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## Summary

## Key terms



## Summary

“Who is the Christ?” The question of Jesus’ identity, as depicted in the New Testament, was crucial in the early church. In Luke, it is linked with leadership and the various conflicts that he faced with the “systems” of Luke’s gospel, namely; the Roman elite, the Jewish elite and the Jewish peasantry. From an etic viewpoint, the context of Luke’s gospel indicates that Jesus’ leadership was that of conflict, rejection and opposition. Therefore, three basic issues showcase the content of this study: leadership, conflict and identity, with specific reference to the micro narrative in Luke 9:18-22.

Nowadays, leaders are sometimes opposed because of many reasons: inequality of resources, incompatible interests, ideology, inefficiency, the leader’s identity and the inability or inexperience in handling conflict and opposition. Jesus was not exempted from this. The failure to understand him in terms of his identity and mission was the stimuli for the conflict he encountered. Unfortunately previous studies in Luke have only fairly established a link between Jesus’ identity, his leadership and conflict. Even when they do, it is not approached from a social scientific perspective, that is, a reading that takes the social dynamics of first-century Palestine seriously. Also, none of such studies have been applied to the African context. This study aims at filling these gaps, by applying the results from some conflict and leadership theories to the African context. The application of these models helps to diagnose, explain, interpret and narrow the chasm between leadership and conflict within the African society. It enables leaders not to dread conflict, but to use conflict when it occurs as a positive ingredient to societal change and innovation.

Three conclusions emerge from the question of Jesus’ identity in the dialogue of Luke 9:18-22. From an emic perspective, the Christ is an enigmatic figure in Luke’s gospel. From an etic reading, he is the Christ of reform and social transformation. From an African standpoint, he is the Christ of empowerment and development. The examination of some African models for the understanding of Jesus’ identity reveals that Jesus has been refashioned according to African understanding. This approach has definitely made Jesus African-like. There is need for relevant Christology to be

conscious that the definition of Jesus as the Christ of God does not become a barrier of separation between individuals of differing contexts. Jesus' identity is contained in the connection between his person and his suffering, rejection, death and eventual resurrection (Lk 9:22). The dialogue in Luke 9:18-22 further proposes two ways in understanding Jesus' leadership, his identity and conflict in the Gospel – spontaneous and community participatory theology.

Leadership is risk, conflict and opposition by definition. Conversely, poor leadership is scaring, aggressive and destructive. Hence, effective leadership entails mutual acceptance, perseverance and a better management and appreciation of conflict and opposition. In response to the current stalemate of misery and despair, this study postulates that a proper definition, understanding and interpretation of Jesus as the Christ is a solution to contemporary problems of leadership crisis in Africa and the world.



## Key words

1. Luke
2. Luke 9:18-22
3. Narratology
4. Social scientific criticism
5. African contextualisation
6. Leadership
7. Conflict
8. Identity
9. Spontaneous theology
10. Community participatory theology
11. Legitimation
12. Jesus

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

*Sharing power does not diminish power;  
in fact it multiplies power.*  
(Gill 2006:211)

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT OF STUDY

From an empirical perspective, this study has been motivated by various situations in the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC). For example, theological students at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary Kumba<sup>1</sup> are told that the pastor's mission is essentially to explain to Christians the gospel whose content is a response to Jesus' question: "Who do the crowds say I am?" Graduating from the Seminary in June 2000, the young pastors were cautioned: "Be careful with those who come to you first, as you get to the parish. They may be the first to oppose you". When the graduates inquired why things must be so, they were reminded that "the crowd that sang Hosanna in the highest to Jesus was the same crowd that confirmed his crucifixion". Secondly, they were urged to remain careful because no one understands their mission more than they themselves, as well as the one for whom they were being commissioned – Jesus. Such words of caution nursed a prejudice toward this "crowd",<sup>2</sup> whose attitude could reverse at will; and created the worrisome question: "Why can a supporting "crowd" at the same time be an obstacle?"

In the early nineties a pastor of the PCC introduced the notion of *revival* in the Church. This notion was rejected by the Synod, as a matter of procedure.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, he decided to quit the Church. This was highly applauded and encouraged by a "crowd" that soon abandoned him. A few years later, another pastor thought the Church was not *reformed* enough.

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<sup>1</sup> The Seminary is the institution where the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon prepares all her pastors for the ministry.

<sup>2</sup> The "crowd" in this context is representative of the people with whom and for whom the pastor is expected to work.

<sup>3</sup> According to *The Constitution* of the PCC, the Synod is the highest organ that "deliberates in all matters which concern the Church, especially in doctrine, worship, discipline and organisation" (Presbyterian Church in Cameroon 1998:30).

This notion was also rejected, which also led to the pastor's resignation. Interestingly, the same "crowd" that earlier was against revival, also applauded this decision! One wonders what later happens to a people who seem to show enthusiasm at the start of events! Is it that respective interests and goals are misunderstood? However, one has the impression that many clergy seem not to understand their mission well, being the reason why they are quite often (mis)led by emotions or carried away by enthusiasm.

When people are appointed or elected into an office, others often acclaim with a lot of expectation, but in very rare cases does such enthusiasm last. Leaders find themselves in a sort of dilemma because of the risk of losing the support of the "crowd" that seems to have very strong influence. Here again the problem of goals and interests surfaces. Some leaders easily get confused in their leadership, especially when they are faced with crises. Most often the hierarchy has its demands that clash with that of the people, as well as with those of the leaders themselves.

Finally, having attended to leadership in general in my master's thesis (see Nyiawung 2005), I had promised that I would, in due course, pick up and treat specific issues pertaining to leadership in church and society. At this point, my interest has been aroused by the numerous conflicts that threaten leadership in contemporary society. My quest is therefore to research how Jesus dealt with hostility and to see how his inclination towards acceptance, friendliness and compassion could be of help to present-day leaders. It is in this light that the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples in Caesarea Philippi (Lk 9:18-22) has caught my attention. It offers a glimpse of Jesus' identity; explains why conflict sometimes erupts between leaders and their followers and defines the correct approach to leadership. These motivating factors therefore triggered a research on the topic: **"Who is the Christ? Leadership and conflict in Luke 9:18-22: A social scientific- and narratological analysis from an African perspective."**

## 1.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

This topic of research contains two categories of terms that need to be explained for a better understanding on how they will be used. The first

category has terms such as **narratological analysis**, **social scientific analysis**, and what it means to do a study employing these approaches from an **African perspective**. These terms will be defined in § 4.4. The second category of terms in the title is leadership and conflict. **Leadership** is a noun that comes from the term leader, which refers to someone who leads.<sup>4</sup> Leaders are normally described in terms of the influence they exert upon the goal setting and goal achieving activities of the community (Stogdill 1970:24, see also Nyiawung 2005:4). Leadership can thus be defined in relation to the activities of the group. Hunter (1990:634) defines it as a “process of influencing the actions and behaviour of persons and/or organisations through complex interaction toward goal achievement”. Hunter’s definition takes care of both individuals and their motivation to a group. From the above contributions, leadership could be understood as a series of acquired skills, abilities, and behaviour that improve or better the performance of two or more individuals within a given community, to enable its members to achieve a common and well-defined goal(s).

**Conflict** as a generic term is linked to terms such as antagonism, hostility, quarrels, controversy, violence, rejection, competition, rivalry, opposition, tension, misunderstanding, disagreement and confrontation. Fink (1968:45) is correct when he observes that it is difficult to have a definition of conflict that will unanimously be accepted. However, the term **conflict** is a derivative from the Latin *configere*, which means to strike or to clash. This definition projects physical confrontation. Mack and Snyder (1957:218) define conflict as “a particular interaction process or ‘interaction relationships’ between parties who have mutually exclusive or incompatible values”. Coser (1956:135) criticises this understanding of conflict which seems to draw a distinction between conflict and other related terms such as hostility, tension, disputes, contest, and competition. Conflict thus has both physical and emotional elements. In broader terms, Dahrendorf (1959:135) defines conflict as “all relations between sets of individuals that involve an incompatible

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<sup>4</sup> Etymologically the noun leader comes from the verb to ‘lead’. ‘Lead’ is derived from *laedan*, corresponding to the Old Saxon *ledian* and Old High German *leiten*, which means to “take with one” or to “show the way.” Formerly, *ledere* was used for a person who shows other people the path to take. Gill (2006:8-9) remarks that in the Old Icelandic derivative *leidha* means the person in front. He further states that the noun “leader” was used in English in the thirteenth century, while “leadership” only appeared later in the nineteenth century.

difference of objective”. This definition seems more inclusive. For Turner (1982:183), it is “a process of events leading to overt interaction of varying degrees of violence among at least two parties.” Conflict is here understood as an eruption resulting from an impending unresolved problem of which its manifestation is open confrontation.

Lumley concurs with Turner in that he sees conflict as a “‘battle’ between parties who wish to use the same resources for different purposes” (Lumley 1986:35). Once more, both physical and psychological or emotional conflict comes into play. This then is also the way in which Boulding defines conflict, namely as a “system of interacting systems, each party to the conflict being a system in itself, bound, however, to the other party by a system of communication, information, subjective knowledge, and behaviour reactions” (Boulding 1957:122). Boulding’s (1957:129) definition is important for the current study, since Jesus as an individual indeed constituted a system. Following from this insight, the study of conflict in this study will give attention to conflict between the different “systems” in the Lukan text: the “system” of Jesus and other independent systems such as those of the Roman aristocracy, the Jewish elite, and the Jewish peasantry.

### **1.3 CURRENT RESEARCH AND RESEARCH GAP**

#### **1.3.1 Current research**

As indicated in the topic; the research on the issue of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke with reference to the question “Who is the Christ”, is essentially exegetical. The second quarter of the last century has noticed an amazing methodological proliferation in the area of New Testament studies, with new ways of studying ancient texts coming to the fore. Prominent in this research has been the urge to apply methods from other disciplines in Biblical interpretation. It has also been an era where the various approaches in Biblical interpretation are no longer considered as conflicting methodologies. Rather, there has been an on-going effort to use various exegetical approaches in Biblical studies as complementary.

Various studies on Luke’s gospel indicate that Luke had initially been regarded as a mere compiler and arranger of traditions and/or documents



(Thiselton 2005:4).<sup>5</sup> The various studies on Luke-Acts also show that Luke-Acts has initially been studied from a historical perspective, then from a literary perspective, and currently most Lukan scholars concentrate on social scientific criticism in interpreting Luke. The latter approach, according to Thiselton (2005:8), has indicated that historical inquiry alone is not enough for an understanding of the Lukan text.

The use of the historical-critical approach, according to Wenham (2005:79), affirms that the stories about Jesus are set against particular historical contexts and can only be understood within these contexts. He also argues that the understanding of the Gospel is possible only when serious work is done on its historical context, the author's intention and the extra Biblical sources related to the text (Wenham 2005:81). Hence, Wenham's understanding of Jesus' events in Luke's gospel has been approached from a purely historical-critical perspective. Wenham's ideas were criticised by Spencer (2005:120), arguing that Wenham's historical method is presumptive, reductive and speculative. According to him, the use of historical-critical approach brackets out matters of faith and experience (Spencer 2005:105). He therefore agreed with the literary approach (Spencer 2005: 104), which had already been used by Knight (1998). Their analyses are especially based on the relationship between Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit in Luke's gospel (see § 2.2.2), with more emphasis on God's activity. Knight (1998:129) concludes that Jesus was responsible for the conflicts that he faced in Luke's gospel.

Van Staden (1990) and Goheen (2005) propose a hermeneutical-critical reading of Luke's gospel from a reader-oriented perspective. In his approach, Van Staden does not explain the ideological difference in Luke as a source of conflict (Van Eck 2009:10). His ideological study of Luke brings him to the conclusion that Luke's Jesus is an ethical Jesus (Van Staden 1990:4). Goheen (2005:235) approached Luke's gospel from a missionary perspective in which he brought the missionary context of the audience into dialogue with the text, trying to shape practices that are consonant but not identical with

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<sup>5</sup> In response to this assertion most scholars nowadays are of the opinion that Luke-Acts exhibits a coherent structure and should not be seen as "simple raw material" (Thiselton 2005:4, see also Green 2005:56).

that of the text (see also Wright 2004:107). From this context, he defined Jesus as a missionary Christ (see Moessner 1983:579).

Another current approach to Luke's gospel is social scientific criticism championed by Moxnes (2001), Malina (1991) and Neyrey (1991a). This approach seeks to understand Biblical texts in their social and cultural context. Malina (1991:6) opines that "meaning is not in the wordings; rather meaning resides in the social system of individuals that is held together by a shared culture, shared values, and shared meanings along with social institutions and social roles to realise those values and meanings" (Malina 1991:6; see also Neyrey 1991a:xiv). Supporters of this approach hold that the understanding of the cultural and social world of Luke's gospel is fundamental in the interpretation of its text, if not, the exegete simply becomes anachronistic and/or ethnocentric in his/her evaluation. The application of the social scientific approach also, from a methodological point of view, helps the exegete to check, in an abductive way, presupposition and results (Van Eck 1995:223).

While this approach leads Moxnes (2001:194) to define three main areas of conflict in Luke, it enables Malina and Neyrey (1991a:99) to understand and interpret the dynamics of these conflicts, using a cross-cultural theory of labelling and deviance (§ 2.2.4). Esler (1989) equally used the socio-redaction approach in order to establish a relationship between Luke's theology and the context of his audience (§ 2.2.5).

It flows from the above approaches that there has been an on-going interest to read Jesus' story in Luke's gospel in a new way. Unfortunately, these approaches have been applied in specific domains, giving the impression that they conflict with each other. In effect, all exegetical methods of interpretation are important and complementary as long as they remain relevant.

In the area of leadership, Horrell (1999a:309) treats leadership in the early church. He argues that itinerant and resident leadership were the two leadership patterns that existed during the period of early Christianity (see § 2.4.1). His study *inter alia* shows that the transfer of leadership from the itinerant leaders to resident leaders implied social transformation and change, which went along with conflict and opposition, influenced by "household

codes". Still from a general perspective, Wilkes (1998) and Nyiawung (2005) have concentrated on leadership modelled after Jesus and concluded that leadership for Jesus meant service (Wilkes 1998:9, see also Wehrli 1992:104, Nyiawung 2005). Wilkes (1998:127) further opines that effective leadership is risk taking. For him, leadership is risk and conflict by definition.

In like manner, several scholars have made a contribution in the area of conflict in Luke, focusing on the nature of the conflicts, as well as their *raison d'être*. Hence, Tyson (1983) concludes that the different conflicts in Luke were a conflict between incompatible systems: Jesus, the Roman aristocracy, the Jewish elite and the Jewish peasantry (see Boulding 1957:129). Kingsbury (1991) simply focuses on the description of these conflicts without indicating its further implications, while France (1990:22) and Desjardins (1997:75) argue that Jesus faced conflict because of his arrogant attitude (see § 2.5.3). For Malina (1991:99), the conflict Jesus endured was because he stood against the powerful elite who perpetrated injustice by labelling and thus marginalised those who did not adhere to the accepted social norms of the day.<sup>6</sup> Cassidy (1980:35) and Desjardins (1997:78) have argued that Jesus stood against religious abuse, the down-play of women and social status and the misuse of political structures. Cassidy (1980:124) and Van Eck (2009:24) have observed that Jesus' conflict ridden public ministry was due to the fact that first-century Palestine was essentially an agonistic society.

In each of these studies conflicts and leadership in Luke are studied independently, without establishing any relationship between the two. Secondly, so far, there seems to be little or no interest yet in the study of leadership in Luke's gospel in particular. The results from the above research prove that as of now, there are still some shortcomings in the area of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke's gospel.

### 1.3.2 Research gap

The research gaps identified from the previous research in the area of the subject-matter of this study can be divided into two groups: the first is

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<sup>6</sup> Harnack (1957:103-104) agrees with Malina that those in power like the priests and the Pharisees held the Jewish nation in bondage and murdered its soul. He then argues that Jesus responded to such an unconstituted "authority" by showing a really emancipating and refreshing disrespect.

methodological, and the second relates to the question of relevant theology. With reference to the first group of the research gaps, this study takes as point of departure the premise that exegetical studies of Luke, in comparison with the work done on the other gospels, have been relatively scanty. More specifically, proper attention has not been given to the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples in Luke 9:18-22. Secondly, the speculations from the crowds have often been taken for granted, while emphasis has been laid mostly on Peter's confession. Thirdly, the relationship between Jesus' identity and the antagonism that he faced has sometimes eclipsed from many findings. These three research gaps seem to point to the defects caused in the area of the methodological approach to Luke's gospel and justify the need for the present thesis. In fact, Lukan scholars seem to have neglected to look at the traditional methods of exegesis (historical-critical analysis), the literary methods (narrative criticism) and those of social sciences (social scientific criticism) as complementary.

The second group of research gaps can further be split into two. Firstly, there seems to have been neglect in associating the ordinary audience in theological discussion. Secondly, there seems to be a chasm between current theologies and the social realities of Africa. As a result, Africans have read about Jesus, not as the Christ who offers a solution to the present socio-political, economic and ecological problems that plague Africa and render its citizens in misery and death, but as a "strange white man" who cares less about human condition.

## **1.4 AIM, HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH ITINERARY**

### **1.4.1 Aim and hypothesis**

The aim of this study is threefold: First, to use historical criticism, narrative criticism and social scientific criticism in the study of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke's gospel from an African perspective. Two main issues harness this venture and showcase its relevance in the twenty-first century African Biblical studies. The first is the key question centred on Jesus' identity "Who is the Christ?" Secondly, it is to define the place of conflict within the context of leadership. This is a means to help leaders so that they do not dread conflict and opposition; but face them as realities of leadership. Thirdly,

LIST OF RESEARCH PROJECT TOPICS AND MATERIALS

it is a study of Luke 9:18-22 (which seems crucial in Luke's gospel) in terms of its position within the macro-context of Luke's narrative story. It is thus a literary study of the meaning of Luke's text in its original historical, social and cultural context (and not necessarily their historical accuracy), and its relevance and application in the African context by way of contextualisation.

The main hypothesis that will orientate this study is that the Lukan Jesus was opposed by his contemporaries because of the goal and content of his mission, as well as the way in which they understood his identity. Jesus worked at the margins of society, that is, his actions were seen as going against the grain of accepted societal norms. He mingled with those who were considered as outsiders and did not operate in conformity with the goals and interests of his opponents. Secondly, his identity revealed in his message was an open challenge to the *status quo*. He challenged the social order by x-raying societal abnormalities such as injustice, oppression, exploitation and racism, and stood for an alternative that consisted of justice, love, equality and peace – all virtues of the kingdom.

The question "Who is the Christ?" was a fundamental question in the early church. It is also crucial to this study. If this question was a crucial one to Jesus' contemporaries who knew him, as well as to the early Christian communities, it is even more crucial for African Christians who sometimes live on nothing more than bare faith. The problem attended to in this study is centred on the action of Jesus' contemporaries for whom he came. Why did they reject his mission in order to realise their goals rather than support him? What is so important within the people's community that they do not want to loose as a result of some external influence? In other words, why do some people often cling to the *status quo* at the detriment of innovation and change? These questions will facilitate the debate in this study through the itinerary below (see § 1.4.2).

#### **1.4.2 Research itinerary**

One of the aims of this study as stated in § 1.4.1 is to seek to justify the place of conflict within the context of leadership, as well as the leader's identity. The guiding principle for this search is the question "Who is the Christ?" This question and those mentioned earlier (see § 1.3.2) will be attended to in six

chapters. Chapter 2 will examine previous research carried out with regard to Luke's gospel. It will lay emphasis on the various approaches in the study of Luke's gospel, as well as the issue of conflict surrounding the question of Jesus' identity. The first research gap will be attended to in Chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 3 serves as an evaluation of the current debate described in Chapter 2; lays emphasis on the structure of Luke's gospel and describes the narrative function of Luke 9:18-22 within the macro narrative structure of Luke's gospel. Chapter 4 defines the models and theories that will be used in the study as a means of making a blend between historical criticism, narrative criticism and social scientific criticism. Chapter 5 is an emic reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke. As a solution to the second research gap, it will highlight the importance of the crowds' conjectures in Luke 9:18-22.

The third research gap is the focus of Chapter 6, which is the etic reading.<sup>7</sup> It dwells on the sources of conflict in Luke's gospel and draws a correlation between Jesus' identity and the conflict he faced in his ministry. His "methods" of curbing conflicts that arise in leadership will then be analysed in § 6.3, and his leadership approach will be studied in § 6.4. The fourth and fifth research gaps will be the focus of Chapter 7, where an African hermeneutical reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke is carried out by way of contextualisation. In response to the question of Jesus' identity, some African models that have so far been used will be examined. Some sketches to the answer of Jesus' identity will be provided in § 7.4.

