place of the exchange of products, which has a very long history, all areas of human communication are taken over by forms of commodity exchange. ‘Market economization’ [Vermarktwirtschaftung] means the domination of commodity production and circulation (‘commodification’) and the subordination of all relationships to its logic” (Altvater

& Mahnkopf 1997:307).

Humanity has created this economic global village, yet this village has power over its creators. Humanity does not live as the creators of the economic system, but rather as its victim as if the current world system is understood as inevitable and everyone is forced into its mechanisms.

“These disembedded relations are human creations which, however, exercise an ‘objective compulsion’ [*Sachzwang*] over their creators” (Altvater & Mahnkopf 1997:307).

I will be reflecting on the development of these disembedded relations according to the narrative global field of experience.

15.1 The disembedded narratives of national societies

In the previous section of this chapter I reflected on the demise of the nation state as part of the story of the global village. In this section I will shortly reflect again on this demise, but from a sociological point of view as a process of disembedding within the adapted understanding of Robertson’s Global Field.

Within the global context the national society plays less and less of an important role in the social understanding of human existence. In the past the national society played a central role in traditional modern sociology, which concerned itself with the movement from *Gemeinschaft* (community) to *Gesellschaft* (Society) (Robertson 1992:11). Within the global village there now is a movement from society to globality as individuals need to understand themselves within the global context.

15.1.1 Relativisation of societies (Robertson 1992:27)

Polanyi describes the first stage of disembedding as the separation of the economy from the society (Altvater & Mahnkopf 1997:309). I have discussed this in the previous section of this chapter - the demise of the nation state, where the global markets as well as the global finance markets forced the national economies to separate from national politics. The world economic system thus relativizes the influence and power of the nation state (national societies). The nation state is disembedded within the global world order.

The nation state which in the past gave the individual a feeling of security, order and

national identity is being eroded away. The nation state within the world system of societies can no longer guarantee employment opportunities, can no longer guarantee a national identity and the global labour market has opened itself to such an extent that individuals have become global citizens. If one thinks of the many South Africans living in London, the world has opened itself up as people seek employment throughout the globe. The narratives that they brought with from South Africa for interpreting their reality are being challenged by the new narrative setting (of a new country) in which they find themselves.

15.1.2 Individual-society problematic

The implication is that the global economy is also beyond the control of democracy, thus society can no longer be held together by politics and national states, but is determined by the global market processes. Society is controlled by the dictates of the market and therefore there is no longer any strong form of cohesion which had a unifying effect on a society.

The individual and his or her democratic power is diminished by the dictates of the market and the only way that the individual can influence society is indirectly through ownership of capital. "Social participation is then possible through commodity ownership or better still through monetary wealth" (Altvater & Mahnkopf 1997:312). People feel that they are powerless and cannot do anything to change their situation or the situation of the world. Thus individuals feel disembedded from politics and the future of the world, bringing about a certain sense of hopeless and powerlessness.

Individuals are also disembedded from society as competition for employment is increased through the labour market of the global village and money creates distance between people. As the labour market gets tighter so also the feeling increases that everybody else is a possible threat as they (the other) might take the job. One very often hears, both here in South Africa and in Germany, that the foreigners are taking away our jobs and this leads to a heightened xenophobia.

15.1.3 Relativisation of citizenship

"Mass production and mass consumption, which entail rendering cultural patterns of social communication uniform, have in time created a rich cultural soil for disembedding yielding a paradox: disembedding results in a renewed embedding; the 'disenchanted world' (Max Weber) acquires a new enchantment. All this clearly does not mean a reversal of disembedding and disenchantment. On the contrary, it creates a cultural buffer which enables the effects of the

‘mechanisms of disembedding’ and the processes which they bring about to have a ‘soft landing’” (Altvater & Mahnkopf 1997:312).

Where does an individual belong to? To which cultural group and to which national society does he/she belong to? Many have become global citizens and the new ‘enchantment’ of the global village buffers this loss of citizenship or this relativization of citizenship.

15.2 The disembedded narratives of the world system of societies

The world system of societies can also be described as the economic global village. The economic global village is the system to which the world and her societies are connected to each other in a single economic system, namely the global market and the finance markets.

Money and markets have developed over the last few centuries. The story of this development has been reflected upon in the previous section of this chapter. Money has developed from a medium of communication or circulation, which obeys the laws of commodity exchange, to a medium which has a life of its own. A stage in the development of money has been reached where it has its own momentum and own life, with the only goal not to exchange, but to accumulate more money. Aristotle already made us aware of this danger where money disregards “the good of the society” and is only interested in accumulation of more money (Chapter Four: 2.1 The early beginnings of the story).

The individual self is characterised according to debt and credit.

I have described how money has been disembedded from the real economy with the financial global markets. With these financial markets there was created a hierarchy of markets: “the money market directs the goods market whose development directs the labour market, i.e. the system (and the level) of employment” (Altvater & Mahnkopf 1997:316).

“Market economies are, as the ‘monetary Keynesians’ emphasise, money economies, and money decodes their laws of movement. Thus distantiation between persons through money becomes possible, thus the economy disembeds itself from society, and thus money becomes decoupled from the real economy in order to impose its logic on the economy which in turn forces society to obey it as ‘Sachzwang’” (Altvater & Mahnkopf 1997:316).

15.3 The disembedded narratives of selves

Chapter Four: Descriptive Theology part two: Unpacking the story³⁰²

The self (personal identity) in the global village is created through various narratives: the narratives of experience, the narratives of the social context with the aid of the narrative tools of our culture and the sacred stories into which the individual is born which can be described as the narrative setting. The narrative setting is the culture into which the individual is born, or find him/herself.

“Culture is a repository of symbolic forms and social and individual experiences. It is the medium for personal, interpersonal and group exchange, expression and reception of ideas. Its mesh ties together personal ambitions and desires to a legitimate moral order and political action, authority and the economic system. Through culture, people create moral and epistemic parameters to control, yes, but also enhance their social and personal lives, in a way they can come close to and accept them as their own. It is a medium for the construction of meaning in those lives and a channel for transmitting and exchanging that meaning and knowledge - it is a ‘form of life’, yes, but also a process for creating new lives and meanings and cultures” (Gurnah 1997:126).

The narrative setting of personal identity in the global village needs to take global setting into consideration.

The global setting influences the narrative setting of the individual. This setting then forms the basis from which she/he develops his/her identity /story of self.

The narratives of this narrative setting are no longer the traditional narratives of the family or cultural group, but all the stories with which we are bombarded with over the radio, television and media in general. Regional narratives and cultural stories are exported via the communications network throughout the world, so that which once was part of the individual cultural group’s narrative setting, now becomes part of the global setting. For example “... the commercialization and therefore internationalization of regional music through radio- calypso or rhythm and blues or Congo jazz -” (Gurnah 1997:123) and thus it all becomes part of a global complex of culture. The 1960s in the USA did not, only have an influence on the USA, but had an effect throughout the global village.

Daily the individual who is exposed to the global culture complex has to re-write his/her story within this context. Images and symbols from once different worlds are brought into the living room and these symbols, images and stories challenge our stories and narrative setting and they relativize them.

Gurnah describes this challenge in the following way: “Metaphorically speaking, these

processes act through the concepts and cultural icons in such a way that later they may act rather like charged electrons in a chemical reaction. The 'charge' then enables exchange between two or more fairly 'stable' cultures when they make contact or 'touch' each other" (Gurnah 1997:128).

15.4 The disembedded narratives of humanity

"The persuasiveness of popular culture, its apparently universal appeal, stands for the existence of a global culture, one that transcends or erodes national cultures. Indeed, popular culture is held to represent more than just the spread of particular stars or products. It also symbolizes the establishment of an accompanying infrastructure. The key networks of global communication (and the industries organized around them) are those of the entertainment business" (Street 1997:75).

It is as if humanity does no longer live for itself, but lives in the lives of those that the entertainment world provides. The overwhelming response to Big Brother and all the other reality shows might be signs of this disembedded nature of humanity. We live in others and no longer in ourselves. The life of the global villager is prescribed via the entertainment world.

Summary: The narrative global field of experience is a metaphoric tool that helps us understand and interpret globalization. Globalization can be described by interpreting the various processes of relativization and disembedding between the different levels of the narrative global field of experience.

16. GLOBALISATION AND HOMELESSNESS (NOSTALGIA)

The problem of nostalgia or homelessness needs to be brought into consideration as it describes the "*lostness*" of individuals and communities in the global village. Robertson understands the relationship between Nostalgia and globalization to be: "Theorization of nostalgia is the 'flip side' of the theorization of globalization" (Robertson 1992:146).

Nostalgia as a condition can also be described as homesickness or homelessness (Robertson 1992:155). In the previous section the study reflected on the disembedding processes which are at work within the Global setting. It is exactly these disembedding processes which produce this feeling of homelessness.

Chapter Four: Descriptive Theology part two: Unpacking the story³⁰⁴

This feeling of homelessness stands in direct contrast to the ideology of the unity and small quaint homely global village. The dominant discourse of the global village is the story of unity, yet this story is a problematic story as it does not give sufficient interpretation to the experienced reality of the global village and thus clouds the story of the future. The story of the future is characterised by a feeling of *lostness* and *homelessness*. The past is no longer connected to the future. “The past no longer carries us to the future, it simply leaves us worried, without any promise that things will be different” (Nouwen 2002:15). The past and the future are for many in the global village no longer connected and this is where the problem story comes in, as communities and individual search for new meaning and interpretation that can connect the past to a future filled with hope and not a future without any hope.

Henri Nouwen describes this condition within the global village in the following way: “boredom, resentment and depression are all sentiments of disconnectedness”(Nouwen 2002:14). This disconnectedness is part of the disembedding that was described in the previous section. Nouwen continues and says that “Loneliness is without doubt one of the most widespread diseases of our time. It affects not only retired life but also family life, neighbourhood life, school life, and business life. It causes suffering not only in elderly people but also in children, teenagers and adults” (Nouwen 2002:14). The everyday practices and actions are within this context of fragmentation, of disembedding and disconnectedness, yet the dramatic resources of the global village tell a story of unity.

“The deep and seemingly unshakable melancholia that holds sway over large segments of our global village has led many in popular culture as well as the academy to talk about the world entering a postmodern era” (Harvey 1999:6).

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 (both villagers and marginalised) living in the global village is one of disembeddedness and ‘homelessness’.

17. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter 4: Describing and unpacking – the story of the past and the clouded story of the future.

Description of the terms: “Globalization”	“Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (Robertson 1992:8).
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and “Global Village”.	
Unpacking the story of the global village – globalization	The story of the global village will be unpacked from two complementary perspectives: A. The first perspective: the story of the development of the global village B. The second perspective: unpacking the global village as narrative setting
<u>The first perspective: The story of the development of the global village</u>	
Unpacking the story of the development of the global village – the world capitalist order.	After the fall of the Berlin wall and the demise of socialism there has been one dominant world economic system namely the capitalist system which can be seen as the dominant theme of the story of the development of the global village.
The early beginnings of the story	The first interpretations and descriptions of the economy and economics as well as the role of money and markets.
The early beginnings of the markets up to the middle ages.	The early markets were embedded in the communities and were part of the community life with the sole purpose to serve the community.
Mercantile markets	Mercantile markets were the first markets to be disembeeded from the community as they were national markets. These markets no longer served the needs of the community.
The capitalist market	The capitalist market developed and for the first time in history there was the process of commoditisation (land, labour, and capital). This opened the door for exploitation of these three.
The final stage in the development of the world capitalist order - the market of the global	In the world capitalist order of the global village there are two main actors, namely the global market and the global finance market. This final stage’s development can be described in three stages.

village.	
Unpacking the story of the global village – the demise of the nation state	The global market and the global finance market developed to such an extent that the nation state could no longer control these global economic processes. These global processes then started dictating to the nation states with regards to various economic policies. The relationship between economics and politics has its own story as the two battled for power. In the global village the nation state no longer has any control over the global economy and therefore the need for international institutions arose who could facilitate and regulate the global markets.
Unpacking the story of the global village – the division of labour.	The global village has opened the labour market to such an extent that labourers compete globally for wages and labour conditions. Yet in a world with such discrepancies between rich and poor this creates opportunities for absolute exploitation of the global labour market. The dictating power of the finance markets places tremendous pressure on the local companies to increase the profits. The companies in turn can only place the pressure on the weakest link in the production process, namely the labourer, thus forcing wages to the absolute minimum.
Unpacking the story of the global village – the world military order.	Not only do the global markets need protection, but also the dominant ideological discourse of the capitalist market needs to expand globally thus bringing about the global military order. This military power is not only kept in place by military weapons, but also other subtle weapons such as food and development aid.
Unpacking the story of the global village – the ideological media of the global village.	Can one speak of cultural imperialism within the global village? Ironically globalisation has brought the world into contact with the diversity of cultures, religions and world views yet one cannot ignore the role that technology plays in the interpretation of different cultures and religions. The domination of the global media, communications and information market by those who have the technology and the infrastructure in place.
Unpacking the story of the fragmented and marginalised from the global village.	There have been alternative stories to the dominant story of the global village. A story of those who have been marginalised from the global village. It is a story of fragmentation and of further marginalisation to such an extent that the global village is globally marginalising more and more communities and is bringing about greater fragmentation.

The second perspective: The global village as narrative setting.	
The global village as a narrative setting – a social and cultural phenomenon	The global village can certainly be seen as a narrative setting in which the individuals have to understand and interpret his/her identity and reality. There are various global realities which makes it impossible not to take globalisation into consideration, namely: 1) global economic reality, 2) global military order, 3) global environmental factors and 4) global pluralism.
Global field of experience/ Global narrative setting	The global narrative field of experience is a very useful tool with which to describe globalization as it does not reduce globalization to a single aspect, but understands it within various different relationships and on various levels.
Narrative global field of experience	The narrative global field of experience is a metaphoric tool that helps us to understand and interpret globalization. Globalization can be described by interpreting the various processes of relativization and disembedding between the different levels of the narrative global field of experience.
Globalization and Nostalgia	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 (both villagers and marginalised) living in the global village is one of disembeddedness and ' <i>homelessness</i> '.

18. IN CONCLUSION: DESCRIBING THE PROBLEM STORY OF THE GLOBAL VILLAGE.

I began this chapter with a description of every day life in the global village. From this description dominant characteristics were identified, although this description is only one view of the global village and the process of globalisation is a lot more complex. Through the process of unpacking the story of the development of globalisation I gained a deeper understanding of the story of globalisation or the story of the global village. One's experience of life within the global village is that the world can be seen to be connected via the economic markets and communications technology. This experience is a very dominant experience as it nearly affects most areas of life. This can be seen as the ideological visual dimension of life in the global village. Yet there is another dominant experience and that is the experience of fragmentation and homelessness. This fragmentation is experienced in various differing forms:

- The division of the world into rich and poor communities and the ever widening gap between rich and poor.
- The rise in cultural religious conflict. Most of the conflicts of the last decades have been either religious/ideological or cultural.
- The rise in genocide.
- The rise in fundamentalism
- The environmental impact on the planet.
- A general feeling of nostalgia
- A loss of values and standards.

Life in the global village is characterised by both of these experiences, fragmentation as well as unification into the global village. Yet these are conflicting experiences I sought to unpack the story of the global village to gain a deeper understanding of these conflicting experiences. One of the characterising experiences in the global village is that of fragmentation and nostalgia or homelessness. To get a better understanding of these experiences, or to get a deeper understanding of the problem story, I needed to unpack the story of the global village. In this chapter I tried to develop a fuller understanding of the global village and I did this by looking at the development of globalization from two perspectives: the one, a more modern perspective looking at the development of the global village; the other a postmodern perspective looking at the global condition, the global setting in which individuals and societies find themselves.

The story of the development of the global village looked at the driving mechanisms behind the development of a global village. The dominant story in this development was the world economic order which acted as a driving force bringing the world economically and technologically closer and closer together. The economic story thus provided the global village with the necessary symbols, metaphors and narrative resources by which to justify the unity and connectedness of the global village. So, economically the world is connected and united into a global village, yet the daily experience is not that of connection or of unity, but rather of fragmentation and homelessness.

I also discovered that the story of fragmentation, especially economic fragmentation (division into rich and poor), is a direct consequence of the economic story of the global village and that in a certain sense the economic story of unity and connectedness is an ideological story (discourse) which offers insufficient narrative tools with which to make sense of perceived reality in the 'global village'. In Chapter One of the study I reflected upon the villagers and the marginalised and that these two groups have differing challenges. After unpacking the story of the global village these two are brought closer together, as the villagers (being those who directly economically benefit from the global

Chapter Four: Descriptive Theology part two: Unpacking the story³⁰⁹

village) and the marginalised (those excluded from the economic benefits of the global village) are both experiencing a sense of homelessness – the villager's experience an emotional/spiritual homelessness and the marginalised, a physical homelessness.

The second perspective then placed this experience of homelessness into a global narrative setting thereby giving a fuller description to the story of homelessness within the global village.

“Rather, I am insisting that both the economics and the culture of the global scene should be analytically connected to the general structural and actional features of the global field” (Robertson 1992:51).

I will bring the problem story, which has its root in the clash between the experienced reality and the visional level of the global village to the classic texts of the Christian tradition and seek new creative resources to interpret the practices and the reality of the context of the faith community.

In the next chapter I will seek alternative narratives and narrative resources (symbols, metaphors) within which the challenges of the global village can be faced. I will look at certain ‘*unique outcomes*’ by looking at communities that have created space for individuals to find alternative narrative resources with which to re-interpret their problem story of fragmentation and homelessness as a story of hope and belonging. These ‘*unique outcomes*’ are based on the redemptive outcome of the story of Christ and therefore they become ‘*redemptive outcomes*.’

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 time¹. Then there are numerous others who see

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 (both 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

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 state⁵ 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).

⁵ Chapter Four: 6. Unpacking the story of the global village – the demise of the nation state 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” (Potreat 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).

⁶ Refer to 2.3.1 The 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 disembedded⁷ 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

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.

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 loses 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 *postmodern 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 (Giddens 1991:9).

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 Two¹⁰ 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

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 standpoint 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).

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 prey 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 delegitimizes 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 CHURCH 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 modernity¹² 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.

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 cultureAs 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

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

to the attempt to make Christianity “true” apart from 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-believer – 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 Descartes¹⁴ 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 *history* 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

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 God¹⁵”(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

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 outlive 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

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

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

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 antiqua*. 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

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

¹⁸ Refer back to 2.3.1 The 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 fourth 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 Pragmatic theology as one response of the church to the postmodern

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 relevance¹⁹. 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

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 truth²⁰. 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

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

political forms²¹ 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

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 were 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 *postmodern 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*

Het communisme is kapot
 De idealen
 Zijn verraden
 En God is dakloos
 Want elke kerk
 Wordt hier verbouwd
 Tot een teater (Bos 1995)

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 study²².

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 questions²³

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?

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 village²⁴

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

²⁴ These questions are taken from Chapter Two: A Theological orientation in a postmodern world as well as Chapter Three: Descriptive 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 dismantled 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.

HISTORICAL AND SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY: DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE SACRED TEXTS AND THE QUESTIONS RAISED IN DESCRIPTIVE THEOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL AND SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

After the completion of the first step of theology, namely descriptive theology, the theological journey now inevitably needs to turn towards the sacred/ normative texts and the monuments of the Christian faith. Browning argues that historical theology becomes the heart of the hermeneutical process, “but it is now understood as putting the questions emerging from theory-laden practices to the central texts and monuments of the Christian faith” (Browning 1991:49). “Historical theology asks, What do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis when they are confronted as honestly as possible?” (Browning 1991:49) This dialogue between the questions from the theory-laden practices and the central texts and thoughts of the Christian faith is a process that can be described as systematic theology. Browning sees the process of systematic theology to be guided by two fundamental questions as already referred to in Chapter Two (12.2.2.1 The Four Movements):

1. What new horizon of meaning is fused when questions from the present practices are brought to the central Christian witness?
2. What reason can be advanced to support the validity claims of this new fusion of meaning? (Browning 1991:51-52).

I will seek to be in a critical and honest dialogue with the normative texts as well as the effective history of these texts in the tradition of theology, bringing the questions raised in the previous chapters to these texts. The historical texts will be understood and brought into the dialogue through the hermeneutical and exegetical process.

At the end of Chapter Five the question that summarised all the questions into one was: **“What kind of church, which finds itself within a 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 both of the villagers and the marginalised, when this ethical and pastoral task is made rather difficult in a postmodern context?”**

It is this question that will guide the historical and systematic theological journey of this chapter.

In the previous chapter I described and reflected on the connection between postmodernity and globalization which together form what I call the *postmodern global village*. In this chapter I will return to the narrative understanding of theology, which I discussed in Chapter Two (10. Narrative theological response to postmodernity), as the proposed theological orientation of this study, as a response to the postmodern

context. I will also be reflecting on the community formed (created) by the Christian narrative (language) as a possible response to the globalization of the global village.

1.1 The basic outline of this chapter

The guiding question can be divided into two parts.

The first part seeks to understand what kind of church could adequately respond to the *postmodern global village* from a South African perspective within a narrative theological orientation.

The second part seeks to understand the ethical pastoral action of the church, which is based on truth and authority, within a postmodern context. I will begin this chapter on historical systematic theology by seeking to respond to the second part of the question first. This is the question that concerns itself with the postmodern context which makes ethical and pastoral work difficult.

I would like to address this question first as it is a question that challenges the process of historical theology, because: How can one enter into dialogue with the historical texts and a tradition if the question of relativity and authority has not been clarified? This will form the first part of this chapter: **Historic theology in a *postmodern global village***

I have already partly responded to this question in Chapter Two, where I proposed a narrative theological orientation as an appropriate response to the challenges of postmodernity therefore I will not be repeating what I reflected on and described in Chapter Two, but I will bring into the argument the understanding of the Gospel as a narrative truth.

Truth and authority within a narrative orientation are always embedded in specific communities and therefore once I have clarified the question of the truth of the Gospel I will turn to the church as the community created by the narrative truth of the Gospel. This then leads to the first part of the question regarding the kind of church which could adequately respond to the challenges of the global village. I would like to reformulate this question: Is the community created by the truth of the Gospel an appropriate community equipped to respond to the challenges of the *postmodern global village*?

Question one: How can the church enter into dialogue with the historical texts and a tradition if the question of relativity and authority has not been clarified <i>which would make the ethical and pastoral task of the church rather difficult in a postmodern context?</i>	
2.	Historical Theology in a <i>postmodern global village</i>
Question two: What kind of church, which finds itself within the postmodern, urban, South African context 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?	
3.	Introduction to the question

4.	The context of the Biblical story of God's fellowship in history
5.	Introduction to the journey of describing the church
6.	The dimensions within which the church needs to describe her identity
7.	The relationships which are integral to the church's identity
8.	The story of Christ as the church's narrative
9.	The story of the early church's identity
10.	Fusion of horizons – the questions from the theory-laden practices and historical theology: – a systematic theological journey
11.	Conclusion of the historical and systematic theological story

QUESTION ONE: HOW CAN THE CHURCH ENTER INTO DIALOGUE WITH THE HISTORICAL TEXTS AND A TRADITION IF THE QUESTION OF RELATIVITY AND AUTHORITY HAS NOT BEEN CLARIFIED?

2. HISTORICAL THEOLOGY IN A *POSTMODERN GLOBAL VILLAGE*

I will now be looking at the church and how the church is equipped to respond to the challenges of the *postmodern global village*. This part of the question is specifically concerned with the postmodern context, "...when this ethical and pastoral task is made rather difficult in a postmodern context?"

In this first section of this chapter I will seek to respond to the following questions mentioned in Chapter Five (3.4: The Core Questions which will guide the rest of the theological journey of this study) which together with the other questions, were part of the formulation of the leading question of this chapter.

9. What does it mean to say that the gospel is true, not just in the private experiences of believers, but 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?

The first question deals with the truth and thus the relevance of the Gospel. The Gospel is central to the church, as the church grows and lives out of the apostolic proclamation of the Gospel. Therefore this question is of vital importance and needs to be dealt with first, before I can reflect upon the church, which is the community created and sustained by the Gospel. This question has however been dealt with in Chapter Two, where a narrative response was seen to adequately respond to the challenges of postmodernity and therefore I would like to return to the summary given in Chapter Two (10.7 Summary: Narrative as an appropriate theological orientation within postmodernity)

Narrative and Theology

1. Narrative is the dominant genre in Biblical witness
2. The postmodern understanding of self (identity), action, human experience and meaning need to be placed within narrative settings to be

- intelligible.
3. The individual needs the faith narratives to understand and give meaning to his/her personal narratives.
 4. The identity of a faith community is also dependent on the narratives of the community. Therefore to understand a congregation's identity its narratives need to be taken seriously.
 5. Christian soteriology and the structure of Christian faith necessarily take on a narrative form.
 6. The confession of faith also necessarily takes on a narrative form.
 7. The Christian-Jewish faith is rooted in a narrative tradition.

In Chapter Two my purpose was to describe a narrative theological orientation as an appropriate orientation in the postmodern context. In this chapter I will reflect on the Gospel as a narrative truth which is relevant and authoritative within a *postmodern global village*. In Chapter Two (8.5 Narrative and epistemology), I reflected on the idea that truth cannot be found beyond the scope of narrative (metaphor). To use narrative to illuminate the grammar of religious convictions and more specifically the Christian's convictions, is not an apologetic strategy in a postmodern world, but rather I would like to see narrative in line with Hauerwas' argument, that "approaching Christian conviction via their narrative character involves an attempt to do constructive Christian theology and ethics in a non-reductionistic manner, so that questions of truth may be rightly asked" (Hauerwas 1981:94).

As mentioned in the summary above it is clear that the narrative is a necessary category for true understanding of God, scripture, self and soteriology. Yet this does not help me with regards to the question about the truthfulness of the narrative (Gospel) concerned. "The necessary interrelation of narrative and character provides the means to test the truthfulness of narratives" (Hauerwas 1981:95). The truthfulness of a narrative is tested by the character that is formed by the narrative.

Before I turn to the Gospel as a truthful narrative I need to briefly describe my understanding of Gospel and how I understand (interpret) Gospel in this study.

The Gospel and the proclamation of the Gospel does not only involve the public preaching of the minister, but the whole linguistic communication of the church. In a similar sense when I speak about the 'Word of God' I am referring to more than the Bible. Karl Barth understood the Word of God to be three things:

- 1) The revealed Word of God
- 2) The written Word of God
- 3) The proclaimed Word of God (Karl Barth K.D. I 2 1953: 124f).

In a similar way the Word of Christ, the Gospel, can specifically be understood as:

- 1) „das in Jesus Christus >>Geschehene<<
- 2) das in die Bibel >>grundlegend niedergeschriebene<<
- 3) das >>je aktual verkündigte Wort Gottes<<" (Pöhlmann 1990:69).

Yet, when Karl Barth speaks about the revealed Word of God, what is the relationship

between revelation and scripture? The Bible is not the revealed Word of God. The Bible is a testimony to the revelation of God's Word. "But note well: the Scriptures as a tool in *God's* hands. For they are only human testimony of divine revelation"(Barth 1936:30).

Hauerwas argues in a similar line of thought: "The main relation of revelation to the Bible is not that of an antecedent revelation, which generates the Bible as its response, but that of a revelation which follows upon the existent tradition, or, once it has reached the fixed and written stage, the existent scripture. The scripture provides the frames of reference within which new events have meaning and make sense"(Hauerwas 1981:58).

Scripture is a testimonial story which God uses to reveal Himself to us today.

"...the Scriptures from which the word of God strikes us always as a flash of lightning out of dark clouds – but which as a whole demand our constant attention because as a whole their origin and meaning bear witness of divine revelation and for this reason are rightfully called "Holy" Scriptures, canon of the Church, by which the Church is constantly measured and which it is the Church's duty constantly to search and humbly to expound" (Barth 1936:31).

In this study, when I refer to the Gospel or to Scripture, it is in the context of this understanding of the relationship between God's Word and the Bible.

The church lives and grows out of the story of the Gospel. The Gospel is her story as it is the Gospel that gives her her character and identity. The Gospel is the story of promise and the story of liberation which provides the frames of reference within which new events are given meaning and make sense. It is through the Gospel that God's truth is revealed and meaning is found within every new period of history.

The church is founded on the Gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit. Before I enter into dialogue with the historical texts I am still struggling with the question: What authority and relevance do these texts (the Gospel) have in a postmodern global context? They have relevance for the church, as the community which is created through the truth of the Gospel. But does this truth have a wider frame of relevance than the church?

The easy way out of this question is to argue that they have authority for those who have chosen to let their lives be formed by these stories. In other words the ancient texts have a relative authority and it is a matter of choice which would fit in perfectly with the global village idea of individualism, consumerism and materialism. An individual chooses from the multiple religious possibilities that which best suits his/her spiritual needs. This idea would make any form of interreligious dialogue difficult as well as disempower religion completely to speak a critical or prophetic word into this context.

The Church sees herself not only as a community of believers but also as a community that is involved in the history of the world as she is part of the triune redemptive history of God.

How can the church be involved in the universal history of the world if all she has is a relative narrative, which proclaims a relative promise and relative liberation?

2.1 The Gospel as narrative truth

In Chapter Two of this study I reflected on narrative truth as a response to the relativity of the postmodern context.¹

In these two sections of Chapter Two it was shown that truth and knowledge are not to be found beyond the scope of language and more specifically not beyond the scope of metaphorical language. The limits of our language are the limits of our world as there is no truth or knowledge beyond the scope of language, because there is no direct connection between the knower and objective reality besides language and therefore all reality is a subjective interpretation of reality.

Science uses the language of analogy to discover universal truths, but even these truths were found to be embedded within certain stories (paradigms of scientific traditions). Therefore these scientific truths are relative to the paradigms of tradition, in other words, relative to their story.

Does this mean that humans cannot speak about truth at all, as all truth is relative to its specific story/tradition?

In a postmodern world it would thus be better to remain silent about that which cannot be spoken (universal truth)? If everybody remains silent about that which cannot be spoken of then the emptiness and melancholia of the postmodern age rules supreme without a challenge. If the church would resign to this silence she would do this at a very high cost, because then she needs to learn to live with the lie (Harvey 1999:135). Or as Vaclav Havel argues: “live with a lie. They need not accept the lie. It is enough for them to have accepted life with it and in it. For by this very fact, individuals confirm the system, fulfil the system, make the system, are the system” (Havel 1987:45).

The only problem is that silence also tells the lie, because then the dominant narrative of the *postmodern global village* is all-powerful and unchallenged. The lie needs to be all-powerful and its basic principle must permeate everything and therefore it cannot coexist with the truth. This is the story of the *postmodern global village* although it claims that it has no narrative and that it is free from tradition, history or any form of narrative, which has been shown to be impossible. The only way to challenge the lie is to live the truth, because any one who steps out of line denies the lie in principle and threatens it in its entirety (Havel 1987:56).

Just because truth cannot be expressed in universal absolute language of analogy does not mean that there is no truth and just because all understanding of reality is a subjective (narrative) interpretation of reality does not mean that there is no reality. This truth, which cannot be expressed in universal absolute language, can be expressed in metaphoric (narrative) language, but it must never be confused with analytic language.

¹ Chapter Two: 8.5 Narrative and epistemology and 8.6 Narrative and truths

It is within this context that in a narrative theological orientation the two languages need to complement each other as they enter into a critical dialogue. The language of metaphor (narrative) and the language of description of reality (analogy) are in a critical dialogue with each other as I have discussed in Chapter Two.²

The metaphoric language (truth as narrative) gives meaning to experiences and reality and forms the internal history (Aggada, *techné*, metaphor), but this internal history needs to be in critical dialogue with the external history (Halacha, *epistmé*) otherwise the internal story can easily form an ideology, which if left unchallenged becomes all powerful like the ideological story of the *postmodern global village*.³ The Gospel proclaims a narrative truth, but this truth needs to be in critical dialogue with the external history (systematic theology, philosophy, psychology, sociology) within the process of doing theology to ensure that theology does not create an ideology. This critical dialogue I have understood as *phronesis* and have incorporated it into the narrative orientation of this study. The other critical element that can respond to the lie of the *postmodern global village* comes from the story of the Gospel itself, namely the story of the cross. I will discuss the challenge of the story of the cross at a later stage.

The church needs to respond to this claim of the *postmodern global village*. “It is only the truth of proclamation that makes us free for the proclamation, and it is only the liberation that has been experienced which gives authority for liberating narration” (Moltmann 1992:207).

What Moltmann is saying is that truth is within the proclamation and in the experience of liberation and it is not to be found outside of it.

The church can respond to the *postmodern global village* by not keeping quiet, but by proclaiming the truth. This truth is a narrative truth, it is not an analytic truth that can be proven through scientific theories, but is a truth that is known in the experience of liberation as it gives meaning to that liberation. In other words it is a metaphoric (narrative) truth that gives ‘truthful’/appropriate meaning (interpretation) to experiences and as such is known as truth.

One can test the truthfulness of a narrative by the necessary interrelation of narrative and character. Therefore the truth of the Gospel can only be tested by the character that is created by the truthful response to the Gospel.

“The crucial interaction of story and community for the formation of truthful lives is an indication that there exists no “story of stories” from which the many stories of our existence can be analyzed and evaluated” (Hauerwas 1981:96).

There is no metanarrative on which communities can rely.

Yet the Gospel needs to be true for more than the church if the church is to play a critical and relevant role within the history of the world.

I will look at some of the ways in which the church has understood her proclamation of the Gospel as an authority (*sola Scriptura*) that goes beyond the confines of the church, in other words, the understanding that the Gospel is not only a relative authority for the community of believers, but a ‘truth’ for the history of the world.

² Chapter Two: 11.2.1 Phronesis as a critical awareness to ideological distortion and 11.2.3 Ideological critique from within the Christian-Jewish narratives

³ Chapter Two: 11.2.1 Phronesis as a critical awareness to ideological distortion

I will first reflect on the biblical understanding of narrative truth⁴ and then I will reflect on two ways of knowing narrative truth, namely:

- 1) To know the narrative (metaphoric) truth of the Gospel through the story of God's revealed Word which is testified to in the Bible.
- 2) To know the narrative (metaphoric) truth of the Gospel through the story of the individual who has responded in a moment of faith to the story of God's revealed Word – kerygma.

Conclusion: The Gospel is a narrative (metaphoric) truth and as such responds to the *postmodern global village*.

2.1.1 The Biblical understanding of narrative truth

"I contend that the only reason for being Christian (which may well have results that in a society's terms seem less than "good") is because Christian convictions are true; and the only reason for participation in the church is that it is the community that pledges to form its life by that truth" (Hauerwas 1981:1).

I would like to introduce this section with a text from scripture taken from John 18:37-38a.

"So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say I am king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" (The African Bible)

Pilate's situation is very similar to the postmodern global context today in one aspect and that is the plurality of religions and beliefs and the multiplicity of claims to truth. In Pilate's question there is a certain scepticism with regards to truth which is very similar to the scepticism of the postmodern towards truth. Pilate did not answer this question for himself, but rather chose to wash his hands in innocence. He avoided this question of truth. The church or even humanity finds itself in a very similar situation in that we are responsible for our neighbours (our fellow humanity) in a world where truth has lost all power. Truth has become so relative that taking up the responsibility for fellow humanity has become problematic, because on what basis or what claim can individuals or communities take up this responsibility? Yet the consequence of this relativism in the global village where the majority of the world's population is suffering and dying and there is no basis or claim to truth which can challenge this situation, as all truth is relative, is catastrophic. Is the church also avoiding this question and washing her hands in innocence? Can the human crisis of the global village afford the relativism of postmodernity? I say this to express the importance of this question in a *postmodern global village*, because just like in Pilate's situation life and death are dependent on the answer of this question.

In the Old Testament understanding of truth in the Hebrew word *emeth*, which comes

⁴ For the rest of this study when I refer to 'truth', or the truth of the Gospel I understand truth as a narrative (metaphoric) truth and not as a universal analytical truth.

from the root that means “to be faithful” or “steadfast” this indicated “a reality that is seen as firm, solid and valid, binding” (Kittel 1932:233). “As such it means both the reality itself and the attitude of mind and heart that acknowledges and lives by that reality”(West 1999:2).

The Greek word for truth, *aletheia*, has a different root and understanding. It is rooted in the understanding of “not hidden,” “open” or “made known” and thus it soon took on the meaning of that which is real in contrast to that which merely seems real (West 1999:3).

This idea was taken up by Plato which then developed into a dualism which influenced not only the ancient world, but influenced the philosophy of truth right into the modern Western time. “Truth is the changeless form of reality. It is discerned by reason (*logos*) freed from the constraints of passion and material limitations” (West 1999:4). Truth was thus something beyond the imperfections of history and this world and thus history was reduced to a meaningless process of creation and decay. The Hebrew understanding of truth which is embodied in the covenant relationship of faithfulness, righteousness, promise, grace, and love were subordinated to the changeless perfection of the Greek understanding of ahistorical universal truth.

Yet the New Testament claims a historical truth in Christ: in the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Truth embodied in a historical person. It is the Gospel of John which takes up this dual understanding of truth (Greek /Platonic and Hebrew).

John 1:14 “And the Word (*logos*) became (*egeneto*) flesh (*sarx*) and made his dwelling among us and we saw his glory, the glory of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth (*aletheia*)”

“John uses the ideas of Greek philosophy – *logos*, *egeneto*, *sarx*, and *aletheia* – to tear them out of their timeless, dualistic worldview and make them descriptions of God at work through Christ in creation, history, and promise of this human and material world” (West 1999:4-5).

John continues in this line of thought regarding truth when he says in John 14: 6 “Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” In other words what John is saying is that if the believers follow the *logos* then they will know the truth (*aletheia*) and this truth will set them free (John 8: 31-32). The believer needs to be in a relationship to Jesus as disciple, to understand the meaning of the truth.

John 8:31-32 “Jesus then said to those Jews who believed in him, “If you remain in my word (*logos*), you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth (*aletheia*), and the truth will set you free” (The African Bible).

John 1:1-4 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race”

John 16: 13 “But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth” (The African Bible).

It is quite clear that John introduces a new concept of truth into the ancient Hellenistic world, which has elements of both the Hebrew understanding of truth as well as the Greek, but is also totally new as he relates truth completely to Christ in the story of the triune God. This truth is the ultimate reality (West 1999:5). This truth is a narrative truth as it is related and found in the story of the triune God revealed to us in the story of Christ. I have discussed this in Chapter Two (10.2 Narrative as a dominant genre in the Biblical as well as in confessional Christian witness)

2.2 The Gospel truth known in the story of the revealed Word of God

Karl Barth, considering the question of truth and how truth can be known, soon realised that the modern idea of human reason discovering truth or God is impossible.⁵ “There is no way from us to God, not even *via negativa*, not even a *via dialectica* or *paradoxa*. The god who stood at the end of some human way – even these ways – would not be God” (Barth 1957:177).

Karl Barth discovered that truth is not to be found via analytic inquiry. In this sense Karl Barth can be seen as the first postmodern theologian. Barth argued that the church is “aware the truth of God is not an object – not even a supernatural object – but the eternal subject which makes itself known to us in a mystery only, and only to faith” (Barth 1936:20).

The truth of God can thus only be known in the story of His revelation of Himself to humanity, in other words, in the narrative of His revelation. Barth also argued that humans do not even have access to this story as the Bible is only a testimony which testifies to that story of God’s revelation.

The individual is confronted with this story of the revealed Word of God through the testimony of the Gospel or the preacher, and he/she is confronted with the truth. The revealed truth of God claims the whole human being and not just his/her intellectual faculties.

“Truth, the whole truth that claims the human mind, emotion, and will begins with the revelation of God and the calling of human beings into faith and obedience. It confronts the postmodern world not with another structure of truth but with One who gives and commands here and now” (West 1999:46).

For Karl Barth the proclamation of the Gospel is not the proclamation of the church’s word, but the proclamation of God’s Word. In other words this Word which is proclaimed is not:

- 1) a religious or spiritual interpretation of the world
- 2) nor religious articulation to express an individual’s spiritual feelings.

“The question is not metaphysical, moral, or religious. It is not the goal of human search or the fulfilment of a human experience, as if we could define and use Deity

according to our concepts and desires. It can be answered only in response to a self-revealing God. We human beings are not our own creators. We are not the subjects of our knowledge, the authors of our goodness, or the masters of our spirituality. We are not the center of our existence. Our power does not control our destiny. We think, we act, we live in the middle of life, not knowing our beginning or end, but only that we are created and called to be in the middle. We are limited by the other person with whom we are called to live and by the Creator who has made us, whose word gives our life meaning and direction. That this middle and this limit are grace perfected in love, we know from Jesus Christ, who shared them with us and redeemed them with his death and resurrection. That we can live in them with joy and hope, we know from the work of the Holy Spirit among us" (West 1999:xv).

Truth as understood throughout history has always been a human construction, either through myth or through reason. Truth was to be found within the ordered universe, and thus prescribed a certain way of life which would be in harmony with the truth. Therefore truth was seen holistically as it influenced the whole way of living.

"The biblical witness differed not in its view of the wholeness of truth, but in the way in which that wholeness is made known and acknowledged by human beings. Not cosmological order, perceived by myth or by reason, not some human vision that embraced the gods, the powers of nature, and human society, but the revelation of God, made known in word and act toward a particular people, leads them into wholeness of truth" (West 1999:8).

Postmodernity in contrast to modernity is very suspicious of anything that seeks to impose order on the chaos of history. Yet God's Word, as truth, does not attempt to do this. It cannot do this, because it is a narrative truth and not an analytic truth with which order can be imposed.

"Rather it calls us out of ourselves – our subjective experiences and choices, our divided and therefore finally meaningless "language games" - into true, that is, faithful and responsible, action in the midst of it all, toward the humanity revealed in Christ" (West 1999:46).

The Gospel as narrative truth is therefore not known outside of the narrative of God's revelation and therefore it cannot be isolated into a theory of order which is then imposed on the chaos of the world. The individual is exposed to this narrative truth of God's revelation through the testimony of the Bible or the testimony of a preacher and through the power of the Spirit knows and accepts the truth of the narrative. It is God speaking to the individual through the testimony of the Bible or preacher.

The Gospel which is proclaimed is the Word of God.

"As ministers we ought to speak of God. We are human, however, and so cannot speak of God. We ought therefore to recognize our obligation and our inability, and by that very recognition give God the glory"(Barth 1928:186).

The Word of God is not a discourse about the revealed history, nor is it personal talk about individual faith, but God's Word. This Word cannot be uttered in a literal way by

giving to our fellow humanity exact scientific formulations or a moral code, but speaks to us metaphorically in the narrative of a God and His people⁶. In Chapter Two I reflected on Crites' understanding of mundane and sacred stories (8.4 Social setting of narrative).

Between the mundane and sacred stories there is a distinction without there being a total separation. "...all a people's mundane stories are implicit in its sacred story, and every mundane story takes soundings in the sacred story" (Crites 1998:71). It is in our mundane stories that sometimes the sacred story resonates (Chapter two: 8.4.2 Mundane Stories).

The sacred stories cannot be told, but they resonate in our mundane stories and in this sense the preaching and the Gospel testify to the truth of the sacred story of God.

I would also like to refer back to the Jewish understanding of revelation in the context of Karl Barth's understanding of God's word as revelation.

Chapter Two: 10.6.1 Jewish understanding of revelation:
The actual Word of God nobody would be able to write down or even hear. All that was given, was the first breath of the revelation of God. When God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai He certainly did not give him the whole Decalogue as humans would not be able to grasp God's word. Tradition believes that all that was given to Moses was the first breath of the first letter of the word "I" which in Hebrew is *Alef* of the word *Anochi*. This first letter, *Alef*, is not pronounced, it is breathed as if to begin to speak. This is how God spoke to Moses, said Rabbi Mendel Torum von Rymanow (Denecke 1996: 89). It is up to the faith community to discover and interpret this *Alef*.

a "It is the Word which God himself utters and in which God corresponds to himself, and that therefore for its part corresponds to God. But this cannot be concept, an image or a symbol; it can only be the name of God himself" (Moltmann 1992:208).

This means that God in His Word cannot be reduced to a symbol, a concept or an absolute. God can only be known in His Name. The only way to judge the truth of this Word is against God Himself. The question that needs to be asked is, Does the Word correspond to God? The church believes that God has revealed Himself to the world through Christ. "Jesus Christ is the name in which God corresponds to himself. In Jesus Christ God's Word is the reconciling event"(Moltmann 1992:208).

When God's Word is proclaimed in preaching it stands in an indirect identity with this self as indication, likeness, echo, testimony and answer to this event of reconciliation. The truth or the authority of the Word of God cannot be verified against anything else. As it verifies itself, it enforces its own claim and illumines through its own being. It

⁶ Chapter Two: 8.6.2 Internal history (a metaphorical story): "Certain things need to be left for inner history or the story of metaphor to say. Metaphor functions in the midst of differences – it says what it says in a metaphorical way in the midst of the ruins of literal sense."

cannot be verified through any external historical events, or internal religious experiences. The question of the authority or truth of the Word of God, by its very nature, is in God's own hands.

In the Old Testament God's name could not be pronounced and any understanding of God would be hidden in a story about Him. In the Old Testament also the Word of God and His name are not identical. God's name denotes His character and His nature, while His Word creates and stamps history (Moltmann 1992:209). God's Word is historical and it creates history as it creates the history of Israel, who is either obedient or disobedient to His Word. Yet it is believed that at the end of history God's name will be glorified.

In the New Testament God's Story is told as a revelation of God's character and nature, through the story of Christ, and this story centres on the Christ event (crucifixion).

The New Testament is essentially the story of Christ, thus the New Testament reveals Christ to us. Luther argued that the verification of the Gospel is in the Gospel itself. "Durch diesen ihren Inhalt verbürgt die Heilige Schrift sich selbst. Das heißt, da Christus ihr Inhalt ist: Christus verbürgt sich im Heiligen Geist dem Menschen als die Wahrheit und verbürgt damit die Heilige Schrift" (Althaus 1983:74).

The Christ event is the event of God's self-revelation and also humanity's reconciliation. This event spans the whole of history from the beginning of God's creation to the end of God's unification with creation.

The verification of truth "takes place between the remembrance of Christ and hope for the kingdom through the presence of the Spirit and the power of the resurrection" (Moltmann 1992:209).

This historical (remembrance of Christ) and eschatological (hope for the kingdom) dimension of the Gospel and its proclamation is, however, sustained by the inner correspondence of God's Word to God himself. So the character of the church and individual members is bound up with the church's ability to remember and to witness to the fact that our understanding of God and our knowledge of God is not inferred from stories, but is the very stories (Kelsey 1975:45).

This idea liberates us from the need to make unsupportable claims about the unity of scripture, or by reducing the idea of God, or the centrality of scripture to some theory or idea. Scripture needs to be seen as a long, 'loosely structured non-fiction novel' that has subplots that at times appear minor and later turn out to be central (Kelsey 1975:48).

Christian proclamation is in essence the proclamation of God's name, God's character and nature as revealed to the world in Christ, made known to us through the Gospels. The nature that is revealed to us is the open, seeking nature of the Trinity that reconciles the godless with God through Christ's suffering on the cross.

This Word of God, so understood in New Testament terms, besets the history of the

world with restless hope as we wait for the consummation and glorification of the whole of creation in God.

“The inner correspondence between the Word of God and God himself leads to contradiction with a God-contradictory world and is directed towards a world corresponding to him. The self-revelation of God in Christ therefore does not end history but opens up the history of the future, because it lets us hope for God’s glorification in the world and lets us fight against man’s humiliation” (Moltmann 1992:210).

Truth is the correspondence of the Word of God to God himself. Yet in history humanity has always again and again tried to capture truth for itself and for the powers humanity serves. If truth is so misappropriated it becomes destructive and leads to conflict as history has shown. “Christian truthfulness lies in continual witness to the One who judges, corrects, and transforms all human claims, even our own, to know and to possess the truth of God” (West 1999:10).

In conclusion I can say that the narrative truth of Gospel (sacred story) is not known through any human power of analytic reason, but God reveals Himself to humanity through His story with humanity which is testified to in the scriptures (mundane stories). These mundane stories (the testimony of scripture) resonate with the sacred story of God and through the action of the Holy Spirit can reveal the truth of God to the individual today and in this way the truth of the Gospel is known.

2.3 The Gospel truth known in the story of the experience of faith - Kerygma

The second way of knowing the truth is through the story of the experience of faith in response to the story of the revealed Word of God.

“Rudolf Bultmann has interpreted the proclamation of the gospel as kerygma, as an eschatological call to decision and as a summons”(Moltmann 1992:210).

The truth of the Gospel is known in the response, decision or summons of the story of the revealed Word of God.

The Greek word Logos has the meaning of uncovering, revealing or giving meaning to something or to events. It does not refer to a summons, or a calling. But as was said in the previous section, the church (believer) enters into this story of God, the triune history of God as revealed through Christ. The church enters into this truth by remaining in the Word and through remaining in the Word will know the truth and this truth will set the church free (John 8:31-32). By entering into the story of the truth the believer will know the truth. It is only from inside the story, or from the experience of the truth, that the truth will be known.

The New Testament Word of God needs to be understood differently from the traditional Greek understanding of logos. It needs to be understood as the Word of the Creator and the Judge – a Word that is both promise and commandment and therefore

needs to be understood as a creative Word that creates history. It creates life and history and to this history the believer is called and challenged which she or he may accept or reject (John 1:1-4).

In this sense the Word of God is “legitimated and verified in the very event of its being heard and believed” (Moltmann 1992:211). Similar to Karl Barth’s understanding of the Word of God it cannot be verified or legitimated through anything outside of itself in the sphere of objective knowledge.

In Chapter Two I discussed the narrative understanding of revelation (10.5.2 Narrative understanding of revelation) as well as the narrative understanding of the response to revelation namely confession (10.5.3 Narrative, Revelation and Confession).

The sacred story of God which resonates in the mundane story of the testimony reveals to the individual something of the sacred story and the individual responds to this sacred story in the kerygma and becomes part of the story.

him “To be true summons, a word must necessarily reveal man to himself, teach to understand himself – but not as a theoretical instruction about the self. The event of a summons discloses to the man a situation of existential self-understanding, a possibility of self understanding which must be grasped in action. Such a summons...requires decision, it gives me the choice of myself, the choice of who I will be through the summons and my response to it” (Bultmann quoted in Moltmann 1992:211).⁷

The story of God re-authors the individual story as discussed in Chapter Two (10.5.2 Narrative understanding of revelation).

The revealed truth of God’s Word summons and challenges humanity to a new understanding of ourselves. “But there is no “real Jesus” except as he is known through the kind of life he demanded of his disciples; that the gospels display the grammar of such a life should not therefore surprise us” (Hauerwas 1981:41-42).

The truth of Jesus is known in the re-authored life or the experience to which this Word summons the believer to. The believer through the re-authored story gains completely new insight into him/herself and humanity and this new insight has new meaning (interpretation) and therefore is known as truth.

In this sense the truth of Christ (as God’s revealed/incarnate Word) stands in contrast to the truths of society. The truths of society are developed from the centre of our humanity. These are truths of reason, law, and culture and are indeed relative, partial and bias. These truths are also easily corrupted by power motives and certain interest groups within society and then only serve to justify the interest of the powerful. Christ as the truth invites us into a new relationship where we die to ourselves and live in a new reality “whose mystery we explore without ever being ourselves in control” (West 1999:7). The truth of the Gospel cannot be manipulated by self-interest as it calls the

⁷ Chapter Two: 10.3 Narrative and experience, self and meaning where the narrative understanding of self is described and how sacred stories are necessary for this self-understanding.

individual to die to him/herself in following Jesus.

The church has not been spared the trap of too closely associating ‘knowing’ Jesus and following him, as Christology and soteriology become too intertwined. As Panneberg argues, if soteriology becomes primary one needs to ask if one has actually dealt with the story/ the narrative of Jesus/ the truth of Jesus, or has one projected onto Jesus the human desires for salvation, deification and humanity’s striving to be like God? Or projecting onto Jesus human constructions of perfect religiosity, or perfect morality? (Pannenberg 1968:47) If this happens, then the truth of Jesus is no different from the relative truths of society which are human constructions and projections and not the revealed truth of Christ that is known only in the response of the believer and not in some model or theory, “or some universally valid objective model of morality” (Hauerwas 1981:42).

Postmodernity has quite clearly shown that this is an impossible task as there is no universal category or general standard that could possibly bring together the separate fields of discourse and behaviour in a pluralist society. Yet the Christian truth is not to be found in these universals, but in an experience and relationship which God has established with human beings through the work of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ.

“That is not to say that Christian convictions are proven meaningful or true by showing their ethical implications; rather they are both true and ethical in that they force us to a true understanding of ourselves and our existence” (Hauerwas 1981:90).

The only way to understand this truth is if humans understand the narrative nature of their lives.

“The objective reality we seek with our reason (modernity) and finally give up on (postmodernity) is replaced by the living Other whom we can never control but to whom we respond by trust and discipleship” (West 1999:47).

“In this sense word and history coincide in the eschatological event of the word”(Moltmann 1992:211). The Word of God calls humanity to a new understanding of him/herself in the light of the new creation. This the believer grasps in faith and in hope and in this sense it corresponds to the Word of God. The believer understands him or herself in the light of the history of the new creation through the Word of God and thus this Word of God corresponds to the experience of the believer.

2 Corinthians 5: 16-18 “Consequently, from now on we regard no one according to the flesh (*human point of view*) even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh (*human point of view*), yet now we know him so no longer. So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold new things have come. And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation,” (The African Bible) ‘*Human point of view*’ is an interpretation of ‘*flesh*’ taken from West (West 1999:7).

Truth known in the kerygma and our existence as a new creation, is known in the quality of a living relationship, “not a structure of being, not the text of a statement, whether of doctrine or law. Objectively, it is the self-revelation of the triune God coming to men and women created for one another in God’s image and played

out (1) in the biblical struggle with a believing but disobedient people, and ultimately (2) in Christ's life, crucifixion, and resurrection. Subjectively, it is known by faith responding to God with the whole self and using the mind to explore both creation and human life in light of God's covenant, gift, and promise" (West 1999: 9).

I will seek to combine Barth's objective understanding of knowing the truth in the story of the revealed Word of God with Bultmann's subjective understanding of knowing the truth in the kerygma as experience.

The Story of Christ is more than mere kerygmatic address. It is also storytelling – the telling of a liberating story into which the believer enters so that this story becomes the believer's story. It is within this story that the believer finds his/her new identity and thus realises the non-identity of the world around him. He or she realises the need of redemption of the world around him/her and thus enters into a universal history with the world in solidarity with the unredeemed creation. Thus the Gospel and the truth of the Gospel can be verified not by outside standards, but by the very life that is created and sustained by it. The believer finds the truth in the story of Christ which is the story of a Palestinian Jew. It is not a transcendent truth, but a truth revealed in history in the story of Jesus the Christ. Truth is therefore not to be found outside of history but in it, "in the concrete ways God deals with us in its particular events" (West 1999:11).

To understand truth in this way has certain consequences and that is to surrender the security of absolute knowledge and this truth demands the risk of personal commitment to God "whom one trusts but whose mind one can never fully understand"(West 1999:9).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once described this relationship to truth as a relationship where one does not ask the question, What? or How?, but Who? It is a question about who calls us and who claims the whole of our lives, the whole of our identity and who leads us through death into a new creation and new life (Bonhoeffer 1978: 30-37). It is God who claims us, summons us and calls us into a new identity. This identity is a narrative identity and thus the God who calls us is a 'storied God' who is known to us through the stories, but only if our character as 'storied people' is formed appropriate to God's character. This cannot happen in isolation, but within a 'storied society' namely the church (Hauerwas 1981:91).

This narrative truth cannot be captured in any human objective or subjective system of thought, reason, or myth. Doctrines are helpful only as they guide believers in their commitment to the One who reveals truth "step-by-step in relation to us." There is no faith without risk of error that responsible witness brings. God alone is the lord of truth. We by faith may be its servants"(West 1999:10).

Faith thus does not have a timeless or universal platform that lifts it out and above the vulnerability of the historical realm.

"It boasts no certainty other than what accrues to be a contingent event from the past, with its promise of claiming the present in the name of a purposive future. The person-event of Christ precedes a purposive future. The person-event of Christ precedes particular responses of faith"(Hauerwas 1981:43).

Today the church stands in the tradition of these responses over generations, from the first witnesses until today. This tradition witnesses that revelation has an ongoing narrative truth and power. “So completely is the truth of faith tied in with what is transmitted historically” (Hauerwas 1981:43). The history of one generation witnessing to another from the very first witnesses who responded to the summons of the Christ event right until today responding to that “alternation of social-personal existence which roots in this Jesus” (Groff 1971:47).

The universality of this truth is manifested only by a people who are willing to take his cross as their story, as the necessary condition for living truthfully in this life. I will come back to the cross of Christ and its relevance and truth in the *postmodern global village*. MacIntyre argued that a living tradition “is an historical extended socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition” (MacIntyre 1984:222).

“Any community and polity is known and should be judged by the kind of people it develops” (Hauerwas 1981:2). This is the only verification that there is for the Gospel. It is verified in God as His revealed Word and it is verified by the community that it creates.

This brings me to the context of the Gospel or proclamation within world history and the relevance of the Gospel to world history. The Gospel is not only relevant to the community that have chosen it as their narrative.

In conclusion: God’s Word (sacred story) is revealed to humanity in God’s story with humanity as testified to by the scriptures (mundane stories). Yet these mundane stories resonate with God’s story and through the power of the Holy Spirit the truth is revealed through them. The truth is revealed as God’s story which is revealed through the story of Christ. This story re-authors the individual’s narrative as he/she responds to the truth. This re-authored story forms a certain type of character which corresponds to the character of God. The re-authored story of faith interprets reality and the individual in a new way which makes more sense and as such is known as a truthful interpretation. In this sense the Gospel can be known as the truth.

2.4 The Gospel truth as relevant

Pannenberg argues that the kerygma needs to be understood not so much in the light of its content, but in the light of what it reports (Pannenberg 1969:152). In other words the kerygma is a report of the history of Christ.

“The Christian proclamation therefore reports, not a self contained event, but the prolepsis of the end of history in Jesus’ fate – that is, an event which is both open to the future and opens up the future” (Moltmann 1992:213-214).

Therefore the proclamation of this Gospel breaks into every situation and every context as a call into redemptive history and as consolation. It is not a neutral historical chronicle, but the history of salvation which requires a response.

“On the basis of insight into the history of Jesus, which reveals God and anticipates the end of history, it conveys a universal historical view of the world which must prove to be the true understanding of reality.....

But because all historical knowledge is anticipatory knowledge and only grasps the meaning of past and present in the context of the future, the Christian knowledge of history proves itself the true one”(Moltmann 1992:214).

In the world there are numerous narratives and each individual is enmeshed in different stories and histories. Especially in the *postmodern global village* each individual is confronted with a pluralism of stories and histories which make up his/her identity. It is exactly this multiplicity of stories to which the individual needs to respond to that leaves him/her feeling fragmented.⁸ The ‘universal’ truthfulness of the Gospel can only be judged by its ability to equip the individual or the church to effectively be able to respond to this plurality and fragmentation.

“The truthfulness of Christian convictions, therefore, is not dependent on being able to generate a theory of truth that a priori renders all other accounts false, or that promises to demonstrate that underlying the differences between people is a deeper and more profound common morality. Rather the truthfulness of Christian convictions resides in their power to form a people sufficient to acknowledge the divided character of the world and thus necessarily to offer hospitality to the stranger” (Hauerwas 1981:93).

It is my claim that the Gospel as truth does just that. It equips individuals as well as the church, which seeks to live faithfully to the Gospel, with the skills to face the world as it is and not to construct it in a manner in which the church would like it to be.

In the previous section I reflected on the truth of the Gospel known in the experience of a re-authored story. This re-authored story of the self gave the individual dramatic resources with which to better understand him/herself as well as the world around him/her. It was in this more meaningful interpretation of self and reality that the individual perceived the truth of the Gospel.

In response to the *postmodern global village*, what is needed is not a universally valid story, but a story that can give a community the skills to live faithfully in a fragmented pluralistic world. I am not looking for an *a priori* defeat of relativism, but a truth that can help the church to live in a world where there is more than one story.

This takes me back to the previous section where the truth of the story people hold to can only be verified in the lives that they live according to that story (Hauerwas 1981: 96). Yet how does one judge this verification if there are no universal narrative, independent values or norms?

The Gospel does not provide these universally valid norms, but it provides a story that allows the church to live faithfully to this story without denying the reality of the world, nor resorting to violence and coercion to change the world in accordance to her

⁸ Chapter Four: 15.3 The disembedded narratives of selves and 16. Globalisation and homelessness

understanding of truth. The story I am referring to is, what Pannenberg has reminded the church of, the story of God revealed in Christ. This story tells the church of the eschatological universal Lordship of Christ.

“Christian confidence in God’s lordship provides the church with the power to exist amid the diversity of this world, trusting that the truth “will out” without resorting to coercion and violence for self-protection or to secure adherents. Therefore the non-resistant character of the Christian community, which is often sadly absent, is a crucial mark of the power of the Christian story to form a people in a manner appropriate to the character of Gods providential rule of the world” (Hauerwas 1981:101).

Thus, the church has a story that proclaims God’s Lordship over the world and every aspect of the believer’s life. It is a story that tells of a God who does not nullify differences but celebrates the diversity and calls/summons this diversity into His story with the world to serve in His kingdom.

The church’s task is not to defeat relativism, but the church’s task is to witness to this God, who reveals Himself within history. The command to witness has nothing to do with a universal truth, but “is based on the presupposition that we only come to the truth through the process of being confronted by the truth” (Hauerwas 1981:105).

This command to witness does not mean to judge what is wrong with the other faiths, but rather we are called to witness to the life that is made possible through the power of the cross of Christ (Gospel).

“The invitation to join such a life is made not on the assumption that there is something wrong with the others’ beliefs, but it is made because we are all sinners and through participation in this community we have the possibility of finding redemption” (Hauerwas 1981:106).

It is specifically humbling to the church to realise that the God they serve exists among all people and that He chooses to speak very often through the stranger. Although this understanding of God does not mean that the church should melt all differences into one through self-deceptive tolerance, “but rather it is the reason why the church must be a universal community capable of showing forth our unity in our diversity” (Hauerwas 1981:107). This unity is not based on the idea that there is a universal concept of human nature that all humanity shares, but is based on God’s Word revealed through the Gospel that tells us of a Lord who is universal.

This does not solve the problem of diversity nor fragmentation, but it does not deny it and in that sense it is a truthful account with which to approach reality. This is a tragic account of reality. “In a divided world tragedy cannot be denied, but we can find the patience to sustain one another through our tragedies and in so doing, provide an alternative to the violence that would force the world into premature unity” (Hauerwas 1981:108).

In this sense the Gospel is universally relevant not because it has a universally valid abstract truth, but because it creates a community that can live truthfully in a divided and fragmented world, acknowledging the tragedy of the world and sustaining her

members to live faithfully in this world.

2.5 The Gospel truth as authority

“The authority of scripture derives its intelligibility from the existence of a community that knows its life depends on faithful remembering of God’s care of his creation through the calling of Israel and the life of Jesus” (Hauerwas 1981:53).

The question really is, Is the church prepared to base her existence on this story and take this story as her only authority (*sola scriptura*)?

“The question if and how the Church can exist, depend simply and concretely on the other questions whether the church is capable of putting its confidence in this book, and therefore feels constrained to obey it” (Barth 1936:31-32).

How is authority understood? It is a word that has had rather negative connotations attached to it as it was understood in modernity as universal authority. How can one understand authority in a postmodern context?

Authority can never be seen separate from a community’s self understanding which is embodied in its laws, narratives, customs, traditions and habits, and it is within these that the individual of the community is guided to approach the truth.⁹

“A community is a group of persons who share a history and whose common set of interpretations about that history provide the basis for common actions. The diversity of accounts and interpretations of a community’s experience is exactly the basis of authority”(Hauerwas 1981:60).¹⁰

The Christian community shares certain decisive events which they regard as important, such as the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. It is these decisive events that unite the various Christian churches and congregations into a Christian community, but how the cross and the resurrection is to be interpreted today will be very diverse. Authority is the very power that allows a community to intelligibly respond to the present time by a reasoned reinterpretation of the cross and the resurrection and what that means for the future. This Christology has not jumped centuries, but it is a living tradition of interpretation and reinterpretation.

“Authority is the means by which the wisdom of the past is critically appropriated by being tested by current realities as well as by challenging the too often self-imposed limits of the present” (Hauerwas 1981:60-61).

Authority thus comes from the ability to justify decisions and direction taken into the future on the basis of the shared tradition of the community.

Authority has been associated with stagnation and holding onto the past, but in the light of this understanding of authority there is a direct connection between authority, tradition and specifically change. It is only in the light of change that authority really begins to play a role. “Reasoning from tradition is the primary form and method of authority”(Hauerwas 1981:61).

⁹ Chapter Two: 8.3.2 Narrative understanding of self/personal identity and 8.4 Social setting of narrative.

¹⁰ Refer back to a similar definition of community in Chapter Two: 10.4 Narrative and the identity of community

If a community wants to survive its traditions it needs to change. I have discovered in this study that the church with her traditions is in a crisis and requires change. The question is, On what authority does the church change to be a relevant reality in the *postmodern global village*? In the previous section I have discovered that the Gospel is the narrative truth and therefore it is on the authority of the Gospel that the church needs to change. What is required of the church is a reasoned reinterpretation of scripture. This re-interpretation of scripture is the constant adjustment that is needed for the church to stay in continuity with her tradition.

“Change and continuity are two facets of the same process, the process we call tradition. So much so that continuity can only be maintained by continual development, and development or change is only such (and not simply replacement) because of continuity. Tradition means continuity and change, both together and both equally”(Mackey 1968:42-43).

In the church the Gospel she is working with is a non-repeatable event and it is to this non-repeatable event (Christ event) that the church witnesses to. Hauerwas argues that such events must be fitted within a narrative and this narrative is an interpretation of the non-repeatable event. “But that interpretation must remain open to a new narrative display not only in relation to the future, but also whenever we come to a new understanding of the past” (Hauerwas 1981:61).

When the church is dealing with the Gospel, as the non-repeatable Christ event, the interpretation does not mean discovery of new meaning, but rather the re-appropriation of a tradition with greater depth in understanding (Barr 1966:513-535).

The church, faced with the challenges of the *postmodern global village*, turns to the Gospel as her authority to reinterpret, discover and appropriate the message for this time. This can lead to discontinuity in tradition, but it can also lead to unanticipated relevancy through reinterpretation. On this journey I discovered the unanticipated relevancy of scripture for the church in the *postmodern global village*, but I will come back to this in the next section, when looking at the church (community) which is created through the truthful language of scripture.

It is in the context of the question, What kind of church can respond to the Postmodern Global Village?, that authority of scripture becomes vitally important.

Authority is not necessary because of the deficiencies in humanity, or within the community, so that one needs some form of authority to bind the community together into common action, or common response to a challenge. It is rather that the opposite is true, that as the deficiencies decrease in a community the number of choices increases. In the *postmodern global village* the church is faced with pluralism or fragmentation because individuals are faced with so many choices of what could possibly be the common good of humanity (*telos*). It is within this context that authority plays a vital role to guide a community within its traditions. Judgments of how to respond are always particular and contingent. This means that one could respond in a different way as well. The tradition of the church tells the history of how the church has judged and responded to the world from generation to generation. “Authority is not, therefore, an external force that commands against our will; rather it proceeds

from a common life made possible by tradition” (Hauerwas 1981:62).

Authority has always been seen to be in opposition to freedom. Yet freedom can never be an end in itself, “but is the necessary condition for a community to come to a more truthful understanding of itself and the world” (Hauerwas 1981:62). Thus authority of scripture must always call the church to that which she has not become, as authority continually witnesses to the truth of Gospel.

“Authority, therefore, functions at those points where the tradition of a community engages in the discussions necessary to subject its politics to the search of a judgment by the truth”(Hauerwas 1981: 62).