## **1.5 CONCLUSION: MAIN THESIS**

By reflecting on the topic "Who is the Christ? Leadership and conflict in Luke 9:18-22: A social scientific- and narratological analysis from an African perspective", I wish to make a contribution on how to handle a crowd that does not seem to accept leadership, without considering them as enemies since conflict is not necessarily negative. The study agrees that there is no universal understanding of Jesus' identity. However, relevant Christology is that wherein the definition of Jesus as the Christ of God does not become a

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<sup>7</sup> The terms emic and etic will be explained in § 4.4.2.6.



barrier of separation between individuals of differing contexts. The study highlights ten aspects which are considered as requisites for effective leadership:

- The position of the leaders or their role within the context of the group;
- the leaders' mastery of their mission;
- the leaders' ability to stay focus and unperturbed;
- the leaders' knowledge of all the stake holders involved in leadership;
- the leaders' recognition of the followers' support;
- the leaders' ability to harness followers and other external agents such as the hierarchy;
- the followers' support by way of the legitimation of the leaders' authority and power;
- the relationship between leaders and followers;
- the leaders' appraisal of conflicts; and
- the leaders' dependence on God.

As its main thesis, this study postulates that a proper definition, understanding and interpretation of Jesus as the Christ is the beginning of the understanding of the conflicts that animated his ministry. By extension, it is also the beginning of a solution to contemporary problems posed as a result of leadership crises in Africa and the world.



## Chapter 2

### The current debate: Approaches to Luke, Luke 9:18-22, leadership and conflict

*We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing,  
while others judge us by what we have done already.*<sup>8</sup>

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to explore the contributions of various scholars in the area of leadership and conflict in Luke's gospel in general, and specifically in Luke 9:18-22. The following question will be addressed: how have scholars interested in the study of Luke made a blend between the leadership of Jesus and the various conflicts he had with the authorities of his time (the Roman elite, the Jewish elite and the Jewish peasantry)?

Considering that Luke-Acts has been described as "one of the great storm-centres" of New Testament scholarship (Van Unnick 1980:18), the first topic in this chapter centres on some of the approaches scholars have used to study Luke. A short *Wirkungsgeschichte*<sup>9</sup> of previous interpretations of Luke 9:18-22 is then presented. In this regard attention will also be given to the function of this micro narrative in terms of the narrative structure of the Gospel, since the position of Luke 9:18-22 (as a micro narrative) within the narrative context of Luke influences its reading, as well as its understanding and interpretation.

The third and fourth topics addressed in this Chapter are leadership and conflict. The terms leadership and conflict may seem contradictory at face value, but they are indeed interwoven. People like to lead, but shun away from conflict which is almost always an integral part of leadership. The reason for this is that conflict has always been considered negative, and to associate conflict with leadership, for some, means failure.

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<sup>8</sup> This was a thought from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, an American poet (1807-1882).

<sup>9</sup> This technical term is normally used referring to the study of all the different ways in which a specific focus of interpretation, like Luke 9:18-22, has been interpreted and how this interpretation has influenced the understanding and application of, for example, a specific passage. It is often referred to as 'impact history' because the meanings of texts are those that have been profoundly affected by the identity and the purposes of the interpreter (Holgate & Starr 2006:85).

Meyer (2002:25) is correct when she states that “God has put the same potentials in us that he has put in anybody else”. This assertion relates leadership and conflict to the question of identity. All human beings probably have the same leadership potential, but that which distinguishes this identity are each individual’s focus and the way in which each person applies the leadership skills with which s/he is endowed. The question “who is the Christ” in Luke 9:18-22 is all about identity, and links leadership, conflict and identity to one another. Because of Jesus’ identity he adopted a specific leadership style, which led to conflict with other leaders in the Gospel. At the base of these conflicts were clashing ideologies.

The end of this chapter will be devoted to the definition of the research gaps that will be addressed in this study. These research gaps will be formulated on the basis of the contributions that have been made by Lukan scholars on the four topics named above.

## **2.2 CURRENT APPROACHES IN READING LUKE**

The Bible contains a “verbal reality” (Chouinard 1997:68) that remains silent unless it is unveiled through scientific research, that is, exegesis. During the Middle Ages exegesis was aimed at ensuring that Biblical interpretation “squared” with the church’s tradition (Chouinard 1997:65). This conviction, however, has changed gradually over the years that followed since the Middle Ages.

Nowadays exegesis is a discipline that strives for excellence. In the analysis of texts Biblical scholars concentrate on three aspects of the text: its author, the text itself, and its receptor (Hartin & Petzer 1991:1). Each proposed methodology in the study of New Testament texts has so far insisted on either one or two or on all of these poles for a meaningful interpretation. Each of these poles is grounded in a specific “centre of authority” (Porter 1995:87). The historical exegetical approach, with the historical context of the text as its centre of authority, focuses on the author of the text. Text-immanent exegesis, on the other hand, has the text itself as its centre of authority and concentrates on the inner structure of the text. And the reader-oriented exegetical approach focuses on the reader/receptor of the

text, including contextual issues that surround the reader of the text (e.g., feminism or materialism).

A reading of the text that takes the social dynamics embedded in texts nowadays intently complements these three traditional approaches. This approach, known as social scientific criticism, renders texts as products of specific social systems. In analyzing a text, attention is *inter alia* given to aspects like social institutions, societal arrangements and social values that are part of the social world in which the text originated. This approach goes beyond a mere study of the author and the text in order to understand social structures and social contexts of which the text can be seen as a vehicle. The main aim of this approach is to avoid the twin dangers (Neyrey 1991a:xiv), sin (Malina 1991:23) or errors (Elliott 1993:11) of an ethnocentric and anachronistic<sup>10</sup> reading of ancient texts. As such, it takes the cultural difference between the first receptors of the text and that of the modern exegete seriously.

A brief overview of the research history of Luke indicates that the interpretation of Luke has not escaped from this historical-hermeneutical evolution. Initially, Luke as author was considered as merely a compiler and arranger of documents or traditions of Jesus (Porter 1995:81, Thiselton 2005:4, Green 2005:56). Most scholars nowadays, however, are of the

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<sup>10</sup> According to Van Eck (1995:9) ethnocentrism is a term that was introduced by Sumner, referring to a “view of things in which one’s own group is centre of everything, and others are scaled and rated in reference to it”. Ethnocentrism is therefore an attitude through which values derived from one cultural background are applied to another cultural context, where different values operate (Levine & Campbell 1972:1). In this respect, an in-group culture or attitude is considered as a norm for what is human (Malina 2001b:6), while out-group behaviour is seen as a deviation. This attitude is judgmental because it relegates one culture while affirming cultural superiority to the other (Strecker 2001:119). Everyone, everywhere at every time, however, does not think and behave identically (Malina 1991:9). Etymologically, anachronism comes from a combination of two Greek words ἀνα& (backwards or against) and χρό&nov (time), meaning an error in chronology in terms of events. The exegete treats a text with the understanding that it is a product of its own social context, although it represents a different time frame. Anachronism then refers to the approach of a text by bringing into it a foreign social world. In other words, anachronism is the projection of the patterns and dynamics of the modern world back into the world of antiquity (Rohrbaugh 1991:127). It is an attempt to fashion figures or events of the past to support twenty-first century agenda (Malina 2001c:ix). In social scientific Biblical studies, these two terms are often used as synonyms in order to insist on their effect on the text (Van Eck 1995:10, Elliott 1993:11, Malina 2001b:3, Stansell 2001:35). McKnight (2004:150) emphasises the need for exegetes to bracket off presupposition when analysing Biblical texts. The exercise of exegesis is that of extracting meaning out of a text. To fall into the trap of ethnocentrism and/or anachronism is a wrong theological creativity, which is eisegesis, because in that way the exegete simply sticks his own words into the mouth of the Biblical writer (Malina 1991:23).

opinion that Luke-Acts exhibits a coherent structure and not “simple raw material” (Thiselton 2005:4, see also Green 2005:56). The various studies on Luke also show that Luke initially has been studied from a historical perspective, then from a literary perspective, and currently most Lukan scholars concentrate on social scientific criticism in interpreting Luke. The latter approach, according to Thiselton, has indicated that historical inquiry alone is not enough for an understanding of the Lukan text (Thiselton 2005:8).

### **2.2.1 A historical-critical reading: David Wenham**

Historical-criticism focuses on the historical context of the text and its author in trying to establish the meaning of the text. In using this approach exegetes establish their findings on the basis of three principles: probability, analogy and correlation<sup>11</sup> (Vorster 1991:16). The historical-critical approach is considered by many scholars as the best of all approaches (Hartin & Petzer 1991:3), and “operates like yeast” (Troeltsch, in Vorster 1991:16), since it has influenced and continues to influence almost every subsequent approach that are applied in Biblical interpretation.

One of the scholars who applied a rigorous historical-critical analysis of Luke is David Wenham. His contribution should be seen as a response to the quest of the Enlightenment which encouraged scholarly investigation in the study of Scripture (Chouinard 1997:66). According to Wenham, the stories about Jesus are buried in particular historical contexts and can only be understood within these contexts (Wenham 2005:79, see also Vorster 1991:15). A meaningful interpretation of Luke therefore has to take the historical context, the author’s intention and extra Biblical sources (related to the text) into consideration (Wenham 2005:81).

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<sup>11</sup> The principle of probability rests on methodological doubt. This principle is used in exegesis because no text has a fixed meaning. Van Aarde and Joubert (2009:442) agree with Pierce that any truth is provisional, and the truth of any proposition cannot be certain but only probable. The principle of analogy, on the other hand works on the premise that the courses of events in the ancient world follow the same or similar logic as events in the world of present day reader. This apprehension of history enables the exegete to appreciate his/her context with the lenses of the ancient world. In other words, it is an assumption that the past is analogous to the present, and that one human society is analogous to another (Miller 1999:17). With this correlation principle, the exegete tries to make sense out of past events or to make connections between past and present events.

Wenham's historical study of Luke leads to the following conclusions regarding the prologue of the Gospel, Jesus, wealth and poverty, Judaism and Christianity, and what he calls "the controversial Gentile mission" in the Gospel. Luke's prologue transmits historically reliable theological and spiritual information about the Jesus tradition; the Lukan Jesus is depicted as "Saviour, who is Christ the Lord" (Wenham 2005:83). As Saviour and Christ, Jesus has concern for the poor and the marginalised. Luke uses a host of examples to show the Jewish rootedness of Jesus and the Christian gospel (the gospel begins and ends with activities in the temple).<sup>12</sup> Also in Luke's gospel, there are several Jewish practices (the presentation of Jesus in the temple, his circumcision, his preaching in the synagogue and the journey to Jerusalem for the celebration of Passover) and Jerusalem as the place of Jesus' death presents the fulfilment of Judaism and Jewish hope (Wenham 2005:91; Tuckett 1996:64). Finally, Wenham understands Jesus' mission to the Gentiles in Luke as controversial because of the long-standing tension between the Jews and the non-Jews.

### 2.2.2 A text-immanent reading: Scott Spencer and Jonathan Knight

A text-immanent approach to Biblical texts has the text in its final form as its focus<sup>13</sup>. The text is studied as a work of literary art, and results of exegetical studies within this approach indicate that Biblical texts are, like other secular texts, well structured (Porter 1995:78). Fitzmyer (1981:5), for example, considers Luke as a literary artist, and employs different literary devices to guide his understanding of Luke as a cohesive text (see also Resseguie 2005:19).

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<sup>12</sup> Jesus' temple activities start with the story of John the Baptist, and ends with Jesus and the disciples. According to Wenham (2005:98), this shows that for Luke, Jesus' intention was not to create a new religion (see Tuckett 1996:63). Rather, it was to revive and transform Judaism by reorienting its practices to include a sense of universalism. Jesus thus was not against Judaism as a religion; he reacted to the misinterpretation of the Torah by the temple and its authorities.

<sup>13</sup> A text-immanent analysis of texts differs from redaction and source criticism (that concentrate on smaller units in the gospel narratives and render 'inter-gospel' amendments as redactional activity of the author) in focusing on the literary work as a whole (Spencer 2005:114; Resseguie 2005:19). Texts make sense when they are considered in terms of their totality, and not in terms of their parts. As such, a text-immanent reading can be considered as a corrective of, *inter alia*, redactional criticism.

Like Porter and Fitzmyer, Spencer (2005) believes that texts only make sense when they are considered in their totality and not in terms of its different parts. He therefore opts for a text-immanent reading of the text<sup>14</sup>. He criticises Wenham's historical-critical analysis of Luke as being presumptive, reductive and speculative (Spencer 2005:120). He also disagrees with Wenham that the historical method is theologically necessary and a helpful ingredient in the process of Biblical interpretation (Wenham 2005:80). A historical approach to the study of Luke's gospel, like that of Wenham, brackets out matters of faith and experience (Spencer 2005:105). Historical criticism, especially redaction and source criticism, only concentrate on "inter-gospel" amendments rather than the text as a literary whole (Spencer 2005:114, see also Resseguie 2005:19), and a focus on the external elements of the text (e.g., the identity of the author, and date and place of writing) is misleading and inadequate.

With regard to Wenham's analysis of Luke, he lauds Wenham's treatment of the theme of Jesus in Luke, but disagrees with what he calls Wenham's "Christomonism". Wenham's understanding of Jesus in Luke, he argues, plays down the activities of God, as well as those of the Holy Spirit in the gospel (Spencer 2005:117). According to Spencer, this overemphasis on Jesus by Wenham is the result of Wenham's methodology. Although Luke's gospel is historical in nature (as Wenham argues), its genre is narrative. Moreover, "beyond tracking key historical-political events making headlines in Luke's era, it is vital to understand the pervasive social-cultural environments and symbolic-ideological universe in which Luke-Acts is embedded and from which it emerges" (Spencer 2005:120)<sup>15</sup>.

In his literary analysis of Luke, Spencer (2005:117) focuses on the work of God and the Holy Spirit. Without the work of God and the Spirit, Jesus' birth cannot be understood, and God functions as the prime mover behind Luke's narrative (see also Knight 1998:64). The stories in Luke are shaped by God's will, and not by Roman and Jewish politics. Consequently, a study of

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<sup>14</sup> Spencer's supposed dichotomy between a historical-critical and text-immanent in fact does not exist. The literary method of interpretation (which concerns itself *inter alia* with the way in which texts are composed) takes its roots from redaction criticism, an exegetical method that operates within the sphere of historical-criticism.

<sup>15</sup> It is interesting that Spencer, with this remark, not only questions the possibilities of the historical approach, but also projects the very limits of the literary approach.



the political situation to which the Lukan texts refer can only be misleading. Spencer also identifies a second important theme in Luke: hearing and accepting God's word. A close reading of the Lukan text shows that God and Jesus are the ones that speak, and the people are those that hear. This theme in Luke has a profound theological impact in the lives of its readers, which can be recognized only when the text of Luke is analysed from a literary perspective.

Knight's (1998:1) motivation for his narrative approach in reading Luke stems from the fact that he appreciates Luke's gospel as a text which tells a story. The reading of Luke as a narrative text already led him to address one of the shortfalls in Lukan studies that were later taken up by Spencer: the importance of God's activity in Luke's gospel (Spencer 2005:117; Knight 1998:4). He holds that a reading of Luke's gospel as a narrative enables the reader to pay attention to the different relationships established in the gospel (see also Goldsmith 2000:2), as well as issues such as plot and characterisation, which are at the heart of all narratives (Knight 1998:2). He acknowledges the older approaches to the Gospels – they have not lost their value – but also remarks that some research on the gospels still tends to treat them as uniform documents, thereby ignoring the differences between them. Such research ignores the fact that no two stories can be the same, even if they were told by the same reporter (Knight 1998:28). Hence, he opts to treat Luke's gospel as a different kind of story from that of the other Synoptic gospels.

First of all, Luke situates his story within the context of Jewish history (Knight 1998:28) through the presentation of the various authorities in action (Lk 1:5; 3:1), especially the religious authorities (Zechariah, Simeon and Anna) and the political authorities (Caesar, Pilate and Herod). These authorities are a signal of the system within which Jesus will minister. Secondly, Luke is interested in moral and ethical topics such as the attitude to wealth and human relationships (Knight 1998:7; see also Esler 1989:165). Thirdly, Knight (1998:16) agrees with Franklin (1994:371) that in Luke's gospel, as compared to Matthew, the law no longer has a strict part to play in defining the boundaries of the people of God. Consequently, Luke's Jesus



defines God's people in terms of God's forgiving love, and not in terms of their observance to the law.

In situating Jesus' story within the context of authority, Luke supplies the reader with the perspective from which his story should be understood. He presents Jesus as the Messiah-king in the infancy narratives. Opposition between Jesus and the present authorities is signalled in the canticles of Luke 1:46-55 and Luke 2:29-32, and in the prophecy of Simeon (Lk 2:34-35). His mission statement presented in the synagogue also attests to this fact. He is the one through whom God's eschatological enfranchisement will be discharged (Lk 4:14-30). According to Knight, Luke continues to show that in spite of the powerful nature of the authorities (religious and political), they both show their powerlessness when it comes to protecting Jesus' movement. While the religious leaders become powerless in their attempt to arrest Jesus because of the people (1a0&j), the political authority (Pilate) also shows his powerlessness by declaring Jesus' innocence during his trial (Knight 1998:142; see also Esler 1989:203).

Luke's gospel presents both John's and Jesus' ethical teachings as appropriate to the standards of the new society, the kingdom of God, where future judgment is dependent on the criteria of present status and response (Knight 1998:90). Without being a society of vengeance, it will be a society where the treatment accorded to people will be commensurate with their previous attitude *vis-à-vis* others. This is an appeal to responsible and consequential life. The urge for the kingdom of God is pressing, urgent and important. Hence, believers need to turn their attention from material belongings in order to yearn for the virtues of the kingdom that bring satisfaction. The provision for material well-being in this new sphere is entirely God's concern. The picture of the kingdom of God is that of a new society of generosity, hospitality and forgiveness (Knight 1998:112, 118).

With reference to Jesus' regard of the law, Luke demonstrates the lawlessness of the law in its inability to exonerate Jesus during his trial (Esler 1989:203). By contrast, he shows the positive side of the law which is executed with the spirit of love. However, Jesus' status as Messiah shows that a new order of love and concern has arrived. His actions, irrespective of time and space, have a restorative purpose. Because of this concern, his

attitude becomes unpredictable, even if it means going against the law (Knight 1998:88). For Luke's Jesus, therefore, the correct respect for the law goes hand in hand with the ethical concerns of the new community – a community where the traditional concept of patriarchy is replaced by the new belief in mutuality and the fatherhood of God (Knight 1998:179).

Knight's narrative approach leads him to the following conclusions. First, although Luke's gospel forms part of the canon, it can be interpreted by the same kind of methods as secular narratives (Knight 1998:21). Secondly, even though the story of the life of Jesus gives an initial shape and coherence to the gospel, it is not so much a description of Jesus' life, but rather about what Acts 2:11 calls "the mighty works of God" (Knight 1998:6). Through Jesus, God offers a new era which is not necessarily law bound, but an era whose status is controlled by human love and concern for one another (Knight 1998:121). Luke's Jesus is an enigmatic figure (Knight 1998:38). Jesus is like a prophet, John the Baptist, David, Elijah; but he is also unlike these figures. Fourthly, Knight's (1998:42) narrative reading causes him to explain the reasons for Jesus' crucifixion in two dimensions. He was crucified because of the necessity to fulfil Scripture. Hence, Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is interpreted as a move that enables Israel to be what they intended to be; that is, a liberated nation (Knight 1998:116). Also, Jesus was opposed because of his attitude towards the temple and its leaders. Knight (1998:129) holds that, by cleansing the temple, Jesus gave to himself a new status in the eyes of his opponents, which caused them to rise against him.

Evans has raised criticism against the literary method of interpretation, characterizing it as vulnerable because it can lead to a subjective reading of the text (Evans 1995:19). Spencer's reading of Luke, as well as Knight's reading can thus be seen as subjective readings, because it is the result of their personal analysis of events reported by Luke. Porter has also labelled criticism against a mere literary reading of the text, arguing that it lacks a rigorous methodological control (Porter 1995:78). This criticism of Evans and Porter has to be taken seriously. It does not, however, mean that an analysis of the narrative structure of a text cannot in principle contribute to a better understanding of its textual world.

### **2.2.3 A hermeneutical-critical (reader-oriented) reading: Pieter van Staden and Michael Goheen**

Any text has three types of owners, each of whom has the right to produce the meaning of a text – the reader, the author and the copyright owner (Aichele 1996:123). A reader-oriented approach focuses on the place of the reader (the first type of owner) in producing a meaning of a Biblical text. Reader-response criticism, an exegetical method within the reader-orientated approach, works with the premise that literary texts have “gaps” that the reader is expected to fill (Iser 1974:282). In this method the main issue thus has to do with the effect that the text has on the reader (Resseguie 2005:33). Each text has an identity and at the same time creates meaning(s) that can only be disclosed through reading.