In the previous section I discovered that the truth of the Gospel is only known as the revealed Word of God which is known from within the experience of faith and the participation in the tradition of faith, in other words, the truth of the Gospel is known in the actions of the church which seeks to live truthfully according to the Gospel.

“And whoever is concerned about what the world thinks of the Church ought to become aware of the fact that the world is interested in only one question about the Church: Does the Church still dare, and dare ever and ever again, to cling simply and concretely to the method of the Holy Spirit and faith?” (Barth 1936:32)

The method of the Holy Spirit and faith is the faith that the Gospel reveals God’s Word to the believer through the power of the Holy Spirit. In this sense the Gospel also becomes an authority for the world, through the church’s faithfulness to the Gospel.

In this sense “truth is like ‘knowing how’ – a skill that can only be passed from master to apprentice” (Hauerwas 1981:62). It is in this context of truth that authority becomes important as authority and tradition will guide the church to that which others before have found to be true, although I must keep in mind that in this process it could happen that the guides of the present or recent past need to be criticized.

If I claim scripture as the authority for the church, I am in no way arguing that scripture is infallible. Nor am I claiming that the Bible contains a unique understanding of God, history and humanity in opposition to some other understandings. Nor do I claim that the Bible contains a unique “Weltanschauung”.

“Rather to claim the Bible as authority is the testimony of the church that this book provides the resources necessary for the church to be a community sufficiently truthful so that our conversations with one another and God can continue across generations” (Hauerwas 1981:64).

Therefore I see in the Bible an authority because by trying to live in accordance to its witness the church can live faithfully to the truth.

2.6 The Gospel and the Messianic era

The Gospel is the term used by the New Testament for both the apostolic proclamation of Christ and the story of Christ. Yet I would like to place this understanding of the Gospel into the context of Deutero-Isaiah, because the prophet expects from the future God’s final victory, his enthronement and his rule without any opposition. Jesus himself stood in this tradition and saw His mission to be the proclamation of this kingdom or this era. Like the Word at the beginning of creation, His Word creates this

era of salvation (Moltmann 1992:216). The Gospel reveals the divine secret, not only of God's triune character, but also the eschatological divine secret of world history. In this sense the Gospel has the character of a 'hidden power of revelation already breaking into the present from the end of the world' (Moltmann 1992:217).

2 Corinthians 2:7f "Rather, we speak God's wisdom, mysterious hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, and which none of the rulers of this age know; for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (The African Bible).

In the Gospel is revealed, in a provisional way, what will finally and visibly be revealed in Christ's parousia.

"The gospel of Christ in the messianic era of Christ is at heart 'the word of the cross' and the contradiction in practice of a world which contradicts its Creator and itself. It is only out of this protest against the contradiction that the correspondence will be created which, as 'signs and wonders', are the proof of the messianic era" (Moltmann 1992:221).

Therefore the Gospel stands in contradiction to the world and thus cannot be supported by analogies in the cosmos or in history, because this history stands in contradiction to the Gospel. Nor can human reason support the Gospel, as it also stands in contradiction to the cross.

"When the power of the resurrection becomes effective in the gospel of Christ, then the gospel belongs to the people who stand in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, for whom the suffering Christ has become a brother, and for whom the crucified one died" (Moltmann 1992:222).

The hermeneutical circle therefore does not only revolve around Word and faith or Word and reality, but faith and reality belong rather to the life which is stamped by Spirit and suffering.

"Hope in action in the sign of the crucified Jesus is the messianic protest against godlessness and unrighteousness in this period of death; a protest which liberates men for response to and fellowship with God, and for righteousness" (Moltmann 1992:222).

It is here in this protest in the face of resistance that fragments and anticipations of the new creation come into being.

"It is correct to see the celebration of the Lord's supper as the centre of the life of the primitive Christian churches, then the telling of the story of the passion and the proclamation of Jesus' saving death 'until he comes' coincide in this celebration" (Moltmann 1992:220).

2.7 The Gospel creates the church as a messianic fellowship

In the previous section the Gospel was understood as a narrative truth, as the revealed Word of God known in the experience of faith and in that the believer becomes part of the story of God which the Gospel reveals. The Gospel is universally

relevant to our world not as an abstract universal and objective truth, but as a narrative that equips the church with the necessary skills to interpret and respond to a fragmented and pluralistic world. The Gospel is a narrative with a self-involving character, through which one discovers its truth and therefore there is no way in which one can speak of the story of Jesus without it forming the believer's own story. "The proclamation of the gospel always belongs within a community, for every language lives in community or creates one"(Moltmann 1992:223).

The task of the church "is to be the kind of community that tells and tells rightly the story of Jesus"(Hauerwas 1981:52). This does not mean that there is one way of telling the story of Jesus, or that one can forget the discrepancies of the Gospels with regards to the story of Jesus, but that understanding Jesus' life is inseparable from learning how to live our own lives.

"The Church is not divine revelation institutionalized"(Barth 1936:20). But the church learns to live its life as the church of Christ through remembering the story of Jesus. "For the narrative requires a corresponding community who are capable of remembering and for whom active reinterpreting remains the key to continuing a distinctive way of life"(Hauerwas 1981:54).

The fellowship which is created by the Gospel is the messianic fellowship. The Word summons a response from the hearer and if the person responds in faith he or she is added to the community. "Wer dem Worte glaubt, der ist durch den Heiligen Geist dem Leibe Christi >>eingeleibet<<" (Althaus 1983:262). The Gospel has authority within this community as it helps to form, nurture and guide the community's self-understanding as well as form the character of the individual members.

The Gospel does not only create a world, but it creates a community which is the bearer of that world, which is the messianic world brought into life through the resurrection of Jesus, and therefore the church which truthfully responds to the Gospel is a messianic fellowship. "For scripture forms a society and sets an agenda for its life that requires nothing less than trusting God found through the stories of Israel and Jesus" (Hauerwas 1981:66).

This messianic fellowship narrates the story of Christ and its own story together with the story of Christ, because its own story is born out of the liberating story of Christ. Therefore this fellowship is a storytelling fellowship (Moltmann 1992:225).

"It is a 'story-telling fellowship', which continually wins its own freedom from the stories and myths of the society in which it lives, from the present realization of this story of Christ. It is a fellowship of hope, which finds freedom from the perspectives of its society through the perspectives of the kingdom of God. Finally, it is a fellowship which, by virtue of its remembrance of the story of Christ and its hope for the kingdom of man, liberates men and women from the compulsive actions of existing society and from the inner attitudes that correspond to them, freeing them for a life which takes on a messianic character" (Moltmann 1992:225).

The church is a story-telling fellowship, which not only tells the stories of the Gospels,

but also remembers the story of Christ. The dominant genre in the Bible is narrative. In this narrative sense the Bible makes sense, as all acts of God are understood within a narrative framework developed from previous acts and these acts are remembered in the tradition. So for example the Old Testament tells the Story of God's relationship with the people of Israel. In this story there are some decisive events, for example the calling of Abraham and the Exodus. These decisive events are remembered in the tradition and from this remembered tradition the new events are interpreted. So these communities live through remembering. In this remembering and retelling of the story of God, God's character is made known.

"Jews and Christians believe this narrative does nothing less than renders the character of God and in so doing renders us to be the kind of people appropriate to that character"(Hauerwas 1981:67).

When Jews and the early Christian remembered the stories it was not about remembering the facts of the events, but more a question of what kind of community should we be to be faithful to this story? "The issue is not just one of interpretation but of what kind of people can remember the past and yet know how to go on in a changed world"(Hauerwas 1981: 67).

The Cannon is not an accomplishment, but a task for the church. The task is to become a church capable of recalling these stories and living in accordance to the narrative truth of scripture. This brings me to the first part of my leading question: what kind of community should the church be?

"...what kind of community the church must be to be able to make the narratives of scripture central for its life"(Hauerwas 1981:68).

In conclusion: Referring back to Chapter Two (8.2.2.2 The narrative history of the social setting of an action), the Gospel as authority, interpreted over the centuries of church history, forms the living tradition and thus the narrative setting in which the practices and pastoral actions of the church make sense. This narrative setting provides the framework for the narrative ethics of the church with the Gospel not as an absolute authority, but as a lived tradition.

Summary:

- 1) The church in the *postmodern global village* has not abandoned the search for truth, but does not seek this truth in universal, absolute truths, but seeks this truth in narrative and metaphor. Thereby the church avoids being apologetic towards the postmodern world view, but rather earnestly returns to her narrative – the Gospel, as it is in this Gospel that she finds truth and her identity, for it is the story that forms and creates her.
- 2) The truth of the Gospel is a narrative truth, but it is not only relevant for the church, but is also relevant in the church's relationship to the world.
- 3) The Biblical understanding of truth is relational, narrative and historical, in other words embedded in the history of God's covenantal relationship with Israel and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. This understanding of truth stands in contrast to the Greek and platonic understanding of truth which influenced the modern understanding of

- truth.
- 4) This Biblical truth is the revealed Word of God and comes from Him. There is no way in which humanity can know this truth through any methods of its own. This truth comes to us in the story of the wholly OTHER.
 - 5) The postmodern objection to the modern truth is that it seeks to impose order on the chaos of history. The Biblical narrative truth does not seek to impose order, but seeks a relationship with the believer as the believer enters the narrative.
 - 6) The truth of the Word of God (Gospel) cannot be verified by any external or objective standard, but can only be verified by its correspondence to God himself.
 - 7) This Word of God became incarnate in Christ.
 - 8) This inner correspondence between God and His Word brings this truth into conflict with a world that is contrary to God, thereby exposing the illusions and lies of the world.
 - 9) God's Word which is also the Gospel is true insofar as it corresponds to God. It is a narrative truth that seeks a relationship.
 - 10) Bultmann understands the Gospel as kerygma which is an eschatological call to decision.
 - 11) The truth of the Gospel is known in the individual's story as he/she responds to its summons.
 - 12) This kerygmatic summons reveals humanity to itself. It does this not through some theory of the self, but through the acceptance of the truth in action, in other words in the practices that follow the response to the truth.
 - 13) The truth as kerygma stands in contrast to society because it is not developed from the centre of humanity, but from Christ.
 - 14) The truth of the Gospel in this kerygma is not some universal model of self, but it forces us to a true understanding of ourselves and our existence.
 - 15) This kerygmatic truth is liberating storytelling as it tells the story of Christ, calling the believer to enter this story of liberation. It is in participating in this story that the believer comes to a true understanding of him/herself and thus also to see the world anew realising its non-identity.
 - 16) The history of Christ reports the *prolepsis* of the end of history in Jesus' fate. This event is both open to the future as well as opens the future.
 - 17) It breaks into every situation, not only exposing the non-identity of the world, but also revealing and calling to the redemptive history of God.
 - 18) This is a universal view of history and this universality is grasped in its ability to equip believers with the ability to respond to the pluralism and fragmentation of the postmodern global village.
 - 19) The Gospel has authority for the church which believes that her life depends on its faithful remembering of God's redemptive story.

2.8 Fusion of horizons between narrative orientation in a postmodern world and the theological understanding of truth in the Gospel

In Chapter Two I reflected on a narrative understanding of truth (8.6 Narrative and truth) where I discovered that truth is to be found in metaphor and that narrative truth is found in and creates narrative settings and thus creates narrative communities. The Gospel as a testimony to God's revealed Word (Truth) creates the church. The church therefore is a narrative community or a language community created by this narrative truth. I will now turn to the community created by the Gospel truth, namely the church.

QUESTION TWO: WHAT KIND OF CHURCH, WHICH FINDS ITSELF WITHIN THE POSTMODERN, URBAN, SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT 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?

3. INTRODUCTION TO THE QUESTION

In the previous section 1.1, I tried to answer some of the questions with regards to the postmodern context, which make ethical and pastoral work difficult as these often have to do with truth claims. I have tried to show that the truth of the Gospel is contradictory to the societal truth claims and therefore stands over and against these claims. It is also not a truth that the church can capture in doctrine or in a formulation, but it is a narrative truth that is experienced and lived once the believer has responded to the revealed truth and enters into the narrative of faith in which the truth is revealed.

The believer responds to this truth through his/her life, as he/she enters into the story of the triune God. This story is not lived out as an individual but within the messianic fellowship which is the language community formed by the narrative truth of the Gospel. It is to this fellowship that I now turn. I turn to the community that is created through the narrative truth of the Gospel and it is through this community that the truth of the Gospel will be verified. In the previous section I also discovered that the test for truthfulness of narratives is in the interrelation of narrative and character (Hauerwas 1981:95). I will now turn to the character of the church and her ability to respond to the *postmodern global village* as a 'test' of the truthfulness of her narrative namely the Gospel.

If the church is created by the truth of the Gospel then the theory-laden questions need to be directed to the Gospels as well as the church's tradition. This tradition is formed

by the church's attempt over the centuries to be faithful and obedient to the narrative truth of the Gospel. In this section on the church I will be looking at the Gospels as well as the setting of the Gospels, namely the history of God and His people (Israel) as well as the early church. I will be briefly looking at the setting of the story of God in the history of Israel in the Old Testament as well as looking at the story of the early church, as the early church can be seen as the first communities seeking to live faithfully to the Gospel.

Many of the questions which arose out of the theory-laden practices are questions which are pre-dominantly addressed to the church and her theology. "What kind of **church**, which finds herself within the postmodern, urban, global, South African context 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..." (Chapter Five: 3.4 The questions from the practice of the church within the postmodern global village)

The question of the future of the Church is probably one of the greatest challenges facing the church as she enters into this new era. "...for the foreseeable future, the real bone of contention among Christians, theologians and ethicists is going to be what constitutes an appropriate ecclesiology and *modus vivendi* for the churches after Christendom" (Guroian 1994:3).

In the historic and systematic theological journey of this study I will thus be reflecting on the description of the church. Gustavo Gutiérrez said, what this time we are living in calls for, is *intellectus fidei*, in other words a thorough understanding of the Christian faith (Gutiérrez 1993:3f). I will not give a systematic reflection of the historical development of the doctrine of the church from the New Testament and the early church right through to the present, but I will enter into a dialogue with some of the present ecclesiological narratives and in this dialogue reflect on various New Testament texts. The historical development of the doctrine of the church is certainly part of the effective history which is not only part of the theory-laden practices that has led to this study, but is also part of the story of the doctrines with which I will be in dialogue with.

4. THE CONTEXT OF THE BIBLICAL STORY OF GOD'S FELLOWSHIP IN HISTORY

I would like to begin this section, as this is a narrative study, on ecclesiology with a brief biblical look at the adventure story of God's fellowship in the history of this world. God is a God who has chosen to reveal himself within history and this revealed truth is only discovered through participation in His history with the world. God is a 'stories' God in relation with a 'storied' people. This revealed truth has from the very beginning always called a fellowship together and it is to this fellowship and this adventure that I now turn. The church today is part of this adventure, but the adventure began with Israel and thus the church needs to be understood within this historic setting of the adventure narrative.

"We thus forget that the most basic task of any polity is to offer its people a

sense of participation in an adventure. For finally what we seek is not power, or security, or equality, or even dignity, but a sense of worth gained from participation and contribution to a common adventure. Adventure requires courage to keep us faithful to the struggle, since by its very nature adventure means that the future is always in doubt. And just to the extent that the future is in doubt, hope is required, as there can be no adventure if we despair of our goal. Such hope does not necessarily take the form of excessive confidence; rather it involves the simple willingness to take the next step” (Hauerwas 1981:13).

The church is polity that offers her members this sense of adventure. This study is part of this adventure as the church stands before the *postmodern global village* in doubt of her future. The church is asking the question: where will she get the courage and the willingness to take the next step? Maybe the story of the adventure will help me answer this question which will then turn to a reflection on how such a next step could possibly look like.

4.1 The story of God’s fellowship and their adventure

The early church saw herself as “messianic Israel in covenant with the risen Lord, thus continuing the story of Abraham and Sarah’s offspring under very distinct circumstances, namely, as those ‘on whom the ends of the ages have come’ (1 Cor. 19:11)” (Harvey 1999:63). George Lindbeck argues that one needs to return to Israel’s story because this story needs to be the “template for fashioning an adequate ecclesiology in and for a ‘post-Christian’ age” (Lindbeck 1988:190). I believe that we cannot begin the adventure of the church in the New Testament without remembering the history of this adventure as it started with Israel. The reason for this is that redemption and truth are revealed within the public arena of history and therefore this adventure needs to be told, as it needs to be lived and proclaimed in relation to the public arena of world history. It is not a truth for the private sphere, but a truth that is found and lived in relation to history.

The adventure begins with the creation story of Genesis 1-3, but I would like to begin this adventure at a time where there were already many nations on the face of the earth. It was in a time where the earth already experienced plurality and thus also fragmentation. This story of plurality begins with the descendents of Noah in Genesis 10.

Genesis 10:5: “These are the descendants of Japheth, and from them sprang the maritime nations, in their respective lands – each with its own language – by their clans within their nations.”

Genesis 10:20: “These are the descendants of Ham, according to their clans and languages, by their lands and nations.”

Genesis 10:31: “These are the descendants of Shem, according to their clans and language, by their lands and nations” (The African Bible).

This is what happened after the covenant with Noah and God, where God blessed the descendants of Noah so that they can populate the world. Many nations are born from the descendants of Noah and each of these nations had their own language, culture

and tradition. The world for the first time experiences plurality and diversity, but this is experienced as a sign of God's blessing the descendants of Noah. This diversity and plurality is a sign of God blessing upon His people as each develops their own culture, language and tradition. Each family and the nation that arose out of these families bears witness to the covenant with God through their own language and culture (West 1999:52).

In the very next chapter the adventure of blessing and the richness of God's blessing takes a totally different turn in Genesis 11: 1-4.

Genesis 11: 1-4 The whole world spoke the same language, using the same words. While men were migrating in the east, they came upon a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, "Come, let us mould bricks and harden them with fire." They used bricks for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Come let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky, and so make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered all over the earth" (The African Bible).

Why did the people turn away from the celebration of God's blessings, which was shown and expressed in the diversity and plurality, and rather build the tower of Babel?

Numerous motives can be discovered:

- 1) Pride, arrogance to reach heaven through their own efforts, to develop truth through their own power of reason, to create monuments in their own image, to create gods in their own image.
- 2) The lust and desire for economic and political power that would impress and thus intimidate others.
- 3) A search for security and a fear of plurality and diversity.

The city of Babel became a city of protection. The city was intended to protect humanity from plurality and diversity by unifying all humanity into one city. The city tried to protect its inhabitants from the blessing of diversity and plurality and thus the city was built against God's blessing. "The fear was self-fulfilling. Tongues that had understood one another when they talked about human relations and response to God became confused languages when human ambition and human fear drove their discourse" (West 1999:53).

The adventure seems to have come to an end. The people God had created in His image, are scattered and confused and there is no longer any sense of togetherness. Is this the end, the final victory of human fear and ambition over the blessings of God?

It is in this context of utter hopelessness where the adventure seems to have come to an abrupt end as there is no hope for the future, that the story of Abram begins. God responds to human crisis and hopelessness and begins the adventure with Abram.

The irony of the adventure is that what the people of Babel had feared most was the task given to Abram. "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and form your father's house to a land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1).

“What for the Babelites was a curse is for Abram the promise of a blessing. He would be father of a great nation; his name would be great. But the greatness of this nation would be not its culture and power, but its faithfulness to the covenant and its witness only to the merciful power of God” (West 1999:55).

The Adventure begins again. The adventure of God’s truth which is in contradiction to the truths of society, of culture and of reason, begins again with the calling of a fellowship. The sacred story is revealed in the mundane story of this one man’s life and his story with God.

It is a truth revealed in history which creates a community or fellowship which seeks to live by this truth.

This time God reveals Himself to Abram. Abram and his wife respond to this revealed truth and form the fellowship based on and created by this revealed truth. This truth is not an abstract universal truth, but the truth that will be known in the experience of history and that reveals itself in history to those who are obedient to its call.

The fellowship on the adventure of truth is faced with the challenge (Genesis 12: 2-3):

Genesis 12:2-3: “I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you”(The African Bible).

This is a calling of a nation, but how can one nation with one culture and language fulfil this challenge of being a blessing to all nations and be a community of reconciliation in which God reconciles the scattered and fragmented universe?

It is within the context of this challenge that the Old Testament story unfolds and tells the story of the adventure of a people who responded not to a universal abstract truth, but a narrative truth revealed in history and known only in them who lived in response to this truth. It was and is a story and a journey which was plagued with many temptations. There was continually the temptation to go beyond the grammar of narrative truth as I reflected on in Chapter Two (8.6.2 Internal history (a metaphorical story)).

For example, there was the temptation of imperialist power, where one language and one culture are united into one nation with political power to coerce other nations into submission. “Such was the pattern of ancient Egypt, of Babylon, of the Chinese Empire and civilizations, of Greek culture in the Hellenic Empires, and of the civilization established and ruled by Rome” (West 1999:56). Israel was tempted into this line of thinking under the rule of David and Solomon.

The other great temptation was of religious nationalism - “one culture that becomes itself sacred sphere where God is known and worshiped and for which other nations are by their existence at best strangers, at worst threats or enemies” (West 1999:56). This was the pattern of the ancient Near East, and the fellowship of Abraham and Moses very often fell for this temptation although the prophets protested against it.

The people of Israel had to withstand these temptations as they were given a different mission – “to find their way between these fatal rocks on one or the other of which so many cultures have foundered, toward a new vision of human community inspired by the promise of God” (West 1999:57).

For this task a chosen fellowship was necessary or a chosen people, the children of Abraham, who would seek to live not by powerful universal truths and ideologies, but would take the risk of living in relationship to a narrative truth which reveals itself within history.

They were chosen not because they were special or because they had special power or for any other reason but for the reason that they were chosen by God, and so they had no power of their own, but were dependent on God.

Deuteronomy 7:7: “It was not because you are the largest of all nations that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you, for you are really the smallest of all nations. It was because the Lord loved you and because of his fidelity to the oath he had sworn to your fathers, that he brought you out with his strong hand from the place of slavery, and ransomed you from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt” (The African Bible).

This fellowship, community, nation owed its existence only to God and His His mercifulness, faithfulness and nothing else. The truth of this fellowship is in God and not in any human creation, be it tradition, culture or reason.

The crux of the development of this story is given in the story of Gideon (Judges 6:11-8:23). Martin Buber describes this story of Gideon as a poetic memory that expresses a will or disposition “of a religious and political kind in one” (Buber 1967:58).

This story of Gideon makes it so clear that God is the all embracing ruler of the world and that He is the beginning and end of the people of Israel. He is their *proton* and *eschaton*.

The people of Israel seek to make the lordship of God a reality in their lives. This places their existence and their history into a dialectic - of a asking divinity and an answer-refusing, but nevertheless answer-attempting humanity (Buber 1967:63-65). Israel’s one desire was the fulfilment of this promise of the Kingship of God, “wresting ever and again from the changing resistance of the times a fragment of realization, however altered,” and this formed the basis of their understanding of God, history the world and politics (Buber 1967:139).

The word consciousness, which comes from the Latin word *con-scio* which means to know with, resides principally in the ability to hear and speak rather than to see.

“This ability to say, and more precisely to signify, emanates from the contingent operation of memory that forms the medium and the means of human knowledge”(Harvey 1999:37).

A thing, a person or an event exists for somebody only when it passes into an incorporeal or intentional state which has the ability to abide in time when it is no longer

present and this is done through memory.

Yet memory in the context of history tells us that the present situation has a context. It is “part of a continuity, it is ‘made’ and so it is not immutable” (Williams 1984:29f).

An adventure, which is based on the revelation of a narrative truth to a people, demands memory because the people will always need to interpret the present in the light of that narrative of revelation.

Abraham Joshua Heschel argues: “much of what the Bible demands can be comprised in one word, remember” (Heschel 1951:161).

To really understand history it needs the context of memory. For the children of Abraham and Sarah to understand their history, their identity and their politics they required a context of understanding, interpreting and describing that only memory could provide.

“The memory of God as king, exemplified in the canonical story of Gideon, is therefore poetic in the basic sense of that term, for it has provided countless generations with their knowledge of how to go on and go further in the use of the expressions of a language” (Harvey 1999:37).

Slowly the community (Israel) learned this language and this made it possible for them to continue as community or as people through history. This narrative of God as king formed the poetizing medium through which reason could become practical as freedom (Metz 1980:195-197).

It is this very fact that they are chosen for no other reason, but that God loved them, that they are a shining light to the nations of the world. This fact has proven itself true in history, that wherever the Jewish people were in the diaspora they witnessed to the fact that those nations, their power and their culture, are not ultimate.

“Another people, chosen by God and formed by God’s covenant, lives among them, challenges them with its culture and its law even without political power of its own, an implicit reminder of God’s commandment, judgment, and mercy on us all” (West 1999:59).

This is also the reason that the Jewish diaspora history is a history of so much violence and oppression, as these other nations did not accept this challenge by a ‘powerless’ people.

At each step of the way of this journey they had to ask themselves what it means to be claimed by God as a chosen people. It is in this process of an asking God and an answer-attempting humanity that their identity needed to be established.

“The key feature of this dialectic is its interlocutory character. Over and over again the word of the Lord comes to claim this people in the entirety of their existence, and their world is turned upside down” (Harvey 1999:38).

It is in response to this claim that they had to establish and understand their identity as a people within the nations.

As the story of Israel suggests, “for a person (or group) to be initiated into personhood (or peoplehood) as a character in an ongoing drama does not necessarily condemn anyone to a fixed place or role within the story. It is of course the case that at any given moment in this narrative a person could be asked to provide an account”(Harvey 1999:40).

It is this dialectic of memory and identity which gives a community the ability to respond to certain set of questions, such as: Who are we, and what kind of world do we inhabit? What sort of people are we to become, and what role do we play in this world? What goods should we pursue as a people? What means should we use to achieve these goods? (Harvey 1999:41). These questions are never asked in isolation, but always in the context of various relations with other nations or peoples. The logical consequence of the question: what is good and best for one group of people, will lead to the question of what is good for all people. The prophets of Israel were at the forefront of this question, reminding the people of Israel that they were called to be a light to the nations.

As was stated earlier, Israel was an odd people, yet with a subversive voice challenging the truth of nations and the societies with which they came into contact. For a small group of wandering nomads, or refugees, or exiles this is an audacious claim. Yet it was the claim of God’s divine rule to which they tried to respond to and live faithfully to. Through their very existence as God’s chosen people, they called into question any other claim about the meaning and purpose of life. The other claims to reality and truth needed to be “judged by reference to one seemingly insignificant group of people who have laboured through the centuries as the (often reluctant) bearers of this poetizing memory” (Harvey 1999:42-43).

Israel’s relationship to other nations is to allow the historicity and strangeness of its poetizing memory to challenge prevailing assumptions about how people should live and relate to each other. This poeticising memory does not only claim Israel on the boundaries of life, but in the middle of life, or as Dietrich Bonhoeffer says “not at the boundaries where human powers give out, but in the middle of the village” (Bonhoeffer 1971:281f).

The narrative truth of Israel’s story challenges and questions the analytic and philosophical theories of truth of the societies around them.¹¹

The reign of God shapes the course of history. It does this in a method that at first appears like a paradox (Harvey 1999:44). The paradox is the paradox of narrative truth in the context of universal absolute truths. Israel responded to this paradox, as they refused to accept the limits of language to a truth that could not be defined nor named. It was not because they wanted their individual autonomy, but on the contrary their response was carried out for the sake of the highest bondage to the ruler of the world – their God. Yet the paradox once more is that this highest bondage knows no

¹¹ Chapter Two: 8.6.2 Internal history (a metaphorical story), where I reflected on metaphor’s (narrative truths) ability to challenge the analytic assumptions.

compulsion.

“The paradox of God’s sovereign rule finds its historical expression as a *politeia* in the covenant concluded at Sinai between Israel and the God of their ancestors, who would forever be their king” (Harvey 1999:45).

This was the first step of the journey that unfolded in the history of “a world which does not want to be God’s and to a God who does not want to compel the world to become his” (Buber 1967:139).

It is within this context that Israel understood history as “an interpellative dialogue between God (whose covenant faithfulness, *tsedaqah*, or ‘righteousness,’ is perpetually at stake) and humankind (whose resistance to the divine rule) forms an essential component of the engine that drives history towards its true end” (Harvey 1999:48).

I would like to jump from the people of Israel and the Old Testament fellowship of truth to the New Testament and the fellowship of truth which was created through Christ.

The new fellowship was the fellowship around Jesus namely his disciples, but it was only after His resurrection and with the coming of the Spirit that this fellowship began to understand the truth of their fellowship. I would like to argue that this fellowship was born through the power of the Spirit in Jerusalem at Pentecost.

It is no coincidence that the beginning of this fellowship was in Jerusalem and that the disciples spoke in all the languages so that each could hear the Gospel in their mother tongue. The Spirit had to address all these people in their different languages, as languages were no longer God’s blessing, but had become the curse of division and fragmentation. Yet all these people had come to Jerusalem, because they were searching for a community that was more comprehensive than the individual nations, languages and cultures. They were in search of a community that could unite in the midst of fragmentation and division.

The message was proclaimed in that the story of Jesus was told. The story of Jesus which was told was the fulfilment of the adventure of Israel. This message had two results:

- 1) “the household of God, of which Christ is the head, grows out of the Jewish nation, Its mission to all peoples is a new direction in the history of God with the covenant people that began with the calling of Abraham.”
- 2) “in Christ the desire of all nations (Hag. 2:7), including the Jews, has indeed been fulfilled and at the same time transformed (West 1999:61).

So the adventure of truth is taken up and is transformed by the fellowship of Christ. I will now turn to the doctrine of the church as I take up this adventure of truth.

4.2 The summary of the context of the biblical story of God’s fellowship in history

The adventure of the church does not begin in the New Testament but already in the Old Testament with the revelation of God’s truth to the people of Israel. This is a paradoxical truth, that ‘spoke’ against the ‘truths’ of society and thus countered

the humanly created idols, monuments and gods (Babel) as it came from the living God. This **narrative truth** was bound within in the limits of language, such as the theories and ideologies of the ancient world, but revealed itself within the story of a people and in their history. This history is characterised by a people's response to the narrative truth of God.

This truth, as kerygma, called a fellowship into being which lived in a relationship with it and thus formed a history. The truth was known only in the history that is created. This is the history of the children of Abraham and Sarah. This truth of God is known in relationship and in the subsequent history that develops out of this relationship. The truth is that these obscure nomadic people are the bearers of the true meaning of history as they are responding to the Lord of history. It was this story that they remembered and thus this story, of the kingship of God, formed their poetizing memory by which they defined themselves, understood and interpreted history and ventured into the future. This is the context into which the Son of God became incarnate and then became universal at Pentecost and thus became the story of the Church.

5. INTRODUCTION TO THE JOURNEY OF DESCRIBING THE CHURCH

One of the characteristics of life in the *postmodern global village* is a sense of insecurity. There is the nagging feeling of insecurity and instability both outward and inward, as the ethical, political, economic and spiritual systems of our world seem more vulnerable than what was expected. Within this context humans long and seek for spaces of security and stability. The church is no exception to this process of insecurity and instability and her members are certainly longing for stability and security. The church can very easily be tempted to respond to this longing and offer humanity a space of stability and security, as was described in Chapter Five, that the church responds to the therapeutic culture (Chapter Five: 2.6 The church and postmodernity/ the church within the global village).

The church's task is to respond to the needs of humanity in the sense of supply and demand. Or has the church a greater calling to which she needs to respond to? I will return to this question in the next section. The church is tempted to create a secure and stable environment in an unstable and insecure world, but the church is also criticized by the many sceptical voices questioning the relevance of her tradition, theology and liturgical forms.

The church of the *postmodern global village* is in a crisis. The church in crisis seeks new bearings and maybe a new or a rediscovered or a reinterpreted understanding of the meaning of being church.

This crisis I have partly described in the previous chapters where I described the crisis of the *postmodern global village* which has influenced the church to such an extent that

the theory-laden practices are raising numerous questions. Questions such as:¹²

- 1) Where do we come from? This is a historical question as it looks back at the story of the church.
- 2) Where are we going? This question is born out of the crisis and it questions the future. The question is: does the church have a future or has she come to her end? The church can only understand its future in the context of her commission and the hope that she bears for and with other people, or for and with the world (Moltmann 1992: xii).
- 3) Who are we? This is a question of identity. As was discovered in Chapter Two, identity is necessarily narrative identity and if the story of the past does not flow into a story of the future because of a crisis (a problem story), then the identity is questioned. I believe this is where we are at the moment in the journey of this study. “The Christian life of theologians, churches and human beings is faced more than ever today with a double crisis: the crisis of relevance and the crisis of identity” (Moltmann 1974:7). The identity of the church is being questioned and a new (reinterpreted, rediscovered) identity needs to be found which can only be done by reinterpreting/rediscovering/reauthoring the story of the past so that new light and hope is born for the future. Yet, because we are dealing with the church, this journey is also a spiritual journey guided by the trinitarian story of God.

In this chapter, being a historical chapter, I will begin with the historical question: Where do we come from? But I will ask this question from the perspective of the future, guided by the question: What is the next step/s for the church in the future? I believe that the church has a significant future, that the church can take the next step and that this step will be a step of hope within the story of the adventure. But this future might be completely different to the past, although the church can only understand herself in the light of her past story. “But to have that future, we Christians must stop trying to have the kind of future that nearly sixteen centuries of official Christianity in the Western world have conditioned us to covet” (Hall 1997:ix).

“For every crisis calls the traditional and familiar answers into questions. Anyone who only talks about the ‘crises’ without recognizing this implicit opportunity is talking because he is afraid and without hope. Anyone who only wants to have new opportunities without accepting the crisis of previous answers is living in illusion” (Moltmann 1992:xi).

In this theological journey I need to critically reflect on the crisis of previous answers. In section (2.2 The Gospel truth known in the story of the revealed Word of God) I discovered that the truth of God and the Gospel are historical and that they are revealed within history. Therefore the truth of the past will not necessarily be the truth of the present or the future. If the church holds onto the past she will not have the hope to enter the future, but her future will be darkened and filled with crisis and doubt.

“I believe that commitment to the established model of the church – to Christendom in its various institutional forms – is the single most important

¹² These questions are very similar to the questions asked by Israel as discussed in Chapter Six: 2.1 The story of God’s fellowship and their adventure.

cause of inertia and the retardation of intentional and creative response to this great transition” (Hall 1997:7).

When faced with the challenge and the crisis of the church today it is very tempting to return to older forms of being church. But as Moltmann and Hall have argued this is not the way to go, as it robs the church of her historical truth and stifles her in her development. Yet the church has done exactly that as she has tried to recapture something of her past. The church has tried to go back “to the style of the *ancien regime*... to a society in which the churches regarded themselves as the spiritual form of a material community” (Kent 1982:viii).

This nostalgic return to the old forms takes on two different forms, as was discussed in Chapter Five (2.6 The church and postmodernity/ the church *with* the global village).

“Some long to recover something of the institutional or cultural synthesis between Christianity and society that once distinguished the age of Christendom. Others cede the day to the forces of secularization and so relinquish much of the specificity of the gospel” (Harvey 1999:14).

In a post-Christian world the church can no longer expect to be this large institutional organisation that she once was in the past. Within the *postmodern global village* the idea of imposed affiliations are loosing their power to shape people’s lives and lend them meaning, purpose and significance and therefore the church does not need to be this large organisation within society.

New forms need to be found, but these new forms are not found in a vacuum, but within the history of God. The church cannot just look for new forms anywhere, because her history (her present and future) needs to be understood in the light of the memory of her story. It is in the memory of the story that the church finds the hope to take the next bold step because this step is taken within the Story and the providence of God. It is not humans who are the makers of history, as the story of the fellowship of God tells us that there is a covenantal relationship between humanity and God in the unfolding of history.

“Christians understand themselves to be stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 4:1). Accordingly, we are called to participate in the judgment that begins at the household of faith (1 Peter 4: 17), and to participate also in re-forming of that household” (Hall 1997:41-42).

The reformers taught us that the disciple community is called to continuous reformation (*semper reformanda*). This tells us that God wills the church to be critical, self-reflective and seek new ways in which to be obedient to the calling of God’s Word.

The question the church needs to ask herself is: How can we (the church) be more faithful to our memory (poetizing memory) and obedient to our story?

If the previous institutional form of church is no longer appropriate in a *postmodern global village*, what new form can be rediscovered from scripture?

“Forms of community that are personally accepted and entered into voluntarily are becoming more important” (Moltmann 1992:xvi).

The idea of community is not only becoming more important within the *postmodern global village*, but it is also an integral part of the Biblical understanding as well as the narrative theological orientation (language communities).

Communities that are born out of the Biblical narratives, such as: the community of Abraham who hears the call and embarks on a journey of promise and hope, the community of Israel liberated from bondage and slavery and called to live as a free community and as such be a light to the nations, and the community of Christ born out of His redeeming story. It seems as if the way forward is in the form of new communities, but the question that still needs to be asked is: What form will these new communities take? Before I will come to this question I believe it to be important to take up Gutiérrez's challenge and engage in a thorough theological understanding of the church and reflect on tradition in which this theology of the church (ecclesiology) has developed.

I will be reflecting on the doctrine of the church under four headings, namely:

- 1) The dimensions within which the church needs to describe her identity
- 2) The relationships which are integral to the church's identity
- 3) The story of Christ as the church's narrative
- 4) The story of the early church's identity

5.1 Summary of introduction to the journey of describing the church

It is clear that the church in the *postmodern global village* is in a crisis. This is an identity crisis as the church is not sure where she is going, because she does not know who she is in the *postmodern global village*. In this study I would like to reflect on the church's identity and specifically in this chapter return to the question: Where does the church come from? In other words I will be returning to her foundation and there seek a way forward, as it is clear that the church needs to find new ways to respond to the *postmodern global village*.

6. THE DIMENSIONS WITHIN WHICH THE CHURCH NEEDS TO DESCRIBE HER IDENTITY¹³

Before I can embark on this historical and systematic journey I need to be clear about the dimension or the parameters of this journey. In this journey of discovering and describing the church I will be reflecting mainly on the work of Jürgen Moltmann.¹⁴ Moltmann argues that the church at every period of her journey needs to be very clear about her commission, her situation and her goal.

¹³ In this section on the description of the church I will be reflecting on the work of Jürgen Moltmann and also following the basic structure of his argument in his book, *The church in the Power of the Spirit*.

¹⁴ Moltmann, J 1992 *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* Second Edition London: SCM Press Ltd.

“The church is the people of God and will give an account of itself at all times to the God who has called it into being, liberated it and gathered it. It is therefore before the divine forum that it will reflect upon its life and the forms that life takes, what it says and what it does not say, what it does and what it neglects to do” (Moltmann 1992:1).

Yet on the other hand the church also has a responsibility towards humanity.

Romans 1: 14: “To the Greeks and non-Greeks alike, to the wise and the ignorant, I am under obligation” (The African Bible 1999).

Paul saw himself to be under the obligation to fulfil the commission with regards to the whole world. Karl Barth’s explanation of this text: “Landesgrenzen und Kulturschranken werden ihn sicher nicht zurückhalten und, wenn es denn sein soll, wird er auf dem Geistes - und Religionsjahrmarkt in Rom ebenso ungescheut seines Amtes walten...”(Barth: 1922:12).

The church therefore has this double obligation, namely to the triune God and toward humanity (the world).

“In the community of the incarnate God and the exalted man Jesus Christ there can be no division here. The church will always have to present itself both in the forum of God and in the forum of the world. For it stands for God to the world and its stands for the world before God. It confronts the world in critical liberty and is bound to give it the authentic revelation of the new life. At the same time it stands before God in fellowship and solidarity with all men and is bound to send up to him out of the depth the common cry for life and liberty” (Moltmann 1992:1).

It is exactly in this double obligation that the church finds herself that the crisis of identity comes up in our present time. It is in this double relationship that the church in the *postmodern global village* experiences an identity and relevance crisis.

Somehow the church will need to find a way to be true to her obligation towards God, which is found in her tradition, without becoming a theocracy, but on the other hand she cannot become so part of the postmodern world that she is stuck with unproductive tolerance and relativism that can only be seen as psychological effectiveness, as discussed in Chapter Five (2.6 The church and postmodernity / the church *with* the global village).

Therefore the journey of the church can be seen as a journey of free solidarity and critical fellowship with the world. The church in the *postmodern global village* is called to free solidarity with the villagers and marginalised yet the relationship is also characterised by a critical fellowship. Stanley Hauerwas understands the challenge for the church today to be:

“...to reassert the social significance of the church as a distinct society with an integrity peculiar to itself.Christians rediscover that their most important social task is nothing less than to be a community capable of hearing the story of God we find in the scripture and living in a manner that is faithful to that story” (Hauerwas 1981:1).

In the journey of this study it has become clear to me that if the church wants to serve and be faithful to her commission in the *postmodern global village* she will need to understand her identity as separate from this global village. This sense of separateness does not deny that the church has a social responsibility and that her commission is directed towards the world, but to be faithful to that commission she needs to seek her identity as separate or should I rather say as an alternative to the *postmodern global village*. I will seek to describe and reflect on why I say this.

Hall describes the relationship between the church and the world as intentional *disengagement* from the dominant culture (Hall 1997:43). This is specifically true for the church from the protestant tradition within the Western countries. The Western church needs to disengage from the dominant culture of the West, as for too long the church has been bound up in this culture. The church in the West can be to a large extent described as the pastoral church of Western culture. (I have discussed especially the Western church's relationship to modernity and postmodernity in the previous chapter, Chapter Five) As the dominant culture of the global village has arisen mainly out of the Western world it is important for the church in the *postmodern global village* to disengage from this culture. This disengagement is only the precondition for a meaningful engagement with this world and society. It must not be understood as a flight from the world.

The church is a community that is faithful to a story and is faithful by being called into the history (story) of the triune God. Therefore the church can never be static, but is continuously on a journey – a journey that is understood in the context of the commission, inspired by the hope of the promise and is in critical fellowship with the world where she can judge the suffering by the standard of the kingdom to come. To be able to judge the suffering by the standard of the kingdom to come the church needs to disengage from the world so as to be able to critically engage herself with the world.

In this disengagement and identification with the suffering there lie certain dangers that the church needs to be aware of.

“...sensitivity to injustice and suffering often becomes a new dualism that categorizes human beings according to membership in the group of the oppressed or the oppressor... I am not convinced that this objectification of humanity into victim and executioner does justice to the complexity of the human individual or to the dynamic of evil...the web that unites victim and tyrant in the same person is more complex...” (Farley 1990:51-52).

This is the one extreme of disengagement and identification which the church in the *postmodern global village* needs to be aware of. There is another danger with regards to the relationship of the church to the world and that is the idea that ‘true Christians’ are those that take a certain radical stand on various contemporary issues. The disengagement – engagement dialectic needs to be a lot more holistic and comprehensive to do justice to the story of Christ, which is also the story of the church.

The church needs to understand her role towards the world from the perspective of God's history with the world.

“It will comprehend the meaning of its divine commission in world history and at the same time will understand the world in the context of God’s history” (Moltmann 1992:2).

The parameters of the doctrine (description) of the church needs to be understood within these three dimensions:

- 1) Before the triune God
- 2) Before humanity and the world
- 3) Before the future of God’s promise

A church that seeks to understand herself within these three dimension is an open church as she needs to be open to God, to humanity and to God’s future with the world.

These are the dimensions in which this journey needs to take place. Yet if the church calls herself the community of Christ, in other words the community that is born from the story of Christ, then the story of Christ becomes her story. This story of Christ is a messianic story of liberation and of eschatological renewal of the world (Moltmann 1992:2). It is from this Story that the church gets her calling to be “the cruciform body of Jesus Christ, a priestly and prophetic community of “the Way” (Hall 1997:49).

This is a dynamic story that calls to repentance and rebirth. So whoever enters this community, thereby entering this story, becomes part of a story which is the movement of Christ’s Spirit which liberates, calls to repentance and tirelessly works for the coming kingdom (eschatological renewal of the world).

If this is the story of the church then the restlessness of the church is not the result of the present insecurity and instability of our times, but the very nature of the church, because how else could she fulfil her charge before God, humanity and God’s future for the world. “But basically its ‘unrest’ is implicit in itself, in the crucified Christ to whom it appeals and in the Spirit of which is its driving power” (Moltmann 1992:3).

The dimensions of the description of the church, as community of Christ

- 1. Before God**
- 2. Before humanity and the world**
- 3. Before God’s future with the world**

These three dimensions of the church are only truly understood as meaningful if they are seen in the context of the church’s story – the story of the triune God with the history of the world as revealed to us in Christ.

In this chapter of the study I will be guided by these three dimensions within the context of the story of Christ.

6.1 The church before God/ the church of Jesus Christ

The church can be understood and described from numerous different perspectives and each of these perspectives would be historically and contextually conditioned.

The church needs to be understood theologically within the context and dimension of the One to whom she appeals. Theologically the church has always been, and will

always have to understand herself, as the church of Christ.

“Therefore there can be no separation of christology from ecclesiology, that is, Jesus from the church. The truthfulness of Jesus creates and is known by the kind of community his story should form” (Hauerwas 1981:37).

According to the New Testament there is no other way to understand the church as the church of Christ that lives through him and His proclamation (1 Corinthians 3:11 “for no one can lay a foundation other than the one what is there, namely, Jesus Christ” (The African Bible)). The church is seen to be His body (1 Corinthians 12:27 “Now you are Christ’s body, and individually part of it” (The African Bible)).

The word church comes from the Greek word *ecclesia* and the profane Hellenistic understanding of *ecclesia* is a political gathering of people, who constitute themselves. The church however is not just a gathering of people which is constituted by humans, but is a community called by God and constituted by God (Pöhlmann 1990:315).

Christ is the subject and the author of the church and therefore the church is tasked with the concern and that is to discern her subject and author as clearly as possible and then to seek to live accordingly as church. If the church lives before God, “then theological doctrine will see the church in the trinitarian history of God’s dealing with the world”(Moltmann 1992: 5).

The church is understood within the trinitarian history of God’s dealing with the world, which is revealed in the story of Christ.

Christ thus becomes the church’s foundation, her power and her hope. For the church to be truthful she needs to listen only to Christ, be alone formed and shaped by the story of Christ and be there where Christ is. Then the church will be a truthful community, created by the truthful narrative of Christ and thus be a liberating and redeeming power within the world.

The theological understanding of the church is embedded in this tradition, this story of Christ and His liberating power. The church, as the church of Christ, can only appeal and understand herself before her Lord – Jesus, the Christ. The Lordship of Christ is the church’s sole and all-embracing and determining factor (Moltmann 1992: 5). Likewise the members of the church, the believers, are also called to this total obedience to the Lordship of Christ which is all-embracing and undivided.

In this sense Christology and ecclesiology become totally intertwined.

“Every statement about the church will be a statement about Christ. Every statement about Christ also implies a statement about the church; yet the statement about Christ is not exhausted by the statement about the church because it also goes further, being directed toward the messianic kingdom which the church serves” (Moltmann 1992:6).

2 Corinthians 5: 15: “He indeed died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised” (The African Bible).

The church is called to subordinate all her interests and the interests of her members

under the interest of Christ, which means that the story of Christ crucified becomes the dominant determining story for the church and her members.

The church is called to stand before God, to give account before the triune God and the story of the triune God, which is her story. This is the task of theology and it is a critical task. It is the task of this chapter to reflect on the theory-laden practices of the church in the *postmodern global village* in the light of this task of theology. This task is therefore critical as it challenges the church with the story of her subject. Yet this task also needs to be done before humanity and the world, in other words it needs to be relevant to the context and the times in which the church lives. The Church's dimension before God/the story of Christ is not in contrast to her obligation towards humanity, because her relationship to Christ makes her involved in the world. The church's faithfulness to Christ forces her to turn to the world.

“...a Christology which is not a social ethic is deficient. From this perspective the most “orthodox” Christologies are inadequate when they fail to suggest how being a believer in Jesus provides and requires that we have the skills to describe and negotiate our social existence” (Hauerwas 1981:37).

I will now reflect on this dimension of the church, her skill in negotiating her social existence in the world and her obligation towards the world.

6.2 The church's relevance and obligation towards humanity and the world

The church as was discovered in 4. *The Dimensions within which the church needs to describe her identity* has an obligation towards the history of the world. This obligation, as understood by Paul in the letter to the Romans, is a missionary charge. The church, especially in the protestant tradition, has neglected this missionary charge as the theology of the reformation focussed its attention of the justification of the sinner through grace, unlike Paul who focussed on the commission to proclaim the Gospel to all the nations both Jews and Gentiles.

“Since there was at that time no proclamation of the Word outside the church, the call is no doubt seen as something that has already happened, something accomplished by the apostles, from which we still profit today; it is no longer a divine action in the present which we experience too” (Schlatter 1897:7).

This idea is still very prominent in Christian societies where the church is seen as the guardian of the national religion and although this view changed in later years with the discovery of new lands and people, there are still remnants of this understanding of mission in the church today – the idea that mission is something for certain individuals in the church at large, but certainly not the task of the church as a whole.

Yet the church stands before humanity and the world as it stands before God. The church does not have a mission, but the very reverse is true “that the mission of Christ creates its own church. Mission does not come from the church; it is from mission and in the light of mission that the church has to be understood” (Moltmann 1992:10).

The church stands in the story of the triune God, which is the story of God with the

world. Therefore the church stands within the *missio Dei*. If the church is the church of Christ then the church stands in the mission of Christ (*missio dei*) which is described in Luke 4.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.” Luke 4:18-19 (The African Bible).

The church is called to proclaim the Gospel of the coming kingdom which as Jesus says: “Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing” Luke 4:21 (The African Bible). The most primitive Christology argues that the Gospel is the story of the man who had the authority to preach that the kingdom of God is at hand. Jesus, through the story of his life, proclaimed the dawn of the kingdom of God. His story forms the ethos of the kingdom.

“By recovering the narrative dimension of Christology we will be able to see that Jesus did not have a social ethic, but his story is a social ethic”(Hauerwas 1981: 37).

If Jesus’ story is a social ethic then the church, which is created by His story, needs to exemplify that ethic.

The proclamation of the kingdom of God is the most important element in the mission of Jesus and therefore also is the most important element in the mission of the Spirit through the church. The church needs to understand herself within this dimension before humanity and the world, and that is to be sent like the Father sent the Son and the Holy Spirit, because then the church will understand herself within the history of the triune God and within the *missio dei*.

This *missio dei* is not the expansion of the church, but the proclamation of the kingdom and it is the glorification not of the church, but the glorification of the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit (Moltmann 1992:11). How does the church engage with the world in this *missio dei*?

I have said earlier that the church needs to disengage in order to engage and this is a continuous process and not a once and for all event. I would like to briefly reflect on this idea of disengagement in order to engage with the world. The disengagement cannot be complete, because if one is completely distinct from a given entity then you cannot communicate with it. “Genuine engagement of anything or anyone presupposes a dynamic of difference and sameness, distinction and participation, transcendence and mutuality”(Hall 1997:52).

Romans 12:2: “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”
Matthew 28:19: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”(The African Bible).

It seems as if the *missio dei* needs just such a disciple community which distinguishes

itself from the world yet enters into the world. The church needs to become an alien in her own land. This can very often lead to an awkwardness but this is the church's calling to be fools for Christ.

“If we are faithful and imaginative enough to disentangle our authentic tradition or tradition of belief from its cultural wrapping, we will have something to bring to our world that it does not have – a perspective on itself, a judgment of its pretensions and injustices, an offer of renewal and hope. Only as community that does not find its sources of identity and vocation within its cultural milieu can the church acquire any intimations of “gospel” for its cultural milieu”(Hall 1997:55-56).

6.3 The church before God's future with the world

The third dimension of the identity of the church is within the context of God's future with the world. It is the future and the hope of the kingdom of God and the consummation of all creation in God that leads the church into a critical fellowship with the world. It is a critical and liberating fellowship that seeks holistic liberation for a new fellowship with God, humanity and creation. The church in her dimension before God's future places her on the side of the oppressed and humiliated and there she is sustained by hope.

“For the adventure in which the church plays a part is sustained only through hope, a hope disciplined by patience, since we recognize that our hope is eschatological – that is, that we live in a time when that for which we hope is not soon to become a full reality”(Hauerwas 1981:5).

From the three dimensions of the doctrine of the church it is clear that the church finds herself within the story of the triune God and that Christ is her author and subject. These three dimensions together form a narrative unity, which is the story of God with the world.

I have discussed the dimensions in which the church needs to understand and describe herself. I will now turn to the church's relationship within these dimensions and describe how these relationships are guided by the Gospel truth.

6.4 Summary of the dimensions within which the church needs to describe her identity

The church is a narrative community, which is created by the truth of the Gospel. The Gospel and the interpretation of the Gospel over the centuries forms her living tradition. Yet the members of the church are also exposed to other traditions and narratives and therefore the church needs to understand and describe herself within these other traditions as well. There are three dimensions within which the church needs to describe her identity, namely before God, before humanity and before God's future with the world. The church, with her living narrative tradition, is in a critical hermeneutical dialogue with these other narratives. To be in critical hermeneutical dialogue with these other traditions the church needs to disengage (be separated that is to be defined by God's Story) to be able to critically engage these other narratives. These three dimensions only have meaning and make

sense if they are understood within the narrative of the triune God as revealed to the church through the story of Christ. Christ is the church's author and her subject, therefore the church's task is to discern this subject and author as clearly and comprehensively as possible and then seek to live by that. She is called to respond to Christ alone and in this faithful response she arrives at her truth (her true identity) and becomes free and a liberating power in the world. It is her relationship to Christ that also determines her relationship with and dimension to the world. This dimension to the world is a messianic and missionary dimension as the church becomes part of the mission of God. The Father who sent the Son and the Spirit also sends the Church in the power of the Spirit into the world and so the Church becomes part of the Story and the *Missio Dei*. This mission becomes meaningful only if understood in the eschatological history of Christ, in other words in the story of God's future with the world. Thus the church needs to describe her identity within these three dimensions as understood as the history of the triune God revealed in Christ.

7. THE RELATIONSHIPS WHICH ARE INTEGRAL TO THE CHURCH'S IDENTITY

The question that I am struggling with in this chapter is the identity of the church. This identity, as I have discovered in this study, is necessarily a narrative identity. Therefore the church will discover her identity within her story, which is the story of the triune God as revealed in the story of Christ. The church is born in Christ and is incorporated in a story that culminates in the glorification of the Father, through the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit. The church's identity is set within the dimensions of this story, but identity also has to do with relationships with others.

The church finds herself in numerous relationships. The first relationship in which will be discussed is the relationship between the church and her members. This is a complex relationship as the church is experienced in this relationship in two very different ways. Firstly, the church is experienced as the local community/ congregation with all its struggles and problems. Secondly, the church is also experienced by each believer as a statement of faith (*credo ecclesiam*). These two experiences of the church can very often be very contradictory. The second relationship is the relationship between the church and the story of Christ. The third relationship is the relationship between the church and the historical situation in the world. The fourth relationship is between the church and the trinitarian history of God. I will briefly touch on these four relationships in which the church finds herself.

7.1 The relationship between the church as a social reality of experience and the church of faith (*credo ecclesiam*)

Many of the frustrations with regards to the church arise out of this relationship, which can be seen as a relationship between ideal and real. Yet, if we want to describe the church and more specifically the story of the church, all that we have at our disposal is a historical and social institution (Moltmann 1992:20). This social and historical does not really do justice to the identity and character of the church, because an important

part, probably the most important part of the church, namely what is believed and stated in the confession of faith, is not taken into consideration. Paul Tillich describes the relationship in the following way: “What can we make of the ‘paradox’ that the churches participate, on the one hand, in the ambiguities of life in general and of the religious life in particular and on the other hand, in the unambiguous life of the Spiritual Community?” (Tillich 1963:165)

The question is: how can one identify the church or understand her character when one is dealing with the essence of her being, but at the same time her form, (Ebeling 1966:94) which seems to be at times contradictory?

“The church never existed in a historically demonstrable ideal form, a form in which faith and experience coincided”(Moltmann 1992:21). Luther already struggled with this question. He formulated it with the idea of the invisible church - “*abscondita est ecclesia, latent sancti*”= Verborgen is die Kirche, die Heiligen sind unbekannt” (Pöhlmann 1990:317).

Moltmann offers three possibilities of how this relationship can be understood.

7.1.1 Paradoxical identity

“The church is ‘at the same time’ the object of faith and the object of empiricism. By the way of this paradoxical ‘at the same time’ it partakes of the paradox of Christ’s proclamation, which preaches the historical cross of Christ as being at the same time an eschatological saving event. Its paradoxical ‘at the same time’ corresponds to Christian existence, which is at once eschatological and historical” (Moltmann 1992:22).

These two, namely eschatology and history, come together in the instant when this concept is grasped in faith (Bultmann 1957:154).

The paradoxical identity brings with it tension and conflict between sin and righteousness, spirit and flesh and thus presses forward towards redemption by virtue of its hope (Moltmann 1992:23). This paradoxical identity does not really solve the problem because sinful humanity does not necessarily correspond to empirical humanity and secondly the creative righteousness of God corresponds ultimately only to a new creation which is understood eschatologically and not as that which already exists in the here and now. This paradoxical understanding is not very useful in the description and understanding of the church.

7.1.2 The anticipation of hope

“Basically speaking, this picks up the ancient doctrine of sanctification, which has justification as its premise and existence in this world as its condition. Here the church is ‘at the same time’ the object of hope and the object of experience” (Moltmann 1992:24).

The church being part of the history of Christ has a promise and a hope implanted into her very being. This promise and hope she continually realizes and then also compromises, testifies to and betrays through the forms she assumes in history and

society. It is this anticipated hope which drives the church and inspires her. The church's identity needs to be understood in the sense of transition and of continual conversion from sin to holiness, from division to unity and from particularity to universality (Moltmann 1992:25).

This understanding of the church's identity could easily fall for the temptation to think that there is a continuous progress in the church's history. Therefore this understanding needs to be very conscious of the freedom that is created through grace. "Only by virtue of its remembrance of the one who was crucified can the church live in the presence of the one who is risen – that is to say, can live realistically in hope" (Moltmann 1992:26).

The danger of this way of thinking is to see the church as an ideal that will never be reached. "Die Kirche is nicht ein Ideal, nicht ein Stern, den man nie einholen kann, sondern greifbare Wirklichkeit; sie ist nicht Idee Christi, sondern Leib Christi" (Pöhlmann 1990:324).

7.1.3 Sacramental identification

"Das Eigentliche der Kirche liegt hiernach nicht...neben oder hinter ihrer äußeren Gestalt, sondern es liegt in ihr" (E. Kinder quoted in Pöhlmann 1990:324-325).

The essence of the church cannot be seen as separate from the empirical reality of the church so that there are two churches namely one empirical social reality and the other the essential invisible church.

"Eben darum sind die sichtbare und unsichtbare Kirche nicht zwei Kirchen: eine irdisch-geschichtliche Gemeinschaft und über oder hinter dieser eine supranatural geistige, sondern, wie wir schon sahen: die eine die Gestalt, die andere das in dieser verborgene, aber auch sich darstellende, in ihr zu erfragene Geheimnis einer, derselben Kirche: die sichtbaren sich darstellend und zu erfragen, beide nicht in ihrer Sonderung, sonder in ihrer Einheit der Leib, die irdisch-geschichtliche Existenzform des einen lebendigen Herrn Jesus Christus" (Barth KD IV,1 1953: 747).

A sacramental understanding offers a way out of this 'dualism'.

"Here the whole church is orientated towards the sacramental representation of the history of Christ and the eschatological future in, with and beneath the word, the bread and the wine. Sacramental thinking links together the remembrance of Christ with the hope of glory in the present tokens of liberating and uniting grace" (Moltmann 1992:26).

It all comes together in the Gospel and the Eucharist. In other words the eschatological and the historical, the experienced and the hope for are united in the sacrament of the church, the Word and the Eucharist. In the eschatological is already present the historical church, the essential nature of the church is present in the social church and the coming kingdom of God is already real and present in the community of believers. The point of departure for this understanding must be a definite event. "This definite

event which ‘makes the church the church’ is the sacramental event”(Moltmann 1992:27). This sacramental event is the Word of God which is proclaimed in the human words during preaching, the coming of Christ in the bread and wine of the Eucharist and the coming of the Spirit in baptism (Moltmann 1992:27).

Bonhoeffer says the following about the invisibility and visibility of the church:

“The followers are a visible community; their discipleship visible in action which lifts them out of the world – otherwise it would not be discipleship.Flight into the invisible is a denial of the call” (Bonhoeffer1959:106).

“Anything that claims space is visible. Hence the Body of Christ can only be a visible Body, or else it is not a Body at all.”....”A truth, a doctrine, or a religion need no space for themselves. They are disembodied entities. They are heard, learnt and apprehended, and that is all. But the incarnate Son of God needs not only ears or hearts, but living men who will follow him. That is why he called his disciples into a literal, bodily following, and thus made his fellowship with them a visible reality”(Bonhoeffer 1959:223).

One cannot really distinguish between visible and invisible church, because the church as body of Christ must be visible as His body. Therefore I would like to return to the differentiation between experience and faith rather than visible and invisible. Here Moltmann offers the sacramental understanding.

“Because this sacramental happening cannot be ‘created’ and cannot be calculated, the solution of the problem of faith and experience, hope and reality, the nature and form of the church, has to be looked for in pneumatology. It is only in the history of the Spirit, which unites us with the history of Christ and is itself the history of the new creation, that all the definitions that have been given of faith and experience, paradox and dialectic, nature and form acquire the theological function and lose their partial character” (Moltmann 1992:27-28).

In conclusion: I would like to support the sacramental understanding of the church’s identity as I find in this understanding a strong narrative element. The sacred story of the church’s truth resonates in the mundane empirical story of the church.¹⁵

This takes us to the second relationship of the church namely the church as she is related to the story of Christ, which is the history of the Holy Spirit.

7.2 The church and her relationship to Christ in the history of the Spirit

The church needs to understand herself within the story of Christ. This story has a historical component and an eschatological component which both need to be taken into consideration. The historical component of the story deals with the incarnation of Christ, His birth in a stable in Bethlehem, His journey through the Roman occupied land of Israel and finally his entry into Jerusalem and His crucifixion. The eschatological character has to do with His resurrection, His transfiguration, exaltation, ascension and finally glorification with the Father at the end of history.

¹⁵ Chapter Two: 8.4.2 Mundane stories

These two, the historical and the eschatological, need to be seen and understood as a unity.

“And here the eschatological interpretation of his history must correspond to his historical embodiment of the eschatology. Hope must return to remembrance if it is not to lose its real foundation” (Moltmann 1992:28-29).

7.2.1 The church and the history of Christ

“The mere *notitia* of the history of Christ is not enough for faith. Only when we lay hold on the *promissio* which speaks to us out of that history, because it is inherent in it and because history is its experienceable sign, do we arrive at its application (*usus*) and an understanding of its meaning for us” (Moltmann 1992:29).

The promise of the history of Christ, for the reformers, was the forgiveness of sin through grace. For Luther the church was mainly to be understood as the *congregatio sanctorum*, the congregation of the sanctified (Article seven of the Augsburg Confession in *Unsere Glaube*). The congregation is seen as a community of justified sinners who partake in the means of grace, which is justification from sin through grace (Althaus 1983: 254-257).

If we understand the promise which is in the history of Christ, then the very history of Christ also becomes the very foundation of the promise.

Galatians 2: 16: “who know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.”;

Romans 4: 16: “For this reason, it depends on faith, so that it may be a gift and the promise may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not to those who only adhere to the law but to those who follow the faith of Abraham, who is the father of all of us,”; Ephesians 2:9 “...it is not from works, so no one may boast” (The African Bible).

The story of Christ is summed up in the two statements made by traditional Christology namely the meaning of the death on the cross is the *remissio peccatorum* and the meaning of his resurrection on the third day is *acceptatio personae ad vitam aeternam* (Moltmann 1992:30). The church is founded on the justification of the sinner through grace, which is founded on the story of Christ crucified. Yet the sinners are justified and liberated for a new life and the history of Christ is then unfolded in a new obedience.

Luther understood this dual meaning in the church as gift and duty. “Diese Gemeinschaft bedeutet Gabe und Aufgabe, Gnade und Beruf zugleich, für jedes Glied der Kirche“ (Althaus 1983:263).

Romans 6: 8f “If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him as to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as (being)

dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus” (The African Bible).

This new life is unfolded not only in new obedience but also in a new fellowship namely the body of Christ according to Romans 12:4ff to each member of this body is given the manifestation of the Spirit which are the charismatic powers of the new creation (1 Corinthians 12:7ff).

“If, therefore, the justification of sinners is the meaning of the history of Christ, then the meaning of the justification of sinners is the liberating lordship of Christ over the dead and the living, i.e., the new creation in him” (Moltmann 1992:31).

So what is the meaning of the story of Christ for the church taking all the above into consideration? It is that Christ is the Lord over past, present and future? Christ becomes the Lord over the story of the Church. This is the final goal of the story of Christ as expressed in 1 Corinthians 15 and specifically in verse 25.

1 Corinthians 15: 25: “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death, for “he subjected everything under his feet. But when it says that everything has been subjected, it is clear that it excludes the one who subjected everything to him. When everything is subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all” (The African Bible).

This is the final purpose of the story of Christ – the glorification of God in all of creation. Thus the teleological question about the meaning of the story of Christ leads us “beyond every purpose that can be comprehended in any present and particular sense. It leads us into universal eschatology”(Moltmann 1992:32).

This is the story of Christ and therefore also the story of the church, being the community of justified sinners, who are a new creation, living in a new obedience and empowered by the Spirit to fulfill this story of Christ. Therefore the Church exists in the power of the Holy Spirit and is formed by the story of Christ.

7.2.2 The church exists in the power of the Holy Spirit

The church is created as a language community by the narrative truth of the story of Christ. This narrative truth is revealed to the church through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals God’s narrative truth in the mundane stories of the biblical witness and the preaching of the minister.

It is the Holy Spirit who proclaims Christ alone.

“It proclaims Christ alone; but the fact that it proclaims him is already the advent of the future of God in the world. It believes Christ alone; but the fact that it believes is already a sign of hope. In its liberation it follows Christ alone; but this is already the bodily anticipation of the redemption of the body. In the Lord’s Supper it remembers and makes present the death of Christ, which leads to life; but the fact that this happens is a foretaste of the peace to come. It only confesses Jesus, the crucified, as Lord; but the kingdom of God is anticipated in this confession. This relationship between what happens and the fact that it happens can only be understood pneumatologically“ (Moltmann 1992:33).

The church is part of the triune story of God and thus the church is part of the messianic kingdom through the power of the Holy Spirit who finds in the church its home (Harvey 1999:25). The church is the Spirit's agency for the world mission of the Gospel (McCledon 1994:433).

In conclusion: The truth of Christ creates a historical community through the power of the Spirit. This community is part of the messianic project of the triune God and in this sense the church is the eschatological creation of the Holy Spirit. It is in this sense "that history passes into eschatology and eschatology into history" all through the work of the Holy Spirit (Moltmann 1992:33).

7.3 The relationship between the church and the history of the world

How does the church understand her relationship with regards to the history of the world?

The church has a history and a tradition which separates her from the world. "Such separation is required by the very fact that the world knows not the God we find in the scripture"(Hauerwas 1981:68). I have also tried to show in this study that the church has a certain obligation to the world in the sense of her *missio dei*. But how does the church understand the history of the world?

This relationship and understanding has changed within every period of history alternating between end time pessimism to kingdom optimism. It was only with the dawn of dialectical theology that her relationship to the history of the world could be seen differently than these two options. The signs of the times are no longer interpreted either optimistically or pessimistically, but there is seen to be only one sign of the time and that is Christ and as Paul would say Christ crucified. This Christological concentration determines the church's relationship to the history of the world. If the church proclaims salvation it simultaneously proclaims disaster, as salvation is proclaimed and not consummated (Moltmann 1992:48). Thus the relationship between the church and the history of the world needs to be understood within the context of the history of God. It is within this context that her relationship with the world is defined.