A second exegetical method within the reader-orientated approach operates from the premise that at the basis of every text lays ideas, and it is the responsibility of the reader to make use of these ideas within his own context (Van Aarde 1988:239, Van Tilborg 1991:262, Aichele 1996:140). Examples of these readings are feminist criticism, materialistic criticism and liberation criticism (see Pippin 1997, Oeming 2006:v; Van Eck & Van Aarde 2009:5). These readings are normally typified as ideological-critical readings, a subset of reader-orientated criticism (Pippin 1997: 268).

This definition of an ideological-critical reading of the text poses a problem of where exactly to situate ideological-critical exegesis. Essentially, the heuristic value of the ideological critical approach is to help in bringing out neglected aspects of the text into exegetical discussion. This definition places the ideological approach somewhere between a text-immanent and reader-oriented approach, since an ideological reading grants equal freedom to both text and reader. Ideology is “not something extra added to texts but rather the way in which a set of texts is assembled, a picture puzzle that turns out different for each reader” (Aichele 1996:151). Ideological criticism thus also relates to points of view that is, the norms, values, attitudes beliefs and general worldview of the narrator or the reader (Culpepper 1983:32-34; Resseguie 2005:172; Malina & Neyrey 1991a:103). Finally, ideological criticism is also connected with both historical criticism and social scientific

criticism in that it exposes the political, social and economic realities of the communities for which the text was originally written (Stratton 2000:123).

An ideological-critical reading of a text could therefore not be seen as only reader orientated. Clearly this reading also focuses on the text, and more specifically, on ideologies in the text, whether political, social or economic. It would therefore be more appropriate to typify these readings as hermeneutical-critical, a term that designates these readings as an approach that focuses not only on the reader, but also on the text.

In this sense then, the studies of Luke by Van Staden (1990) and Goheen (2005) could be deemed as hermeneutical-critical. Van Staden (1990:73) defines ideology as general ideas, general perception about reality, principles or point of view. Point of view is understood by Van Staden not with reference to the reader of the text, but with reference to the text itself. This understanding of point of view relates to what Soulen and Soulen call the ideology of the text. According to Soulen and Soulen, ideological criticism considers three areas in which ideology affects a text: the ideology of the context of the text, the ideology of the text (on which Van Staden concentrates) and the ideology of the reader and the interpreter (Soulen & Soulen, in Holgate & Starr 2006:132). In his reading of Luke, Van Staden understands the narrator's point of view as the ideology of the author. The specific contribution he makes is to equate the ideology of the author, in religious texts, with the theology of a specific religious text. He thus applies the sociological concept of ideology (as theology) to literary criticism in order to understand the ideologies present in the social context of Luke's gospel. His reading concludes that the difference between Jesus and the Pharisees is a difference in ideology, that is, an ideology of compassion (Jesus) and an ideology of holiness (Pharisees; see Van Staden 1990:8).<sup>16</sup> In this reading of Luke, Van Staden affirms that for the Lukan Jesus God's compassion has no boundaries, as compared to the Pharisaic understanding of God whose holiness is exclusive. His ideological reading of Luke also brings him to a

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<sup>16</sup> Recently Van Eck (2009a:10), in an ideological-critical analysis of the Tenants (GThom 65/Mark 12:1-12 and par), has come to the same conclusion: the main source of conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees was a difference in ideology.

second conclusion, namely that Jesus is an ethical Jesus (Van Staden 1990:4). This conclusion ties well as one of the possible answers to the question “who is the Christ?”

In his hermeneutical-critical reading of Luke, Goheen (2005:230-232) remarks that modern scholarship has failed in two ways in reading Biblical texts: it has not enabled people to hear God speak in the text, and mission has not occupied a central place as it ought to (see also Wright 2004:107). Goheen therefore, in following the work done by Bosch in reading Luke by means of a missional hermeneutic approach, suggests a hermeneutical-critical reading that can be called “missional hermeneutics”. Missional hermeneutics entails reading the Bible focusing on what God is saying in terms of mission (Wolters 2000:103). The aim of this reading is to establish a dialogue between the reader and the text in terms of the reader’s missional situation. It also means to acknowledge, understand and apply the four types of missions prescribed in the Bible: God’s mission, Israel’s mission, Jesus’ mission, and the church’s mission.

In his reading of Luke, Bosch focuses on Luke 4:16-30<sup>17</sup>, and understands the Lukan Jesus as a missionary inclined Christ. He qualifies Jesus’ mission as a universal mission to the Jews, the Samaritans and the Gentiles alike, a mission to both the rich and the poor, and a mission of peacemaking. His missional reading of Luke shows that Jesus has left a missionary legacy for the church so that the church may continue to empower the weak and the lowly; heal the sick and save the lost. For Bosch, applying Jesus’ mission in Luke means to “incarnate the gospel in time” (Bosch 1984:173) – the application of Jesus’ missionary strategy in response to the missionary demands of time and space.

Goheen also appreciates Bosch’s idea of mission, that is, mission that goes beyond the narrow conception of mission as geographical movement (see e.g., Ac 1:8). He also observes that Bosch’s study would have made a bigger contribution in the area of Biblical interpretation if he also attended to

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<sup>17</sup> This section is often called “the thematic introduction” to Luke (Moxnes 2001:192), and parallels Mark 1:15 and Matthew 4:17. The “thematic introduction” defines Jesus’ mission as understood by each of the evangelists, and occupies a central place in the narratives of the three Synoptics.

two other aspects of Luke's gospel: the link between mission in Luke and mission in the Old Testament, and the link between Jesus' mission in Luke and the mission of the apostles in Acts.

According to Goheen, there is an inseparable link between mission in Luke and mission in the Old Testament. He interprets Jesus' mission in Luke as a fulfilment of God's mission that had already begun with the people of Israel in the Old Testament. This link is made easy when Jesus is seen in the light of Isaiah's description of the "suffering servant". Secondly, he opines that Luke's gospel is about Jesus' mission, which has become the church's mission. As such, all the themes in Luke (e.g., the travel motif, suffering and prayer) should be viewed from the perspective of mission.

A hermeneutical-critical reading of Luke thus also, although indirectly, brings Goheen and Bosch to provide an answer to the question "who is the Christ?" For them Christ is the missionary Jesus or a "journeying teacher", preparing his disciples for a church after his death (Moessner 1983:579).

#### **2.2.4 A social-scientific reading: Halvor Moxnes, Bruce Malina and Jerome Neyrey**

Social-scientific criticism as an approach to Biblical interpretation derives its strength from its focus on the social context of the text (Elliott 2001:11). As a tool of retrieval and an aid to interpretation (Pilch 1991:182), this approach seeks to understand the meaning of words in the text in terms of the social system in which they are used. Words being used in a text always contain an anthropological component (Rohrbaugh 1996a:11, Malina 2001b:12-13). Unlike the historical approach that focuses on a descriptive analysis (what happened, when and where), social-scientific criticism asks the "why" question – why did it happen? This why-question, according to social scientists, relates to meaning, since

meaning is not in the wordings ... rather meaning resides in the social system of individuals that is held together by a shared culture, shared values, and shared meanings along with social institution and social roles to realise those values and meanings.

(Malina 1991:5-6)



This is also the point of view of Neyrey (1991c:xiv): the understanding of the cultural and social world (e.g., that of Luke's gospel) is fundamental in the interpretation of texts, if not, exegetes become anachronistic or ethnocentric in their understanding of texts.

This approach is not without its critics. From its inception, Gager described the relationship between sociology and Biblical studies as a marriage between enemies (Gager, in Richter 1995:266). Stowers has equally questioned the credibility of the social scientific approach in the study of New Testament documents (Stowers, in Taylor 2002:581).<sup>18</sup> In spite of the above criticisms<sup>19</sup>, the application of a social scientific approach, from a methodological point of view, helps the exegete to check – in an abductive way<sup>20</sup> – presupposition and results (Van Eck 1995:223).

In the past two decades several social-scientific readings of Luke (or aspects thereof) have seen the light. Moxnes (2001), for example, has used the social-scientific approach to analyse the concept of “the kingdom of God” in Luke as to a better understanding of the conflict between Jesus and the

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<sup>18</sup> This credibility is established at two levels (Esler 1989:12). The social scientific approach to the study of scripture is accused for being reductionist. Supporters of this idea suggest that this approach claims to provide a total explanation of the Bible, leaving no scope for the activity of individuals to figure in the explanatory task. It is equally accused for being too dependent upon contemporary cultural patterns (models) in order to understand first century texts (cf Judge 1980: 201-207). This criticism thus questions the understanding of models and their role in historical research. However, Elliott (1993:89) and Scroggs (1986:140) disagree: “No ‘scientific’ approach need be reductionistic. *Every ‘scientific’ approach* – including the historical – *can* be reductionistic. That is, reductionism does not lie in the methodology itself, but in the theological [philosophical] presuppositions which one brings to sociological or any other methodology. Statements informed by social pressures *can* be apprehended as revelation. That is as legitimate a faith as the contrary” (Scroggs 1986:140).

<sup>19</sup> See also Esler (1989 12-15; Elliott 1993:87-100) for a discussion of the different criticisms levelled at social scientific criticism as an approach.

<sup>20</sup> The abductive method of research is an alternative to the traditional inductive and hypothetico-deductive accounts of scientific methods of investigation. In the inductive method the researcher observes facts from which generalised conclusions about particular issues are made (see Chalmers 1999). In the hypothetico-deductive method the researcher suggests a hypothesis which is then tested. From this process, some other observational predictions also then can be derived. The abductive method is broader; it evolves from the construction of empirical facts to the construction of theories, which in turn explain these facts. It is a method of investigative theory that enables the exegete to move, for example, from the “facts” about the conflicts that Jesus faced as a leader in Luke's gospel, to the detection of empirical phenomena (breeding grounds for conflict) that are found in Luke's social world.



various authoritative systems in Luke's gospel.<sup>21</sup> Moxnes' study of Jesus' preaching on "the kingdom of God" shows that in Luke a shift from the traditional understanding of the kingdom (as a geographical place) to a new understanding thereof can be indicated: the "kingdom of God" in Luke relates to a transformation of social structures. Like Malina (1996a:137), he comes to the conclusion that Jesus' message on the "kingdom" presupposed obvious opposition from political authorities (Moxnes 2001:176). Most of the events in Luke are narrated within the context of political power. Hence, he situates Jesus' expression of the kingdom of God within two contexts. In the extra-context there are two political forces: the political rule in Palestine and that of the Roman Empire. Three main issues build up the intra-context: the political ideology of Luke's day, the Jewish traditions about "God's reign", and the cosmological conflict between Jesus and Satan (Moxnes 2001:188-90).

The above social-scientific analysis of the kingdom of God in Luke results in Moxnes identifying three specific areas of conflict between Jesus and first-century Palestine context as a whole (Moxnes 2001:194): conflict over the dominion of space (who has authority?); conflicts over boundaries (who are those considered as God's people?); and cosmological conflict (who owns the geographical space, including the welfare of people and creation; Jesus or the devil?). All these conflicts are presented in Luke 4, which stands as an introduction to Jesus' ministry in Luke.<sup>22</sup>

Moxnes concludes his study by associating the kingdom of God with two important social structures in Luke's gospel. He considers the table (meals) as a structure through which Jesus defines a new order. Instead of a patron-

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<sup>21</sup> Malina has worked extensively on the same theme, not only in the gospel of Luke. He focuses on the possibilities of meaning this term could have had in a first-century Mediterranean milieu, and qualifies Jesus' preaching on the theme: the kingdom of God as a "social gospel" (Malina 2001b).

<sup>22</sup> Luke 4 opens with conflict about who owns space and authority in a cosmological conflict. Satan gives the impression that he has power and authority over space. Jesus, however, refuses to see the kingdom of God in terms of space. In Nazareth he is opposed by his people because he suggests an alternative space in which the poor (spiritually and materially), liberated prisoners and the socially marginalized are part of God's plan of salvation. Jesus then continues his ministry by healing and performing exorcisms. This attitude was a sort of war declared against cosmological forces (illnesses, magic and suffering), which held God's people hostage. Through healing Jesus regains the kingdom. Although he is accused of upsetting the world order, he seems instead to be putting the devil and his agents in their rightful places.

client or master-slave order at table, he takes the lead as Master, and serves (see also Malina 2001b:10). In this new structure people are not invited in terms of social status; everybody has a seat. The table stands as a symbol for the abolition of hierarchy. The second structure is that of the temple: it ceases to be a symbol of exploitation and becomes a symbol of the kingdom as a household in which God is not “king” but “Father”. The opposite of the kingdom of God in Luke is Jerusalem. The kingdom is not a place of death; it is a place of life and celebration (Moxnes 2001:200). This reading of Luke thus also, although indirectly, brings Moxnes to provide an answer to the question “who is the Christ?” For Moxnes Jesus is an advocate of social transformation.

Malina and Neyrey (1991a:99) equally use a social-scientific reading in order to understand and interpret the dynamics of the conflicts in Luke using a cross-cultural theory of labelling and deviance. In their study they focus on the trial of Jesus with the crucifixion as the climax of the conflict between Jesus and his opponents. Luke reports the story of Jesus’ ministry within the context of conflict, rejection and hostility. At least two areas of conflict can be indicated: the conflict between Jesus and the authorities (supra-human and human) over practical ways on how God should be understood and obeyed, and conflict among the various groups and individuals who surrounded Jesus on the appreciation of Jesus’ mission and his identity (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:97-98).

During the trial Jesus is proven a deviant through the labels attributed to him. He perverts, subverts and blasphemes (Lk 22:5, 23). As a result of this labelling, Jesus is subjected to a Jewish and then to a Roman trial where he is described as a “deviant of the worst sort” (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:116). The aim of labelling and deviance (especially during the trial) is to discredit and depersonalise Jesus. It leads Jesus to lose his status (leadership and identity) and honour, and subjects him to shame (Malina & Neyrey 1991b).

### **2.2.5 A hermeneutical-critical (socio-redaction criticism) reading:**

#### **Philip F Esler**

Socio-redaction criticism is an exegetical approach which results from the fusion between the historical critical approach and what Esler (1989:6) calls

the “sociological exegesis” (*sic*) of Elliott (1982). According to Esler (1989:3), redaction criticism has been very meaningful in defining the particular theological thoughts of an author. It has, however, failed to investigate the social context of texts. With this passion for the study of the social context of the text, Esler proposes a hermeneutic reading that combines redaction criticism with a conscious application of ideas and techniques drawn from social sciences. A socio-redaction analysis of Luke-Acts highlights and insists on the role of Luke (in his own right as author), as well as the role of his social and political communities in the development of his theological thoughts.<sup>23</sup>

In previous Lukan studies, Esler argues, the Gospel has been misread in three dimensions. First is the conception that Luke does not associate his theology to his context, second is the presumption that Luke’s gospel is apologetic and lastly that Luke wrote in order to portray the cruelty of the Roman authorities. Contrary to the presumption that Luke seems to have separated his gospel from the realities of his community, Esler (1989:165) argues that such realities instead served as motivation for the Lukan theology. Luke’s theology begins with Jesus’ mission of property with reference to poverty and riches. Because of this, Luke can only be understood in terms of the political, social and religious realities of that community.

In response to the second misreading, Esler (1989:24) considers it an erroneous presumption to read Luke as an apologetic, that is, in search of tolerance towards the Roman authorities. By comparing Luke with Hellenistic literary conventions of preface composition, Esler comes to the conclusion that Luke was not animated by an apologetic desire. Luke’s gospel is rather a legitimation<sup>24</sup> of Old Testament prophecy and some Jewish practices which his audience was already familiar with (Esler 1989:25). Luke’s intention was to legitimize Christianity to Christians (including Jews and Gentiles) who “needed strong assurance that their decision to convert and to adopt a different life-style had been the correct one” (Esler 1989:16). Luke’s audience

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<sup>23</sup> Esler’s work (1989) is an analysis of both Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. Since the focus of this study is the gospel of Luke, emphasis in this section is on Esler’s arguments that are relevant to the understanding of Luke.

<sup>24</sup> The concept of legitimation used by Esler has a difference in application to how legitimation is used as a concept in this study. For Esler (1989:16-17), legitimation refers to “the collection of ways in which an institution is explained and justified to its members”. In this study the concept is applied to the validation of someone’s leadership.

was not pagan and the formulation of his theological material conforms to this idea. With this conviction, Esler complements his historical analyses of the gospel by investigating the loyalty of Jesus and his followers to the Jewish tradition.

Esler's third response to previous Lukan studies focuses on Luke's position towards the Roman government. Earlier comments on Luke have relied on the argument that if one of Luke's intentions was to portray Christianity as politically innocuous, why does Luke then mention aspects that prove the contrary in his text?<sup>25</sup> For Esler (1989:204-205) Luke instead sought to show that, in spite of accusations levelled at Jesus and his disciples, they were repeatedly pronounced innocent of breaking any Roman regulations. Esler (1989:210) further opines that there is only one answer which offers a satisfying explanation for the political theme in Luke: "faith in Jesus Christ and allegiance to Rome were not mutually inconsistent".<sup>26</sup>

Esler's use of socio-redaction criticism to show the interrelatedness between Luke's theology and the social and political pressure of his community leads him to three conclusions: Luke's gospel is a legitimization of what his community already knew about God and his promises. The formulation of Luke's material, secondly, confirms that Luke is an independent writer, distinct from the Synoptic writers, with specific social and political concerns. Finally, the "marriage" between theology and sociology as portrayed in the gospel, shows that Luke's community experienced a crisis relating to ethnic and religious identification.

### 2.2.6 Summary

The variety of approaches in reading Luke described above broadens the exegete's understanding of the Gospel and its content (i.e., Jesus). Hence, all

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<sup>25</sup> Luke's gospel presents many instances where Jesus seems not to agree with the Roman authorities. According to the Lukan Jesus the Roman authorities tolerate and encourage exploitation in all its senses: social, economic, political and religious. During Jesus' trial they prove ineffective in exonerating him, but legitimated his crucifixion on their "right" to order the death penalty (see Esler 1989:203).

<sup>26</sup> Esler basis this conclusion on the following: Luke situates the beginning of the gospel within the context of Roman history (Lk 2-3:3). A favourable attitude is shown by Roman officials towards Jesus (see e.g., the generosity of the centurion [Lk 7:1-10] and another centurion that declares that Jesus was *δικαιος*, that is, innocent [Lk 23:47]). Luke's version of the trial of Jesus also favours the Romans: Pilate declares Jesus innocent of the charges against him, the Roman soldiers do not subject Jesus to physical violence (contra Mark 15:16-20), while the Jewish soldiers do (Lk 23:6-12). In all, Esler (1989:203) concludes that the Jews were solely responsible for Jesus' death.

exegetical methods of interpretation are important as long as they are relevant for a given exercise. The approaches and readings described above could be considered as the various possibilities or options in the field of Biblical interpretation. They are the sources or 'axes' of theology (Porter 1995:96, Crossan, in Chouinard 1997:68) and not competing approaches (Hartin & Petzer 1991:2). Different approaches should rather be seen as complementary: they have different and particular functions and address particular issues, depending on the type of text that has been chosen (Porter & Tombs 1995:13; Van Aarde & Van Eck 2009:47). Each Biblical interpretation aims at bringing clarity to obscure areas of the text so as to help the understanding of its readers, and thereafter, to enhance their faith. In such an activity the exegete plays the role of a bridge between theology and society.

In the interpretation of New Testament texts preference for a specific approach and method should relate to the nature of the text and the objective of the exegete, which should be to formulate theology that addresses and challenges society to positive change.<sup>27</sup> In this respect the above approaches should be appreciated in terms of their richness and developments in New Testament studies whose objective is to connect today's believer with the various testimonies about Jesus that are inscribed in the New Testament. For the purpose of this study, it is therefore the conviction that, the application of the above exegetical approaches from an African perspective can shed new light on Jesus' leadership in Luke. The latter perspective will also make it possible to apply the results of this study to leadership in an African context.