"The world is sometimes enemy, sometimes partner of Church, often antagonist, always one to be befriended; now it is the co-knower, now the one that does not know what the Church knows, now the knower of what the church does not know" (Hauerwas 1981:91).

The Gospel calls for a decision of faith and therefore divides the world into believers and non-believers. The church which stands in the creative power of the Spirit of Christ within a story that culminates in the glorification of God in His all-embracing kingdom will necessarily be like the yeast that infiltrates world history and produces discord (Moltmann 1992:49). In this sense the church, as the proclaimer of the Gospel, has this dual effect that it proclaims Christ crucified and with that comes the experience of liberation and the signs and wonders of the kingdom, but at the same time it also

brings forth the signs of crisis, because of a world estranged from God in need of redemption. It is like the dual function of the Gospel, which proclaims liberation and freedom from sin and death through grace, but at the same time also functions as a law which condemns.

The world is the community to which Christ comes (Niebuhr 1956:26) and thus to which the church addresses itself. It is through the church that the world is given a history. "Indeed the term "world" derives its intelligibility from there being a people who can supply a history for the world" (Hauerwas 1981:91).

This does not mean that the church denies the multiplicity of narratives in the world or that she tries to force them into an artificial harmony. But she is called to witness to God and God's story with the world in which this diversity has meaning and the divided nature of the world is made intelligible.

"The church, which is too often unfaithful to its task, at the very least must lay claim to being the earnest of God's Kingdom and thus able to provide the institutional space for us to rightly understand the disobedient, sinful, but still God-created character of the world" (Hauerwas 1981:92).

7.4 The relationship between the church and the trinitarian history of God

In the previous section (5.3) I reflected upon the church's relationship to the history of the world. This relationship to world history would be rather arbitrary if one did not also understand the world history to be the trinitarian history of God. The church is part of this history and she needs to understand herself as part of this universal history of God with the world.

"If a single and special phenomenon like the church wants to understand itself in the history of God's dealings with the world, then it has to conceive itself in the movement of history not above it and not at its end" (Moltmann 1992:52).

God has chosen the church to be part of His trinitarian story with the world. The messianic community, though frail and fallible, shared in the life and activity of the triune God through its participation in the faithfulness of Christ (Harvey 1999:25).

How does the church conceive the movement of history while she herself is involved in the movement of history?

"If we talk about the 'trinitarian history of God', this then means the livingness of God which has moved out of itself, which cannot be fixed by any definition, but can only be understood through participating and engage knowledge" (Moltmann 1992:52).

The church participates in this movement of God in the trinitarian history of the world as one element. Therefore the church's attempts to understand her own identity must necessarily include attempts to understand the movement of God in the universal triune history of God.

The church needs to understand the triune history of God with the world.

“The determining outlook of seeing oneself in the movement of the world through the history of God, starts from the perception of the history of Christ and from the experience of the Spirit in the light of its sending” (Moltmann 1992:53).

The history of Christ needs to be understood in the light of his origin in the sending of the Father. The Gospels tell the story of the sending of Jesus from the Father for the salvation of the world. The concept of sending is intended so that the whole appearance, history and meaning of Christ’s history can be understood in the light of God, the Father, who sent him.

Therefore the history of Jesus is also the revelation of the Father. In a similar way the sending of the Spirit can be understood. The Trinity is revealed through the sending of the Son and the Spirit.

“The Trinity in the origin is the foundation of the Trinity in the sending and hence the Trinity in the sending reveals the Trinity in the origin as being from eternity an open Trinity” (Moltmann 1992:55).

The story of the sending of Christ and the Spirit makes it impossible to understand the Trinity as a closed perfect entity that is self-sufficient, because this story of Christ reveals to us that the Trinity in its origin is open to the sending of the Son and the Spirit. Therefore it is open to the history of humanity and the experience of history. This openness of the divine Trinity is not out of ‘deficiency of being’, but on the basis of “divine fullness of being and superabundance of life which desires to communicate itself” (Moltmann 1992:56).

The divine history of the triune God is revealed in the history of Christ and this history of Christ can be understood from two sides: from the origin and from the future. If one looks at the history of Christ from the past then one understands this story in the light of the sending and mission of Christ which was his messianic mission. If one looks at it from the perspective of the future, then one understands it from the perspective of its goal, the resurrection from the dead. These two perspectives are not alternatives, but only together give the full description of the story of Christ. The same can once more be said about the story of the Holy Spirit. From the side of its sending the history of the Spirit links up with the history of Christ, but from the side of the goal, it brings about a new creation (Moltmann 1992:57). The eschatological goal of Christ’s story is the glorification of God and the lordship of God. Looking at the history of the triune God from the perspective of the goal of Christ’s history it is the glorification of the Trinity that is its goal.

“The eschatological meaning of the messianic mission of Christ and the Spirit lies in the glorifying of God and the liberation of the world, in the sense that God is glorified through the liberation and healing of creation, and that he does not desire to be glorified without his liberated creation” (Moltmann 1992:60).

If one looks at these two perspectives in which one can understand the history of Christ and the spirit within the context of God’s history with the world then one comes to the realization that there is one distinct direction.

“The Trinity in the sending is, from its eternal origin, open to the world and to men. For with this the history of God’s seeking love is begun. The Trinity in the

glorification is, from its eschatological goal, open for the gathering and uniting of men and the whole creation with God and in God. In it the history of the gathering love of God is completed. Through the sending of the Son and the Spirit the history of the Trinity is opened for the history of the gathering, uniting and glorifying of the world in God and of God in the world. The opening and the completing correspond to one another in the openness of the triune God”(Moltmann 1992:60).

The Holy Spirit is not only viewed as the force of glorification, but also as the force of unification. The Trinity is viewed as an ontological unity in the origin in its sending of the Son and the Spirit. In the eschatological anticipation of history, the unity of the triune God is more than the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but includes the unity with the whole of creation as well as being linked to the salvation of the whole of creation (Moltmann 1992:61).

Franz Rosenzweig understands the Shema Israel as follows: “To acknowledge God’s unity – the Jew calls it uniting God. For this unity is, in that it becomes; it is a Becoming unity. And this Becoming is laid on the soul of man and in his hands”(Rosenzweig 1954:192).

This is suggested in the Shekina: “God himself cuts himself off from himself, he gives himself away to his people he suffers with their suffering, he goes with them into the misery of the foreign land, he wanders with their wanderings....God himself, in that he ‘sells himself to Israel – and what should be more natural for ‘God our Father!’ – and suffers its fate with it, makes himself in need of redemption. In this way, in this suffering, the relationship between God and the remnant points beyond itself” (Rosenzweig 1954:192-194).

The church today finds itself in this period between the ontological unity of the Trinity in its origin and the eschatological Becoming unity of the triune God with all of creation. This period is the time of God’s dealings with the world through His Son and the Spirit. God, as a loving and seeking God, enters history through the incarnation of the Son and the Spirit and thus experiences history in its fullest breadth and depth. If God thus opens Himself to history and to the experience of history he cannot be unchangeable, nor is He immune to suffering if He experiences history through the incarnation. This changes some of the traditional views of God. God in His triune story is experienced as a God who is changeable, open to suffering and vulnerable.

“The Father has become ‘another’ through the Son’s self-giving, and the Son too has become ‘another’ through his experience of suffering in the world. Through his love for the Son, who experiences sin of the world in his death on the cross, God experiences something which belongs essentially to the redemption of the world: he experiences pain. In the night when the Son dies on the cross, God himself experiences abandonment in the form of this death and this ejection”(Moltmann 1992: 62).

Although this is a new experience for God, He was open to this experience from the very beginning as he opened Himself to be a God of love and seeking the redemption of the world. “God experiences the cross, but this also means that he has absorbed

this death into eternal life, that he suffers it in order to give the forsaken world his life. Because of that he does not want to be glorified in any other way than through the glorification of the one who was crucified, ‘the lamb that was slain’”(Moltmann 1992:63).

In a very similar way, Moltmann argues that God does not seek His glorification without the glorification of the Spirit, which includes the glorification of humanity and all of creation (Moltmann 1992:63).

In these two directions of understanding the story of Christ is also the understanding of the triune history of God. In the story of Christ suffering under Pontius Pilate, crucifixion, death, descending into hell, is all part of God’s experience of the suffering of history. It is all God’s suffering of the unredeemed world. As God becomes vulnerable (in the crib of Bethlehem) God suffers under Pilate, God is crucified and buried and descends into hell. Yet if one looks at the story of Christ in the other direction in the view of the resurrection, exaltation and perfection and ascension then we can also talk of God’s joy. “In this way God creates history. God experiences history in order to effects history. He goes out of himself in order to gather to himself”(Moltmann 1992:64).

It is clear from this Story of the triune God in relation to the history of the world, that the history of the world is the Story of the triune God. It is a story that takes place within the Trinity. What is the church’s role and function within this story? It is not the church’s task to bring about salvation of the world, but salvation comes through the sending of the Son and the gathering of the Father, through the Spirit, which includes the church. Thus the church “participates in Christ’s messianic mission and in the creative mission of the Spirit” (Moltmann 1992:65).

In conclusion we can say that the church of Christ is as the Augsburg confession states it in article VII:

“congregatio sanctorum, in qua evangelium pure docetur et recte administrantur sacramenta, Es wird auch gelehrt, daß allezeit eine heilige, christliche Kirche sein und bleiben muß, die die Versammlung aller Gläubigen ist, bei denen das Evangelium rein gepredigt und die heiligen Sakramente laut dem Evangelium gereicht werden“ (Das Augsburger Bekenntnis in Unser Glaube 1991:64).

This understanding of the church is also found in the Barmen Declaration article 3. Yet maybe in the light of the above, the church in her relationship to the triune History of God with the world, more needs to be said about the church.

1 Corinthians 12:7: “To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.”

The church could be seen as that community, that place within the history of the world, where the creative Spirit manifests itself in the creative workings of the triune history of God. The true church is the church that participates in the divine triune history of God with the world.

This means that the true identity of the church is there where the church shares in the love and openness of the sending God, who has opened himself for the suffering of the

world history. So the true church is there where there is a fellowship of love, a love that participates in the suffering of history, a fellowship that takes up its cross, where the Spirit's sighings are heard in the cry for liberation. The true church is the church that is defined by the story of Christ, in other words a church under the cross, open to the struggle of history. But this is only the one side of the divine story to be open to the suffering of love in world history. There is also the participation in the joy of God. There where the church celebrates the small signs of hope and joy of the kingdom, the kingdom is already sacramentally present in this history.

The true church is the church that through the power of the Spirit participates in the triune history of God with the world. The early church tried to live this, as they believed that the wisdom of God would be made known to the world through their way of life (Harvey 1999:25). The body of Christ is the primary bearer of the meaning of history.

The church is thus neither simply the carrier of a message about the work of the triune God in the world, nor the result of that message, but it is that message. The community was the mission (Yoder 1994b: 91).

In this study I have tried to place the church within her dimensions and her context within the divine triune story of God. Before I go on to describe her identity in more detail as the church of Christ, I would like to summarise the description thus far.

7.5 Summary of the relationships which are integral to the church's identity

The church is embedded in the triune history of God as revealed in Christ and she understands herself within these narrative dimensions, but she does not live in isolation or as an abstract concept but in relationships to others. The church needs to understand herself within these relationships. Four fundamental relationships were identified:

- 1) The relationship between the church as experienced and as believed
- 2) The relationship between the church and the story of Christ in the history of the Spirit
- 3) The relationship between the church and the history of the world
- 4) The relationship between the church and the trinitarian history of God.

The first relationship needs to be understood as a sacramental narrative relationship, that the *credo ecclesiam* is present in the historical empirical church, just as Christ is present in the Word and the sacraments. This can only be understood within the story of the Spirit which leads us to the second relationship. This is the relationship between the church and the story of Christ through the power of the Spirit. The church is related to the story of Christ in a dual manner. Firstly she remembers the history and incarnation of Jesus and secondly she lives in the hope of His eschatological story. These two stories are not separate, but need to be seen as a unity. In the church's relationship to this unified story she understands herself as the community of justified sinners, who have been liberated from the power of sin and death and thus became part of a new creation which lives in obedience and in the anticipated hope of the Lordship of Christ, which is

already realised in the faithfulness of the church. This anticipated hope brings the church into the third relationship with the world, as this anticipated hope is universal and not just confined to the church herself.

The third relationship is the relationship between the church and the history of the world. This is a paradoxical relationship of the church being separated from a world that does not know God and at the same time because she knows God she is involved with the world in the *Missio dei*. It is within this context that the church interprets and understands the history of the world. In the past she either understood the world as kingdom come or as the disaster of the end time. But there is also a third option and that is to understand the history of the world through the perspective of Christ's story. It is in this relationship to the story of Christ that the church's relationship to the history of the world is defined. It is only with regards to the world's relationship to Christ that the history of the world can be understood and interpreted by the church within the context of the *missio dei*, which brings us to the last relationship. The last relationship is the relationship between the church and the trinitarian history of God. If the church really wants to understand history and her relationship in history as part of history she needs to understand the *missio dei*, the history of the triune God. The history of the triune God is characterised by the sending of the Son and the Spirit by the Father. The Father sends the Son and the Spirit to reveal Himself to the world, thus the Trinity in its origin needs to be open to history because it has the desire to send and reveal itself to the world. The Trinity is open to history and the suffering of history. The identity of the Father (Trinity) is revealed in Christ in both His incarnation and His exaltation and glorification in the end. It is thus in this context that the Trinity also needs to be understood. The Trinity responds to history by sending, by opening itself to the suffering of history and culminates in the glorification and unification of all of creation in the end. This is the story of the Trinity and it is within this story that the church needs to understand herself as well as the history of the world, because it is this trinitarian story that creates history. The church cannot only be understood as the gathering of the justified sinners around the Word and the correct administration of the sacraments, but she needs to be understood within this trinitarian history.

I have now described the dimensions and the context of the church in her relationships and discovered that she participates in world history through the power of the Spirit in obedience to Christ.

In the next section of this chapter I would like to look at this obedience to the story of Christ. If this is how the church is involved in world history then one needs to take a closer look at the story of Christ and critically reflect whether the church is obedient to this story, which is also the subject of her story.

8. THE STORY OF CHRIST AS THE CHURCH'S NARRATIVE

I have already mentioned the unity of ecclesiology with Christology.

“In this way modern Christology and ecclesiology ‘from below’ come close in structure to the idea of the extended incarnation, which bring Christology and ecclesiology into an organic connection with one another” (Moltmann 1992:73).

In the previous sections I tried to show that the only way to get to know Jesus as Christ is firstly through His story as believers find it in the Gospels, and secondly through the life of those who follow Christ, namely the church of Christ. This is the extended incarnation, in the sense that the truth of Christ and His Spirit lives in the narrative of church.

STRATEGIC PRACTICAL THEOLOGY - PASTORAL REDEMPTIVE COMMUNITIES AS PASTORAL ECCLESIOLOGICAL PRACTIS WITHIN A NARRATIVE THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION WITHIN THE *POSTMODERN GLOBAL VILLAGE* FROM A URBAN SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

1. INTRODUCTION

I have come to the last step of the theological journey in this study and in this step I will return to my specific context of ministry, namely the Evangelical Lutheran Congregation Pretoria, St. Peter's¹. I return to this context, because it was in this context that part of this journey took place and therefore the congregation is my fellow traveller in this journey. This last chapter will be a reflection on this practical journey with St. Peter's.

At first when I began this study, I was not yet working in this specific congregation. I only joined the congregation half-way through my studies, so the questions raised in the beginning of the study are questions that were raised in various different ministry contexts as well as my personal spiritual/theological questions, but I found many of these questions also to be the questions in St. Peter's. It was then, through various workshops, Bible studies, discussion groups as well as council meetings, that the congregation became the co-travellers and in a certain sense also the co-author of this study and no longer just the 'object' or the context of the study.

The ministry crisis described in Chapter One and Chapter Three is the story of need which was to a large extent the story of need and crisis of the congregation. This ministry crisis and story of need gave rise to various questions. Browning sees there to be at least four questions that motivate strategic practical theological thinking²:

- 1) How do we understand this concrete situation in which we must act?
- 2) What would be our praxis in this concrete situation?
- 3) How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation?
- 4) What means, strategies, and rhetoric should we use in this concrete situation? (Browning 1991:55)

The first question I responded to in Chapters Two, Four and Five. In Chapter Two I described the postmodern context of the concrete situation. In Chapter Four I described the global village and the process of globalization of the concrete situation. In Chapter Five I described the *postmodern global village* as a description of the concrete situation. The second question is what I will be responding to in this chapter.

The third question takes us back to Jürgen Habermas³ and the need for validity claims

1 I will refer to the congregation from now on only as St. Peter's.

2 I have reflected on Browning's understanding of strategic practical theology in Chapter Two: 12.2.2.1 The four movements

3 I reflected on the thinking of Habermas in Chapter Two: 4.3.8 The critical theory of Jürgen Habermas.

(Habermas 1979:2). I have defended the norms or the theological orientation of this study in Chapter Two as well as Chapter Six, but I will again be critically reflecting on the pastoral action within the context of these validity claims.

The fourth question brings us back again to the concrete context of pastoral praxis which will be discussed in this chapter.

This last step on the strategic practical theological journey is in essence rooting the previous chapters in a specific ministry context, or one could say the practical contextual implication of the previous chapters in a specific congregation. It is to the strategic theological story of St. Peters that I now turn.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE CONCRETE SITUATION

The concrete situation is an urban congregation situated in the inner city of Pretoria, the capital of South Africa. It is a congregation faced with the challenges of globalisation and postmodernity and therefore a congregation facing the challenges of the *postmodern global village*.

In the beginning of the year 2001 a few members of the congregation came together over a couple of weeks in an attempt to respond to the concrete situation. We came together with the purpose to understand our praxis and more importantly to define our way forward. Many of the challenges that we were facing were new to us and thus we did not have the dramatic resources of how to respond to these challenges. The congregation needed new wine skins, in other words a new model to respond to these challenges, but the question was: Which model? What transformation should take place?

The challenges of the context were described in the following way (Welcome to St. Peter's⁴ 2003:3).

Our Challenges:

- 1) We are an inner city congregation facing all the inner city challenges of multiculturalism, diversity, pluralism, poverty, homelessness, unemployment, refugees, HIV/AIDS, and more.
- 2) We are an English speaking Lutheran congregation, which began about 30 years ago catering for English speaking Lutherans living throughout the city. Later, with the transformation of our country, many new members were added to our family who were Lutherans coming from all over our country and finding work here in the city, as well as Lutherans coming from all over the world. English became our language of love and unity which united us into the one body of Christ.
- 3) We are a congregation in the capital of South Africa and thus a prophetic ministry has been placed on our shoulders.
- 4) We are not only a congregation in an urban context, but also in a postmodern global context.

2.1 We are an inner city congregation

⁴ This is a brochure that I wrote in September 2003 for all new members of the congregation. Please find it attached as Addendum One

I believe that it is in the inner city that the reality of the *postmodern global village* is most acutely experienced⁵. I have various reasons for saying this:

- 1) The global competitiveness of the global labour market is experienced in the inner city as the rise in unemployment is experienced most acutely on the streets and in the flats of the inner city.
- 2) It is in the inner city that one also experiences the multiculturalism – a characteristic of the global village.
- 3) It is in the inner city that the marginalisation of the global village is experienced by the numerous homeless people and the informal settlements that appear on the fringes of the inner city.
- 4) The postmodern pluralism of values is also visibly seen in the inner city as it is here that the different lifestyles and life choices are seen in the development of the various sub-cultures.

St. Peter's is faced with all these challenges, some of them from within the congregation and others from the surrounding context of the congregation. The challenges came from both villagers and those marginalised from the village and the question is, how to respond to these challenges and needs. I have discussed these challenges and needs in more detail in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

2.2 We are an English speaking Lutheran congregation

The congregation was originally a German congregation, but as many of her members got married to English speaking South Africans the need arose for English services. These services began about 30 years ago and were very small, but in the meantime they have grown so that today they can be seen as a congregation in their own right. After the transformation in South Africa in 1994 the congregation grew tremendously. Lutheran families from all over South Africa came to Pretoria and looked for a Lutheran congregation that could fulfil their spiritual needs. The result was that our congregation is pre-dominantly Lutheran, although the Lutheran traditions from all over South Africa are very diverse.

2.3 We are a congregation in the capital of South Africa

The fact that St. Peter's is situated in the capital city of South Africa brings with it a special challenge as it challenges us to be a prophetic congregation challenging the political/social and economic issues of the day.

2.4 We find ourselves in a postmodern global context

One cannot look at the context of the inner city, the Lutheran tradition or the capital city in isolation, but all this needs to be interpreted and described within the bigger picture, which I have called the *postmodern global village* in this study.

We found ourselves faced with these challenges and these challenges threw our traditional practices into a crisis. Two things needed to be done: we needed to return to the Gospel and secondly fully describe and thus seek to understand the context that we

⁵ I am not saying that in the suburbs and townships it is not experienced, but I am saying that it is more visible in the inner city.

are trying to respond to. We needed a new transformed model of being church as the classical model of Sunday morning worship services, regular Bible studies together with various interest groups and meetings on regular or irregular intervals such as confirmation groups children's church etcetera, was not sufficient to respond to the crisis of the *postmodern global village*.

The crisis itself cannot bring about transformation, but it can be the catalyst. "Crisis is a necessary but insufficient condition for transformation. Crisis destabilizes older, inadequate structures of practical reasoning exposing their inadequacies"(Browning 1991:281).

The previous 'models' of practical reasoning were in crisis and thus a systematically structured continuous hermeneutical process was needed to reflect on these practices of the congregation in the light of and in dialogue with the various dramatic resources with which the congregation constructs and interprets their reality and understanding of themselves.⁶

Browning argues that older models of praxis may be inadequate for two reasons:

- 1) "They may be inadequate normatively: They may be theologically and philosophically skewed or deficient when tested against the classics of tradition and the demands of experience."
- 2) "The individuals or groups may not be deeply socialized into these structures. They may be held superficially" (Browning 1991:281-282).

I believe in St. Peter's both of these descriptions are appropriate, as normatively there is in the tradition of the congregation a skewed understanding of "grace". One of the core principles of the Reformation was salvation through grace alone (*sola gratia*). This concept of grace I believe is skewed as it is understood within the context of a "I'm okay you're okay" mentality which leads to apathy. This understanding of 'grace' Bonhoeffer referred to as 'cheap grace'.

In the second sense the four pillars of the reformation (*sola scriptura, sola Christus, sola fide, sola gratia*) are not really part of the socialization of the congregation, for example the Biblical narrative (*sola scriptura*) does not stand as centrally as it should in the lives of believers. This also has to do with the whole question of authority in a postmodern world (can one refer to scripture and how does one refer to scripture as an authority?), the danger of fundamentalism or literalism always lurking in the background.

The first step that we as congregation felt should be taken was to return to the Gospel. This step we described as: 'Discovering God's purpose for us as body of Christ in a postmodern, global, urban South African context.'

This journey in the congregation, to be truly transformative, needs to be a journey within the hands and providence of God. It is God's congregation and it is He who is on a journey with us and in His providential Story we need to trust to be able to transform. God is the agent of transformation.

Psalm 136 exemplifies this narrative nature of God. In this Psalm the narrative nature of

⁶ I would like to refer back to the working description of the narrative theological orientation of the study: "The narrative theological orientation of this study can be described as a systematically structured, continuous hermeneutical process of critical reflection on Christian activities (praxis) within the social context and in the light of the various narratives that form the dramatic resources with which the faith community constructs and interprets their reality." (Chapter Two: 12.2.1 Working description)

God's truth is shown. It tells us that God is known in His character as a God of love, not through some abstract theological/philosophical thesis, but through history and the journey with a community which is seeking to live in relationship with this Truth. This Psalm may also give us as believers and as congregation the confidence to take the next step of this adventure in hope.

Ps. 136

Praise the Lord, who is so good;
 God's love endures forever;
 Praise the God of gods;
 God's love endures forever;
 Praise the Lord of lords;
 God's love endures forever;
 Who alone has done great wonders,
 God's love endures forever;
 Who skilfully made the heavens,
 God's love endures forever;
 Who spread the earth upon the waters,
 God's love endures forever;
 Who made the great lights,
 God's love endures forever;
 The sun to rule the day,
 God's love endures forever;
 The moon and stars to rule the night,
 God's love endures forever;
 Who struck down the firstborn of Egypt,
 God's love endures forever;
 And led Israel from their midst,
 God's love endures forever;
 With mighty hand and outstretched arm,
 God's love endures forever;
 Who split in two the Red Sea,
 God's love endures forever;
 And led Israel through,
 God's love endures forever;
 But swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea,
 God's love endures forever;
 Who led the people through the desert,
 God's love endures forever;
 Who struck down great kings,
 God's love endures forever;
 Slew powerful kings,
 God's love endures forever;
 Sihon, king of the Amorites,
 God's love endures forever;
 Og, king of Bashan,
 God's love endures forever;
 And made their lands a heritage,
 God's love endures forever;

A heritage for Israel, God's servant,
 God's love endures forever.
 The Lord remembered us in our misery,
 God's love endures forever;
 Freed us from our foes,
 God's love endures forever;
 And gives food to all flesh,
 God's love endures forever;
 Praise the God of heaven,
 God's love endures forever (The African Bible).

This Psalm encapsulates so much of what I discussed and reflected on in Chapter Six about narrative and truth and thus a narrative orientation of this study.

- 1) God's truth is revealed and cannot be found through any human effort.
- 2) This truth is revealed to us through the story (history).
- 3) This truth is revealed as truth to those who are in and part of the story.
- 4) The response to this truth is to become part of the story.

This is what this Psalm does as it invites one to become part of the adventure of God's history with the world. The Christian faith is imbedded in the history of the triune God within world history. It is within this context that the adventure for transformative practice can be sought. The love of God revealed to us in history forms a "holding environment" (Winnicott 1965), which is a space where we are known to be loved by God and this love allows us to relax our anxieties and fears and boldly take the next step in the adventure with hope.

3. WHAT WOULD BE OUR PRAXIS IN THIS CONCRETE SITUATION?

3.1 The Gospel as our guiding authority on praxis

St. Peter's returned to scripture in line with our tradition (*sola scriptura*) to seek a way forward, in other words, we returned to the tradition with the questions and challenges of the context. In Gadamer's understanding we brought the horizons of the context into a critical dialogue with the horizon of the Gospel and allowed the Gospel to re-author and re-formulate our horizons (Chapter Two: 4.3.6 Hans-George Gadamer). Yet we were also very conscious that being an inner city congregation we are daily confronted with the needs and the challenges of those marginalised from the global village, namely the homeless and unemployed community of the inner city. To be able to respond to the needs of the homeless community, those marginalised, we needed an emancipatory and critical element in this dialogue (Chapter Two: 4.3.8 The Critical theory of Jürgen Habermas).

In the process of returning to scripture, one question kept on coming up from amongst those attending the workshop and also in Bible studies and discussion groups: How can we use the Bible as authority? What about all the other religions? This question was normally accompanied by a story which tells of the wonderful colleague who is a Muslim or a Hindu and how can one say to them that only the Bible is true?

This brings me to the reflection in Chapter Six: (2. Historical theology in a *postmodern global village*), where the question of narrative truth was discussed and the movement away from universal and objective truths to a truth which is communicated or passed on through language and the use of metaphor.⁷ God's revealed Word as truth is revealed in His story with humanity and this truth is testified to in Scripture. The relevance of truth is not to be found in an objective theory, but in the kind of community this truth forms and how relevant and redeeming this community is within the context of the world. Scripture and tradition form the living tradition of a community and this living tradition is the authority for the community. This authority is not a rigid authority, but an authority that facilitates change and makes transformation possible.⁸

Browning argues that transformation follows the five dimensions⁹ (Browning 1991:280). I will be referring to these dimensions in the following sections.

This first section I believe has to do with the visional level as it challenges our metaphysical understanding of reality or as Stephen Crites call them 'sacred stories' (Chapter Two 8.2 Narrative and Human Action). In the postmodern era humanity had lost these sacred stories and in our congregation we were not longer sure what role (authority) these sacred stories could possible have in our lives for guiding our praxis. The narrative understanding of truth and also the narrative understanding of human praxis and action within living tradition allowed for a reinterpretation and thus a revival of this visional level.

Our community could return to its tradition of *sola scriptura*, but not in a modern (universally applicable and verifiable) sense, but in a narrative sense within a narrative orientation.

It was on this basis that we could turn to scripture as our authority (living tradition) and seek God's purpose for us as congregation. The first step was to establish the dimensions of our praxis.

4. SCRIPTURE RE-AUTHORS OUR HORIZONS WITH REGARD TO PRAXIS – HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

This is the practical side of the reflection with St. Peters as compared to the theoretical side reflected on in Chapter Six (4. The dimensions within which the church needs to describe her identity).

In the search for appropriate praxis we turned to scripture to discover the dimensions of this praxis. In our workshops we looked at two texts which would guide this process. The first text was God's calling and commissioning of all believers and the second text was the greatest commandment.

Matthew 28:18-20 "Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in

⁷ Chapter Two 8.6 Narrative and Truths

⁸ Chapter Six:2.5 The Gospel truth as authority and Chapter Two:4.3.6 Hans-George Gadamer, Gadamer's understanding of the authority and rationality of tradition.

⁹ I have worked with these five dimensions in Chapter Four: 2.2 Validity claims in the context of descriptive theology and the common human experience.

heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Matthew 22:37 “He said to them, “You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments”
(The African Bible).

It was from these two texts that we got our dimensions within which we could understand our praxis. In these two texts nearly all the aspects reflected on in Chapter Six are addressed. I will briefly be reflecting on these aspects.

4.1 Love for God and love for neighbour – the dimension within which the praxis needs to be understood

In theory I discussed the dimension within which the church needs to describe her identity in Chapter Six. In this section I quoted Moltmann and I would like to refer once more to this quote.

“In the community of the incarnate God and the exalted man Jesus Christ there can be no division here. The church will always have to present itself both in the forum of God and in the forum of the world. For it stands for God to the world, and it stands for the world before God. It confronts the world in critical liberty and is bound to give it the authentic revelation of the new life. At the same time it stands before God in fellowship and solidarity with all men and is bound to send up to him out of the depths the common cry for life and liberty” (Moltmann 1992:1).

In our workshops we reflected on the text from Matthew 22 and realised that what is needed is a commitment to God and to the world. The church needs to find a form of praxis where the believers can love God with all his/her heart, soul and mind so that the believer can holistically turn his/her whole existence towards God. Yet this love for God cannot be separated from the commitment to the world. The church needs to create the space where the believer can serve the world (love the neighbour as himself/herself).

This space, where the believer can serve the world, is guided by the Great Commission of Matthew 28. The service to the neighbour needs to be understood within the framework of the great commission in other words within the framework of the *missio dei* as reflected on in Chapter Six (6.2 The church’s relevance and obligation towards humanity and the world).

In our workshop we then looked at the great commission to understand our praxis with regards to the world, but before we did that we first looked at the world (the neighbour) around us.

We asked the same question that Jesus was confronted with: “Who is my neighbour?” in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). We asked this question to discover: who are the people around us? We made the following descriptive groupings helping us

describe and understand our reality and context. These groupings are in no way intended to stereotype or classify people. I have borrowed these five descriptive groupings from Warren's book (Warren 1995:153ff), *The Purpose Driven Church*, although my description and interpretation of these groups is totally different to his.

The answer to the question, 'Who is my neighbour', can be described in the following way in the context of St. Peter's:

- 1) The 'community' is the postmodern, global urban community of the greater Pretoria and Centurion.
- 2) The 'crowd' are all those who live and work in and around our city and who have some contact with the congregation.
- 3) The 'congregation' are all those who are on our data-system.
- 4) The 'committed' are all those who regularly attend our worship service and various other activities offered by the church.
- 5) The 'core' are all those who are involved and even have leadership roles in the various ministries of the congregation.

Somehow this diverse description of our 'neighbours' had to be included or incorporated into the commission or the *missio dei*. We tried to do this in the following way.

4.2 Baptised into the triune story – in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

The church becomes part of God's triune history with the world as discussed in Chapter Six (7.4 The relationship between the church and the trinitarian history of God).

Believers are baptised into this history and thus become part of the *missio dei*. Members of the congregation are baptised and members of the congregation are guided through preaching and Bible studies to become part of this mission and to understand the world history in the light of the triune history of God.

The praxis with regard to the *congregation* is *inclusion* into the mission which alone is done through baptism and preaching to become part of the *missio dei* - the triune history of the world.

4.3 Guided and orientated by the story and teaching of Jesus – teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you

I reflected on this aspect in Chapter Six (8. The story of Christ as the church's narrative), as the church seeks to live in accordance to the story of Christ. The story of Christ, as revealed to us in the New Testament, is the determining story and thus the living tradition of the church. The Gospel as living tradition is the authority for the church. It is this story that determines the actions of believers and the church. The story of Christ is the narrative setting in which the practices and actions of the believers and the church make sense¹⁰. In this sense the believers are trained and equipped to live as church (as the body of Christ) in the world.

¹⁰ Chapter Two: 8.2.2.2 The narrative history of the social setting of an action

This is the pastoral action for the *committed*, namely those who attend the services and the Bible studies, because it is here in these activities that the individual believer is *equipped* with the story of Christ.

The believer is equipped with the Story of Christ which forms the narrative setting for his/her actions.¹¹ The Gospel is not the only narrative setting in which the believer finds him or herself. The believer in the *postmodern global village* is set within various narrative settings. That is why he /she experiences the fragmentation described in Chapter Five (1.4 The individual in the *postmodern global village*). So although the congregation has rediscovered two fundamentals, (*sola Christus* and *sola Scriptura*) and the believer would like to live his/her life accordingly he/she still lives in a world that is determined by numerous other narratives.

In this section the transformation came on the obligational level. The story of Christ guides and forms the character of the believer with certain values and thus obliges him/her to live by these values.

4.4 An eschatological dimension – until the end of the age

This story of Christ needs to be seen within both its historical and eschatological dimensions as discussed in Chapter Six (8.3 The liberating lordship of Jesus and the fellowship of the kingdom).

From the historical dimension the church lives in solidarity with the world in following Christ's incarnation and non-identity which culminates on the cross. From the eschatological dimension the church lives in the victory of Christ over law, sin and death as well as the idolatry and godforsakenness of the world. Therefore the church can offer the whole world redemption and freedom from the systems of death that hold the world captive.

The believer has rediscovered the Story of Christ as his/her determining story (narrative setting). Yet the believer lives in the global village where he/she is daily confronted with numerous other narrative settings. The believer for example is also set within the narrative setting of the workplace where the obligations are motivated by the story of profit. These narratives of the global village have certain environmental constraints as is clearly seen in how the consumption of the global village has a detrimental impact on the environment. This addresses the environmental and social dimension as the believer is embedded in the story of the cross and thus is in solidarity with the marginalised and so stands in conflict with the dominant narratives of the *postmodern global village*.

Yet the believer's narrative setting tells the story of victory over these dominant narratives of the global village and this victory narrative will determine his/her role and actions within the global village.

4.5 Christ is present – I am with you always

I discussed this in Chapter Six (8.5 The church of Christ is there where Christ is), where Christ was described to be present in the apostolate, the least of the brothers and

¹¹ Chapter Two: 8.2 Narrative and human action

sisters and in his coming (parousia).

The church, in obedience to the story of Christ, experiences His presence in the apostolate (the proclaiming of the Word, the sacraments and in the fellowship), but also in solidarity with the least of the brothers and sisters. This leads the church to be a community of the cross which can accommodate both the Mary Magdalene's of the world (marginalised) and the Zacchaeus' (villagers) and this is only possible in a community defined by the cross of Christ. In the cross Christ overcame the law, sin and the idols and gods of power which marginalise people to the margins of society, but he also overcame the idolatry and godforsakenness caused by worshipping the idols and gods of our time. Therefore only in a community of the cross are both included namely the marginalised and the villagers.

4.6 The power of the kingdom of Christ – all authority in heaven and on earth

The church lives in the power of the kingdom of Christ as discussed in Chapter Six (8.3 The liberating lordship of Jesus and the fellowship of the kingdom). The church is a new creation, a unique outcome which offers an alternative to the *postmodern global village*. The church as a community of the cross is liberated from the constraints of sin, law, idolatry and godforsakenness and can thus live and act in creative freedom.

4.7 A fusion of horizons – a re-authored story for transformative praxis

In the narrative theological orientation the church returns to scripture in a critical dialogue and in the process of this critical dialogue the congregation's story is re-authored and this opens the door for transformative praxis.

As Browning says, transformative praxis follows the five dimensions.

4.7.1 Visional level

A narrative orientation made it possible, in a postmodern world, to return to scripture as an authority for the congregation. A narrative orientation made it possible to reflect on truth and allow this truth to be determining for a community without claiming universality.

4.7.2 Obligational level

The narrative theological orientation enabled the community (St. Peter's) to rediscover scripture as a living tradition which forms and shapes the character of the believer and thus places certain obligations on him/her. It places the believer in a narrative ethical tradition, not offering universal 'does and don'ts', but offering a narrative that shapes a character with certain values. This Gospel formed character negotiates an ethical lifestyle in the *postmodern global village*.

4.7.3 Tendency-need level

This is the anthropological dimension which raises claims about human nature, basic human needs and the kind of pre-moral goods required to meet these needs. The theological narrative orientation offers the believer the Gospel as the story which defines his/her identity and self-understanding. Yet it cannot ignore the discoveries of anthropology, psychology and sociology, but is in critical hermeneutical dialogue with these stories. The Gospel challenges some of the tendencies and needs that are created by the narratives of the postmodern global village. For example, the idea that the individual is an autonomous individual who defines him/herself through consumption is challenged by the Gospel story which sees the individual as an image of God. Yet the Gospel story which defines the believer also creates certain tendencies and needs, for example the need for narrative/language community. I will return to this point at a later stage.

4.7.4 Environmental and social dimension

The dominant narratives of the postmodern global village are causing tremendous suffering through exclusion and marginalisation as well as destruction of the environment.

The Gospel and specifically the passion narrative of Christ challenge these dominant narratives and expose them as lies and destructive illusions that lead to death and thereby offer the world an alternative. It offers the *postmodern global village* a community of the cross where marginalised and villager can meet and embrace each other. It offers the *postmodern global village* a view of nature as a gift of God and that our relationship to environment is not one of dominance, but of reflecting the image of God¹².

4.7.5 Rule role dimension

This dimension reflects on the concrete patterns we should enact in our actual praxis in the everyday world. The *postmodern global village* as a narrative setting forms certain rules and roles which MacIntyre describes as certain characters (rich aesthete, manager and therapist).¹³ Within the narrative theological orientation the Gospel forms the narrative setting for the church and thus forms and shapes a different kind of character who is trained in the values of the Gospel.

4.7.6 Conclusion

Browning argues that if changes have taken place in the first levels (visional and obligational) and these changes are genuine and deep, then one can speak of conversion (Browning 1991:281). In this sense this journey has been a conversion - transformation.

5. SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY – A FUSION OF HORIZONS, A

¹² Chapter Six: 8.3.2 The Story of the Kingdom of God as a Kingdom of Redemption

¹³ Chapter Five: 1.4.3 The individual in relation to others in the *postmodern global village*

UNIQUE OUTCOME AND A CRITICAL DEFENCE OF THE NORMS OF OUR PRAXIS

As the result of the fusion of the horizons between the two texts (Matthew 22 and Matthew 28) and the description of the neighbours around St. Peter's, the following was the outcome of the workshop:

The two texts call St. Peters to the following tasks:

1. Love God - we understood this to mean that we should create a space where people can *commit* themselves holistically to God.
2. Love our neighbour - we understood this to mean to create a ministry space where people can serve the world by offering the world an alternative.
3. Go out and make disciples - we understood this to mean to be open to the world history, but understanding this history within the light of the triune history of God.
4. Baptise them - we understood this to be the ministry that includes people into the community that is defined and lives according to the story of the triune God, revealed to us through Christ.
5. Teach them to obey - we understood this as the ministry that equips people to discipline their lives according to the story of Christ.

We understood the tasks in relation to the description of our neighbours in the following way.

- 1) The *community* – to be *open* to the community and allow the brokenness of the postmodern, global, urban South African and inner city reality to affect us and challenge us. We are guided by the thought of Jesus' incarnation into the brokenness and the cross, to form a community of the cross which embraces the whole world (both villagers and marginalised).
- 2) The *crowd* – to create a space in our midst whereby the crowd can *commit* themselves to God, through the proclamation of His Word and the experience of His grace, love and forgiveness.
- 3) The *congregation* – to invite and *include* all into the *missio dei*.
- 4) The committed – to equip them for discipleship.
- 5) The *core* – to create the space for the servant ministry of all believers where we can *serve* each other as well as the community as members of the body of Christ (refer to 'Welcome to St. Peter's' 2003:4 in Addendum).

This process brought us to our purpose statement:

To embody the love of Christ by reaching out as a servant people to those in need being united by the love of God into his family, to lead to commitment all who share in God's journey with our city by including them into the servant body of Christ being equipped by Christ to serve our community.

Browning argues that in strategic practical theology we need to defend our praxis with the use of five validity claims, so that the community can be in dialogue with other communities and engage in critical dialogue.

5.1 A critical defence of our norms of praxis

I have discussed these dimensions in the previous section (4.7). In this section I need to defend these claims in order to facilitate dialogue between ourselves and other groups. This defence of our norms is based on the thoughts of Jürgen Habermas reflected on in Chapter Two (4.3.8 The critical theory of Jürgen Habermas). Habermas' language communities are not just arbitrary and random and relative to each other, but they need to defend their claims through rational argument. By defending the practice of the church through these rational arguments I am not trying to establish some form of fundamental standard, but opening the door for critical dialogue with other communities of faith or ideology.

5.1.1 Visional level

The visional level inevitably raises metaphysical validity claims. The narrative theological orientation rediscovers scripture as a testimony to the revealed truth of the triune living God within history. This truth is:

- 1) not an universal abstract truth, but a narrative truth revealed in story and through story.
- 2) It is thus not a coercive truth and through violence seeks dominance over others.
- 3) It is an inclusive truth as it sees diversity as blessing and includes both villager and marginalised into a community of the cross.
- 4) It responds to the fragmented reality of the postmodern global village not with violence or coercion, but with love and openness – the openness of a sending Father, who sends His Son and Spirit in love and who will one day unite all to himself in glory.

5.1.2 The obligational level

In the *postmodern global village* people are in search of global ethical standards, but these standards can no longer be found. It is impossible in a pluralistic society to erect ethical/moral norms, because on what basis could that be done? The only basis there is, is the 'hidden' metanarrative of the *postmodern global village* that says that there are not authoritative narratives and that the individual is the last authority. He or she needs to choose from the religious spiritual market that which best suits his/her lifestyle. We cannot turn the wheel of history back to a modern understanding of universal standards and truths.

The narrative theological orientation does not offer a universal standard nor does it offer the world a moral code which will solve all the problems. It offers the world a narrative truth that shapes and determines community (church) which seeks to live in response to this narrative truth. This narrative shapes a character which is obliged to respond to the world in a certain manner. This cannot be spelled out in a code of conduct, but is a continuous hermeneutical process and thus appropriate to the *postmodern global village*.

5.1.3 The tendency-need level

The *postmodern global village's* understanding of the individual has become a self-fulfilled prophecy. It understands the individual to be an autonomous consumer bound

by nothing but him/herself. This kind of understanding creates certain tendencies and needs namely continuous innovation so that consumption never ends. The narrative that the theological orientation, which is in critical dialogue with the social sciences, offers the *postmodern global village* is a different understanding of humanity with different tendencies and needs. Douglas Hall (Hall 1997:57) has identified four quests (tendencies/needs) of the postmodern global villager, but which the global village denies him/her.

“...how our society longs for something that its performance regularly denies and its operative values frustrate...” (Hall 1997:57).

These four quests are:

1) Quest for Moral Authenticity

This need is personal as the individuals experience this need within themselves. They find themselves in various narrative settings (the narrative of the family, the narrative of the work place) and each of these settings has its own demands and obligations. The result is that the individual experiences himself/herself as morally fragmented and the need arises for moral authenticity as the individual experiences himself/herself as morally inauthentic.

I have already responded to this need (5.1.2 Obligational level).

2) Quest for Meaningful Community

“This quest, like the search for authentic morality with which it is closely related, is also conspicuous today because of a double failure – the failure of individualism and the failure of most forms of social cohesiveness” (Hall 1997:59).

Individualism has been one of the dominant narratives of the *postmodern global village* and human needs were interpreted from this perspective. This narrative has even influenced and to a certain extent destroyed the most basic form of community namely the family. The family cannot exist if each individual in the family only strives to fulfil his/her own rights as individual. In Chapter Two (8.3 Narrative understanding of human existence) I discovered that humans are storied people. The individual does not live in a vacuum, but is necessarily part of a language community (a narrative setting), through which he/she understands him/herself. The most basic need of humanity is to be part of a language community with which to understand and interpret themselves and the world around them. Without this community they would not have any access to understanding reality or themselves.

The church can offer community not only in response to this need, but the church needs to be a community. She needs to be a community firstly because this is how Scripture sees and describes her, but secondly the Gospel as narrative truth creates a language community which is formed by this truth. The church in her very essence is a community, which provides believers with a living tradition – a community wherein they can understand themselves and the world around them. The church provides the individual with alternative dramatic resources with which to understand and interpret.

3) Quest for Transcendence and Mystery

The modern secularisation has failed. “During the past ten years – and primarily in the wake of new environmental awareness – Western people have become newly conscious of the devastations of which humanity is capable when it thinks itself

accountable to nothing beyond itself”(Hall 1997:61).

The emergence of the numerous new religious movements in the past few years also indicates this need. Humanity needs a sacred story. The church, understood within narrative theological orientation, can offer the postmodern world this sacred story of the mystery of faith.

4) Quest for Meaning or a Quest for a *Telos*

Humans need a purpose, a *telos*, by which they can order their lives. Humans are essentially narrative, but without a *telos* their narrative is a meaningless succession of events without purpose or meaning.

The church can offer the *postmodern global village* a *telos* within the triune narrative of God which is unfolding within history.

5.1.4 The environmental and social level

As discussed in 4.7.4, the narrative theological orientation offers the *postmodern global village* an alternative understanding of humanity’s role within the world. This role is not a role of dominance over creation, but of co-operation and redemption with the creator. Thus the narrative orientation takes into account the environmental constraints. It also takes into consideration the fragmentation and pluralism of the postmodern global village and does not seek to ignore it or through violence remove it, but incorporates this fragmented diverse society into its narrative.

5.1.5 The rule role level

As discussed in 4.7.5, the *postmodern global village* creates certain characters with certain rules and roles as a response to the tendencies and needs of the capitalist markets. The church can offer the world a different character, a different role and rule. I will elaborate on this level in the following section where I will propose Pastoral Redemptive Communities as a strategy in response to the *postmodern global village* – a strategy which was developed in the specific context of St. Peter’s.

6. PASTORAL REDEMPTIVE COMMUNITIES AS A POSSIBLE STRATEGY IN RESPONSE TO THE CONCRETE SITUATION?

A narrative understanding of truth demands a narrative community, as this community is created through the truth. The Gospel as a narrative truth creates the church and functions within the church as the living tradition, but the believers are also involved, through their work and life in the global village, with other narratives which have an influence on them. The church needs a certain degree of separateness to be able to engage in a critical hermeneutical dialogue with these other narratives and to expose the lies and the illusion of some of these narratives. But to be able to do this she needs distance. In the previous chapter I shortly reflected on MacIntyre’s proposition of a new Monasticism. I would now like to propose Pastoral Redemptive Communities as an ecclesiological praxis for the necessary disengagement and engagement with the *postmodern global village*.

6.1 Introducing Pastoral Redemptive Communities

I will be describing and introducing the idea of Pastoral Redemptive Communities under six different headings. These six headings was the result of our workshops and can be found in 'Welcome to St. Peter's'.¹⁴

Pastoral Redemptive Communities are a response to three questions that we (St. Peter's) asked ourselves. These three questions are:¹⁵

- 1) Have these challenges anything to do with the church?
- 2) How can the redeeming story of the cross become a reality in our city?
- 3) Can we as individuals face the challenges of the city?

All three of these questions are questions about engagement with the world (city), but they are based on disengagement and commitment to the story of Christ.

In response to the first question we came to the following conclusion:

"I believe that it has everything to do with the church, if we believe the following:

- † that the church is the bearer of the story of Christ who was born, suffered and crucified, descended into hell and on the third day rose again from the dead;
- † that Christ was crucified because of sin;
- † and if we understand sin in all its forms of brokenness and evil which holds the world captive in systems which lead to separation between creation and God and eventually ends in death" (Meylahn 2003b:5).

Engagement with the world is only possible if this story of Christ is the determining story which means if the community allows this story to be the narrative setting of the community then for that a degree of disengagement is necessary.

6.1.1 Pastoral Redemptive Communities are embedded in the story of Christ crucified

"The story of Christ Crucified dear Insight readers, is the central story of our Christian faith. It **is** the story of our faith! Paul says in his first letter to the Corinthians 2:2 "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." This is the centre of our faith. This is the story that we proclaim, this is the story that we were baptised into, and this is the story that gives birth to the new creation that we are in Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit" (Meylahn 2003a:3).

These communities are understood as narrative (language) communities which are created by the language of the Gospel. Pastoral Redemptive Communities seek to be communities that have this story of Christ as their narrative setting through which the individual members seek to understand themselves and their surrounding reality.¹⁶

Pastoral Redemptive Communities "are communities which are built and carried by this story of Christ. This story is the leading metaphor with which we understand our

¹⁴ As already mentioned, this document is attached as an addendum.

¹⁵ These three questions are all taken from the brochure 'Welcome to St. Peters' pages 5-6

¹⁶ Chapter Six: 8. The story of Christ as the church's narrative, where I discussed the narrative of Christ giving the church her identity as the body of Christ.

individual and community's stories. It provides us with the spiritual tools with which we try and understand our reality, try and come to terms with the things that happen to us as individuals, families, as community and in our country" (Meylahn 2003a:3).

6.1.1.1 Community of incarnation

In the beginning of this journey I mentioned that the metaphor of Christ's incarnation will guide this study and not only the first step of descriptive theology (insertion),¹⁷ but the whole study. Pastoral Redemptive Communities are guided by the story of Christ's incarnation as the Story of Christ is the determining story of the communities. If the community receives its identity in the story of Christ and seeks to be obedient to this story it is obedient to the whole story of Christ, both the historical and the eschatological. This historical story is the story of Jesus' incarnation. The Pastoral Redemptive Communities seek to follow Christ on this journey of incarnation as they become part of the reality of the world and allow this reality of the world to challenge them and affect them. The community is guided by the scripture taken from Philippians 2: 5-8.

"I would like to understand this purpose statement¹⁸ as a journey of incarnation into the brokenness of our city: 'to embody the love of Christ by reaching out as a servant people to those in need.' The word '*embody*' is very similar to the word incarnation – as it means to give body to the love of God/Christ" (Meylahn 2002/2003:3).

6.1.1.2 Community of the cross

A community of the cross is a community of justified sinners,¹⁹ but also a community in solidarity with a world that is condemned by the law.²⁰

It is a community that seeks to describe and understand the brokenness and fragmentation which is caused by the 'law' of commercialisation.²¹ The individual in the global village has to understand himself/herself and the surrounding world within the narrative global field of experience (Chapter Four: 15. Narrative Global Field of Experience). If the only dramatic resources (narrative resources) at his/her disposal are the 'laws' of the *postmodern global village* then the result is this feeling of homelessness. The narrative community based on the story of Christ's cross offer alternative dramatic resources. These alternative resources of the passion narrative of Christ is not just an alternative story which is offered on the cultural religious market of the global village, but it is a story which directly faces the dominant narratives of the *postmodern global village* and understands, interprets and describes the dominant stories of the *postmodern global village* as illusions and as lies. The passion story of Christ does not offer a flight from reality, but faces the reality of the *postmodern global village*.

17 Chapter Three: 1. Introduction to descriptive theology

18 The purpose statement that I am referring to in this quote is quoted in full in section 5 of this chapter.

19 Chapter Six: 8.2 The Story of Christ's passion – a story of a community of and under the cross

20 Chapter Six: 8.2.1 Justification of the sinner and liberation from the power of sin.

21 Chapter Five: 1.4 The individual in the *postmodern global village* and Chapter Four: 15.4 The disembedded narratives of humanity and 16. Globalisation and homelessness (nostalgia)

The reality of homelessness of both the villagers and those marginalised from the village is the dominant experience of reality of the *postmodern global village*. The story of Christ offers the 'homeless' of the postmodern global village a home by offering them a narrative setting which re-authors their story of homelessness into a story of hope. Thus the Pastoral Redemptive Community is a community of the cross where both villager and marginalised find a home namely a community of the cross. It is planned (in the workshops) that each Pastoral Redemptive Community is in partnership with one of the communities of Pretoria Community Ministries.²² Through this partnership the community of the cross becomes a community where the villager and those marginalised are united by the cross and a redemptive alternative is offered the *postmodern global village*.

"It is the story that leads and guides our individual, communal and congregational stories out of the brokenness of hopelessness to a future with hope. It is the story that again and again becomes our own story as we are time and again confronted with the cross" (Meylahn 2003a:3).

6.1.1.3 Community under the cross – a community for the godforsaken

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities are communities that seek to be communities under the cross. They are communities that are liberated from the idols of power²³ and liberated from the godforsakenness.²⁴ They are liberated from the power of idols of the consumer society of the *postmodern global village*. These idols no longer have any defining power over the community, because the community does not see these narratives as its defining narratives, but the narrative of Christ crucified is the defining narrative. The community is liberated from the godforsakenness of the world which has turned towards the worship of the idols of the *postmodern global village*. This idol worship leads to the world into hopelessness yet the community under the cross has hope as this is not the determining story, but the triune story of God is the determining story.

The community is a community under the cross because it needs to remain at the cross otherwise it will itself create ideologies, strategies and theories. Thus the community remains under the cross careful not to create ideologies, universal *truths* and absolutes, but remains absolutely dependent on God's revelation through the cross.

"Moreover, true Christian existence can only be present in the best of all possible societies, or, in symbolic terms, can only 'stand under the cross,' and its identity with the crucified Christian can be demonstrated only by a witnessing non-identification with the demands and interests of society" (Moltmann 1974:17).

22 Pretoria Community Ministries is a social transformation organization within the inner city of Pretoria with various communities. These communities include: 1) A street centre catering for the needs of the homeless and unemployed community, 2) Lerato house catering for the needs of young girls in crisis, 3) Potter's House, a community catering for the needs of women in crisis, 4) YEAST City Housing, a community that caters for the city's need for low cost housing, just to mention a few of their communities.

23 Chapter Six: 8.2.2 Liberation from the idols of power

24 Chapter Six: 8.2.3 Liberation of Godforsakenness and the Godforsaken

6.1.1.4 Community of the Eucharist

Pastoral Redemptive Communities are communities of the Eucharist, because it is here in the Eucharist that the story of Christ is remembered where the poetizing memory is actualised in the celebration of hope.

“For the Lord’s supper is the sign of the actualizing remembrance of the liberating suffering of Christ (*signum rememorativum*). As such it is the prefiguration of Christ’s redeeming future and glory (*signum prognosticum*). In this meal his past and his future are simultaneously made present. This present actualization frees the assembled congregation from the powers of the world which lead to sin and gives it the assurance of the divine future”(Moltmann 1992:243).

A community which is created through the story of Christ “assembles in worship at the Lord’s table, celebrating its bond with Christ and with one another...” (Moltmann 1992:242)

It is in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper that the community disengages to be able to engage in the world, because in the Eucharist the story of Christ becomes actualised in the community as the defining story, but at the same time the narratives of the idols and powers are exposed. Therefore the communities participate in the Eucharist celebration of the congregation as community. The Eucharistic liturgy²⁵ is also used as the basis for all the meetings. The liturgy has a critical dialogical narrative character where the illusions and idolatry of the narratives of the *postmodern global village* are exposed and our dependence on the passion narrative is expressed in remembered hope.

6.1.2 Pastoral Redemptive Communities strive to create alternative realities as a contrast society to the brokenness of the world around us. Under the grace of God they are kingdom communities

6.1.2.1 Community as *altera civitas*

A community which has the passion story of Christ as its determining story exposes the dominant narratives of the *postmodern global village* as illusions.

The early church understood itself as *altera civitas*, as the alternative city of God within the cities of the world. The Pastoral Redemptive Communities understand this as a possible model for themselves. They see themselves as communities which offer an alternative lifestyle by offering alternative dramatic resources with which the individual can interpret and understand himself/herself and the surrounding world. These are not living communities, but communities that are made up of individuals that meet on a regular basis, besides Sundays for worship, to allow the story of Christ to define their existence.

6.1.2.2 Community of the Lordship of Christ

The story of Christ does not only tell the story of incarnation and the cross, but it also

²⁵ I copy of the liturgy for meeting is attached as an addendum two.

tells the story of the victory of Christ's cross over the power of sin and the exaltation of Christ as Lord over the universe. Pastoral Redemptive Communities are defined by the whole story of Christ. If a community confesses the Lordship of Christ this inevitably needs to be a public testimony.²⁶ This therefore has an influence on the believer's life in the world. The believer does not see history as being at the mercy of the powers that be, but understand history within the context of the triune history of God and thus will always interpret history in the light of hope. Not a utopian hope, but a hope that is born from the cross.

6.1.2.3 Community of the kingdom – a community of grace

Christ proclaimed the kingdom of God and through faith we are included in this kingdom which is now already present in the world there where Christ is. This is a kingdom of grace as it is given or inherited, but not constructed through human will or desire. The community seeks to live in obedience to Christ. The community seeks to live as an alternative to the destructive narratives of the *postmodern global village*, but the community does not construct an alternative reality and proclaims this as the kingdom of God. The alternative reality is constructed by the cross of Christ alone and remains under the cross of Christ. This means that Pastoral Redemptive Communities do not propose a new theory of social construction or a social-political programme. All that these communities propose is a space where the members of the community can seek to allow the narrative of Christ crucified to re-author their stories and where they can support each other to live according to that re-authored story. This is the only kingdom of redemption that the pastoral redemptive communities can offer.

6.1.2.4 Community of the Feast without end

Pastoral Redemptive Communities are communities which celebrate the signs of hope, the signs of the kingdom that are visible in the world, but they do this in remembrance of the cross. In the community meeting time is always given to tell the stories of hope which are seen as kingdom signs. These signs of hope are celebrated.

6.1.3 Pastoral Redemptive Communities are places where individuals and families experience healing and reach out to the community

6.1.3.1 Community of healing from the fragmentation

In Chapter Three I reflected on the various stories of need which were told by both the villagers as well as those from the margins of the global village. At the end of Chapter Four I came to the conclusion "that although the dominant story (discourse) in the global village is one of unity and connectedness the most common story of the individuals and communities (both villagers and marginalised) living in the global village is one of disembeddedness and 'homelessness'" (Chapter Four: 16. Globalisation and homelessness (nostalgia)).

The dominant discourse of the *postmodern global village* that seeks to create certain characters (the rich aesthete, the manager and the therapist) which should respond to the tendencies and needs of the *postmodern global village's* dominant economic story,

²⁶ Chapter Six 8.3 The liberating lordship of Jesus and the fellowship of the Kingdom

just does not have the necessary dramatic resources to address the actual day to day tendencies and needs of the villagers and the marginalised. Nor does it provide the villager and marginalised with the necessary dramatic tools to interpret and understand the pluralistic and fragmented world of this highly technologically organised global village which is organised into various knowledge environments and systems of expertise.

In the Pastoral Redemptive Community meetings the first part of the meetings is always geared towards sharing of stories of need. The stories that are shared are similar to the ones described in Chapter Three, but many other stories are also told of the daily frustrations in the family and at the work place.

These stories are then brought into a critical dialogue with scripture. In this process they are re-authored in the light of the scriptures and scripture's call to be a redemptive alternative to the *postmodern global village*.

It is with the help of the story of the cross of Christ that the frustrations and often the hopeless situations can be interpreted and given new meaning within the context of the hopeful story of the Triune history of God with the world.

These reinterpretations or re-authoring of stories can only be done within the context of God's story and within the context of a supportive community which shares the same story (language). It is in these communities (Pastoral Redemptive Communities) that individuals find healing (re-authoring) of their stories of need into stories of hope.

6.1.3.2 Community of healing from the exclusions of the *postmodern global village*

Each community is embedded in the story of Christ and thus each community is commissioned with the Great Commission to be part of the openness of the triune God, who opened Himself to the suffering, the non-identity and the godforsakenness of history through the sending of His Son, and calls us into this story (of openness for the suffering of history) through the power of the Spirit. The community is thus open to the suffering caused by the exclusions of the *postmodern global village*. Each Pastoral Redemptive Community is called to be in partnership with one of the communities of Pretoria Community Ministry and get involved in one social-diaconic ministry in their area or start a project themselves.

One proposal that came out of the Pastoral Redemptive Communities as a joint project is the St. Peter's counselling centre.²⁷

6.1.3.3 Community of conversion of values

A community that offers healing from the fragmentation and 'homelessness' of the *postmodern global village* as well as healing from the exclusions from the village is a community that is created by a different truth to the illusions and lies of the *postmodern global village*.

The dominant discourses of the *postmodern global village* seek to create certain

²⁷ The proposal for this counseling centre is attached as Addendum Three. This counseling centre will be launched in November 2003.

characters (MacIntyre 1984) which will be able to effectively respond to the market needs of the village. These characters act within certain 'values' created by the narrative setting of the *postmodern global village*. These values are guided by the ideological media story of the village and are values such as individualism, egoism, competitiveness, effectiveness and consumerism. These values are constrained by the social and environmental dimensions as the environment can only absorb so much consumption and the social relations can only accommodate so much individualism and competitiveness before it ends in violence.

Communities embedded in the story of Christ are formed into characters which are determined by the story of Christ and thus allow the truth of Christ to become visible through their values and actions. The values that the Gospel teaches can accommodate the diversity and fragmentation as it sees this in the light of God's story with the world and therefore can equip members of the community to respond in a redemptive way to the pluralism and fragmentation of the *postmodern global village*.

6.1.4 Pastoral Redemptive Communities share and proclaim hope

6.1.4.1 Community of disengagement to engage

From the above characteristics of the Pastoral Redemptive Communities it becomes clear that a certain disengagement from the world is necessary for the Gospel to be able to re-author these stories of the individuals. Yet this is not possible as the members of these communities cannot afford to create isolated living communities similar to monasteries.

All that the Pastoral Redemptive Communities can offer the members are spaces of respite where the Gospel can create a community and where Christ is present (through the apostolate, through the least of the brothers and sisters, and as the eschatological Christ). The Pastoral Redemptive Communities seek to provide this space through a basic liturgical format.²⁸ This format is not only used at the Pastoral Redemptive Community meetings, but at all meetings in the congregation.

6.1.4.2 Story telling communities

The space of respite, where the Gospel creates community and where Christ is present, is created through narrative (telling of stories).

The whole format of the liturgy is in a story form which tells the story of a critical dialogue between God's story (Scripture) and the community's story.

- 1) The meetings begin by placing the whole meeting within the context of the triune story of God. "We meet this evening in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."
The community humbles itself before God in praising Him by praying a Psalm together.
- 2) In the light of God's story and relationship with the world the community's story of

²⁸ Refer to liturgy: 'Divine service of community meetings' attached as Addendum Two.

brokenness, fragmentation, homelessness is told. The community disengages from the world by seeing the world through the perspective of God's story and through this perspective realises the illusions and lies of the *postmodern global village*.

- 3) The community is a community of memory as these stories are placed in the light of Christ's passion narrative, where sin is forgiven, freedom is proclaimed from the laws which hold the individual and community captive, and freedom from the idols of power and redemption is proclaimed for a godforsaken world.
- 4) The community tells the story of Christ's victory and shares the signs of His victory present in the community which are signs of hope and signs of grace of a kingdom given (inherited) and not earned.
- 5) Christ speaks to the community from His Word.
- 6) The community's story is retold (the community's purpose affirmed).
- 7) Christ includes the community in His narrative by inviting the community to partake in the Eucharist.
- 8) Time is given for the telling of the re-authored story in the light of the re-engagement with the world. This is done in prayer.
- 9) The meeting is closed by placing the story of re-engagement with the world under God's blessing.

6.1.5 Pastoral Redemptive Communities function as the body of Christ within the city

The body of Christ is there where Christ is.²⁹ The body of Christ is to be found there where the head of the body is. Jesus Himself proclaimed to the church where he is.

6.1.5.1 Community of the apostolate

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities are the body of Christ as they gather in his name (Matthew 18:20), proclaim His story (2 Corinthians 4:8-1) and administer the sacraments (1 Corinthians 11:23).

The communities meet with the understanding that they meet as a community which is created by the truth of God revealed in His story. This truth is proclaimed in the meeting and at times the Lord's Supper is celebrated in these communities.

6.1.5.2 Community of the least of the brothers and sisters

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities are the body of Christ as they include and welcome the least of the brothers and sisters (Matthew 25:31-46) of Christ into the community.

6.1.5.3 Community of the coming Lord

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities are the body of Christ as they participate in the anticipation of the coming Lord as He is already present in the least of the brothers and sisters.

²⁹ Chapter Six: 8.5 The church of Christ is there where Christ is

6.1.6 Pastoral Redemptive Communities are open communities of hospitality where the lost, seeking, hungry, thirsty and needy are invited as Christ

6.1.6.1 Community that is present there where Christ is present

As mentioned above (6.1.5.2) Pastoral Redemptive Communities are communities which are present there where Christ identifies himself with the least of the brothers and sisters and therefore the community also identifies with the least of the brothers and sisters. The communities, embedded in the triune history of God, are open to the suffering of history.³⁰

The communities are open to the community, which means open to welcome the lost, seeking, hungry, thirsty and needy into the community. They are not invited as victims or as candidates for social diaconic projects, but invited as Christ. The communities, being communities of the cross, believe that it is from the perspective of the lost, hungry, seeking and fragmented that the illusions of the 'laws' (dominant discourses) are exposed and where the truth of Christ's cross is revealed.³¹

6.1.6.2 Community of brokenness

Pastoral Redemptive Communities are in solidarity with the lost, seeking and hungry and therefore it is a community of brokenness. Yet it is also a community of brokenness because it is embedded in the story of Christ. It follows Him into the world (incarnation) in solidarity with the least of the brothers and sisters. It follows him to the cross and the non-identity of the cross in the godforsakenness. Therefore these communities can never be communities of power, but always communities of weakness and they take on the character of the foolishness of the cross.

6.2 Pastoral Redemptive Communities in the context of the theory-laden questions

6.2.1 Introduction

At the end of the journey of this study I would like to return now to the questions that were asked at the beginning and see if any answers have been found in response to these questions and more specifically if the Pastoral Redemptive Communities offer an appropriate or possible response to these questions.

In Chapter One the questions (summary of the challenge) were primary as they were questions raised by myself (the primary story of the study). To these primary questions were added the questions of the secondary stories which were the stories of those with whom I journeyed in the various ministry contexts, or whose stories I read about. These questions were described in Chapter Three at the beginning of the descriptive theological journey.

These questions guided the descriptive theological journey as these stories of need (out

³⁰ Chapter Six: 7.4 The relationship between the church and the trinitarian history of God

³¹ Chapter Six: 8.2 The story of Christ's passion – a story of a community of and under the cross

of which the questions arose) were unpacked within the context of the cultural symbols, the institutional patterns and practices and inner motivations and socio-cultural history of the individual's stories of need. This unpacking was done in Chapter Two (postmodern world), Chapter Four (global village/globalisation) and Chapter Five (*postmodern global village* and history of the church in the *postmodern global village*).