## **2.3 THE WIRKUNGSGESCHICHTE OF LUKE 9:18-22: WHO IS THE CHRIST?**

### **2.3.1 "Who is the Christ?"**

#### **2.3.1.1 D P Moessner**

Moessner (1983:582) has studied Luke 9:1-50 as a "window preview" to Luke 9:51-19:44. In his study he makes a comparison between Moses' journey to the Promised Land in Deuteronomy and Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. Although Moessner's treatment of Luke 9:18-22 as part of the "window

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<sup>27</sup> This does not exclude the possibility for exegetes to prefer a specific approach. An approach taken can be a combination of more than one method, or simply relying on one specific method. Porter (1995:121), for example, prefers a literary-critical reading assisted by a historical understanding of the text.



preview” in Luke 9:1-50 is scanty, two remarks are worthy to note. The crowd referred to in Luke 9:18 is said to be the same crowd present at the feeding miracle in Luke 9:10-17. Moessner thus sees a connection between Luke 9:17-21 and Luke 9:18-22. Secondly, the prediction of Jesus’ death in Luke 9:22 is considered to foreshadow the future suffering of the disciples in Luke 9:23-27. This remark equally links Luke 9:18-22 to Luke 9:23-27. Apart from these two remarks directly concerned with 9:18-22, the rest of the study is a correlation between the Lukan Jesus who must suffer and die in Jerusalem and Moses who must suffer the anger of the Lord because of the sin of his people (see Dt 31:2, 14; 32:48-50; 34:4; Moessner 1983:584; Brawley 1987:22, 24; Tuckett 1996:85; see also Evans 1955).<sup>28</sup> In summary, Moessner’s Lukan Jesus is Moses of the New Testament – God’s plan of salvation initiated in the Old Testament through Moses is being fulfilled in the New Testament through Jesus (Bosch 1984; Goheen 2005).<sup>29</sup>

### 2.3.1.2 J A Fitzmyer

Fitzmyer (1981:134) suggests a reading of the gospel of Luke in terms of eight sections:

1. The prologue (Lk 1:1-4);
2. The infancy narrative (Lk 1:5-2:52);
3. The preparation for the public ministry of Jesus (Lk 3:1-4:13);
4. The Galilean ministry of Jesus (Lk 4:14-9:50);
5. The travel account, Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-19:27);
6. The ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem (Lk 19:28-21:38);
7. The passion narrative (Lk 22:1-23:56a) and

<sup>28</sup> Tuckett (1996:84) substantiates his conviction with the fact that the noun “departure”, used in Luke 9:31 in order to explain Jesus’ movement to Jerusalem is *exodus*. He opines that the mention of *exodus* refers to Moses’ story. He also supports the idea that Jesus’ *route* will be similar to that of Moses who was “rejected by the people and then raised up again” (Tuckett 1996:84). Although words are vehicles of information, it is evident that they do not have only one meaning. Secondly, (using Tuckett’s argument), to say that Moses was raised means that Moses was resurrected. The verb “to be raised” is the same verb that is used by Jesus to refer to his resurrection (Lk 9:22). Consequently, a quick comparison between Moses and Jesus on the basis of the term *exodus* could be misleading. If this were the case, all the places where the noun *exodus* is used in the New Testament would refer to Moses. An example in point is Acts 13:24, where *exodus* is used as a verb referring to Jesus.

<sup>29</sup> Franklin (1994:336) also disagrees with the Deuteronomistic reading of Luke 9:1-50 by Moessner, Tuckett and Evans. He opines that the closeness of the Deuteronomistic connection with the events of Luke 9:1-50 is not enough evidence that Deuteronomy exerted the final control over the order of Luke’s report.



8. The resurrection narrative Lk 23:56b-24:53).

These eight sections can further be restructured in to four:

- Prologue and infancy narrative (Lk 1:1-2:52);
- Preparation and ministry in Galilee (Lk 3:1-9:50);
- Journey to Jerusalem and ministry (Lk 9:51-21:38);<sup>30</sup> and
- Passion, resurrection and ascension (Lk 22:1-24:53).

Since the story of Jesus' ministry only starts in Luke 3, Fitzmyer (1981:134) also sees a possibility of reducing the structure of the Gospel into seven (or even into three), omitting the prologue and the infancy narrative (see also Edwards 1981:29). This choice, however, is arbitrary, since the essence of the narrative of Jesus' ministry clearly takes place in Galilee and Jerusalem.

As can be seen from the above proposed structure of Luke's narrative, Fitzmyer locates the question of Jesus' identity (Lk 9:18-22) within the macro-context of Luke 3:1-9:50, being part of a smaller narrative (Lk 9:7-36) that he calls "Who is this?" In terms of this narrative structure Luke 9:18-22 stands at the very centre of Luke's salvation history (Fitzmyer 1981:137, 192). It is the identity of Jesus as the Christ that takes him from Galilee through Jerusalem to the cross. In all of this, it is only Peter that understands the identity of Jesus as the Christ of God.

### 2.3.1.3 O C Edwards (Jr)

Excluding the prologue and the infancy narrative, Edwards (1981:29) divides the Gospel into three sections of almost equal length:

- Jesus' ministry in the surrounding of the lake of Galilee (Lk 3:1-9:50);
- Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-19:27); and
- Jesus' teaching, arrest, crucifixion and resurrection in Jerusalem (Lk 19:28-24:53).

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<sup>30</sup> Fitzmyer separates Jesus' journey to Jerusalem from Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem itself. This separation could be questioned, since either on his way to Jerusalem or in Jerusalem, Jesus' activities contributed to his fame. All the events as narrated by Luke are interrelated and culminate with the passion story as the consequence of Jesus' earlier predictions. The journey to Jerusalem prepares the events that will eventually take place in Jerusalem, that is, Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and his return to Galilee. It therefore makes more sense to study Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and his ministry in Jerusalem as a whole.

Edwards is further of the opinion that Luke 22:1-24:53 is not part of Jesus' teaching and therefore cannot be taken into consideration as part of the structure of Luke that relates to Jesus' ministry. This means that his proposed structure is reduced to two sections, Luke 3:1-9:50 and Luke 9:51-21:38 (see also Fitzmyer 1981:134).

Edwards situates the gospel within the context of conflict, beginning with the temptation story of Jesus in the wilderness, and identifies a "crisis-motif" relating to Jesus' identity that runs through the Gospel. In the narrative of Luke the devil leaves Jesus in Luke 4:13, and returns in Luke 22:3. The time between Luke 4:13 and Luke 22:3, when the devil is absent, is the time of salvation (Edwards 1981:33). His analysis of Luke 4:14-30 leads him to conclude that Jesus' ministry starts with two important declarations: his mission statement and the prediction of the fate that awaits him as a prophet in Jerusalem.

In response to Edward's identity crisis motif, Johnson (1999:230), working also with the principle of "the conflict of identity" in Luke, suggests a prophet motif. Using the conflict in Nazareth as a case study, Johnson opines that the Jewish elite indeed wanted a prophet, but not one who offers salvation to those they considered being outside the chosen group. They therefore rejected Jesus. According to them Jesus was just like all earlier prophets that embarked on an inclusive mission. The intensity of this conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders can especially be seen in the splitting of the crowd into two groups: those who accept Jesus and those who do not.

#### **2.3.1.4 R Aland Culpepper**

Culpepper (1995:10) equally divides the gospel into seven sections:

1. Prologue (Lk 1:1-4);
2. Infancy narrative (Lk 1:5-2:52);
3. Preparation for the ministry of Jesus Lk 3:1-4:13);
4. The ministry in Galilee (Lk 4:14-9:50);
5. The journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-19:27);
6. Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem (Lk 19:28-21:38) and
7. The passion and resurrection narratives (Lk 22:1-24:53).

These seven sections can further be summarised as follows (cf Fitzmyer 1981:134):

- Prologue and infancy narrative (Lk 1:1-2:52);
- Preparation and ministry in Galilee (Lk 3:1-9:50);
- Journey to Jerusalem and ministry (Lk 9:51-21:38); and
- Passion, resurrection and ascension (Lk 22:1-24:53).

Culpepper also suggests another division of the Gospel. From a geographical point of view, Jesus' ministry can be divided into three periods:

- In Galilee (Lk 4:14-9:50);
- *en route* to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-19:27); and
- in Jerusalem (Lk 19:28-21:38).

Culpepper (1995:13), like all the scholars mentioned above, is also of the opinion that Luke's focus in his gospel is the question of Jesus' identity. Almost all the characters in the Gospel, according to Culpepper, battle with the question of Jesus' identity: the scribes and the Pharisees (Lk 5:21), John the Baptist (Lk 7:20), the guests at Simon's house (Lk 7:49), the disciples (Lk 8:25), Herod (Lk 9:7) and even Jesus himself (Lk 9:18).

While Moessner makes a correlation between Moses and Jesus in Luke 9:1-50, Culpepper sees it as a section the narrator uses to depict the Messiah as the Son of man. Luke 9:18-22, a part of this micro narrative, is not part of the question relating to Jesus' identity, but should be seen as part of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem (Culpepper 1995:192). He further follows Nolland (1989b:454) in considering Luke 9:18-22 as a dependent sub-unit of Luke 9:18-27, where Luke 9:18-22 serves as a mere preparation for Luke 9:23-27 (Nolland 1989b:454, Culpepper 1995:198).

#### **2.3.1.5 Jack Dean Kingsbury**

Kingsbury, as Culpepper, traces the question of Jesus' identity in Luke from as early as Luke 5:21, concluding that Luke's intention is clear in his eagerness to see Jesus' identity legitimated. This legitimation comes in Luke 9:18-22, where Jesus is finally identified by Peter as the Christ of God (Kingsbury 1985:101). Luke 9:18-22 reveals Jesus' identity in two sets of

responses. In the first set, Jesus could be John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets of old. In the second set, he is the Messiah and the Son of man.

The Messiah-title, according to Kingsbury (1985:100), plays a more important role in Luke than in Matthew and Mark,<sup>31</sup> and the misunderstanding of this title by the characters in Luke is the source of conflict in Luke. This conflict that arose around the understanding of this title is also the axis on which the plot of Luke is built (Kingsbury 1997a:5) – the moment that the Messiah-title in Luke is identified with the one that has to suffer (the Son of man), the conflict points forward to its climax in the crucifixion of Jesus.<sup>32</sup> This is also the point of view of Tyson (1983:319): Luke 9:22 (where the Messiah is identified as the Son of man) points forward to the climax of the conflict in Luke. From this verse the understanding of Jesus as the Son of man dominates and provides an orientation for the rest of the gospel (Tyson 1983:319).

### **2.3.2 The narrative context of Luke 9:18-22 within the structure of Luke's narrative**

As indicated above, Fitzmyer (1981:134) and Culpepper (1995:10) divide the narrative structure of Luke into four sections, that is, the prologue and infancy narrative (Lk 1:1-2:52), preparation and ministry in Galilee (Lk 3:1-9:50), Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and ministry in Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-21:38), and Jesus' passion, resurrection and ascension (Lk 22:1-24:53). Fitzmyer is also of the opinion that the prologue and infancy narratives can be considered as the introduction to the Gospel, which means that the narrative structure can be delimited to three sections. Edwards (1981:29) takes the same point of departure as Fitzmyer (excluding the prologue and the infancy narrative) and divides the Gospel into three sections of almost equal length: Jesus' ministry in the surrounding of the lake of Galilee (Lk 3:1-9:50), Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-19:27); and Jesus' teaching, arrest, crucifixion and resurrection in Jerusalem (Lk 19:28-24:53). He is further of the opinion that Luke 22:1-24:53 can be considered as not being part of Jesus' teaching, which reduces the narrative structure to two sections, Luke 3:1-9:50 and Luke

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<sup>31</sup> This claim of Kingsbury can be disputed, since of the thirty-eight times that the Synoptic gospels mention the title of Messiah, Matthew alone has eighteen occurrences, Mark eight and Luke twelve.

<sup>32</sup> Based on this interpretation, Kingsbury (1991:99) defines leadership in Luke in terms of the cross.

9:51-21:38. When one focuses on the geography of Luke's narrative, Culpepper proposes yet another division of Luke's narrative, namely Jesus in Galilee (Lk 4:14-9:50), *en route* to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-19:27), and Jesus in Jerusalem (Lk 19:28-21:38).

Fitzmyer (1981:137, 192), as indicated above, locates Luke 9:18-22 (as part of the smaller unit of Lk 9:7-36, called "Who is this?") within the macro-context of Luke 3:1-9:50. Luke 9:18-22 thus stands at the very centre of Luke's salvation history (see also Edwards 1981:33). Culpepper (1995:192), on the other hand, considers Luke 9:18-22 as a dependent sub-unit of Luke 9:18-27, with Luke 9:18-22 serving as a mere preparation for Luke 9:23-27 (see also Nolland 1989b:454). Luke 9:18-22 is, according to Culpepper (1995:198), structured in two parts: Luke 9:18-20 and Luke 9:21-22. The first part (Lk 9:18-20) contains two questions relating to Jesus' identity, and four answers to these two questions. In the second part (Lk 9:21-22) Jesus charges his disciples not to diffuse the information about his identity, and gives a reason why they should not, that is, because the Son of man is going to suffer (his first prediction of his passion in Luke). Culpepper considers Peter's response "(You are) the Christ of God" as the climax of Luke 9:18-22 since it is clearly the only correct answer to Jesus' questions in Luke 9:18 and 20. This implies that Jesus considered the responses of the crowd to his question in Luke 9:18 as inadequate and misleading (Culpepper 1995:198). Luke 9:23-27, the remaining part of the sub-unit Luke 9:18-27, consists of Jesus' teaching on discipleship. This teaching on discipleship, according to Culpepper (1995:198), flows from Peter's declaration on the identity of Jesus. Peter's declaration thus enabled Jesus to address his disciples on the consequences of discipleship.

Nolland (1989a:361; 1989b:457) identifies two important sections in Luke's gospel, Luke 8:1-9:20 and Luke 9:21-50. He titles the first section *itinerant preaching with the twelve and the women* (Nolland 1989a:361), and the second *making ready for the trip to Jerusalem* (Nolland 1989b: 457). Nolland's structure clearly indicates that Luke 9:18-22 is not considered being a cohesive sub-unit, since Luke 9:18-20 belongs to his first section, while Luke 9:21-22 belongs to the second. Thus, although there is a link between

Luke 9:20 and Luke 9:21, the verses are not considered to be part of the same sub-unit.

Contrary to Culpepper, Plummer (1981:245) and Bovon (2002:363) understand Luke 9:18-22 as an independent sub-unit in Luke. Plummer sees Luke 9:18-22 as a sub-unit within the unit of Jesus' departure to Jerusalem (Lk 9:1-50). Contrary to Fitzmyer and Nolland, he analyses Luke 9:18-22 as an independent passage without a stated or an implied connection with any other passage in Luke (Plummer 1981:245). This is also Bovon's understanding of Luke 9:18-22: Luke 9:18-22 is an independent sub-unit divided into two smaller parts, namely Luke 9:18-20 and Luke 9:21-22. While Peter's declaration serves as the conclusion of the first part, the prediction of Jesus' death introduces the second part. For him there is a close relationship between Jesus' command to silence and the prediction of his passion (Bovon 2002:4). He further opines that up to Luke 9:8 the narrator prepares his readers to understand Jesus' messianic identity that is fully disclosed in Luke 9:22. Contrary to Mark's gospel, the disciples now know Jesus' identity before he approaches his death. Peter's response, however, is still inadequate – instead of approving it, Jesus goes further by adding to Peter's answer: Jesus is the Son of man (Bovon 2002:362).

### 2.3.3 Summary

From the above, the following is clear: Almost all Lukan scholars agree that Luke 9:18-22 is situated within the context of Jesus' Galilean ministry. Secondly, most Lukan scholars analyze Luke 9:18-22 as part of identified macro narratives in Luke, or in terms of its function in Luke's narrative as a whole.<sup>33</sup> An analysis of the structure of Luke is thus being used as a guide that facilitates the understanding of the function and meaning of Luke 9:18-22 in the gospel. Thirdly, only a few Lukan scholars identify Luke 9:18-22 as an

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<sup>33</sup> According to Tuckett (1997:18) much has not been done on the narrative structure of Luke when compared to similar works on the other synoptic gospels, especially in Mark (see Tuckett 1997:18). Evans justifies this disparity in the study of Luke with the fact that Luke's sources have not been as available as those of Mark (Evans 1995:18). Scholars also are not unanimous in their appreciation of the research done in Luke. Fitzmyer, for example, affirms that no other single author in the New Testament has occupied scholars as Luke-Acts (Fitzmyer 1981:3). Fitzmyer is certainly right; but what he fails to realise is that when such work is carried out on Luke, more emphases are laid on the *Acts of the Apostles*.



independent micro narrative in the Gospel. No specific analysis of Luke 9:18-22 as a micro narrative in Luke's gospel, however, has thus far been undertaken. Finally, Luke 9:18-22 is seen as crucial for the understanding of Jesus' identity and mission. Luke 9:18-22 thus occupies a very important position in Luke. All of this necessitates a rethinking of the narrative structure of Luke, as well as the specific narrative place and function of Luke 9:18-22 within the macro-context of Luke.

## 2.4 JESUS AND LEADERSHIP IN LUKE 9:18-22

No study of leadership *per se* with reference to Luke 9:18-22 has yet been undertaken in Lukan scholarship. Horrell (1999), however, has treated leadership in Luke-Acts, while Kee (2002) has evaluated leadership in the early church.

### 2.4.1 David G Horrell

Horrell (1999:309) has studied leadership from a social-scientific perspective, focusing on itinerant and resident leadership, two leadership patterns he identifies in the period of early Christianity.<sup>34</sup> His study *inter alia* shows that the transfer of leadership from the itinerant leaders to resident leaders was accompanied by social transformation and change (see also Moxnes 2001), which went along with conflict and opposition, influenced by the "household codes". The authority of resident leaders most probably was legitimated by these codes<sup>35</sup> (see 1 Tm 3:4-11). *Patres familiarum* like Philemon, Apphia and Archippus, for example, occupied powerful positions because they hosted churches (Phlm 1-2).

Horrell (1999:320) holds that itinerant leaders remained the locomotives of power and authority in the early church. Using the leadership model of

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<sup>34</sup> These two types of leadership differed one from the other in that, itinerant leaders were considered as those ones that moved from place to place in order to evangelise (e.g., Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, James and Peter). Resident leaders were those who were located in particular communities over which they exercised leadership (Horrell 1999:312). It is, however, not that easy to say whether some leaders of the Jerusalem church were itinerant or resident leaders, like the case of Prisca and Aquila (Rm 16:3-5, Act 18:2-3), and Phoebe (Rm 16:1-2), Gaius (Rm 16:23), Stephanas the householder (1 Cor 16:15-18) and Philemon.

<sup>35</sup> These codes were also imbued with injustice because they were male chauvinist, conservative and served the interest of the leaders.

Theissen, he explains how the itinerant models of leadership created conflict within communities. Itinerant leaders either worked in order to support themselves, or they remained dependent on the hospitality of their host congregations (Theissen, in Horrell 1999:311). The latter option was dangerous, since itinerant leaders could abuse and take advantage of any situation, an attitude that could be a source of conflict between the itinerant/resident leaders and the host community (Horrell 1999:320).

Another source of conflict was when itinerant leaders left the communities they founded, but still, remained very influential (like Paul). Weber describes three types of legitimate domination: rational-legal, traditional and charismatic (Weber 1968:212-301). According to Horrell, it was routine that charismatic leaders (like Paul) in many instances became traditional, and this was a source of conflict. Resident leaders also had influence, and in many cases their leadership was unquestioned (Horrell 1999:328). In other cases resident leaders did not have the legitimation of itinerant leaders that created a specific community. In the case of Colossians and Ephesians the traditional leaders of these communities most probably used the household codes to legitimize their leadership pattern and cement their power (Horrell 1999:331). Equally, they misused their positions to write the epistles of Colossians and Ephesians in Paul's name (Horrell 1999:334). This is a typical example of how some leaders use their position of power to enact laws that can guarantee, reinforce and sustain their power for as long as possible.

#### **2.4.2 Howard Clark Kee**

Kee's (2002) sociological study on leadership focuses on leadership in the early church. According to Kee, leadership in the early church (see, e.g., 1 Tim 3:1-3 and 1 Pet 2:9) was understood in terms of Paul's prescription in 1 Corinthians 12:28: "And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues". His study especially focuses on how each of these offices of leadership – apostles, prophets, teachers, elders and helpers – functioned in the early church. His conclusion is that the role of these offices of leadership was to ensure

continuity between the activities of the early church and that of Jesus (Kee 2002:350).

## 2.5 JESUS AND CONFLICT IN LUKE

### 2.5.1 Joseph B Tyson

Tyson (1983:304) begins his study of conflict in Luke by criticising form criticism and redaction criticism for only concentrating on selected material in the gospels, rather than treating them as cohesive literary works. He sees his literary analysis of conflict in Luke as a correction of previous historical-critical approaches to the Gospel (Tyson 1983:305). According to Tyson (1983:313), Luke is a well-directed narrative (an orderly and chronologically presentation of Jesus' ministry) driven by the theme of conflict (Tyson 1983:314, see also Kingsbury 1997a:5). Conflict in Luke, he further argues, develops in four stages: anticipation of conflicts, early conflicts, conflict in the temple, and climactic conflict.

Already at the beginning of the Gospel (Lk 1:5-2:52) the reader is alerted to the conflict that will follow when, in the *Magnificat* (Lk 1:52-54), the reversal of the social status of Mary is announced (see also Malina & Neyrey 1991a:97). Mary's prediction is an indication of class conflict because position and power are reversed. This prediction is followed with the *Benedictus* which foretells the release from enemies (Lk 1:68-69). Zechariah's prediction is an indication of conflict(s) between systems (see also Boulding 1957:122). The third prediction is that of Simeon in the *Nunc Dimittis* (Lk 2:34-35), in which Jesus is described as a future source of conflict. Jesus will cause the fall and the rise of many people, even piercing hearts (of Mary), if it becomes necessary. These three predictions, according to Tyson, are then rounded off by John's preparatory messages for Jesus' mission and his confrontation with Herod.

The early conflicts (Lk 4:1-19:27) begin with the confrontation between Jesus and the devil. This conflict at a non-human level (see Kingsbury 1991:79) is a test of Jesus' strength (Tyson 1983:316). This is followed by the narrative of Jesus' activity in the synagogue in Nazareth (Lk 4:16-30). The question of the Nazarenes on the identity of Jesus (Lk 4:22) is the result of surprise, not a question of opposition (Tyson 1983:317). The dialogue between Jesus and those in the synagogue, however, is full of controversy,

conflict and tension. Jesus predicts that he will, *inter alia*, violate the Torah, especially through healing. As such, his predictions are an attack on the Pharisees and the scribes as representatives of the Jewish elite. As a result of this controversy, they want to kill him, but do not succeed.

The conflict in the temple (Lk 19:45-48) initiates the series of Jerusalem controversies, which earlier have been foreshadowed by Jesus' rejection in the Samaritan village (Lk 9:53; Tyson 1983:320). In his conflict with the chief priests, Jesus publicly challenges their authority and continues to challenge them in his teachings, as he had done earlier with the Pharisees. In Luke 20:1-8 the temple becomes a battlefield of the conflict between the ideologies of Jesus and the religious leaders when Jesus engages them into a question-and-answer session (Tyson 1983:322). Jesus' authority and leadership is now constantly questioned, because the chief priests have been challenged in their very office.

In the last phase of conflict in Luke (Lk 22:1-23:56), Tyson (1983:319) emphasizes the importance of the temple teaching (Lk 20-21) in the development of conflict in Luke's narrative. In Jerusalem the main opponents of Jesus are the members of the Sanhedrin, consisting of the chief priests, scribes, elders and some of the Sadducees. He acknowledges that Lk 9:22 points to the climactic moment in conflict in Luke because it sets the proper agenda of conflicts as has been predicted in the early part of the gospel and clearly defines Jesus' opponents. He also observes that, in the early conflicts, Jesus' opponents are not as malevolent as is the case with the chief priests who systematically want to have Jesus killed. The Pharisees, on the other hand, also opposed Jesus, but quite often protected him from being killed (see Luke 13:31).

Tyson's understanding of conflict in Luke as a conflict between systems (see again the *Magnificat* and *Benedictus*), ties with Boulding's (1957:122) definition of conflict as a clash between incomprehensive systems. According to Boulding (1957:129), Jesus as an individual constitutes a "system". This "system" is one of the four "systems" that are involved in the conflict in Luke: Jesus, the system of the Roman aristocracy, the system of the Jewish elite, and that of the Jewish peasantry.

### 2.5.2 Jack Dean Kingsbury

Kingsbury (1991) is also of the opinion that the story of Jesus in Luke is primarily a story of conflict. He identifies two kinds of conflict in Luke, namely supra-human and human conflict. The first kind of conflict Jesus is involved in the narrative is the supra-human, when the devil questions his identity. The second is the conflict between Jesus and humans, namely the disciples and the religious authorities (the most important conflict in the Gospel). The conflict between Jesus and the disciples comes from the disciples' spiritual immaturity. They are unable to deduce Jesus' identity from his works. On the other hand, the conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities simmers around the question of who is ruling God's people (Kingsbury 1991:79, 100). At the end of Luke's narrative the populace in Jerusalem also becomes a part of this conflict when they conspire with Pilate to kill Jesus.<sup>36</sup>

Cassidy (1993:150) has commented on the work of Kingsbury's from the perspective of the "Roman realities" described in the gospel. In Kingsbury's thought the Roman elite are not to be considered as one of Jesus' opponents because no confrontation between Jesus and them is described in the Gospel. Jesus' preaching on the new kingdom and his salvific work, however, had such major implications for Roman rule that the Romans could not simply ignore it. Also, the main reason for the Jews in expecting a messiah was the Roman oppression. "Any study of conflict in Luke will remain out of focus unless a systematic treatment of Jesus' conflict with the Roman order is integrated into the overall analysis" (Cassidy 1993:151).

Cassidy also criticises Kingsbury's depiction of the religious authorities. Kingsbury does not make a distinction between, on the one hand, Jesus' conflict with the Pharisees and the scribes in Galilee, and on the other hand, his conflict with the temple priests, the elites or elders and the Roman governor in Jerusalem. The reason why the religious authorities opposed Jesus also entails more than just the question of who is ruling God's people. They also opposed Jesus because he took a stance against religious abuse

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<sup>36</sup> There are, according to Kingsbury (1991:120), also positive characters in Luke that embody an attitude other than that of the religious leaders, namely Zechariah (Lk 1:5), Jairus (Lk 8:41), and Joseph of Arimathea (Lk 23:50-51). Kingsbury (1991:79) is also of the opinion that the crowd (λαοὶ/οἱ ἄλλοι) never opposes Jesus. They remain well disposed towards Jesus until he appears before Pilate, and even then they took concerted stand against him (see Luke 23:4, 13-24).

that was condoned by the Roman authorities (Cassidy 1993:151). He also differs from Kingsbury's point of view that the conflict surrounding Jesus was at its most acute in Jerusalem (Cassidy 1993:151).

### 2.5.3 Michael Desjardins

While Kingsbury's analysis focuses on a description of the different conflicts in Luke, Desjardins (1997b) analyses these conflicts having in mind the question why Jesus faced opposition in his ministry. His conclusion is that Jesus himself was the main cause of his crises – Jesus suffered rejection because he occasionally condoned and incited violence (Desjardins 1997:72). Jesus, for example, permitted his disciples to carry weapons (Lk 22:36), never criticised soldiers for their choice of profession, and used military terms such as “swords” (Lk 2:35; 21:24; 22:36, 38, 49, 52) and “armour” (Lk 11:22). Jesus' tone was also provocative which caused people to rise against him.<sup>37</sup>

Desjardins (1997:75) also understands the way in which Jesus entered Jerusalem, as well as his attitude in the temple, as highly provocative. These two events that preceded Jesus' arrest provoked the crowd to be hostile towards him and to support his crucifixion. Desjardins' understanding of how the Jews conceived the period of Passover also supports his view that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was provocative and insulting to both the crowd and Jewish religion in general:

To be sure, the entry is said to be non-violent, but its historical context has to be kept in mind in order to appreciate the full force of such an action. Passover, for Jews, symbolized freedom – the escape of the Israelites from Egypt centuries before, and since that time, freedom from oppression from all foreign oppression. Emotion ran high during this festival, a time when all Jews tried to visit Jerusalem. Indeed, emotions ran high that the Romans would keep the high priest's sacred vestments locked up, lest the people rise up and declare him their political leader.

Desjardins (1997:75)

According to Desjardins, Jesus thus disrupted the serenity of the Passover solemnity, an action that could not be tolerated in view of the respect the Jews had for this important feast. By causing a great crowd to follow him

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<sup>37</sup> To substantiate this understanding of Jesus, Desjardins (1997:72) refers to the several “woes” of Jesus aimed at the Pharisees and the lawyers (see Lk 11:37-52), as well as the parable of Tenants (Lk 20:1-19).



singing, Jesus disrespected this Jewish festival, which was one of the most important memorials of God's goodness.

Desjardins is further of the opinion that Jesus was opposed because, he involved himself in societal issues that were of no concern to him (see also France 1990:22). He mingled with those who were considered as outsiders and did not operate in conformity with the goals and interests of his opponents. His identity revealed in his message, was an open challenge to the *status quo*. He challenged the social order by questioning societal "normalities" such as injustice, oppression, exploitation and racism, and stood for an alternative that consisted of justice, love, equality and peace. This attitude of Jesus – as a fellow Jew – caused him to lose his credibility in the eyes of his contemporaries and because of this, he was considered an opponent. Finally, Desjardins holds that Jesus was rejected because he caused family disunity by discouraging his disciples from being faithful to their families (see Lk 8:19-21; 9:57-62; 12:51-53).

Jesus, however, sometimes took a totally different approach. He responded to physical agitation with persuasive arguments and miracles, and, in spite of the oppressive nature of the political structure of his time, did not preach armed revolt, but rather advocated a non-violent attitude: "No more of this" (Lk 22:51). Jesus also did not fall in the trap of those who saw him as a political messiah and therefore wanted to make him a king. Finally, Jesus preached that violence is ineffective in altering God's control over human history.

#### **2.5.4 Summary**

The above analyses testify to the fact that even though much has not been said and done on conflict in Luke's gospel, Jesus' mission of salvation involved opposition from both his fellow Jews and the Roman aristocracy. Several reasons account for such an atmosphere. The first is that Jesus was opposed because he fought against social injustice. In this respect, Malina & Neyrey (1991a:99) report that those in power (e.g., the religious authorities) perpetrated injustice by labelling and thus marginalising those who did not

adhere to the accepted social norms of the day.<sup>38</sup> Knight (1998: 181), in his narrative reading of Luke, also portrays an ethical Jesus whose principle of humility and service stand at the ethical heart of the gospel. Such an ethical stand symbolised a reversal of social status. This, of course, constituted a breeding ground for conflict. Secondly, Jesus was opposed because he stood against religious abuse, the down play of women, social status and the misuse of political structures (Cassidy 1980:35; Desjardins 1997:78).

Thirdly, first-century Palestine was essentially a world of conflict on at least three levels: political, socio-economical and religious (Cassidy 1980:124, Malina & Neyrey 1991a:98; Van Eck 2009a:24). Politically Palestine was under the Roman rule; economically an inequitable distribution of resources existed (Desjardins 1997:78); and religious exploitation took place especially through the temple system and its officials. France (1990:22) and Desjardins (1997:75) argue that Jesus was responsible for the problems that befell him, because he addressed these conflicts in an arrogant manner when he declared that “I have come to bring fire on earth” (Lk 12:49). Through his words and deeds Jesus turned the accepted conventions of his time upside-down (France 1990:22). He was provocative, violent, impolite and critical (Desjardins 1997:75).

Fourthly, many scholars agree with France and Desjardins that Jesus was opposed because of his behaviour. He was considered as one who constantly violated accepted societal rules, and therefore was rendered as a social deviant (Malina 1991:100). His behaviour was seen as susceptible to societal norms since he stood against the interest and ideology of both the Roman aristocracy and the Jewish elite. Van Eck therefore is correct when he argues that the conflict between Jesus and his opponents is to be understood in terms of incompatible and opposing interests, goals, values and expectations (Van Eck 2009a:9). The conflict between Jesus and his opponents thus can be categorised as “mutually exclusive conflict” (see Jessie 1957:112).

The historical Jesus’ main opponents most probably were the Roman aristocracy, the Jewish elite and the peasantry (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:104; Van Eck 2009a:6). This is also the case in Luke’s narrative. The crowd in

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<sup>38</sup> In Luke there are both positive and negative labels. Negative labels are names by which people are ostracised from the normal (accepted) societal arrangements of society, and Jesus, according to Malina, fought against these stigmatising labels (see § 3.4.2.3.2).

Luke, however, should also be seen as opposing the ministry of Jesus.<sup>39</sup> As for the outcome of the conflict between Jesus and his opponents in Luke, Cunningham (1997) observes that conflict and opposition played a very negative role in Jesus' ministry. In this regard it will be argued that even if this may be the case, Jesus' conflict with his opponents not only created awareness to the many social injustices in his times, but also led to positive change.

## 2.6 RESEARCH GAP

Many scholars agree with Tyson (1983), Evans (1995) and Tuckett (1997) that so far not much attention has been given to the study of Luke 9:18-22 in particular and Luke's gospel in general as has been the case with the other Synoptic gospels (2.3.3).<sup>40</sup> One of the main reasons for this fact is the assumption that Luke is in part dependent on Matthew and Mark. Notwithstanding, on several occasions, Luke gives himself a large freedom of literary movement in the gospel (Danker 1979:108; Esler 1989) because of the *Sondergut*-sources he used in the compilation of his gospel (Awoh

<sup>39</sup> Although Kingsbury (1991:79) contests this view, the main problem has been that of not making an appropriate distinction between  $\sigma\lambda\lambda\omicron\gamma$  (crowd) and  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&j$  (people). Quite often both have been used as synonyms. This may also stem from the fact that Nestle-Aland sometimes falls in the same error of translation (see Lk 8:35, 37; 13:17). This idea will further be developed in § 5.5.2.

<sup>40</sup> Farmer (1983), in his study of the Synoptic gospels, gives more attention to Mark and Matthew. Of the twenty-one articles that focus on the Synoptic gospels eight are on generalities; six are on Mark, four on Matthew and only three on Luke. Moessner undertakes a study of Luke 9:1-50, but concentrates on a comparison between Moses and Jesus focusing on the place that each of them occupies in the history of Israel as prophets of different epochs. In his analysis of the passion narrative in Luke's gospel, Karris (1985) focuses on factors related to the crucifixion of Jesus such as injustice, but omits a critical study on Luke 9:18-22 which is a springboard to the passion story (Godet 1976:408). Kingsbury (1985:95) considers the theme of salvation as depicted in Jesus' name: "God is salvation", as an important theme in Luke. He further emphasises on key terms used by Jesus in his proclamations, namely  $\delta\eta\&g\eta\sigma\alpha\iota$  (Lk 1:1) and  $\kappa\eta\rho\&s\sigma\epsilon\&i\eta$  (Lk 8:39). Unfortunately, he shuns Luke 9:18-22, which is the starting point to the fulfilment of the mission which Jesus incarnates in these proclamations. BurrIDGE, in *Four gospels, one Jesus: A synoptic reading*, treats the theme of conflict in both Mark and Matthew, but analyses the theme of "bearer of burdens" as the domineering theme of Luke's gospel (BurrIDGE 2005:101-131). Esler has done a tremendous scholarly contribution on Luke-Acts (1989). However, from the point of view of its content, it is sometimes difficult to decipher issues which are particular only to Luke's gospel. The above interest shown in scholarly research is imbalanced, considering the fact that, comparatively, Luke has more material peculiar to him: 38%, as compared to Mark (2%) and Matthew 17% (Plummer 1981:xxxv). Secondly, stories from one gospel cannot explain events in another gospel because no two stories can be reported in the same way by two different reporters (Knight 1998:28). Each narrated Synoptic story is autonomous and can be appreciated only in terms of its autonomous account.

2003:75). Moreover, approaches to the study of Luke show that no particular study has been done on Luke 9:18-22 as an independent sub-unit within Luke's gospel in general.

Even when Luke 9:18-22 is mentioned, the popular approach has been the traditional historical-critical approach. Conflict in Luke is social, cultural, economical and political in nature, that is, societal (Neyrey 1991a). Such studies therefore need to be complemented by approaching conflicts in Luke from the perspective of the social world of Luke. Malina & Neyrey (1991a:97) confirm that Luke tells the story within the background of conflict, rejection and hostility. The social scientific critical approach will therefore be a complement to the historical approach that had been carried out in the study of Luke because it will lead the "why" questions into the understanding and interpretation of these conflicts.

The failure to consider Luke 9:18-22 as an independent sub-unit within Luke's gospel has often led to its misinterpretation. From an exegetical point of view, Peter's confession has often been considered as the climax of Luke 9:18-22. This appreciation has given an inappropriate attention to the response from the crowds and the implication or the meaning of the name Messiah. Source criticism and redaction criticism seem to enhance a better understanding of the text as they assist to situate the climax of Luke 9:18-22 on Jesus' prediction of his death. The particularity of Luke in this narrative lies on the first and the last verses. The first verse serves as context for the last verse. The prediction of Jesus' suffering and subsequent death and resurrection would not have been an easy pill to swallow, hence the spiritual preparation.

So far, sociological (even historical and literary) studies of Luke's gospel have failed to connect Jesus' identity to the question of conflict and leadership. Instead, such studies have been limited to a description of leadership functions within the early church, without any further evaluation (see § 2.4). Also, where the title "Christ" has been studied, emphasis has been more on the name "Christ", rather than on the implications of the name. A study of conflict, which neglects leadership (see Tyson 1983) in Luke, misses the understanding of the gospel altogether. The name "Christ" is synonymous to "leadership" and "conflict".

In the same vein the question about Jesus' identity has traditionally been answered in terms of Jesus' question addressed to the disciples concerning the perception of the crowds. For example, the common response that Christians know is that of the clergy, either from Sunday school classes or from the pulpit. The question of Jesus' identity is actual and urgent, demanding an individual response: "Who do I say that the Christ is?" This study therefore seeks to see the possibility of individualising the response to the question: "Who is the Christ?" Copan in an attempt to answer this question has dwelt on the question: *Who was Jesus?* (Copan 2001).<sup>41</sup> In other words, the responses from the crowds open the way for a discussion on relevant theology<sup>42</sup>, that is, a theology from the perspective of the people. The knowledge of who Jesus was should inspire present day Christians in formulating their faith based upon their personal encounter with Jesus. This makes the question of Jesus' identity more relevant.

The quest for relevant theology is the fourth research gap to be addressed in this study. Just as Esler (1989:24) sees interrelatedness between Luke's theology and the social and political pressures of his community, the intention of this study is to create awareness for theologians (especially African theologians) to engage in the development of "participatory theology". This is theology derived from, and not theology imported into the social realities of life; it is a theology by the people through their interaction with and response to God's word as addressed in Scripture. Relevant theology is not theology in defence of something (apologetic theology); it is theology derived from the social, political, economic and religious thirst of the

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<sup>41</sup> Copan's work is a dialogue between Christianity and Judaism based on the understanding of who Jesus was, and in defining the place that he occupies in the both religions. This debate is very important at the level of inter-religious dialogue. However, for it to be complete, it needs to address the second question on the person of the Christ because the question about "who was Jesus?" is more historical than actual. A study of past events that does not enhance life in the present and project the possibilities of growth and progress in the future is more or less irrelevant for twenty-first century Christianity.

<sup>42</sup> Relevant theology is theology reconstructed from people's personal experiences. Pobee (1986) refers to this method of reconstructing theology as a "do-it-by-yourself theology". Jesus was probably conscious of this fact. That is why at a certain point in time; he wished to know what the crowds thought about him. This method did not only lead to the legitimation of his identity; but it also enabled him to appreciate the crowds' response of his ministry. Peter's response, for example, was as a result of a personal experience, which should not be considered in opposition to the crowds' perception of who Jesus was.

community (“legitimated” or “participatory” theology; Esler 1989:16). The relevance of investigating the African response to the question “Who is the Christ?” is an attempt into such a venture. It is a serious hiatus for theologians not to consider the contribution of a given context to theology.

As a corrective to the traditional way of studying Biblical texts this study also intends to move from the socio-cultural context of Luke 9:18-22 to its application in the context of African readers. Hence, there will be a move from a social scientific study of Luke 9:18-22 to a contextualised study: the African context. This will also mean an examination of some African socio-cultural values that breed conflict. This will culminate with a search for the African response to the question: “Who is the Christ for the African?”

The objective of this study is to diagnose, explain, interpret and narrow the chasm between leadership and conflict within the African society, and enable leaders not to dread conflict but to use conflict when it occurs, as a positive ingredient to societal change and innovation. Van Eck (2009a:9) decries the fact that conflict has mostly been viewed as something negative (Cunningham 1997, Desjardin 1997). Certainly, “good news” should be understood in normal cases to mean welfare. This study will try to open another way of understanding “good news” as something negative that can be used positively. It is in this light that Luke will be analysed in the last chapter as: *The gospel or the good news of “conflict” according to Luke.*



## Chapter 3

# Evaluation and theories: Current approaches to Luke, Luke 9:18-22, leadership and conflict

*Authority does not have the connotation of jurisdiction over others, much less the power to impose force on other persons, but rather the holder's rightful freedom to act.*  
(Murray1968:32-33)

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter scholarly work thus far done in the areas of leadership and conflict in Luke 9:18-22 in particular, and Luke's gospel in general, was presented. In this chapter these contributions are evaluated. Attention is also given to the various theories that have been used in the understanding of leadership and conflict in general terms.

As a reminder this study, titled: *Who is the Christ? Leadership and conflict in Luke 9:18-22: A social scientific-and narratological analysis from an African perspective*, has two main areas of concern. First, the question "Who is the Christ?" connects Jesus' leadership with the various conflicts he was engaged in (that with the Roman and Jewish elite respectively, and the Jewish peasantry). Secondly, how can leadership and conflict in Luke 9:18-22 be understood from an African perspective by employing a social scientific and narratological approach in interpreting the text?

While the next chapter defines and explains the chosen approaches that will constitute the research itinerary of this study, the present one also prepares the groundwork by defining the necessary models and theories that are used. It equally deals with methodology because it explains the usefulness of models and theories in the understanding and interpretation of leadership and conflict. Hence, it is divided into four sections. First, an evaluation of the current approaches to Luke, the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Luke 9:18-22 and the different understandings of Luke's macro-structure are presented. The objective of this evaluation is firstly to evaluate the relevance of the choice for a narrative and social scientific approach in this study. The second objective is to suggest and explain a specific choice regarding the narrative structure of Luke's gospel. As argued above, the understanding of

Jesus' identity and the conflicts he faced is influenced by the way the narrative structure of Luke is perceived.