After the primary and secondary questions had been unpacked and fully described these questions were re-authored into theory-laden questions. These are theory-laden questions because the theories, narratives and dominant discourses behind the primary and secondary questions had been unpacked.

These questions were the basis of the 'prejudiced' hermeneutical turn towards the historical texts. I say prejudiced turn, because I did not turn to the text from a neutral point of view, but wanted answers to specific questions and with this in mind turned to scripture. This journey was described in Chapter Six.

In the context of this critical hermeneutical dialogue between the theory laden questions and the historical texts a fusion of horizons took place as the stories of need were re-authored into stories of hope as in the narrative of Christ unique outcomes were revealed.

At the end of Chapter Six this fusion of horizons was summarised. In this current chapter this re-authored story needed to be placed into a concrete ministry context. The concrete ministry context is that of St. Peter's and the development of Pastoral Redemptive Communities as a possible form of pastoral ecclesiological action within a narrative theological orientation within the *postmodern global village* from an urban South African perspective.

I will be reflecting on the Pastoral Redemptive Communities as a possible form of pastoral ecclesiological action within a narrative orientation as a response to the theory-laden questions summarised in Chapter Five.

6.2.2 What kind of church, which finds itself within the postmodern, urban, global, South African context 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?

This question is broken down into six smaller questions³² which I have already responded to in Chapter Six (10. Fusion of horizons – the questions from the theory-laden practices and historical theology: – a systematic theological story). I will now reflect on these questions only in the light of the Pastoral Redemptive Communities.

6.2.2.1 What kind of pastoral ecclesiological action unites villagers and marginalised into one body?

A narrative pastoral ecclesiological action unites villagers and marginalised into one body as the narrative of Christ which is revealed to us in the Gospels creates a community of the cross. This community of the cross does not function as a socio-

³² Chapter Five: 3.4 The core questions which will guide the rest of the theological journey of this study.

economic or political project seeking to create more justice within the *postmodern global village* and thereby sustaining and condoning the *postmodern global village*. Nor can a community, created by the narrative of Christ crucified, be the spiritual/moral supra-structure which offers the villager therapy to make him/her more effective within the *postmodern global village*.³³

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities are embedded in the story of Christ³⁴ and thus are created and sustained by the Gospel's narrative truth. This narrative truth, being an alternative to the illusion of the *postmodern global village* narrative, creates a polity which is fundamentally different from the *postmodern global village*.³⁵ The Pastoral Redemptive Communities created and sustained by the passion narrative of Christ challenge the dominant discourses (narratives) of the *postmodern global village* and thus offer an alternative to the fragmentation, homelessness and exclusions of the *postmodern global village*.

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities, which are embedded in the story of Christ crucified, are communities which proclaim the kingdom of God in the world. This kingdom is proclaimed to the poor, defined as those who are dependent on God and no longer dependent on the idols or dominant narratives of the *postmodern global village*. This message is often the topic of Bible studies. The *postmodern global village* leads people to believe that their lives depend on the technical organization of the village, yet the message of the cross liberates the believer from that enslavement. In Romans 6: 1-12, Paul explains what it means to be embedded in (baptised into) the story of Christ crucified. It means that the believer dies with Christ and is raised with Him to a new life of righteousness. The believer dies to the laws (dominant narratives) of this world and lives in the new narrative of Christ's kingdom. This new narrative of Christ's kingdom is in solidarity with the poor. Therefore the Pastoral Redemptive Communities have a partnership with the communities of Pretoria Community Ministries.

6.2.2.2 What kind of pastoral ecclesiological action 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*?

The Pastoral Redemptive Community can only offer the believer the narrative of Christ crucified. The community does this through creating a space where the believer's (villager or marginalised) story can be told and interpreted in the light of the Gospel. The story will then be re-authored by the Gospel story. This re-authored story has different values to the values of the dominant story of the *postmodern global village*. The dominant story of the *postmodern global village* has certain values which creates a specific kind of character. MacIntyre described three different kinds of characters which are the result of the *postmodern global village* narrative, namely rich aesthete, manager and therapist.³⁶

These three characters embody the values of the *postmodern global village*. The narrative of Christ however offers the *postmodern global village* a different set of values based on the Gospel story.

33 Chapter Six: 10.2.1 Temptations

34 Chapter Seven: 6.1.1 Pastoral Redemptive Communities are embedded in the story of Christ crucified.

35 Refer back to Chapter Six: 8.2.2.1 The church's mission is comprehensive and challenges the whole of the *postmodern global village*

36 Chapter Five: 1.4.3 The individual in relation to others in the *postmodern global village*

If the story of Christ becomes the dominant or primary story in an individual's life he/she will be shaped by these values and a character will be formed which embodies these Gospel values. For this to be able to happen the church needs to be a living community where the Gospel is the determining story. This is not really possible unless the church returns to some form of monasticism. In St. Peter's this was impossible as the members of the congregation had their jobs and their families and thus could not afford to retreat to a monastery. The Pastoral Redemptive Communities sought to find a way between total disengagement (as in a monastery) and total engagement where the church cannot really offer an alternative.

This way was found in these communities which meet during the week and keep regular contact with each other, seeking continually to re-author the stories of life in the *postmodern global village*, through the story of Christ, and in the process shaping and training a character that embodies the values of the Gospel in contrast to the values of the *postmodern global village*.

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities do not propose to have answers to the ethical challenges of the villagers and those marginalised. All the Pastoral Redemptive Communities can offer is a space within the week of the villagers and those marginalised where the stories of the *postmodern global village* can be told. The communities offer a space where the ethical challenges can be shared and the stories re-authored/reinterpreted by the story of Christ. This re-authored story has a different set of values (a conversion of values) and these values slowly and in a continuous process of storytelling and re-authoring form and shape a certain character. This character negotiates a lifestyle which is faithful to Christ (discipleship) within the *postmodern global village*.

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities have sought to respond to this challenge by offering a space of disengagement from the *postmodern global village* where the stories can be told, re-authored and reinterpreted and a character is shaped and formed in obedience to Christ to re-engage with the *postmodern global village*. The Pastoral Redemptive Communities cannot prescribe ethical action as it would then not be a community under the cross, but a community which has created an idol and absolute universal norm. The story of the cross can form a character and this character responds ethically to the challenges according to the values of a community which is *of* and *under* the cross.

6.2.2.3 What kind of pastoral ecclesiological action is appropriate where both the stories of the villagers and the marginalised can be re-authored by the redemptive story of a triune God, revealed in Christ, into a story of hope?

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities have sought to respond to this challenge by providing a space for re-authoring. This space for re-authoring is within a community which describes and understands itself to be a community of the cross as well as a community under the cross.³⁷

As a community embedded in the story of Christ crucified the Pastoral Redemptive

³⁷ Chapter Six: 10.4.1 Fusion of horizons – the questions with historical theology

Communities are communities of the cross and under the cross.

As community of the cross the Pastoral Redemptive Community is in solidarity with all those who have been marginalised by the laws, powers and idols of the *postmodern global village* and therefore will seek partnership with these communities (PCM communities). A partnership which consists of joint activities as well as offering counselling services through the St. Peter's counselling centre and joint celebrations (spaces for joint story telling and re-authoring).

As community under the cross the Pastoral Redemptive Communities are in solidarity with the whole godforsaken world. A godforsaken world is a world which continually seeks to create idols and gods of power and thereby turn its back on the true living God of history, a community that is in solidarity with a world that continually worships these false gods, a community which itself continually is tempted to create these false gods and certainties by creating absolutes and universal norms and standards. The Pastoral Redemptive Community thus seeks to remain under the cross challenging and re-authoring her own icons of power and thus also offering the villager a space for re-interpreting these godforsaken stories of power and prestige.

6.2.2.4 What kind of pastoral ecclesiological action is appropriate where the redemptive narrative of Christ can function as a prophetic alternative to the dominant discourses of the *postmodern global village*?

In Chapter Six (10.5.1 Fusion of horizons – the questions with historical theology) I reflected on the kind of church which is necessary to respond to the *postmodern global village* as a redemptive alternative and came to the following conclusion: This must be a church that has the passion story of Christ as her defining narrative. In other words it is a church which is created by the truth of Christ's passion narrative.

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities see themselves as communities embedded in the story of Christ crucified.

The New Testament and the early church understood being a church with the concept of the city of God within the cities of the world. This city was not defined by space, but by time as a present anticipated reality of the eschatological time of Christ's coming.³⁸ The Pastoral Redemptive Communities are communities which are organised by space (according to areas of the city) but defined by time (eschatological time of Christ) and characterised by an alternative story (story of Christ). The Pastoral Redemptive Communities which are defined by the story of Christ offer the *postmodern global village* an alternative through the characters it creates and thus the Eucharistic lifestyle of these characters in the *postmodern global village*.³⁹ The meetings of the Pastoral Redemptive Communities follow a basic Eucharistic liturgy where the passion story of Christ becomes the poetizing memory of the community which forms and shapes its lifestyle and characters. These characters seek to live obediently to this Eucharistic lifestyle in the *postmodern global village* and thus offer the village an alternative.

This lifestyle is an alternative as it is based on a completely different narrative to the dominant narratives of the *postmodern global village*. The Gospel narrative offers an alternative to the *postmodern global village's* need to control space from which others can be controlled, managed and manipulated. The Gospel narrative does not require

38 Chapter Six: 9. The story of the early church's identity

39 Chapter Six: 10.5.1 Fusion of horizons – the questions with historical theology

control over space, because the believer is seen as an alien, who does not have any space (land) but the kingdom of God (which is not spatially defined but temporally). The believer is thus homeless (spatially) within the *postmodern global village*. The believer in contrast to the *postmodern global village* does not see the other as a threat that needs to be managed or manipulated, but sees the other as a gift from God and his/her differences as a blessing.

This lifestyle thus offers a redemptive alternative to the *postmodern global village*.

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities cannot verbally and publically proclaim her truth as an alternative to the lies and illusions of the *postmodern global village*, because that would be beyond the dimensions of a narrative truth.⁴⁰ If the Pastoral Redemptive Communities should proclaim an universal absolute truth as an alternative to the lies of the *postmodern global village* they would no longer be communities under the cross and thus no longer be embedded in the story of Christ crucified, because then they would have created/constructed their own ideological truth, which is not the narrative truth of Christ crucified.

This means that the only redemptive alternative the Pastoral Redemptive Communities can offer the *postmodern global village*, is the Eucharistic lifestyle and character of her members who live and work in the *postmodern global village*.

6.2.2.5 What kind of pastoral ecclesiological action is necessary for the Gospel to be proclaimed as a redemptive truth for all?

In the previous section I mentioned that the Gospel cannot be proclaimed as a universal truth as it is a narrative truth, which reveals itself in the mystery of narrative and faith. The only thing that the Pastoral Redemptive Communities can proclaim is the narrative of the Gospel. This Gospel is redemptive for all, but that can only be discovered in the response of faith and not as a postulate formulated as a universal truth. The only action the Pastoral Redemptive Communities can take to proclaim the Gospel as redemptive for all is to be a community of and under the cross.

This means that it is a community that lives in the memory of Christ crucified and in the anticipated hope of the coming eschatological Lord and thereby the Pastoral Redemptive Communities challenge the dominant narratives of the *postmodern global village* offering an alternative, liberating and redeeming interpretation of reality, life and history. Pastoral Redemptive Communities also live in the anticipated hope of the coming Lord, and in obedience to Christ seek the fulfilment of the kingdom in this world through this alternative lifestyle. This alternative lifestyle is lived in memory of the cross and therefore is never proclaimed as the 'answer' (a universal truth), but it is lived in weakness and humility and under the iconoclasm of the cross, which destroys any theory or ideology which claims divine (universal) status.

In conclusion, Pastoral Redemptive Communities proclaim nothing but a lifestyle formed and shaped by the story of Christ crucified and lived in the anticipated hope of the coming Lord.

40 Chapter Six: 2. Historical theology in a *postmodern global village*

7. PASTORAL ECCLESIOLOGICAL ACTION IN A *POSTMODERN GLOBAL VILLAGE* WITHIN A NARRATIVE THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION AS AN IMAGINED STORY OF THE FUTURE

7.1 Introduction

The pastoral ecclesiological action in a *postmodern global village* is interpreted in the context of the five dimensions as each human action can be seen within the context of these five dimensions of practical reason.⁴¹

I would like to reflect on the ecclesiological action of the Pastoral Redemptive Communities in the context of these five dimensions. The question guiding this reflection is: Can Pastoral Redemptive Communities be seen as a redemptive alternative (redemptive outcome) to the actions within the *postmodern global village* and thus offer an imagined story of the future?

The reflection of these 'actions' will be in the context of the narrative orientation (a narrative understanding of human action and praxis). I hope to thereby conclude this study as a search for a narrative theological orientation in a global village from a postmodern urban South African perspective, proposing an ecclesiological pastoral action (praxis) as understood within this narrative theological understanding. This proposal can be seen as a unique outcome for a specific ministry context, as the result of a specific theological journey of a congregation and myself. This proposal in no way assumes to be applicable in other contexts, but it has engaged critically with the five validity claims and therefore I believe it can enter into critical dialogue with other proposals/orientations. These actions form the basis for an imagined story of the future which is inspired by the re-authored (rediscovered) story of the past, making it possible for St. Peter's to take the next step into the future with hope.

7.2 Pastoral ecclesiological action made up of concrete practices (rules and roles, communication patterns)

In Chapter Two I discovered narrative as a response to the postmodern context. I discovered it by looking at very basic human actions and in the process of trying to understand these basic human actions discovered the usefulness of narrative understanding of human action, experience and personality. The Pastoral Redemptive Communities are communities which seek to create a narrative setting for understanding, interpreting and forming the actions of its members.

The Sunday service in isolation cannot be described as a narrative setting for the congregants which can shape and form human actions. The members of the congregation, who attend the Sunday service during the week, live and work in a totally

⁴¹ Chapter Four: 2.2 Validity claims in the context of descriptive theology and the common human experience in the global village.

different narrative setting, namely that which I have described in this study as the *postmodern global village*.

This *postmodern global village*, as a narrative setting⁴², forms and shapes the actions, determines the rules and roles of practice as well as the communication patterns in which the members of the congregation are embedded from Sunday after church to Sunday before church.

The workplace of many of the congregants in the *postmodern global village* is embedded in the language (communication patterns) of the global economy. These communication patterns proclaim certain values and thus form certain characters that act according to certain rules and roles. These values are diametrically opposed to the values of the Gospel and thus many of the members of the congregation are in conflict with themselves as their workplace demands of them certain actions which they cannot identify with because of their Christian upbringing.⁴³ If the 'Christian upbringing' is reduced to Sunday services the Gospel narrative (as a narrative setting) becomes very insignificant and not at all influential enough to form and shape the rules and roles of actions of the individual members of the congregation.

In response to this dominant narrative setting of the *postmodern global village* the Pastoral Redemptive Communities meet on a regular basis specifically to discuss these practical issues of everyday life in the *postmodern global village*. The actions demanded by rules and roles of the *postmodern global village* workplace are placed into a different narrative setting – not the setting of the *postmodern global village*, but the setting of the Gospel, and are thereby re-authored and alternative rules and roles are found which are based on different communicative patterns. In the Pastoral Redemptive Communities individuals are formed and shaped by the language/ communication patterns (narrative setting) of the Gospel, in other words it is the Gospel that shapes and forms their character with which they negotiate a truthful (that of a disciple) lifestyle within the *postmodern global village*.

The values of the *postmodern global village* form certain rules and roles through its communication patterns that shape and form a certain kind of character (for example rich aesthete, manager and therapist).⁴⁴

The Gospel, as a narrative setting, also shapes and forms the rules and roles through its communication pattern (narrative setting) that shapes a certain character. This character is shaped by values (rules and roles) such as humility, grace, forgiveness, reconciliation and love. The character is formed in the likeness of Christ (Philippians 2: 5) by the story of Christ as testified to in the Gospel.

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities are not communities where everybody lives together and separate from the *postmodern global village* and thus their influence, as narrative setting, is minimal. The narrative setting of the *postmodern global village* is very powerful as it has full use of the media, but Pastoral Redemptive Communities in their weekly meetings create an awareness of an alternative way of understanding and

42 Chapter Four: 15. Narrative global field of experience

43 Chapter Three: 3.2.3 The stories of families in the global village

44 Chapter Five: 1.4.3 The individual in relation to others in the *postmodern global village*

interpreting the world.

This awareness is based on the passion narrative of Christ which exposes the lies and illusions of the *postmodern global village*.

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities, as narrative communities, cannot offer the individual member concrete answers or concrete rules and roles, but the language (narratives) of these communities shape a certain kind of character who has the necessary dramatic resources to negotiate his/her rules and roles in the *postmodern global village* which I believe are a redemptive and alternative response to the characters, rules and roles formed and shaped by the communication patterns of the *postmodern global village*.

7.3 Pastoral ecclesiological action is motivated by needs and tendencies

Any human action is motivated by certain needs and tendencies. These needs and tendencies can be understood as basic needs and tendencies, such as food, water and shelter or as psychologically induced needs and tendencies. These induced needs and tendencies are socially constructed needs and tendencies. "These needs and tendencies determine what we value and disvalue, what we need for survival and enjoyment, and what is harmful to survival and enjoyment" (Browning 1991:103).

Some of these basic needs are actually necessary for survival and then the individuals are made to believe that the psychologically induced needs are also absolutely necessary for their survival.

These tendencies and needs are based on the understanding of what it means to be a human. In the *postmodern global village* to be human means to understand oneself within the narrative setting of the *postmodern global village* with the dominant stories of consumption, individualism, and individual autonomy. This result of this narrative setting and the consequent understanding of what it means to be human is that the tendencies and needs are very egocentric. If needs and tendencies are understood mainly from the point of view of **my** needs and tendencies the result will very soon be that everybody is seen as a threat or as competitor.⁴⁵ Needs and tendencies within the context of the *postmodern global village* narrative setting are seen as something that must be defended against the others. For example the basic needs such as food and shelter is dependent, in the technically organised world of the *postmodern global village*, on employment opportunities. In the highly competitive global labour market everybody is a possible threat. Humanity is fragmented as others are seen as threats or possible threats to my fulfilment of my needs and tendencies. The result is a fragmented world, and in many instances very competitive, stressful situations at work and sometimes even antagonistic work environments.⁴⁶ If everybody is seen as a threat or as a possible threat it also explains the rise in xenophobia throughout the world as the foreigners are seen as 'those who steal our jobs'.⁴⁷

Another basic need is the need for meaning and security. The individual in the

45 Chapter Five: 1.4.3 The individual in relation to others in the *postmodern global village*

46 Chapter Three: 3.2.3 The stories of families in the global village, as well as Chapter Four, first perspective: 7.3 Unpacking the story of fragmentation and marginalization – the division of labour.

47 Chapter Four: 10.3 Unpacking the story of fragmentation and marginalization – the division of labour.

postmodern global village has the need to understand and interpret him/herself and to understand the world around him/her. The individual has a need for sacred stories.⁴⁸ In the *postmodern global village* the individual is denied the possibility of these sacred stories of tradition and is told that he/she has to construct his/her own sacred stories from the religious goods available on the consumer market.

The individual, urged on by the need for security and meaning, constructs a sacred story and this story gives a momentary feeling of security and meaning, but in the global village this story is immediately threatened by the other constructed stories, or the other stories of various religious or ideological traditions.⁴⁹ The result of this disembedding and the need for security and meaning is fundamentalism. In the last few decades there has been a rise in religious or ideological fundamentalism. In a *postmodern global village* other religions or ideologies are seen as threats because they threaten the individual's understanding of reality and of him/herself.

I have mentioned a few tendencies and needs within the *postmodern global village* which are not fulfilled and the result is fragmentation and a feeling of homelessness.⁵⁰ The Pastoral Redemptive Communities seek to respond to these tendencies and needs by offering the individual member alternative dramatic resources by which to understand him/herself and the world around him/her and therefore offering a different understanding of his/her tendencies and needs.

In the Pastoral Redemptive Communities individuals are not seen as autonomous and egocentric consumers, but as humans created in the image of God embedded in the divine history of the triune God. The individual members are given the dramatic resources to interpret the pluralism of the *postmodern global village* as a gift of God and not as a threat, and thus the pluralism of the global village is incorporated into the understanding, description and interpretation of the history of the world. These dramatic resources are found in the narratives of scripture.

7.4 Pastoral ecclesiological action is limited and channelled by social-systemic and ecological constraints

Human actions are formed by certain rules and roles, formed by the narrative setting (communication patterns), and are a response to basic human tendencies and needs as well as psychologically induced tendencies and needs.

Yet these actions are limited by certain social-systemic and ecological constraints.

Actions in the *postmodern global village* are formed by the rules and roles of the narrative setting (consumerism, individual autonomy and individualism) where the basic needs and tendencies are continuously seen to be threatened by others and thereby fragmenting the globe through fear and violence.⁵¹

This egocentric consumption is limited by the limited natural resources available. This means that a certain luxury lifestyle is only available to a few and excluding many others

48 Chapter Two: 8.4.1 Sacred stories.

49 Chapter Four: 15.3 The disembedded narratives of selves.

50 Chapter Four: 16. Globalisation and homelessness

51 Chapter Five: 1.6 The effects of the *postmodern global village*.

from this luxury lifestyle. If the majority of the world's population are excluded or marginalised from this luxury lifestyle then this lifestyle will continuously be threatened.

The question therefore is: How long will the earth be able to accommodate this egocentric consumption and the resulting potential for violence?

Human action, as interpreted within the narrative setting of the *postmodern global village*, is limited and constrained, firstly by the environmental factors (limited natural resources) and secondly by the social-systemic factors (rising violence and frustration because of the unequal distribution of resources and the continuous fear and threat of the other).

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities offer an alternative understanding of human action. Human action is formed by the rules and roles of the narrative setting of the Gospel where the basic needs and tendencies are interpreted within the story of the triune history of the world thereby placing humanity and the world within the context of the holistic redemptive history of the Trinity.⁵²

Within this narrative setting the environment, history and other humans are seen as a gift which comes to the present generation from the past. It is given to the present generation to work and develop in partnership with God⁵³ and then is passed on to future generations.

The environment is not seen as a resource that is exploited by humans and unequally distributed, but as a gift that is shared and developed within the context of the redemptive history of God's kingdom. Other humans (social-systemic limitations) are not seen as threats, but as a blessing of God's manifold glory.

7.5 Pastoral ecclesiological action is ordered by the principles of obligation

Human actions are ordered by principles of obligation. Humans as rational beings will always develop certain principles of obligation rationally explaining their actions (Browning 1991:105).⁵⁴ Human action within the *postmodern global village* is regulated by the rational principles of the global economy. These principles of obligation form the values (roles and rules) of the characters⁵⁵ which are created by the *postmodern global village* story.

One of the dominant stories of the *postmodern global village* is that there is no dominant story, but that each individual creates his/her own metanarrative. This dominant story is exactly what is necessary for the dominant economic story to flourish in the *postmodern global village*.⁵⁶

This dominant economic story is therefore seen as the rational global story which is not

52 Chapter Six: 7.4 The relationship between the church and the trinitarian history of God.

53 Chapter Six: 8.3.2 The Story of the kingdom of God as a kingdom of redemption.

54 Chapter Four: 2.2 Validity claims in the context of descriptive theology and the common human experience in the global village.

55 Chapter Five: 1.4.3 The individual in relation to others in the *postmodern global village*

56 Chapter Five: 1.2 The global village a postmodern village

constructed but inevitable and therefore forms the rational basis for the obligations of the characters in the *postmodern global village*. The obligations of the character of the *postmodern global village* are not seen as arbitrary, but founded on rational principles of the global market economy which are understood as natural. In other words, the global economy is not part of the socially constructive narratives of the global village, but is a universal and natural phenomenon. This is an illusion as the market mechanisms are not natural (based on natural human needs and tendencies)/rational or universal, but are indeed socially constructed.⁵⁷

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities, which are communities of the cross of Christ, are liberated from the laws (obligations) of the *postmodern global village*. The cross of Christ exposes the so-called 'natural law' of the market economy, which creates certain inevitable obligations, as illusions. The passion story of Christ exposes this law (obligation) as an illusion that ends in death. It exposes the obligation for what it truly is namely as a law that leads to the death of the individual as well as the death of the planet.⁵⁸

Pastoral Redemptive Communities place the individual under a new obligation and that is the obligation of the cross and to remain under the cross, thereby exposing the lies and illusions of the laws (universal truths) that humanity creates. The obligation to remain under the cross is an obligation to remain faithful to Christ only without creating idols, universal truths or universal systems of meaning.⁵⁹ The narrative of Christ's passion is the narrative truth which places the individual under the rational obligation of the story of the cross.

7.6 Pastoral ecclesiological action is given meaning by visions, narratives and metaphors (sacred stories)

Human actions have meaning by being placed within a certain narrative settings.⁶⁰ These narrative settings have histories and traditions (sacred stories).⁶¹ It is within the context of the visions (*telos*) of the sacred stories that human actions find their meaning and purpose.

Within the *postmodern global village* it is believed that there is no one universal sacred story and therefore there also is no binding *telos* that can give general meaning and purpose to human actions.⁶²

Without this unifying *telos* humanity has no other option than to turn to emotivism to justify their actions. I would like to argue that behind this 'loss of telos' there is a vision and a sacred story namely the 'non-story' story of the *postmodern global village*.

This is the sacred story that tells the story that in the *postmodern global village* there is no sacred story, but rather a pluralism of sacred stories from which the individual can choose. This sacred story creates the moral relativism necessary for the sacred

57 Chapter Four: 7.1 The early beginnings of the story

58 Chapter Six: 8.2.1 Justification of the sinner and liberation from the power of sin

59 Chapter Six: 8.2.3 Liberation of godforsakenness and the godforsaken

60 Chapter Two: 8.2.2 Narrative intelligibility of human actions

61 Chapter Two: 8.4 Social setting of narrative

62 Chapter Five: 2.4.5 The result of the church's position towards these developments. In this section I reflect on MacIntyre's argument that in postmodernity the world lost its telos.

economic story of the *postmodern global village* to advance in history unchallenged. For example, the American led war on Iraq could not be challenged because of the moral relativism which is created by the sacred story (that there is no unifying sacred story) of the *postmodern global village*. The fact that this war could go on, although challenged from many sides, was because all arguments against it were relative and could thus be reduced to emotional arguments.

This does not mean that the actions on the world stage of the *postmodern global village* do not have meaning or are arbitrary just because the arguments for or against these actions are relative and emotive. Nor does it mean that this action was not placed within a sacred story that gave it meaning and purpose. The war on Iraq makes absolute sense, has meaning and purpose within the 'sacred' economic story of the *postmodern global village*.

The Pastoral Redemptive Communities are set within the sacred story of God's revealed truth. This truth is revealed in the story of God with humanity and thus is a narrative truth. This divine story is revealed in the story and passion of Christ and the Gospels testify to this narrative truth. The actions of the individuals are placed within this setting and thus find meaning and purpose within this narrative setting.

This sacred story also gives the individuals the dramatic resources to understand and interpret the actions within world history as history is understood and interpreted within the history of the triune God with the world.⁶³

The dramatic resources of the narrative of the cross enables the community to interpret and expose the illusions of the sacred story of the *postmodern global village* as it understands history within the context of the trinitarian history of God revealed in Christ. The cross of Christ enables the members of the community to expose the gods and the idols of power of the sacred story of the *postmodern global village*. The Pastoral Redemptive Communities can therefore offer the world a redemptive alternative which is a unique outcome because it offers liberation from the obligations of the sacred stories of the *postmodern global village*. The Pastoral Redemptive Communities do not offer an alternative system of truth, or society, but offers the world the narrative of the cross as truth and in that there is liberation, redemption and a unique outcome that offers a future filled with hope.

7.7 Conclusion

I have reflected on the pastoral ecclesiological action of the Pastoral Redemptive Communities within a narrative theological orientation as a response to the *postmodern global village* within the context of these five validity claims. I did this not to formulate a new theory or model, but to create the possibility for rational critique and dialogue with other communities. The pastoral action of the Pastoral Redemptive Communities is not just arbitrary and emotive, but they have a rational basis as I tried to defend this action within these five dimensions.

The truth or appropriateness of these actions is not to be found in a universally valid social or ecclesiological theory or in a transcendental theorem, but in the narrative of Christ and the kind of character this narrative creates. The truthfulness of the narrative

63 Chapter Six: 7.4 The relationship between the church and the trinitarian history of God.

or the appropriateness of the narrative will be known by the kind of character which is formed and shaped by the narrative and which can truthfully and redemptively respond to the *postmodern global village*.

In conclusion I would like to compare these two narratives (*postmodern global village* and the narrative of Christ as the narrative of the Pastoral Redemptive Communities) and the kind of character they form and shape.

Characters, values, rules and roles, obligations formed by the vision (sacred story) of the <i>Postmodern global village</i>	Characters, values, rules and roles, obligations formed by the vision (sacred story) of the story of Christ in the Pastoral redemptive communities
The commodity form of the consumer society of the <i>postmodern global village</i>	The personal form as discovered in the story of the revealed Word of God that addresses the individual and re-authors his/her story in the moment of faith and which becomes the foundation narrative of the pastoral redemptive communities
Value Grounded in Thinghood Marketability of the person Production: worth as what you do Consumption	Value Grounded in Personhood Intrinsic value of persons Worth as who you are Self-gift
Thing-Knowledge Observation and description Measurement and control Quality as quantity Emphasis on derived knowledge How-questions	Personal Knowledge Faith: self-consciousness and interiority Understanding and trust Human quality as non-measurable Immediate experience Why questions
Thing-Willing Determinism Escape Non-commitment Passivity Deadness	Personal-Willing Limited freedom Self-investment Covenant Engagement Aliveness
Thing-Behaviour Violence: Domination Manipulation Retaliation Punishment Defence Devaluation of life Demand Competition Retention	Person-Behaviour Peace: Acceptance of weakness Respect of freedom Forgiveness Healing Defenselessness Exaltation of least person Invitation Sharing Giving
Thing-Like Affectivity Sexuality as mechanics Body as machine Fear/threat	Personal Affectivity Sexuality as sign of person Body as temple- sacral presence Fear not

Non-commitment Retention of self Technique Externality Replaceability Coolness Hardness Accumulation Invulnerability Exchange Hedonism: immediate self-gratification	Covenant – committed devotedness Self-donation Telos Interiority Uniqueness Tenderness Compassion Detachment Vulnerability Prodigal love Generosity: suffering love
Thing-Reality Having What is Human scepticism Human paralysis and doubt Individual isolation Unfreedom as final condition Death	Person-Reality Being What we can be Faith and fidelity Hope and trust Love Freedom as final condition Life
Thing-Life Flight from the self Fragmented relationship Addiction to things Degradation of persons Fear of vulnerable	Person-life Recovery of solitude Rediscovery of community Simplicity of life Commitment to justice Open to wounded

This table I have adapted from John Kavanaugh’s (Kavanaugh 1991:110-111) book, *Following Christ in a Consumer Society*.

The Gospel of Christ shapes and forms a character who lives by certain rules and roles, shaped by a certain understanding of humanity (tendencies and needs), has certain values and lives under certain Gospel values and obligations, which all find meaning in the Gospel narrative.

This character, set within the narrative of the Gospel, can live truthfully and redemptively within the environmental and social-systemic constraints of the world today in contrast to the character set within the narrative setting of the *postmodern global village*.

I am not proposing that my understanding, description and interpretation of the *postmodern global village* is correct or the only possible description, nor that my understanding and interpretation of scripture’s understanding of church is correct, but I am proposing a narrative orientation for doing theology in the *postmodern global village* that is not just relative and arbitrary, but can enter into a critical rational dialogue with other orientations.

I have come to the end of the study and yet it is only the beginning of the journey.

CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE NARRATIVE THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION IN THE *POSTMODERN GLOBAL VILLAGE* FROM A POSTMODERN URBAN SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

I have come to the last part (part three) of this study namely the critical reflection and summary of the journey. I believe it to be only apt to conclude this study with a critical, reflective and summarising story of the study. The study was the story of a journey (quest) and therefore the study being a narrative study, did not seek arguments or conclusions that could be formulated in concise formulation, but the argument, 'truth' or validity of the study is to be found in the story itself and therefore I tried to tell this story as fully as possible, this being the reason why the study is so long.

This concluding chapter will consist of the following:

<p>1. Narrative theological orientation: a critical reflection</p> <p>I will briefly reflect on the narrative theological orientation as proposed and used by the study in this journey. I give a short summary of the chapters to show how this narrative orientation helped in the discovery of unique outcomes.</p>
<p>2. Pastoral Redemptive Communities: a critical reflection</p> <p>This section will be a brief final reflection on the Pastoral Redemptive Communities as proposed transformative praxis.</p>
<p>3. Epilogue</p>

1. NARRATIVE THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION: A CRITICAL REFLECTION

This journey began within the context of ministry. In this context of ministry I understood there to be two major challenges, namely postmodernity and globalization, which I believed was dividing the world into villagers and marginalised. In the initial stage of the journey I had a hunch that postmodernity and globalisation had something to do with each other, but I was not sure how exactly they are connected. I believed that these two challenges needed to be faced together and not in isolation.

This brought me to the formulation of the theme of the study and the purpose of the study.

Theme: Towards a narrative theological orientation in the *global village* from a postmodern urban South African perspective.

The purpose of the study: To find an appropriate ecclesiological praxis within the narrative theological orientation that can respond to the challenges of the global village within a postmodern, urban South African context.

The journey began (Chapter Two) with a description of postmodernity and seeking to understand how this condition developed, in other words I tried to tell the story of postmodernity and within the context of this story to discover a way of doing theology. It was towards the end of Chapter Two that I developed a working description (Chapter Two: 12.2.1 Working description) for doing theology in a postmodern context.

Working Description: The narrative theological orientation of this study can be described as a systematically structured, continuous hermeneutical process of critical reflection on Christian activities (praxis) within the social context and in the light of the various narratives that form the dramatic resources with which the faith community constructs and interprets their reality

This working description was influenced by narrative therapy, fundamental practical theology and contextual theology and it gave rise to four movements. These four movements would guide the theological journey of the study.