The last three sections will be devoted to leadership and conflict. In sections two and three relevant leadership and conflict theories are discussed, and the final section is devoted to an evaluation of the discussed theories in order to make a suitable choice by means of which leadership and conflict will be approached in this study. The study on leadership theories is important because it shows in what way leadership can be enhanced. Conflict theories are equally useful because they help in the understanding and appreciation of conflicts. The formulation of models and theories will ease the application of the various exegetical approaches that will be used, as well as bring clarity to the reader's understanding. The choice of these theories is influenced by the topic itself.

## **3.2 EVALUATION: CURRENT APPROACHES – THE WIRKUNGSGE-SCHICHTE OF LUKE 9:18-22 AND STRUCTURE**

### **3.2.1 Evaluation of current approaches in reading Luke**

In evaluating the current readings of Luke two things should be made clear. The first is that the understanding of a message in a text depends on two "actors", the reader and the text. When the reader shuns the text and becomes the lone actor, it leads to eisegesis. Understanding is only meaningful when the reader reflects, observes and examines the text through a thorough investigation with the objective to explain, interpret or describe (Porter & Clarke 1997:5). In this process of dialogue between reader and text the reader and the text transform one another, depending on the specific context in which the dialogue takes place (Thiselton 1992:35; Resseguie 2005:33). This is exegesis.

Secondly, as a complex and multifaceted collection of disciplines, exegesis leads the exegete to derive a conclusion from a given text, depending on the influence of a specific school of thought (historical-critical, literary-critical, hermeneutical-critical or social scientific critical). Each school of thought, with the use of tools appropriate to its objectives, understands a text from a particular angle. Exegesis is always a perspectival enterprise (see Van Eck 1995:124-125). The question of the "best" approach in New

Testament interpretation is therefore irrelevant. Each approach develops and suggests options in the field of Biblical hermeneutics, which is heuristic by definition.

To elucidate the above remarks, Wenham (see § 2.2.1) studies Luke by focusing on its historical context and his analysis enables him to make an appraisal of different historical aspects of Luke's gospel. His historical findings lead him to qualify Jesus' mission in Luke's gospel as controversial with reference to the tension between the Jews and the non-Jews (see also Esler 2002:187). Although this study plays down many other aspects of Luke's gospel (Spencer 2005), it made an important contribution in the understanding of Luke. Spencer's and Knight's literary devices enable them to improve on Wenham's historical approach. Their focus on the influence of God and that of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' ministry facilitates an understanding of Jesus' mission as God's mission, inspired by the Holy Spirit. The presentation of God's activity confirms him as a God who works in relationship (Goldsmith 2000:2). However, Knight's (1998:54) understanding that Jesus became the Messiah only after his death is misleading. Jesus is the Messiah through his works and deeds from the infancy narrative to his ascension.

From a hermeneutical-critical perspective, Van Staden and Goheen respectively analyse Jesus' leadership from the context of God's compassion and from the context of mission (see § 2.2.3). Moxnes, Malina and Neyrey, and Esler approach the understanding of Jesus in Luke's gospel from a cross-cultural, social anthropological and cultural context. Each of these approaches leads them to understand the Gospel in different ways.

Esler's (1989) idea that Luke's gospel is a legitimization of his community's realities constitutes a strong basis for his use of socio-redaction criticism. This methodology, which is a combination of the historical and the social scientific approach testifies that approaches serve a better purpose when they are used as complementary tools in Biblical interpretation. For instance, Esler's conclusion on the relationship between Christianity and the Roman authority should not be understood in terms of an apparent contradiction in the Gospel. Rather, various views outlined by him testify that Luke's gospel is well grasped if it is understood as apologetic and legitimating

in nature. The view, that the Jews were responsible for Jesus' crucifixion is misleading, since it shifts and postpones human responsibility towards sin (see Heb 6:6) and raises the rest of humanity against the Jews.<sup>43</sup>

From the above, it is clear that no one approach in Biblical interpretation can be seen as *the* approach that should be used in explaining the relationship between Luke's theology and his community. Esler is certainly right that "amidst the battery of critical approaches to the New Testament there is none which is really suited to explicating the relationships between Luke's theology and his community" (Esler 1989:2). Hence, while Spencer (2005) proposes a literary approach as a solution to the lapses of the historical approach in the study of Luke, Evans (1995) and Porter (1995) instead highlight its inability to bear satisfactory fruits. For Goheen (2005) each of these approaches has shortcomings that must be overcome by a hermeneutical critical reading. Even though the social scientific approach encompasses all these other approaches, Gager (in Richter 1995) and Stowers (in Taylor 2002) equally question its credibility.<sup>44</sup> All these criticisms point to the fact that no approach is self-sufficient. It is the compilation of these approaches that makes New Testament interpretation, and the interpretation of Luke 9:18-22 in particular, an interesting activity.

This study by its very nature deals with human behaviour and attitudes within society. It thus imposes the social scientific approach as an option to the understanding of leadership and conflict in Luke's gospel. Conflict in Luke's gospel starts at a certain point and evolves in the course of events. Even though Luke's gospel is part of Biblical history (Karris 1979:5), it is better understood as a comprehensive historical narrative of the events that have been fulfilled in Jesus' ministry (Godet 1976:54). Luke "tells the story" of Jesus in his gospel (Kahl 2002:76). From this perspective, leadership and

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<sup>43</sup> McKenzie and Haynes (1999:133), in their analysis of Esler's work on Luke, are not correct when they state that Esler criticises Luke for importing theological thoughts into his context rather than letting theology grow out of existential realities of his community. A careful reading of Esler proves the contrary. Esler instead affirms that "the general thesis argued in what follows (*in his book*) is that social and political factors have been highly significant in motivating Lukan theology" (Esler 1989:2, my emphasis).

<sup>44</sup> Even though some of these criticisms are relevant, exegetes engaged in social studies are far more humble about the possibilities of their discipline (Esler 1989:12). Social scientific criticism is simply an effort, in using models as heuristic devices, in trying to avoid the perils of anachronism and/or ethnocentrism.

conflict can, maybe, better be grasped if the Gospel is analysed as a narrative. The last aspect of the topic centres on contemporary hearers in the African context, thereby implying an African hermeneutic approach: contextualisation, which simply means the application of a Biblical text within a given context. These three approaches will be discussed in the next chapter.

### 3.2.2 The *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Luke 9:18-22

The discussion of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Luke 9:18-22 (see § 2.3.1) has yielded the following matters that should be addressed:

- According to Moessner the crowds in Luke 9:18-22 is the same crowd as that of Luke 9:10-17.
- Fitzmyer situates the question of Jesus' identity within the macro-context of Luke 9:7-36. According to Culpepper, on the other hand, the question of Jesus' identity starts with the question of the scribes and the Pharisees in Luke 5:21.
- Regarding the role of the devil in Luke's narrative, Edwards argues that the devil leaves the scene in Luke 4:13 and only returns in Luke 22:3.
- According to Culpepper and Kingsbury Peter's response constitutes the climax of Luke 9:18-22.
- The responses of the crowds in Luke 9:18-22 are inadequate and misleading (Culpepper).

Is "the crowds" in Luke 9:18-22 the same crowd as that of Luke 9:10-17, as suggested by Moessner (see § 2.3.1.1)? To respond in the affirmative would mean

- that Herod's speculation (Lk 9:7-8) predicts his knowledge of the crowd in Luke 9:10-17 beforehand;
- that the crowd in Luke remains numerically stable;
- the limitation of the scope of Jesus' activity and fame within the city of Bethsaida; and
- the identification of a specific 'crowd' in the gospel of Luke.

The speculation from the crowds is similar to the cogitation of Herod earlier in Luke 9:7-9. The expression  $\delta\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\ \lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\sigma\alpha\iota\ \upsilon\ \rho\omicron\ \tau\iota\ \nu\omega\ \nu$  ("it was said by some") refers to speculations that already circulated before the crowd of Luke 9:10-17. Secondly, Jesus was an itinerant preacher, with a "movable" or "variable" audience. In Luke 9:1-6 Jesus sends out the disciples to preach the kingdom of God and to heal. Their return is reported in Luke 9:10 when they embarked with Jesus on a trip to Bethsaida. Nothing is said about their missionary expedition, apart from an undisclosed report announced in Luke 9:10. However, as they withdrew to Bethsaida, they are followed by a crowd that is later fed through a miracle (Lk 9:15-17). In the meantime, Jesus and the disciples move away from the crowd, and Jesus is reported praying alone (Lk 9:18). Since their return from the missionary journey (Lk 9:1-6), the disciples and Jesus are once more together (without the crowd). This is the moment of feedback when Jesus inquires from them what the crowds say about him. It is not an inquiry concerning the lone crowd of Luke 9:10-17; Jesus seems to be interested with what the 'crowds' in general, say about him. It is his intention to have an appraisal of the mission he had assigned to the apostles, because this is the first time Jesus is sending them out on their own. The second time is when he sent the seventy (two; Lk 10:1). Consequently, to reduce the crowds of Luke 9:18-22 to that of Luke 9:10-17 will be to reduce the scope of Jesus' mission. This idea will also defeat one of the purposes of the gospel, which has a universal vision. The crowds of Luke 9:18-22 therefore include those who have heard and believed in him and those who have won the sympathy of the 'new movement'. These are those whose speculations have equally reached Herod, pushing him to develop the urge of seeing Jesus.

As indicated above, Fitzmyer situates the question of Jesus' identity within the macro-context of Luke 9:7-36, while Culpepper sees the starting point of the question to Jesus' identity in the question of the scribes and the Pharisees in Luke 5:21. In the baptism story Luke discloses Jesus' identity; he is God's beloved Son (Lk 3:21-22). After his baptism, Jesus is tempted by the devil in terms of a conflict of identity (Lk 4:13; see Danker 1979:107; Edwards 1981:81). Moxnes defines this temptation of Jesus by the devil as a cosmological conflict of identity (Moxnes 2001:194). In Luke 5:21 the scribes



and the Pharisees join the devil in questioning Jesus' identity when they respond to Jesus' forgiving of sins by means of the question *τίς εἶστί σου* (toj; The question of Jesus' identity thus starts much earlier in the Lukan narrative than Fitzmyer and Culpepper have suggested, that is, at his baptism. The question of Jesus' identity is fundamental for Luke's gospel: it inaugurates his ministry and takes him to the cross where the centurion legitimates this identity – Jesus is a righteous (innocent) man (Lk 23:47).

The fact that the theme of identity conflict runs through the gospel of Luke is important with regards to the role of the devil in Luke. As mentioned above, Edwards is of the opinion that after Luke 4:1-13 the devil disappears from the scene to only return in Luke 22:3. The fact of the matter is that the question of Jesus' identity, which is introduced in Luke 4:1-13, is taken up by the Jewish peasantry in Luke 4:22, and thereafter carried forward by the scribes and Pharisees in Luke 5:21. The devil thus, although indirectly, monitors Jesus' ministry throughout the narrative and not only in Luke 4:1-13 and Luke 22:3. The expression *ἀκριβῶς* in Luke 4:13 should therefore not be interpreted literally to mean that after the temptation story the devil is not active in the narrative or did not influence Jesus' leadership (Edwards 1981:33; Evans 1995:40; Culpepper 1995:15; Duling 2003:384). Even though the devil does not manifest himself physically in other conflicts, he is at the background of the conflicts between Jesus and his opponents. All the questions that express doubts in Jesus' identity (Lk 4:22; 5:21; 7:20; 7:49; 8:25; 9:9) follow the devil's formula in Luke 4:1-13 and centre around one theme "who is the Christ?"

Luke announces the themes of leadership and conflict right at the beginning of his story of Jesus in the infancy narrative (Tyson 1983:315). The angel tells Mary that she will bear a child whose reign will not end (Lk 1:32-33); Mary predicts Jesus' reign and his activities in the *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-56); the angel's announcement to the shepherds identifies him as the Christ of God (Lk 2:11); and Simeon refers to the crises that Jesus will face (Lk 2:26-32). In the synagogue Jesus confirms that he is the Christ, because he has been "anointed" (Lk 4:18). This sequence of events demonstrates that Peter's declaration about Jesus being the "Christ" was not news at all. It also justifies why Peter's declaration in Luke 9:20 cannot be considered as the

climax of Luke 9:18-22 (Kingsbury 1985:101; Nolland 1989b:453; Culpepper 1995:198). It was simply a statement of faith.

In Luke 9:18-22 Jesus does not explicitly say that Peter's response was correct, as Matthew's report would suggest. Rather, the Lukan Jesus uses a reminder (see previous declarations in the infancy narrative) to expound on the implication of what Peter has said. Culpepper (1995:199) remarks that Jesus asked the question to the disciples for a second time because he considered the answers of the crowds as inadequate. This idea is debatable, since these responses portrayed the crowds' understanding of who Christ was; each of them came as a result of the observation of what Jesus was doing (Nolland 1989b:454). Once more, the question of Jesus' identity can only be adequately answered in terms of how he influences individual lives, and may never easily draw unanimity. Jesus' true identity should be sought, not only in who he is but also in what he is doing. The separation between his person and his work will be a disastrous divorce in the struggle to find a possible answer to the question "who is the Christ?" Neither Peter nor the crowds were wrong. This conclusion can further be justified by the expression  $\text{o}(\text{ de} \setminus$  which introduces verse 21. The use of  $\text{de} \setminus$  in Luke 9:21 is adversative, to mean "but". Hence, in this study the responses from the crowds and that of Peter will be analysed as alternatives.

Another reason why Peter's declaration in Luke 9:20 cannot be considered as the climax of Luke 9:18-22 is that Jesus, after Peter had made his declaration, still had something to explain. This explanation is introduced by  $\text{ei}0\text{pw} \setminus \text{n}$  – used only by Luke – in order to link Peter's declaration with the Isaianic servant. Jesus is not only the expected Christ; he is the Christ of God, the Son of man in the likeness of the suffering servant of Isaiah. This is the climax of Luke 9:18-22. Secondly, out of the three predictions of Jesus' passion (Lk 9:22, 44; 18:31-33), Luke 9:22 alone uses the verb  $\text{pa} / \text{sxw}$  which refers to pain and suffering.<sup>45</sup> The Lukan Jesus only uses  $\text{pa} / \text{sxw}$  again after his resurrection (Lk 24:26), which, according to Luke, is the core of

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<sup>45</sup> Luke constantly links his understanding of the Messiah to that of the suffering servant in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. At the beginning of his public ministry Jesus identifies himself with the Isaianic tradition when he reads the scroll (Lk 4:16-20). Midway, he explains his messiahship within the context of suffering. Towards the end of the Gospel he confers upon the disciples the responsibilities as judges of the twelve tribes of Israel (Lk 22:24-30); which is also a theme from the Isaianic tradition (see also Evans 1995:154-170).

Jesus' prophecy in Luke 9:22. For Bovon, Jesus' response to Peter's reply is simply a correction (Bovon 2002:362, see also Van Iersel 1988:138). Although Bovon is, in a certain sense correct, Jesus' response entails more: it serves as a complement and explanation of the earlier responses from the crowds and Peter: Jesus is the Son of man (Lk 9:22). If he is seen as simply the "Christ" his identity is incomplete, since this designation does not include conflict.

### 3.2.3 The narrative structure of Luke's gospel

As is the case with the question of Jesus' identity, the structure of Luke's gospel does not draw unanimity in Lukan scholarship. Two remarks are important at this point. There is a tied relationship between the beginning of the gospel (Lk 1:1-3:38) and its concluding section (Lk 22:1-24:53). According to Danker (1979:106), the passion and resurrection stories of Luke function as "dramatic counterparts and hermeneutical medium" *vis-à-vis* the prologue and the infancy narratives. This is also the point of view of Edwards: Luke 22:1-24:53 is not part of Jesus' teaching and therefore should not be considered as part of Luke's structure that had Jesus' public ministry as contents (Edwards 1981:29; see also Fitzmyer 1981:134). Secondly, it seems that Jesus' public ministry – that wedges in between the beginning (Lk 1:1-3:38) and concluding section (Lk 22:1-24:53) of the Gospel – consists of two larger narratives of which both include a beginning and conclusion (legitimation). Both beginnings are introduced by a voice identifying Jesus as God's beloved Son (Lk 3:21-23 and Lk 9:28-36 resp.), and both end with a legitimation (resp. Lk 9:21 and Lk 23:47). The voice at his baptism leads Jesus to his Galilean mission (Lk 4:1-9:50), at the end of which his identity is legitimated in Luke 9:21. The voice at Jesus' transfiguration later leads him to his Jerusalem mission (Lk 9:51-21:38), where he is finally legitimated by the centurion in Luke 23:47<sup>46</sup>.

A further interesting aspect of the above described structure of Luke is that the prologue and the infancy narratives, on the one hand, and the passion,

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<sup>46</sup> Although at the point of this legitimation, Jesus no longer ministers as he did previously; he is still in Jerusalem and the whole of his early ministry has temporarily come to an end with the event of his crucifixion.

the resurrection and the ascension stories, on the other hand, both move from “no life → life → reign”. The narrative story opens with the announcement of conception stories (John and Jesus, respectively): no life. These are followed by stories of births (John and Jesus): life. The third progressive step is that both John and Jesus take (earthly) command: reign. Jesus’ earthly reign took him from Galilee to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem the passion narrative starts with a threat to life, leading to Jesus’ death: no life. This is followed by Jesus’ resurrection: life. As a third step, Jesus ascends to heaven where he reigns as the heavenly king: reign. Also, Jesus’ resurrection is a realisation of the *Magnificat* (Lk 1:52), while through the criminal’s request the light of salvation blazes (Lk 1:78-79 & 23:43-44). These two sets of events are therefore a unity, displaced at two ends.

When the above is taken into consideration, the structure of Jesus’ public ministry (Lk 4:1-21:38) can be described as follows. Luke 4:1-9:27, with Luke 3:21-38 as its introduction, and Luke 9:51-21:38, with Luke 9:28-50 as its own introduction. The first section, Luke 4:1-9:27, is introduced by the baptism of Jesus when he is identified as “the beloved Son” by a voice from heaven in Luke 3:21-23. This is the first legitimation of John the Baptist’s introductory words in the wilderness (Lk 3:1-20). This first legitimation is important in that it ushers Jesus into a world of rejection. With regards to content, the first section deals with Jesus’ identity as it becomes visible in his deeds and words during his Galilean ministry. This ministry is introduced with an identity crisis, which depicts the nature of the ministry. Its conclusion is the second and third legitimations of who Jesus effectively is. His activities place him beyond John the Baptist, Elijah and one of the prophets of old; and confirm him as the (suffering) Christ of God. He is indeed the Son of Man (Lk 9:21). The leading events of this section include:

- Luke 3:21-23    First legitimation (introduction): Jesus is the beloved Son of God
- Luke 4:1-13    Cosmic conflict: The devil doubts Jesus’ identity
- Luke 4:22-29    Conflict about boundaries: The Nazarenes doubt Jesus’ credentials
- Luke 5:17-26    Conflict of ideology: The scribes and Pharisees are embarrassed
- Luke 7:18-20    Question of identity: John wants to know if Jesus is the awaited Christ

- Luke 7:36-50 Conflict about boundaries: Pharisees
- Luke 8:22-25 Question of misunderstanding: The disciples cannot identify Jesus
- Luke 8:7-9 Conflict of ideology: Herod is perplexed; who is this?
- Luke 9:18-22 Second legitimation: Jesus is the suffering Christ, the Son of Man
- Luke 9:23-50 Further expansion on Luke 9:18-22 (third legitimation) and preparation for the Jerusalem ministry.

The Galilean mission thus builds up the legitimation of Jesus' identity as the suffering Christ in preparation for the second part of his mission, in Jerusalem. Without the latter Jesus' person, deeds and death will not be understood. The crowds still compares him to a nationalistic leader in the light of John the Baptist, Elijah and Moses (one of the prophets of old). His disciples also still see him as a worldly king, in spite of Peter's confession (Lk 9:46-48).

The story of the transfiguration actually concludes Jesus' mission to Galilee, and introduces the second section of the gospel: mission to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-21:38). Jesus' leadership is legitimated for the third time: He is God's Son (Lk 9:28-36). After this third legitimation the nature of the conflict in which Jesus is involved in is of a different kind; it is a conflict of authority (see Lk 19:28-44, 45-48; 20:1-7), of interest (Lk 20:20-26), and of ideology (Lk 20:27-40). The opponents also vary. In Galilee the main opponents were the scribes and the Pharisees; in Jerusalem Jesus' main opponents are the scribes, the chief priests and the Sadducees. In Galilee and in Jerusalem, Jesus is labelled a deviant: he is a blasphemer (religious conflict) and subversive with regards to Roman and Jewish authority (political conflict).