The rest of the study can be divided into these four movements:

Descriptive theology part one: insertion which is a process of listening and describing the stories of need of both the villagers and the marginalised	Chapter Three
Descriptive theology part two: describing and unpacking (analysis ¹) the stories of need, namely the stories of the past and the clouded stories of the future.	Chapter Four
Descriptive theology conclusion: describing the <i>postmodern global village</i>	Chapter Five
Historical and systematic theology: dialogue between the sacred texts and the questions raised in descriptive theology	Chapter Six
Strategic practical theology	Chapter Seven

¹ The term analysis comes from the pastoral hermeneutical circle and therefore I have included it here, although I am aware that it is not an appropriate term for a narrative study. I included it to indicate my indebtedness to the pastoral hermeneutic circle.

In Chapter Three the stories and the questions of the various ministry contexts were added to my primary and initial questions. These questions then needed to be unpacked and fully described, in other words the stories behind the stories needed to be told. This I tried to do in Chapter Four where I tried to give a fuller description of the global village as the narrative setting within which villagers and marginalised seek to find meaning and purpose for their lives and their practices. In this chapter I tried to tell the story of the past and how this past story clouds the story of the future.

The study truly was a journey as the books and articles that I discovered along the way took me often to very interesting and surprising places where I made amazing new discoveries which were so relevant to the study. Finally I discovered a number of books and articles which combine the global village with postmodernity. As I have already said, at the onset of the journey I had a hunch that there was a connection, and now there were others who substantiated this hunch and this led me to Chapter Five to describe the *postmodern global village*. At the end of Chapter Five many of the initial questions had to be reformulated because the stories behind the questions had been unpacked and described and so these questions were now theory-laden questions as the visional, obligational, rule and role dimensions of these questions had been unpacked. These theory-laden questions could then lead me further into the next two steps of the theological journey, namely historical and systematic theology, which I combined in one chapter (Chapter Six).

In Chapter Six I tried to bring these theory-laden questions into dialogue with the historical texts of the Christian tradition and thereby discover unique outcomes in the fusion of horizons and the re-authoring of stories of the past.

Have all the questions been answered?

The questions have not all been answered because being a narrative study I cannot answer the questions. All I can do is tell the story of the process of seeking to find new answers to questions and this process continues. In the journey I might have discovered 'answers' which the very moment they have become answers have also already become questions again. Yet I believe I have responded to the questions that I set myself in the previous two chapters. The journey has not come to an end, but has only begun. Elie Wiesel in his book *Twilight* says it in the following way:

"I was right to ask these questions, you said. But then you added, "If you try to seize the answers they will elude you. Don't be discouraged. Like the question, the answer needs freedom. But while the questions never changes, the answer is ever-changing: What is important for man is to know that there is an answer. What is important for man is to feel not only the existence of an answer, but the presence of the one who knows the answer. When I seek that presence I am seeking God"" (Wiesel 1988:107-198).

It is this that I found extremely useful in the narrative theological orientation of the study – it gave me the tools with which to journey, to discover and to describe, a journey I find exciting because it is a journey within a ministry context – a journey with a specific congregation. As I said in my working description it is a **continuous** hermeneutical process, the answers ‘need freedom’ to become questions again. It is also a process that allows the study to be in dialogue with other studies and other communities as it brings in a systematically structured critical dimension which I sought to do by bringing in other disciplines (philosophy, psychology, sociology, economics and history) as well as defending myself within the context of the validity claims.

I found this orientation very useful as it takes the postmodern context seriously and does not seek to ignore its reality.

2. Pastoral Redemptive Communities: a critical reflection

The narrative theological orientation of the study made this journey/study possible, because without these four movements the discussion would not have been possible within a specific ministry context, but it would have been a highly academic discussion. These four movements made it possible to take the congregation along on this journey. I found this very reassuring that the unique outcome of this study is also the unique outcome for the congregation and a journey that the congregation has fully embraced. This joint process of a development and a journey within the congregation and the journey of the study made this study so exciting and worthwhile.

In Chapter Two I argued that transformative praxis is the focal point of my narrative theological orientation.² Therefore I proposed in Chapter Seven a concrete transformative praxis namely the idea of Pastoral Redemptive Communities and argued for this praxis within the context of the five dimensions and in comparison to praxis in the *postmodern global village*.

These Pastoral Redemptive Communities are not the answer. It is not an ecclesiological model that can be applied to different contexts, but they are a narrative tool as they were born out of a re-authored story and thus opened the future for us as congregation. Yet, already now at the end of the first year of their implementation new challenges are already arising, challenges that will question these communities so that the journey will continue. Because these communities are communities of and under the cross they can in the context of the theology of the cross never be complacent or understand themselves to be an answer, but maybe only to be a single step in the rhythm of God’s

² Chapter Two: 11.1 Transformative praxis as the focal point of the study’s narrative theological orientation.

dance with us as congregation.

3. Epilogue

How does one end a journey and a study where probably too much has been said already about something which cannot be argued conclusively, but is better passed on through tradition, poetry, metaphor and praxis. I found a 'new' Psalm that I believe captures in poetry (the language of metaphor) far better the essence of this study than what all these pages of descriptive language could ever do. It is my prayer that the Psalms (the bread of life) will resonate not only in the words of this study, but in the journey that is only now beginning.

Epiphany

Blessed be God: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. And
blessed be the One who forgives our sins.

We stand in the holy presence of saints; with our
fathers and mothers, we bear witness to your
glory.

Let all living who have ever lived join hands with
the children who are yet to be. Let prophets and
martyrs, healers and preachers, draw near to the
throne of grace.

We have been called to a holy purpose; before time
and space, we were claimed by Living God.

Ours is a bold and a perilous mission: to carry faith
into the midst of evil, to oppose injustice with
love, to overturn apathy with shouts of hope.

For freedom, we have been set free; the Holy One has
already paid the bitter ransom.

Listen and heed the Word of God: "When did you call
that I did not answer? When did you weep that I
was not there?"

In the desert I cracked open the rock that you might
drink. With salvation-light I have shattered the
bondage of death.

With fire and cloud have I led you; my covenant goes
before you as beacon and guide.

“Pay attention, my forgetful people. Do not submit yourselves to slavery.

Do not listen to the easy words of moral gods; put nothing in the place of wilderness faith.

Honour the creation: be good stewards of body and mind; respect the earth and its marvellous creatures.

Be vigilant against the demons of envy. Grace bestowed upon another is always grace imparted to you.

Speak the truth; do not inflict harm by falsehood or by silence.

Harbor no malice or hatred; seek justice and freedom for all creation.

“Repent, my beloved. Let your hearts respond to the unfading comfort of my Word.

Be alert, as one who waits to hear a familiar footstep.

There is no moment when I am far off, no time when I am absent.

Your wrongdoing I have set aside, and I have erased your sin.”

Listen to the Word that liberates; hear the good news that nourishes every hungry child:

“Though my people disobey, I will not forsake them.

I am their steadfast teacher; their judge and their strength.

With compassion I will shelter all creatures, from the smallest to the largest.

Not one will be lost from the holy and infinite caravan, the caravan of God that is travelling, full-glorious and infinite and free, into the dawn of redemption day” (Bell 1991:143-145).

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end Amen.

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Welcome to St Peter's



**An Evangelical Lutheran
Pastoral Redemptive Community Fellowship
in Pretoria and Centurion**

Who or what are we?

We are an Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa (N-T) and belong to the Northern Circuit.

We are situated in the heart (inner city) of the capital city of South Africa and therefore have a very special calling from God.

In the beginning of the year 2001 a few members of our congregation came together over a couple of weeks with the task of **discovering God's purpose** for us as body of Christ in a postmodern, global, urban South African context. This is the story of that very special journey - a journey that you as reader are invited to join.

Our calling from God is no different to the calling or the commissioning of all believers and is taken from Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

We are also guided by the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:37):

He said to him, "you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

With this Word God calls us as congregation, but He has called us together in a very specific place with very specific challenges here in St. Peter's, Pretoria.



Our Challenges:

- 1) We are an inner city congregation facing all the inner city challenges of multiculturalism, diversity, pluralism, poverty, homelessness, unemployment.

It was within the context of these challenges that we as congregation under the guidance of the Spirit of Christ needed to discover our God given purpose based on our commissioning.

Five areas of ministry:

We looked at our challenge and discovered five areas of ministry:

- 1) The 'community' is the postmodern, global urban community of the greater Pretoria and Centurion cities

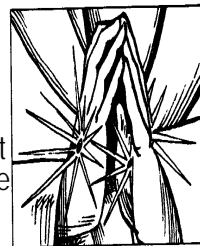
These five areas of ministry do not classify or stereotype, but are descriptive groupings helping us describe and understand our reality and context. We understand ourselves to be called to each of these five areas according to the great commission and the greatest

Five tasks:

Looking at the Great Commission and the greatest Commandment we discovered five God given tasks:

1. Love God = *commit*
2. Love your neighbour = *serve*
3. Go out and make disciples = *openness*
4. Baptise them = *include*
5. Teach them to obey = *equip*

commandment.



These five tasks need to be understood within the context of the reality of our congregation, in other words within the context of the five areas of ministry.

In our journey with God we discovered and were led to understand our calling with regards to:

- 1) the **community** - to be **open** to the community and allow the brokenness of the postmodern, global, urban South African and inner city reality affect us and challenge us.

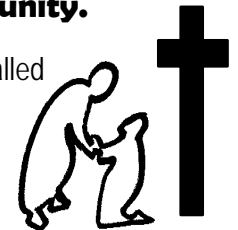
We are guided by the thought of Jesus' incarnation into the brokenness of the world.

- 2) the **crowd** - to create a space in our midst whereby the crowd can **commit** themselves to God, through the experience of His Word, grace, love and forgiveness through Christ.
- 3) the **congregation** - to invite and **include** all into the ministry of Christ through our congregation.
- 4) the **committed** - to **equip** them for discipleship.
- 5) the **core** - to create the space for the servant ministry of all believers where we can **serve** each other as well as the community as members of the body of Christ.

It is out of this journey with God that we discovered our God given purpose:

To embody the love of Christ by reaching out as a servant people to those in need being united by the love of God into his family, to lead to commitment all who share in God's journey with our city by including them into the servant body of Christ being equipped by Christ to serve our community.

Our emblem tries to depict our purpose. We are called to reach out and serve each other through the guidance of Christ crucified.



The keys of St. Peter symbolize for us the eternal Word of God (*sola Scriptura*) which proclaims Christ (*sola Christus*) crucified who calls us to faith (*sola Fide*) and to new birth through grace (*sola Gratia*), thus unlocking the city of God that is hidden yet present in our city of Pretoria, there where the followers of Christ are obedient to His call. The keys tell the story of our Lutheran heritage.



How?

After we had discovered God's purpose for us in our unique context we needed to ask ourselves how we are going to realise this purpose.

The city we are living in is faced with numerous challenges. We read about these challenges in the newspapers, we hear about them at work and we see them as we walk/drive through the city streets. We are very often overwhelmed by these challenges, because the problems seem too big and too numerous.

The question we need to ask ourselves is: **“Have these challenges anything to do with the church?”**

I believe that it has everything to do with the church, if we believe the following:

† that the church is the bearer of the story of Christ who was born, suffered and crucified, descended into hell and on the third day rose again from the dead;

† that Christ was crucified because of sin;

† and if we understand sin in all its forms of brokenness and evil which holds the world captive in systems which lead to separation between creation and God and eventually ends in death.

Then the church has a vital role to play in facing the challenges of our city, because the church as the body of Christ holds the key to liberation from sin and the systems of death. When Jesus died on the cross he took all the sin and brokenness upon himself. It is here, at the cross, that our story as church begins, because it is the centre of our Christian faith.

Consequently we need to ask ourselves the next question: **“How can the redeeming story of the cross become a reality in our city?”**

St Peter's is faced with a practical challenge that our membership is spread all over the city as we do not all live in the same community. This challenge however may be our call to ministry, because this enables us to minister to the whole city!

The next question is: **“Can we as individuals face the challenges of the city?”**

The answer is, no. Nor did God ever intend it that way. He wants each member to be part of a communion of believers, of the body of Christ. Therefore St. Peter's has decided to organize ourselves into **P a s t o r a l R e d e m p t i v e C o m m u n i t i e s** throughout the city, in order to fulfill our God-given purpose. These Pastoral Redemptive communities (PRC's) will create space for the redemptive message and presence of Christ throughout the city of Pretoria and Centurion.

Pastoral Redemptive Communities are:

- †Communities which are embedded in the story of Christ crucified.
- †Communities which strive to create alternative realities as a contrast society to the brokenness of the world around us. Under the grace of God they are Kingdom communities.
- †Communities where healing can be experienced and where individuals and families experience healing and reach out to the community.
- †Communities where hope is shared and hope is proclaimed.
- †Communities which function as the body of Christ within the city.
- †Communities of hospitality where the broken, lost, seeking, hungry, thirsty and needy are invited as Christ.



We invite you, member of the Body of Christ in St. Peter's, to join this journey of redemption as we journey with the city from brokenness to healing. To which Pastoral Redemptive Community do you belong?

The Pretoria East PRC

If you live in the following areas you belong to this community:

Lynnwood, Lynnwood Glen, Faerie Glen, Garfontein, Newlands, Waterkloof Ridge, Monument Park, Constantia Park, Erasmuskloof, Moreleta, Olympus, Silver Lakes, Wingate Park, Menlo Park, Silverton, Meyerspark, Nellmapius, La Montagne, Murrayfield, Willow Glen, Scientia

The Centurion (South) PRC

If you live in the following areas you belong to this community:

Taba-Tshwane, Valhala, Kloofsig, Lyttelton, Clubview, Pierre van Ryneveld, Doringkloof, Eldoraigue, Raslouw, Heuweloord, Rooihuiskraal, The Reeds, Midrand.

The Pretoria North PRC
 If you live in the following areas you belong to this community:
 Riviera, Rietondal, Kirkney, Claremont, Mountain View, Florida, Heatherdale, Amandla, Winterneest, Karenpark, Orchards, Klerk, Onderstepoort, Doornbos, Sinoville, Wonderbos, Park, Rietfontein, Montana Park

The Pretoria Central and West PRC

If you live in the following areas you belong to this community:

Pretoria West, Kwaggasrand, Salvokop, Lukasrand, Sunnyside, Central, Arcadia, Colbyn, Muckleneuk, Bailey's Muckleneuk, Nieuw Muckleneuk, Brooklyn, Hillcrest, Hatfield, Eastwood, Lisogan Park, Bryntirion, Kilberry, Eastclyffe, Groenkloof, Waterkloof



Paul Reding, *Frustriertes und für Anstöße*. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 1996.

The Servant Ministry of all believers

Believers

God has called us to a specific purpose and the journey which we wish to travel in order to fulfil this purpose is that of pastoral redemptive communities.

How are these pastoral redemptive communities going to work?

The only way these pastoral redemptive communities can work is if every member in St. Peter's sees him/herself as a minister, with a ministry within the kingdom of God. All believers are "Ministers".

What is ministry? Ministry is the work of God within the world. It is the work of serving others and using the gifts, resources and power that God gives us to work in His kingdom. I would like to quote a passage from the 'The Word in Life Study Bible':

"This is important for the church today to understand, because many Christians assume that "ministry" belongs only to professional ministers, or clergy. But ministry belongs to everyone in the body of Christ. All believers are "ministers." All

have been gifted to carry out the work of God (Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12).

What then is the role of the clergy? To equip or prepare the "ministers" to do their work of ministry (Eph 4:11-12). This involves teaching the truth of God's Word, helping believers overcome the problems that hinder them, giving them a vision for reaching out to others with the love of Christ, and helping them develop and utilize the practical skills required to carry out their God-given tasks.

Ministry is the calling, privilege, and responsibility of every member of the body of Christ. It has been said that when believers are baptised, "they are ordained into the ministry." The pastoral redemptive communities are the place where we will be able to live out our ministry.

How to discover my ministry? Here are some steps that can be taken:

Prayerfully ask: why has God brought you to St. Peter's? Ask: what gift, talent or resources and even needs do you have which God wants to use in His ministry in St. Peter's to the city of Pretoria and Centurion?

Pray about your role in the body of Christ here in St. Peter's and then critically reflect on this role together with others in the body of Christ. Speak to the Pastor about your role (ministry) as we together discover a way forward.

Some suggestions about possible ministries:

Children's church, youth ministry, music ministry (choir/band, etc), friendship ministry (welcoming team, new members ministry), hospital ministry, bereavement counselling, financial ministry, legal advice ministry, women's ministry, men's ministry, single parent's ministry, medical ministry, nursing ministry, prayer ministry, art ministry, public relations ministry, drama ministry, social work ministry, accountant ministry, communications ministry, support group ministry, outreach ministry, flat ministry, teaching ministry, etc. The list is as long as there are gifts, talents and resources within St Peter's.

You are invited to pray and to discover your ministry within St Peter's as Christ is knocking at your door and wishes to enter and have fellowship with you.

What is the Body of Christ doing through St. Peter's and where can you get involved?

1. The four PRC's and their specific ministries
2. Children's church every Sunday during school terms
3. PRC Bible Clubs – children's church
4. Junior confirmation classes
5. Senior confirmation classes
6. St. Peter's Youth every Wednesday and Friday
7. Teenagers for Christ – youth camps
8. PRC – Teenagers of Christ
9. Alpha course – a basic faith course
10. Spiritual Retreats
11. Emmaus fellowship - a discipleship group

12. Prophetic Bible study – God’s Word for our context and time
13. Brass band
14. Choir
15. Women’s ministry
16. Council centre planning group
17. Counselling
18. Prayer ministry
19. Public Relations and Newsletter (Insight)
20. Pretoria Community Ministry – an urban social transformation agency in partnership with St Peter’s
21. The ministry you are starting.

Tel. 012-322 3810
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E-mail: stpeters.church.pretoria@mweb.co.za

Office Hours:

Mon - Thursdays 8:30-13:00
Fridays 8:30-12:00

Our Pastor:

Johann-Albrecht Meylahn
Tel: 012 667 1898
E-mail:
jmeylahn@lantic.net

Our Sunday Worship Service:

Every Sunday at 8:30
Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month
Baptism by appointment with the Pastor



Where to find us:

Corner of Skinner and Van der Walt Streets

How to contact us:

P.O. Box 1982, Pretoria, 0001



The Divine Service of the Community Meeting
of the Evangelical Lutheran Pastoral Redemptive
Community Church
Pretoria and Centurion

Greeting

We meet this evening in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Come let us pray to our God, and bow before him.
(We stand and read a Psalm)

Answer: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Confession of Brokenness and Sin

Let us bring our world and ourselves before God. Let us look at our world, at the Body of Christ gathered here in St. Peter's in the light of God's Word.

Exodus 20: 1-17: *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the Land of slavery. (1) You shall have no other gods before me. (2) You shall not make yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them. (3) You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. (4) Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. (5) Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord is giving you. (6) You shall not murder, (7) you shall not commit adultery, (8) you shall not steal. (9) you shall not give false testimony against your neighbour, (10) you shall not covet your neighbour's house, nor anything that belongs to him/ her.*

1. Sorrow and brokenness
 - 1.1 Brokenness and happenings affecting us in our world.
 - 1.2 Brokenness and sorrow in our families and places of work.
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
 - 2.1 What has not been done that should have been done?
 - 2.2 What more can we do that has not been done?



- 2.3 How have we neglected our calling?
- 2.4 How have we been unfaithful to our calling?
- 2.5 What brokenness has been experienced in our midst?
- 2.6 What needs to be taken up in our divine service?

commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself." (Matt 22:37-40)

Our Mission statement: to embody the love of Christ by reaching out as a servant people to those in need being united by the love of God into his family, to lead to commitment all who share in God's journey with our city by including them into the servant body of Christ being equipped by Christ to serve our community.

We turn to God and seek his forgiveness.

God's grace: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*

Matt. 6:14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Signs of God's grace in the body of Christ

Signs of faith, love and hope that we need to celebrate.

- 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- 4. Remaining faithful to our calling
 - 4.1 Community - open
 - 4.2 Crowd - include
 - 4.3 Congregation - commit
 - 4.4 Committed – teach and equip
 - 4.5 Core – servant leaders

God speaks to us

Meditation

Living as Body of Christ, strengthened by His Word to *fulfil the task*

Equipped for the task through Christ giving Himself to us

Bringing our world, the body of Christ and ourselves to God

Our Father

Receiving the blessing from God

Our God given task: *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."* (Matt 28:19)

God's will: *Jesus replied: "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest*

Proposal for a Multi-Disciplinary Youth Counselling Centre – Initiated by St. Peter’s Lutheran Church

1. Background

The inner city of Pretoria, located in the heart of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Area, has changed dramatically over the past 10 years. Both the social and racial transition required new and innovative responses from all role players. In the time a significant social movement emerged with the city, comprising of various church – community – based groups and initiatives.

The St. Peter’s Lutheran Church was a leading partner in some of the significant programmes that helped to create inner city social infra-structure.

- This church has experienced major transition from being an all white congregation in the early 1990’s to becoming a very diverse congregation in 2003, reflecting the composition of our city and of South Africa at large. A large percentage of the new community that has formed in St. Peter’s comprises black young people and students.
- This church is a member and donor church of the ecumenical partnership of Pretoria Community Ministries, an inner city community development organisation.
- This church is also one of the members of Yeast City Housing, the first social housing association in the City of Tshwane.

It has therefore clearly demonstrated a commitment to the inner city, a commitment to transform itself from within, but also a commitment to be part of the social transformation of the community in which it is located.

It is against this background, and from the perspective of hearing the voices of the inner city youth daily, that this proposal has been developed.

2. Needs analysis of inner city youth

The inner city has always attracted young adults, who make the inner city their first home after leaving their families. These youngsters very often come from rural backgrounds and are thus faced with numerous challenges as they enter the inner city. But they are also young people with great potential, wanting to seize the many new opportunities that come their way. After consultation and unstructured interviews with numerous young people in the inner city, as well as with various groups, the following issues were raised as challenges that face the inner city youth currently:

- HIV/AIDS
- Unemployment
- Financial difficulties
- Housing: renting or buying property; the basic rights of tenants

Moral and ethical orientation
Relationships
Health issues
Drugs
Crime
Trauma/ Rape
Guidance counselling

Often young people in the city do not have the life skills yet to deal with the overwhelming challenges they are presented with. And yet, there is an eagerness to be equipped for life and to deal constructively with the many decisions that have to be made every single day.

3. Towards a Multi-Disciplinary Youth Counselling Centre

Based on this needs assessment, and coming as a cry from the young people themselves, the concept of a Multi-Disciplinary Youth Counselling Centre has emerged. The idea of such a Centre has been on the agenda of the St. Peter's Lutheran church for a number of years, but the necessary facilities could not be identified. There is also a new momentum with the increased ownership and leadership taken by young people, as well as rising sense of synergy with other local initiatives and groups.

This proposal wants to present the vision and strategic outline of such a Multi-Disciplinary Youth Counselling Centre.

3.1 Mission

- The Multi-Disciplinary Youth Counselling Centre will offer a safe, friendly and hospitable space where young people from the inner city can experience fellowship, caring and love.
- It will be a space of listening, a space of dialogue, a space of learning and empowerment, and a space of healing and growth.
- The Centre will offer information on various topics, individual counselling, support groups, capacity-building workshops, a library & resource centre, a coffee bar & recreational area, and special events for fellowship and interaction.
- It will encourage peer counselling and support, but at the same time engage resource people/ organisation to complement what the Centre could offer.
- It will work in close relationship with various local organisation, forums and networks, to avoid duplication and to contribute to the broader movement of transformation.
- The centre will encourage volunteers to come forward from within the community who will then be trained and empowered to take responsibility for the centre.

3.2 Vision

We see whole and equipped young people, who deal creatively with challenging life issues, and who grow towards their full potential

3.3 Objectives

- O1 Providing a library & information service
- O2 Providing a coffee bar & recreation centre
- O3 Providing an advice centre – finance, unemployment, housing etc.
- O4 Providing individual counselling services
- O5 Providing an HIV/AIDS centre, offering information, advice & counselling
- O6 Providing a drug abuse centre, offering information, advice & counselling
- O7 Facilitating support groups
- O8 Offering leadership workshops
- O9 Offering parenting workshops
- O10 Trauma Centre for crisis and rape counselling

4. Proposed Venue for the Launch of the Centre

It has come to our attention that the property next to our church (**367 Van der Walt street Erf number 3344**) has been standing empty for quite some time. It is a government property and would be an ideal site for such a Centre for various reasons:

It is accessible as it is very central

It is accessible from the street, therefore has very few barriers, making it ideal for a counselling centre.

There are various rooms and outer buildings that could be used for support group meetings. It is therefore possible for it to function as a multi-disciplinary counselling centre.

There is open ground next to the house as well as behind the house for outdoor activities, such as volleyball, etc.

It is next to the St. Peter's church buildings, making management of the Centre easier, and offering plenty of safe parking to the counsellors who will be offering their services to the youth.

Various members of our congregation have offered their professional skills for counselling in this centre, and thus it is ideal that this site is right next door to the church.

5. Strategic Implementation Plan

Objectives	Outcomes	Activities	Responsible Persons/ Partners	Time Frame
Objective 1	Providing a Library & Information service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offering resource material & info on various topics, such as drugs, sexuality, crime homosexuality, abortion, HIV/AIDS, environment, etc. - providing access to the internet. 	St. Peters	May 2003
Objective 2	Providing a coffee bar & recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coffee bar for fellowship & dialogue - various games such as pool, darts, table tennis, volley ball field drawing young people, and offering constructive recreation. 	St. Peter's Youth Ministry, Berea Youth Forum, Inner City Churches Youth Forum	May 2003
Objective 3	Advice centre – finance, housing & unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drop-in advice & information - individual consultations in fixed weekly hours on financial & housing issues - regular workshops on finances: budgeting, opening of accounts, saving - regular workshops on housing: rights & responsibilities of tenants/owners; participation in local resident forums - regular workshops on unemployment: writing of CV's, presenting yourself in an interview, job hunting, the do's & don'ts, labour law - advising the youngsters on educational possibilities within the city - guidance counselling 	Yeast City Housing Berea Community Forum, Tshepo Dept. of Labour	June-July 2003
Objective 4	Individual counselling services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular weekly hours where a therapist, psychologists are available for counselling on various issues – encouraging peer counselling - training of lay counsellors 	Counsellors from the community UNISA St. Peter's	Aug 2003
Objective 5	HIV/AIDS Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Info, advice & counselling - medical& health advice with regard to HIV/AIDS 	ATTIC and Sediba Hope Health Department	May 2003

		- referral service to clinics & doctors		
Objective 6	Drug Abuse Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Info, advice & counselling - medical& health advice – referral service - basic health service to drug users - basic counselling and support of drug users 	Health Department Counsellors from the community PCM Street Ministry	June 2003
Objective 7	Facilitating support groups	- Facilitating support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS, people with drug problems, & unemployment	Counsellors from the community St. Peter's	May 2003
Objective 8	Providing leadership workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a series of leadership workshops dealing with issues such as the moral and ethical challenges of our city, moral and ethical challenges of our global world, personal role & responsibility in society and responsible citizenship - Developing a series of empowerment workshops focussing specifically on gender issues. - Training of counsellors from the youth community thereby empowering them for the future. 	Counsellors from the community St. Peter's	May 2003
Objective 9	Offering parenting workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a series of parenting workshops dealing with issues of parenting - Providing a forum for discussing issues such as parenting and both parents working, parents and teenagers, etc. - Providing workshops on nutrition - Providing workshops on single parenting 	Counsellors and facilitators from the community, St. Peter's	June 2003
Objective 10	Trauma/ rape centre	- Offering the community a trauma centre with qualified professional to guide them through the stages of trauma specifically rape or abuse.	Counsellors, SAP, Health Department	June 2003

6. Performance Assessment

The programme will be assessed in terms of clearly identified Performance Indicator, per very Outcome, as outlined below. Tools will be developed to verify performance (means of verification).

Objectives	Performance Indicators	Means of Verification
Objective 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May 2003 a well equipped resource centre with brochures, books, and video material - 30 young people per day benefiting from the info - 15 young people per day utilising the Internet - youth connected to local services/opportunities through the service of the Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Info database with statistics/records of interviews held with young people.
Objective 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May 2003 a recreational centre with coffee bar, pool table, table tennis table, darts and a volley ball field - Coffee bar - 3 to 4 youth groups utilising the coffee bar and recreation facilities throughout the week. - 80 – 100 youths utilising the coffee bar and recreation centre per week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Info database with statistics of youth attendance - Youth coordinating committee assessing the centre according to needs of the youth
Objective 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - June/July 2003 operational office with specific weekly hours offering advice on housing in the inner city - June/July 2003 operational office with specific weekly hours offering advice on personal finance - June/July 2003 regular workshops on housing, finances and unemployment and the job market - 15-20 young people being supported by the advice centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - info database with statistics/records of individual interviews and attendance at workshops.
Objective 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aug 2003 counselling rooms and facilities set up for individual counselling - A team of psychologists, therapists, social workers who will be available certain hours of the week to offer their services to the youth of the community. - 10-15 young people per week receiving professional counselling on various issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Info database with statistics/records of interviews held with young people - Progress reports compiled by counsellors
Objective 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May 2003 set up a HIV/AIDS advice and counselling centre - A team of professional HIV/AIDS counsellors offering their time certain hours of the week - Nurses offering medical advice and referrals certain hours of the week. - 20-25 young people being advised and referred by the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Info database with statistics/records of interviews held with young people. - Records kept of all the referrals - Records kept of all medical or pharmaceutical help offered

	HIV/AIDS centre.	
Objective 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - June 2003 Drug abuse centre setup with information on drug related issues - Regular weekly hours where counsellors offer their time to counsel youth on drug related issues - Basic medical help to drug abusers - Referral system in place and developing a network for referrals - 20-30 young people on a weekly bases will be guided through the process of drug rehabilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Info database with statistics/records of interviews held with young people. - Records kept of all the referrals - Records kept of all medical or pharmaceutical help offered
Objective 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS and youngsters living with drug problems and unemployment. - Regular support group meetings facilitated by a professional counsellor - Regular Workshops on related issues - Monthly workshops with an attendance of 20-30 youngsters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Info database with statistics/records of all support group meetings and attendance. - Records kept of all workshops held - Progress reports compiled by counsellors
Objective 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May 2003 regular leadership workshops dealing with various issues of ethics, morals and responsible citizenship focussing on the role of the youth - Workshops offered focussing on moral and ethical discernment skills - A workshop facilitating team setup planning and implementing these workshops - Every second month workshops with 30-50 youngsters attending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Info database with statistics and records of attendance at these workshops - Lists of topics discussed together with assessment feedback from the workshop.
Objective 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - June 2003 regular workshops on issues related to parenting - A workshop facilitating team setup planning and implementing these workshops - 4-6 workshops a year with 20-30 parents attending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Info database with statistics and records of attendance at these workshops - Lists of topics discussed together with assessment feedback from the workshop.
Objective 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - June 2003 the opening of an trauma centre for rape and abuse counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Info database with statistics and records

7. Structures of Accountability

A management committee will be put in place, made up of the leadership of St. Peter's, the youth, and 1 or 2 other community members. The youth in the leadership will be elected by the youth attending the centre thus also creating an empowerment opportunity. This committee together with a Centre coordinator will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the Centre, and will evaluate progress monthly.

Quarterly progress and financial reports will be made available to the Church Council of St. Peter's under whose auspices the Centre will run.

An annual report and audited financial statement will be available on request to funders, supporters and friends of the Centre.

8. Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries will be the youth from the inner city. This will include youth participating in local churches, youth living in the residential areas of Berea-Burgers Park, the city centre and even Sunnyside, as well as at-risk youth who are involved with drugs and/or sex work, or homeless on the city streets. The inner city parents will also be direct beneficiaries of this centre.

The indirect beneficiaries will include the local community of Berea-Burgers Park, churches and other organisations that have identified the need for a more specialized youth outreach and support programme, as well as families that might be empowered indirectly through this service.

9. Networks & Partnerships

Although this project is initiated and managed by St. Peter's, it will work in close conjunction with a number of local partners.

The Berea Community Forum and the Youth Forum that is now being created as a sub-forum of Berea

The Youth Forum of the City Centre Churches

Pretoria Community Ministries

Yeast City Housing, offering housing advice and support services

The Skinner Street Clinic & The Sammy Marks Clinic, Folong Clinic

ATTIC

The Sediba Hope Project: an inner city HIV/AIDS partnership

Consortium for Urban Transformation & the Burgers Park Village

Capital Protea Hotel

City of Tshwane Metropolitan Council

Gauteng Department of Health

Vista University

UNISA

Department of Labour

SAP

10. Budget

Running Expenditure		Per year
1.	Staff remuneration: - Coordinator's salary - Cleaning staff - Facilitators remuneration	100 000.00 20 800.00 6 000.00
2.	Coffee bar	2 000.00
3.	Telephone	29 000.00
4.	Communication and printing	30 000.00
5.	Water and lights	20 000.00
6.	Rental of property	???
7.	Bank Charges	5 000.00
8.	Audit fees	3 000.00
9.	Data base maintenance	500.00
10.	Insurance	8 000.00
11.	Maintenance buildings and property	5 000.00
	Total	229 300.00

Capital Expenditure		Per year
1.	Library (Bookshelves, tables and chairs)	12 000.00
2.	Computer centre (internet Café) (computers X 6 tables and chairs)	82 000.00
3.	Counselling rooms (table, easy chairs etc.)	8 000.00
4.	Coffee bar (fridge, mugs, urn, easy chairs, tables, bookshelves)	7 500.00
5.	Recreational centre (table tennis, pool table, volley ball field)	10 000.00
6.	Upgrading of centre (paint, garden etc)	5 000.00
7.	HIV/AIDS Centre	150 000.00
8.	Advice centre/office (table, chair computer, bookshelf, filing cabinet)	15 000.00
9.	Workshop room/conference room (overhead, white board, chairs, tables)	25 000.00
	Total Capital Expenditure	314 500.00
	Total Capital & Running Expenditure	543 800.00

11. Request for Support

See accompanying letter attached.