Luke 9:28-50 links the first and second section of the narrative, as well as the second legitimation of who Jesus is with the third legitimation. It also introduces the Jerusalem ministry as a whole (Bovon 2002:2). The second section thus consists of the following (see Danker 1979:109):

- Luke 9:51-13:21 Mission beyond the boundary: Samaria and the Samaritans
- Luke 13:22-17:10 Mission succeeding: "The last shall be the first"

- Luke 17:11-18:30 Kingdom faith  
Luke 18:31-19:27 Passion predictions and teaching on repentance  
Luke 19:28-21:38 Conflicts in Jerusalem and final instructions

To this, Luke 23:47 (the centurion's confession and the attitude of Joseph of Arimathea; Lk 23:50-54) can be added as an appendix, which stands as a challenge to Jesus' executioners. The centurion's confession is the fourth legitimation of Jesus' identity in Luke, and also serves as the beginning of the third mission in Luke-Acts, that is, the apostles' mission to the church. It also marks the end of Jesus' earthly rejection and ushers in Jesus' acceptance by God (see Karris 1979:25).

The above structure thus presents the gospel as consisting of four main parts:

**Part one (Lk 1:1-3:28)**

Early beginnings: Declaration of conflicts

**Part two (Lk 4:1-9:50)**

Mission to Galilee: Conflicts of identity

**Part three (Lk 9:51-21:38)**

Mission to Jerusalem: Culmination of conflict

**Part four (Lk 22:1-24:53)**

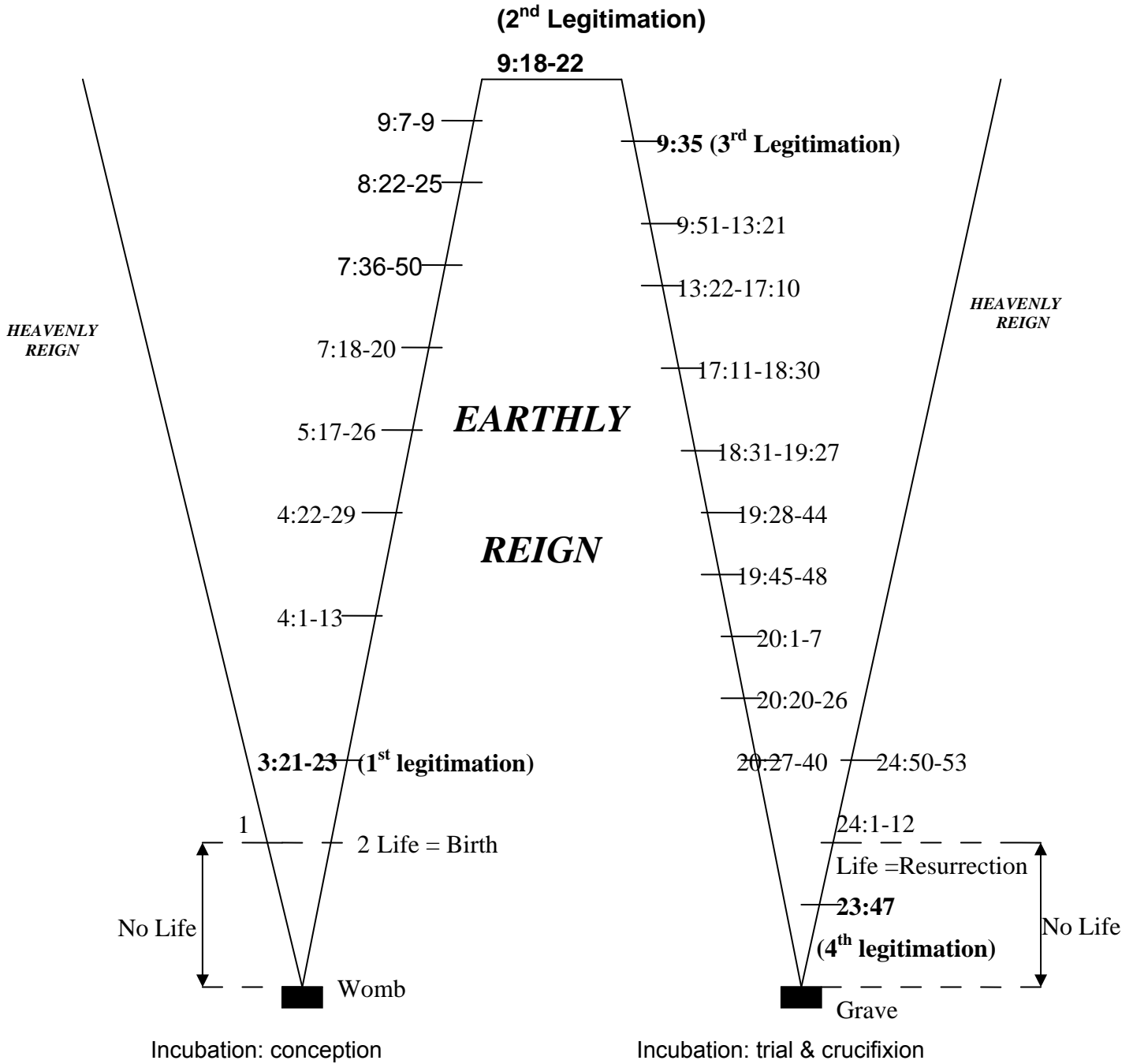
New perspectives: Continuity in conflicts<sup>47</sup>

This can further be explained by the following structure:

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<sup>47</sup> The declaration of the centurion (Lk 23:47), the resurrection story of Jesus and his appearances (Lk 24:1-49), and the report of his ascension (Lk 24:50-53) are symbols of returning conflict. Jesus had predicted his return in Luke 9:22, which is the defeat of earthly powers. The consequence of this defeat is that Jesus now reigns as King in the heavenly realm. In spite of this defeat and his reign as king, conflict continues as he reinterprets Luke 24:46 (and through that, Luke 9:22) in the light of a new perspective. He is the rejected Messiah who, according to the scriptures, actualises God's purpose (Achtemeier, Green & Thompson 2001:171). Repentance and the forgiveness of sins will henceforth be preached by his disciples who have become witnesses to all nations beginning from Jerusalem (Lk 24:47-49). This is the definition of a new mission into the world where the opponent apparently remains strong. That is why the disciples are cautioned to wait for power "from on high" (Lk 24:49).





**3.2.4 The narrative function of Luke 9:18-22 within the macro-context of Luke's narrative**

From the preceding chapter (see § 2.3.2) it is only Plummer and Bovon who consider Luke 9:18-22 as an independent sub-unit, of which the latter understands the sub-unit being structured in two parts (Bovon 2002:363). Although Culpepper (1995:192) also divides the sub-unit into two parts, he treats Luke 9:18-22 as a preparatory dependent sub-unit of Luke 9:23-27. Fitzmyer (1981:137) considers Luke 9:18-22 as a simple narrative which forms part of the Galilean ministry, and Nolland (1989a:361; 1989b:457) treats it simply as a non-cohesive sub-unit that describes a part of Jesus' ministry. These conclusions are important because the position given to a sub-unit within a macro-context explains the importance of that sub-unit, especially when it relates to the issue of leadership and conflict in Luke's gospel. The role Luke 9:18-22 plays within Luke's narrative should therefore be well defined.

At face value, Luke 9:18-22 seems not to function as an independent micro narrative. Luke 9:18-22, however, is introduced with the transitional formula *kai\_ e0ge&neto*. This formula introduces a new action, related to the previous section, but as an independent sub-unit. Luke 9:18-22, moreover, forms a cohesive unit. In Luke 9:18 the question of Jesus' identity is posed by the question *ti&na me le&gousin oi9 o@xloi ei0nai*; Luke 9:22 corrects what appears to be incomplete responses to this question and closes up the topic. On the basis of Jesus' identity in Luke 9:22 he will be rejected, put to death, and raised on the third day. Jesus thus himself answers the question posed in Luke 9:18. He is "the Son of Man." This answer is a complement to the crowds' perception and the disciples' understanding of his leadership. In terms of this interpretation, Luke 9:18-22 can be paraphrased as follows:

Now, it happened that while Jesus was praying alone, the disciples were with him. After having heard from them who they and the crowds considered him to be, he remarked: Even though for the crowds I could either be John the Baptist, or Elijah or one of the prophets of old who has risen, for you the disciples, and especially for you Peter, I am the Messiah of God. In spite of the above responses, I am the Son of man. Because of the various (mis)interpretations of my identity by the crowds and the

authorities<sup>48</sup> they will let me suffer, and kill me. This, however, will only be temporary because I will be vindicated and my true identity will be revealed when I will be raised after three days after which I will reign forever.

(Lk 9:18-22)

With this recast Luke 9:18 clearly functions as the introduction of Luke 9:18-22, while Luke 9:22 is the conclusion. From a literary point of view, Luke 9:18-22 thus functions as an independent and structured sub-unit.

From the beginning of Jesus' ministry the legitimacy of his leadership is questioned by both human and cosmic powers. In Luke 9:18-22 Jesus himself puts this issue on the table after the conflict and hostility during his Galilean ministry: *ti&v e0stin ou0toj*; and *ti&na me le&gousin oi9 o@xloi ei0nai*;<sup>49</sup> Although there seems to be no direct connection between Luke 9:18-22 and Luke 9:10-17 (Plummer 1981:245), Jesus is rounding up his Galilean ministry, described by Craddock (1990:120) as "very popular". There is a need to find out from his disciples if they have understood him at all. The theme of conflict and hostility pilots the whole Galilean ministry, animated by the question *ti&v e0stin ou(toj*; (Walker 2001:17-40). As an autonomous micro narrative that is part of Jesus' Galilean ministry, Luke 9:18-22 should be understood in its transitory position. It defines the peak of Luke's disclosure of Jesus' identity in Galilee and the declaration of the fate that awaits him as he faces Jerusalem.

In Luke 9:18-22, Jesus' role as the Messiah is explained: through suffering in conflict, his rejection by earthly powers will lead him to be accepted by God through the resurrection and ascension. As such, Luke 9:18-22 has a dual function in Luke's narrative. It is a feedback account on Jesus' Galilean ministry and a prophetic pericope for the rest of his ministry in Jerusalem and beyond. This dual role accords Luke 9:18-22 a pivotal place as an independent sub-unit within the macro-context of Jesus' life as reported by Luke. Bovon (2002:4) agrees that Luke 9:18-22, and especially Luke 9: 22,

<sup>48</sup> The term authorities is preferred here, because only one article, *tw~n*, governs the expression *tw~n presbute&rwn kai\_ a)rxiere&wn kai\_ grammate&wn*. These three groups therefore form one body or system (see Boulding 1957:129).

<sup>49</sup> Luke 9:18-22 falls between the end of Jesus' Galilean ministry and the beginning of his Jerusalem ministry. It serves as a test or feedback as Jesus approaches the last phase of his earthly mission. The position and role of Luke 9:18-22 is thus primordial for the understanding of Luke's gospel (Bovon 2002:363).

is the climax of the whole gospel because it defines Jesus' identity and explains why and how his mission is that of conflict and rejection.<sup>50</sup>

In fact, Luke 9:18-22 can be seen as a summary of Luke's gospel that reflects on the past events in the narrative and predicts the outcome of Jesus' mission.

### 3.2.5 Conclusions

As discussed above (see § 3.2.1 and 3.2.2), the study of Luke in general and Luke 9:18-22 in particular have yielded different results. This difference in results relates to the different chosen approaches and intentions of Lukan scholars. No approach in Biblical interpretation can be deemed inadequate or unimportant. Rather, different approaches are testimony of the rich variety and the dynamism of New Testament studies. However, a close look at the Lukan text inspires three important conclusions. Firstly, Jesus' ministry is that of legitimation. Jesus' ministry is legitimated by his Father and in certain cases by the "crowds". This legitimation of Jesus' leadership, however, does not exclude opposition and conflict; it entertains both since opposition and conflict always go hand-in-hand. The events of the Jerusalem ministry cannot be understood but for the declaration and elaboration in Luke 9:18-22. Luke 9:18-22 is a prolepsis of the centurion's declaration in Luke 23:47. Both of these legitimations inaugurates a new ministry with new conflicts,

The second important conclusion is the narrative position of Luke 9:18-22 within Luke's gospel. Luke's narrative may not be well understood if conflict is excluded from Jesus' leadership. Luke 9:18-22 (and especially Luke 9:22) constitutes the climax of the Gospel. The crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus have their genesis in Luke 9:22. Luke 9:18-22 sums up Luke's gospel, and serves as the vantage point from which the rest of the Gospel should be interpreted.

Finally, Luke depicts Jesus as the suffering messiah; he is not the nationalistic messiah expected by the Jews. The Lukan Jesus is the Isaianic

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<sup>50</sup> Knight (1998:7) argues that although Jesus predicts his fate in terms suggested by Luke 9:22, the prediction of Luke 9:44 is more convincing. Although his argument might seem valid, the importance of the prediction in Luke 9:22 comes from the fact that it results from the question of Jesus' identity, which is to be taken seriously. Secondly, it is the first time in the gospel, where Jesus echoes the nature of the events that await him in Jerusalem.

anticipated suffering one (Is 52:13-53:12; Moore, in Goheen 2005:257). Jesus is the very centre of salvation history in Luke and will offer salvation through conflict and suffering (Fitzmyer 1981:192).

### 3.3 LEADERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP THEORIES

#### 3.3.1 Evaluation: Leadership, authority and legitimation of leadership

##### 3.3.1.1 Jesus and leadership

Wilkes (1998) has studied leadership modelled after Jesus and concluded that leadership means service (Wilkes 1998:9, see also Wehrli 1992:104, Nyiawung 2005). An example worth emulating is Jesus in the midst of the crowd rather than sitting at the head table, a place of honour and command (Wilkes 1998:13). This kind of leadership leads to conflict between a leader and his following because the leader is not where he is supposed to be: at the head table! According to Wilkes, this servant-leader model should be emulated in society. He further opines that effective leadership is risk taking by definition (Wilkes 1998:127) – “to influence” always means “to change”.

Change in most cases leads to conflict, and leaders should not fear conflict as a result of change. If they do, their leadership may not be that effective. Leadership means to take initiative, delegate power and set goals. Each of these entails risk taking. Taking initiative is always risky. Delegating power may risk in giving up the seat at the head of the table, and the setting of goals most times challenges the *status quo* (Wilkes 1998:140). He further describes leaders as pioneers, that is, persons who are willing to step into the unknown, ready to venture, to innovate and experiment in order to find a new way of doing things (Kouzes & Posner 1994:8). Effective leaders do not fear taking risks since risk and conflict are positive ingredients of leadership. In this regard Depee observes that “by avoiding risk we really risk what’s most important in life-reaching toward growth, our potential, and a true contribution to a common goal” (Depee 1997:138). The ability to risk is actually to trust in God (Wilkes 1998:127).

Nyiawung has studied leadership in John 13:4 & 12-15 and came to the same conclusion as Wilkes: leadership is service (Nyiawung 2005, cf Wilkes 1998:9). He defines this kind of leadership as “Christian leadership”, leadership that is centred on the ethical principles of Jesus. He sees Jesus as an

icon of leadership who should be a model to all leaders (Nyiauwung 2005:46). His definition of Christian leadership is inclusive; not only for Christians alone, but also for all those who lead with the fear of the Lord. Even though he examines several types of leadership models, he fails to evaluate its functions. He remains scanty in his application of leadership to the realities of life such as conflict and hostility. He furthermore places the leader in the middle position and not at the end (Wilkes 1998:60). This position, he explains, enables the leader to be sensitive towards the needs of people working under his guidance and creates an awareness of the expectations of those outside the group (Nyiauwung 2005:89). According to Nyiauwung, this position of the leader is important since leaders normally function within a community of people who do not necessarily share the same ideology.

The studies of leadership by Horrell and Kee (see § 2.4), Wilkes and Nyiauwung all agree that leadership embodies conflict and risk taking. Apart from Horrell, who uses a theory (the itinerant/resident leadership theory) in order to describe leadership, the other studies on leadership named above are simple definitions of leadership based on daily experience. Horrell points to the importance of legitimation in leadership, but does not entertain the full implications thereof. Leadership is a complex activity with several factors that come into play: leaders' identity, the source and legitimation of their leadership, the expectations of the followers and the goals of the group. Leadership is a social responsibility and needs to be studied and understood with the aid of social models and theories. These models and theories can help to explain both the attitude of leaders and that of the followers.

### 3.3.1.2 The identity of Jesus

Questions that animate Jesus' ministry like *ti&v e0stin ou(toj;* and *ti&na me le&gousin oi9 o!xloi ei0nai;* are all questions of identity. To these questions could be added the question of Jesus' authority in Luke 20:1-6 which is, by inference, also a question of identity. Even though it is more of a question of the legitimation of authority, it is based on the personal character traits of Jesus and thus, his identity.

Kingsbury (1991:76) argues against authenticating the identification of Jesus as one of the prophets of old by the crowds. Through this rejection he equally



neglects the crowds' contribution in the legitimation process of Jesus' identity and mission. The disciples had just returned from their mission (Lk 9:1-9), and Jesus' "identity test" thus is understandable. Secondly, Kingsbury fails to acknowledge the contribution of the crowds in "the making of theology". Thirdly, to reject the crowd's response is to suggest that the question "who is the Christ?" can draw unanimity. Relevant theology is theology done from the perspective of the people (Pobee 1986, Sobrino 1994). To reject the crowds' response is to discard personal experiences concerning the identity of Jesus and consequently rob the right of "the people" to theologise. This, however, does not mean that all perceptions about Jesus can be validated. Schüssler Fiorenza remarks that in the search for Jesus' identity scholars have sometimes de(form)ed him to their own time (Schüssler Fiorenza 2001:29). She further accuses current studies on the historical Jesus of creating internal conflicts within denominations, studies that, according to her, are not always really relevant to the debate on the identity of Jesus (Schüssler Fiorenza 2001:148-149). She concludes that if Jesus was to come back, he would "have an identity crisis and fall into deep depression" (Schüssler Fiorenza 2001:1).

The various conflicts in Luke's gospel that lead to the identification of Jesus as the Christ need therefore to be analysed with caution. Theological debates can disorient Biblical scholars in terms of the essence of doing theology. Pobee (1986), Sobrino (1994) and Schüssler Fiorenza (2001) are correct in their opinion that theology should be at the service of the people, and from the people. Relevant theology should derive from people's understanding of their environment. Since the question of Jesus' identity may never draw unanimity, the respect of individual responses is primordial in any theological venture that seeks to define the identity of Jesus. Even though it remains subjective, the question of Jesus' identity can only bear individual responses from personal experiences. This study will therefore consider the various answers echoed by the crowds through the disciples as very important in elaborating on the theological reflection of Jesus' identity. It is also in this regard that the answer to the question of "who is the Christ?" from an African perspective is important for this study.

### 3.3.1.3 Authority and legitimation of leadership

Authority in leadership signifies that one is permitted or sanctioned by others to lead. The New Testament presents two kinds of authority: Spirit bestowed authority and delegated or hereditary authority (Hugh 1988:290). The source of authority and legitimation are important aspects of leadership:

A person in authority is one who has power over others, who agrees that he is the rightful owner of power. By acknowledging his right to power they transform it into authority; this process is known as legitimating. The charismatic of power in most organisations is that it adheres to legitimated positions and is therefore experienced as authority.

(Brown 1979:93)

What is obvious from Brown's above remark is that the legitimation of leadership is closely related to the source of authority and the proper use of power.<sup>51</sup> Successful leadership depends on the source of the leaders' authority and the legitimation of the leaders' leadership. Read (1974:191) identifies three sources of authority: election by internal agents or followers, appointment by an external agent, or usurpation by the leader him/herself (see also Weber 1968:212-301; Theissen 2002:227-228).<sup>52</sup> These sources of authority concomitantly constitute and reinforce the leader's sources of legitimation: the internal agent, the external agent and the characteristics of the leader. From this, it is clear that legitimation has an important role to play in leadership. Read notes that legitimation impacts success on leadership efforts; enhances the evaluation of the leader by group members and influences the leader's tenure of office (Read 1974:190). It is from this

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<sup>51</sup> According to Brown (1979:93) there is a difference between authority, power and legitimation. Authority is based on power, while legitimation relates to the approval of power. Power is therefore the resource of others that persons with authority need to acquire to be seen as legitimate leaders. Shriberg, Shriberg and Kumari (2005:118, in quoting French & Raven) mention five sources of a leader's power: 1) expert power (based on knowledge and competence); 2) referent power (when a leader draws inspiration from others as role-models); 3) legitimate or position power (power bestowed); 4) reward power (power given as an incentive); and 5) coercive power (the forcing of others through threats to comply). Among these five, three are outstanding in terms of their source of legitimation: expert power, referent power and position power. It is therefore not enough to have authority or power – authority or power needs legitimation to be seen in a positive light.

<sup>52</sup> An example of such usurpation of power is when charismatic leaders, on the basis of so-called "visions", gain the acceptance of a group and motivate their followers to work towards expected goals. Such leaders quite often emerge and gain legitimation when social systems are going through some kind of crisis (Mumford, Scott & Hunter 2006:26; see also Strange & Mumford 2002).

perspective that the role of the voice from the cloud (Lk 3:21-23; 9:35); the responses from the disciples and the crowd (Lk 9:19-20) and the centurion's declaration (Lk 23:47) will be approached and used in this study.

Jesus' ministry in Luke is that of legitimation. Jesus is not a "strange" leader: he has the legitimacy of his Father and the populace because of his personal characteristics (cf Read 1974:191). The legitimation of leadership, however, does not exclude opposition and conflict. The case of Jesus in Luke indeed shows that they go hand-in-hand. The events of the Jerusalem ministry cannot be understood but for the declaration and elaboration of Luke 9:18-22. In this sense there is a connection between the four legitimation "sayings" in Luke mentioned above (see § 3.2.3), as well as conflict and opposition in Luke's gospel. The ability to effect change depends on the amount of legitimation a leader entertains, coupled with personal character traits and the leadership model being applied. The more legitimacy a leader has, the longer a leader can stay in power through persuasion or enticement.<sup>53</sup>

The analysis on leadership in this study will lay emphasis on the role of legitimation in leadership, the source of legitimation in today's leadership, and the impact of legitimation on leadership. In order to achieve this goal leadership models and theories will be used. The issue of the legitimation of leadership is important: the question of the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders in Luke 20:2 about the source of Jesus' authority, after all, was a question of the legitimation of his leadership.

### **3.3.2 Leadership theories**

Leadership is an interpersonal process involving mutual relationships and the strife for a common goal. In this respect Chemers and Ayman (1993a:xvi) are correct in their observation that nowadays there is a growing recognition of the importance of teamwork in the process of producing and achieving of goals. Even when leaders are persons of great vision and initiative, the input of their followers is necessary for the approval and legitimation of their

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<sup>53</sup> Van Eck (in a personal conversation) refers to this attitude as the "dark side" of politics; that is, the (mis)use of power to redefine power in order to get access to more power and then strengthen power so as to remain in power (see also Weber, in Theissen 2002:226).

leadership, as well as the achievement of goals. Hence, leadership can be defined as a game of many participants who have the same goal and focus, with the leader harnessing collective energies towards the realisation of these goals. This is also the point of view of Patching (2007:2): effective leadership is about what a person is (behaviour, not role), what a person does and says, but always in relation with others.

Insights from sociology have influenced the development of theories that aim to understand the behaviour and objectives of leaders, as well as leadership style and the relationship between leaders and followers. In what follows four theories on leadership relevant to this study are examined for possible subsequent use. These are the contingency leadership theory of Fred Fiedler (1993), the transactional leadership theory of Hollander (1993), the itinerant/resident leadership theory of Horrell (1999) and the cognitive dissonance leadership theory of Taylor (2002).

### **3.3.2.1 Contingency leadership theory (CLT)**

According to the contingency leadership theory of Fiedler, effective leadership is conditioned by two factors: the qualities of the leaders and situational favourability (Fiedler 1993:2, Daft 1999:94). Contingency theories take as a starting point the conviction that there is no best or universal style of leadership. Successful leaders use different styles, depending on the nature of the situation of their followers (Gill 2006:47; see also Daft 1999:93). In the case of CLT, the group's success depends on how the leader manages to influence situations (e.g., stress, anxiety, uncertainty and environmental structure) in order to achieve expected goals. The manner in which leaders manage these situations influences both their behaviour and group performance. CLT thus operates on the basis of situational organisation.

Situational organisation functions at the level of "situational control" (Fiedler 1993:3-5). The first situation that can influence the success of the group is relationship between the leader and the group. The atmosphere within the group as a result of the actions of the leaders can either motivate or discourage a leader. Hence, the leaders need the confidence and the loyalty of their followers through legitimation in order to be sure that their leadership is accepted. Secondly, the group's goals and task (or the structure of the group's task) need clear definition to enable the leaders to understand what is

expected of them. The last factor has to do with the question of authority. The power position of the group and the leaders both condition the group's performance. Leaders work with confidence when they know that their authority is not threatened by the power position of the organisation.

This theory further supposes that leadership functions in terms of the leaders' priorities. The leaders' choice of orientation normally affects the group's performance, especially at the level of individual members. Leaders can either choose to be task orientated or relationship orientated. They also prefer those followers who give them immediate satisfaction. Each of their choices dictates the type of co-worker they need, and their relationship with the rest of the group. As a result, some persons may be preferred for one task and disliked for another.

According to Fiedler (1993:7), situational control affects behavioural change on the leader, depending on whether the leader is task (profession) oriented or relationship (social) motivated. For example, when the leaders' relationship with the group is good; when they understand their work well and relate positively with the hierarchy, results will be at their utmost. Conversely, when leaders, do not relate well with the group, do not understand their work well and relate negatively with the hierarchy, the result is total failure.

CLT is a leader centred theory (Fielder 1993:93) that explains the leaders' effectiveness in the management of specific situations. Contingency by definition means that one situation depends on another, and that one thing leads to another. Both leaders and followers depend on one another for the achievement of goals. The leaders' role would be to empower followers so that together they are able to manage situations. This empowerment of group members towards the realisation of goals is the focus of the next leadership theory to be discussed, namely Hollander's transactional leadership theory.

### **3.3.2.2 Transactional leadership theory (TLT)**

Transactional leadership theory, a theory within the area of social exchange, refers to the relational qualities (Daft 1999:427) or the symbiotic exchange between leader and followers, each looking up to the other for the ultimate good of the community. TLT, in effect, is a reaction to and corrective of contingency leadership theory in that, it takes the contribution of the group member's to leadership into consideration. According to Hollander (1993:29),

it is the followers that shape the leader's actions because it is they who hold the real power of legitimation and not the hierarchy.<sup>54</sup> It is the dynamics between the leaders and followers that leads to either the success or failure of the group. While the leaders expect legitimation and cooperation from their followers, they in turn expect vision, recognition, motivation and esteem from the leaders (Hollander 1993:33).

As can be deduced from its definition, this theory accords a more active role to followers within the group because quite often they constitute the source of the leaders' authority. It does not matter if leaders gained power by hereditary, through appointment, by election, or by usurpation; the most important aspect is the validation of their functions (see also Weber 1968:212-301, Read 1974:191, Theissen 2002:277-228). The absence of validation or legitimation is one of the main causes of conflict, which, if not well managed and appreciated by the leaders, will lead to failure. For Hollander (1993:42) "power becomes real when others perceive it to be so, and respond accordingly". Apart from the legitimation of leadership, another positive side of TLT is that it enables leaders to delegate and share power with their followers. By delegating power leaders participate in fostering leadership skills in others, enabling them to be of assistance to their leadership. Also, leadership influence through interaction is seen as more important and effective than the context of power (Read 1974:203). It empowers and enables followers to improve in their own thinking (Rock 2006).<sup>55</sup>

This theory ensures the continuity or the survival of the group after the leader has left. Through empowerment and by the delegation of power, TLT acknowledges that leadership without successorship is failure. According to

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<sup>54</sup> True legitimation comes from followers (Read 1974:191). If legitimation happens to forcefully come from the hierarchy, the leader risks functioning as a stooge.

<sup>55</sup> Rock (2006) calls this approach to followership empowerment, "quiet leadership". He identifies six steps through which the leader empowers followers by improving on their thinking abilities: 1) think "about thinking"; 2) "listen for potential"; 3) "speak without intent"; 4) "dance toward insight"; 5) "create new thinking"; and 6) "follow up". When followers are empowered to think on how to work on their own, they become more effective. Jesus used this leadership approach through the use of rhetorical questions and by maintaining silence, especially during his trial.



TLT, the role of the leader, as well as that of the follower is equally important. In this case, leadership is understood as service.

### **3.3.2.3 Itinerant/resident leadership theory (IRLT)**

Horrell (1999:309), from a social scientific perspective, focuses on itinerant and resident leadership – two leadership patterns that existed during the period of early Christianity, which he transforms into a leadership theory. His study *inter alia* shows that the transfer of leadership from the itinerant leaders in the early Christian communities to resident leaders implied social transformation and change. This social transformation and change went hand in hand with conflict and opposition influenced by “household codes”. The authority of resident leaders most probably was legitimated by these codes (see 1 Tm 3:4-11). *Patres familiarum* like Philemon, Apphia and Archippus most probably had power because they hosted churches (Phlm 1-2).

Horrell holds that itinerant leaders remained the locomotives of power and authority in the early church (Horrell 1999:320). Using the leadership model of Theissen, he explains how the itinerant model of leadership created conflict within the community. Itinerant leaders either worked in order to support themselves, or they chose to remain dependent on the hospitality of their host congregations (Theissen, in Horrell 1999:311). The latter option was dangerous, since itinerant leaders could abuse and take advantage of any situation, an attitude that could create conflict between the itinerant/resident leaders and the host community (Horrell 1999:320).

Another source of conflict was when itinerant leaders left the communities they founded, but still remained very influential (like Paul). In this regard, Weber (1968:212-301) identifies three types of legitimate domination: rational-legal, traditional and charismatic. According to Horrell (1999:314), charismatic leaders (like Paul) in many instances became traditional leaders as a result of their routine responsibilities; this also was a source of conflict because they occupied leadership positions for as long as possible. Resident leaders also had influence, and in many cases their leadership was unquestioned because they were licensed by “household codes” (Horrell 1999:328). In other cases resident leaders did not have the legitimation of itinerant leaders that created a specific community. In the case of Colossians

and Ephesians the traditional leaders of these communities most probably used the household codes to legitimise their leadership pattern and cement their power (Horrell 1999:331). Equally, they misused power to write the epistles of Colossians and Ephesians that bear Paul's name (Horrell 1999:334). This is a typical example of how some leaders use their position of power to enact laws that can guarantee, reinforce and sustain their power for as long as possible.

IRLT emphasizes the role of legitimation in leadership and the misuse of institutional power in order to cement and uphold power. The way in which leadership is transferred, and the attitude of the former leader towards the new leader both condition the smooth functioning of the group. Some leaders leave office without parting with the functions that they had hitherto exercised. This often creates a dysfunction between a new leader and newly defined goals. In the Paulinist literature we have an example of incumbent leaders that misused their leadership in order to manipulate "texts" so as to legitimate their stay in power. In leadership the struggle for power is sometimes closely associated with the struggle for legitimation (Theissen 2002:225). All these aspects constitute breeding grounds for conflict, especially if they are not properly addressed.

#### **3.3.2.4 Cognitive dissonance leadership theory (CDLT)**

In 1957, Festinger used cognitive dissonance theory in the study of marginal North American religious phenomena to show that there is dissonance when two cognitions are inconsistent with one another. A state of tension generally occurs when an individual holds two or more psychological inconsistent cognitions (Budjac 2007:169). Pienaar and Spoelstra (1996:158) refer to this phenomenon as the "theory of justification of actions". CDLT therefore is a theory that studies how beliefs, attitudes and practices among people could be at dissonance or unfitting to each other. The specific focus of CDLT is to determine how dissonance can either be minimised or transformed into consonance through a change of attitude or by reconciling the inconsistent cognitive (Taylor 2002:579). The urge to reconcile dissonant discrepancies within one's self or within the society easily causes tension and conflict between one's self or between groups of people. Taylor uses CDLT to explain

the difficulties that Paul had in his ministry as a leader, and why there is always tension within a community whenever conflicts of interest are at dissonance within persons and groups (Tyler 2005:14).<sup>56</sup>

According to Taylor (2002:577), “households” based on ethnic origin and cultural heritage are important social units because they form the basis of identity for role and status (see § 3.4.2.2 below). Such identity could either be ascribed or acquired (Korostelina 2007:78), of which the case of Paul can serve as example. Before his conversion Paul was an ethnic Jew (an ardent Pharisee; see Phlp 3:5) and by acquisition through birth he became a Roman citizen. After his conversion he acquired a third identity (Christian) which caused in him a dissonant attitude between the beliefs and values of his ancestral religion and the demands of Christianity. His attitude testifies to the fact that although the world of early Christianity was dyadic by nature (Malina & Neyrey 1991c:72; Guijarro 2002:329), this did not necessarily imply uniformity of personality types or of character. Paul also used CDLT as he came into conflict with other apostles on the definition of salvation. In this respect, he found some obligated practices such as circumcision at dissonance with Christianity. The third way in which Paul used CDLT is in his teachings, the famous one being his teaching on “indicative-imperative”<sup>57</sup>.

Paul suffered from an internal conflict as a result of conflicting identities at dissonance with each other because a change in identity means a change in attitude. Paul’s support for an inclusive mission made him lose the support of some of his fellow apostles (Taylor 2002:588). His reinterpretation of the covenant with Abraham redefined it by faith in Christ, rather than by biological descent (see Gl 3:6-9). For Paul, it is salvation through Christ that defines the

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<sup>56</sup> Tyler holds that within a group setting, individuals often trade off between the concerns of self-interest, those of the group and their desire to act, based on ethical judgment. All these concerns cause dissonance, which he describes as “a scandal” (Tyler 2005:14). For more insights on how to manage conflicts of self-interest, see Moore, Cain, Loewenstein and Bazerman (2005).

<sup>57</sup> This is a method of teaching whereby Paul tried to reconcile the past of the new converts with their new identity. The famous example of this teaching is 2 Corinthians 5:17 “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come”. Paul was convinced that new life acquired through baptism in Christ was a life of Christian commitment. What Christ did for a believer becomes the duty of the believer towards all other people, without distinction. Paul believed that Christ had committed believers to become part of the one body, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism and one God, as Abraham’s offspring (Gl 3:26-29).

boundaries of the covenant people and not the law. This understanding of his new identity reduced the dissonance between his Jewish beliefs and his Christian beliefs, granting him the impetus to reduce the tension between the Jewish Christians and the new converts from the Gentile background. Taylor's use of CDLT is significant in showing how leaders can reduce cognitive dissonance both within themselves and among people by reinterpreting their convictions with reference to the objectives of their mission.

Rodd (1981), Malina (1986a) and Elliott (1993) have criticised CDLT in leadership studies for being anachronistic. They postulate that the nature of Biblical evidence and cultural differences between first-century Christianity and that of the 21<sup>st</sup> century renders the application of this theory in modern scholarship inappropriate. This criticism is in line with the main objective of social scientific studies, which is to avoid anachronism and ethnocentrism (see § 2.2). However, in his earlier works Taylor (1998) supported the appropriateness of this theory as a "heuristic paradigm if not as a prescriptive model for the study of early Christianity" (Taylor 1998:150). Gager also agrees that this theory remains relevant because rather than explaining the early Christian attitude theologically, CDLT explains their activities and attitudes by appealing to features of human behaviour that have been observed in other contexts for which there are psychological and sociological explanations (Gager 1999:178).

### **3.3.3 Conclusion**

So far, two most important issues have been raised, with regards to Jesus' leadership (and leadership in general); namely, the leaders' identity and the validation of their leadership. Jesus acted as a leader within a context of conflict. His identity and his leadership only become meaningful when both are reflected upon against the background of his suffering which eventually culminated in the event of the cross. It is this cross that served as a catalyst to the centurion's legitimation of Jesus as the righteous Son of God. This is the identity that was hitherto put to doubt by the devil (see Lk 4:1-13).

Leadership is not only about power and authority; it is also about governance,<sup>58</sup> and this is where Jesus' leadership made a difference.

With reference to the variety in leadership theories, Bass and Avolio (1993:51) remark that quite often a new theory is substituted for an older one that has fallen into disfavour. However, it would be difficult for one theory to replace another in totality since all theories on leadership are developed for specific circumstances that differ from the circumstances other leadership theories are aimed at (Shriberg, Shriberg & Kumari 2005:148). Also, just as there is no common agreement on the definition of leadership, there is also no one acceptable leadership theory that can be considered as the best (Shriberg et al 2005:ix).

Gill (2006:11) is correct in observing that most theories on leadership focus on leaders at the expense of followers. This is a weakness. There will be no leaders if there were no followers, and *vice versa*. There is an African saying that "one hand cannot tie a bundle", meaning that one person cannot do everything. Leadership remains a process that requires teamwork. Even though leaders may have the responsibility to ensure effective success, it is also their responsibility to help followers to move toward fuller self-realisation and self-actualisation along with the leaders themselves (Burns, in Gill 2006:11).

Effective leadership almost always meets conflict at various levels. It generates conflict with oneself through stress (professional ethics, family demands and interpersonal relations), uncertainty (fear of the unknown "crowd" and risk), anxiety, and the ability to manage work and family related emotions. Through pressure, expectations and intrigues from group members, leadership could create conflict within the group setting. Leadership could equally bring conflict into the structure of society because of dissonant policies, ideologies and priorities. When there is dissonance between the structure's objectives and the leader's, there is bound to be dysfunction.

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<sup>58</sup> Governance is a generic term which does not only refer to the quest of ruling, but also, it has to do with the welfare of those who are being ruled. It refers to leadership that responds to the aspiration of the people. In this case, governance has to do with stewardship.

### 3.4 CONFLICT AND CONFLICT THEORIES

#### 3.4.1 Evaluation: Conflict in Luke

Discussing the early conflicts faced by Jesus in Galilee (Lk 4-19:27), Tyson argues that the question of Jesus' identity that was raised by the Nazarenes in Luke 4:22 should not be understood as an opposition to Jesus (Tyson 1983:317). This argument ignores the fact that the question of the Nazarenes was aimed at discrediting Jesus' identity. To ask "Is not this Joseph's son?" was a simple praise in "an empty-hearted way" (Plummer 1977:124). It is this same question that nursed later rejection that eventually caused Jesus to flee from Nazareth. Even though Tyson agrees that the orientation of Jesus' mission towards non-Jews brought hostility upon Jesus (see also Duling 2003:385), he does not evaluate this and other conflict related to Jesus' orientation towards the non-Jews as a rejection of Jesus' leadership. The several doubts raised in the Gospel on who Jesus is, are related to both his leadership and his identity. Since the Jews expected a messiah-leader who would lead them out of oppression and misery, the contestation raised against his messiahship was equally a contestation raised against his leadership.

Turning to Taylor's analysis of conflict, the shortfall is his silence on its outcome. Jesus' confrontation with his opponents led to his death. Only through this lens does the context of the conflict Jesus was involved in become meaningful. The story of Jesus is also the story of salvation. This was finalised only through conflict and rejection. It is in this respect that Luke 9:18-22 is important because it explains in sum the content of Jesus' messiahship as understood by Luke: Jesus is not only the Son of Man, he is also the "suffering" Christ of God whose objective will be accomplished only through conflict.

Although Desjardins' comments on conflict in Luke show some contradiction (see § 2.5.3 above), his study of conflict in Luke should be understood in terms of the intention of his book and the approach that he used. His focus is selected texts (proof-texting) that relate to peace and violence from an academic perspective, and deal with "violent" acts perpetrated by Jesus and his followers as records of the violation of human



rights. Because of this, he suggests that the New Testament should be read as a sort of out-dated document.

Jesus did not condemn in principle the religion and the practices of the faith in which he grew up, as suggested by Desjardins. He rather stood against its misinterpretation and its manipulation by the religious authorities for their personal benefit. His entry into Jerusalem cannot be described as rebellious because, instead of being led by an army, he rode on a colt that is a symbol of peace. By riding on a colt, Jesus enacted and concretised his message: the kingdom of God of which he preached was a kingdom of peace, not violence (Borg 2006:232). Even though his action in the temple was violent, it symbolised a prophetic act to prefigure its destruction. Jesus cannot be understood if his actions are detached from his intentions, the context within which he acted and the social context of Luke.

However, Desjardins is certainly correct in that the New Testament has been (mis)used in modern times for various motives (just as he did himself, ironically). The misunderstanding of the theme of violence and peace in the New Testament has led to structural violence wherein political and religious institutions have sometimes used the Bible to perpetrate and/or validate violence and oppression (see also Kloppenborg 2006). Many people also have sought to remain passive in the face of violence because, according to them, Jesus opposed violence. In this respect Brown agrees with Martin Luther King Jr that “what is so disturbing is not the appalling actions of the ‘bad’ people, but the appalling silence of the ‘good’ people” (Brown 1987:55).

### **3.4.2 Conflict models and theories**

Conflict was defined in Chapter 1 as a “system of interacting systems, each party to the conflict being a system in itself, bound, however, to the other party by a system of communication, information, subjective knowledge, and behaviour reactions” (Boulding 1957:122). This definition implies that an individual like Jesus constitutes a “system” (Jessie 1957:129; Abrams 1996:149-160). It also implies that for conflict to occur there has to be an interaction of ideas and persons that lead to behavioural reactions. Such interaction could be within a system, outside a system or between systems. The above definition of conflict also implies that conflict between human

beings is omnipresent and ubiquitous (Rubenstein 2003:55, Van Staden 1990:23), because it is an inescapable feature of social life. Simply put, conflict is present where and when individuals or groups pursue goals that are incompatible or when individuals or groups compete for resources that are scarce.

Conflict is furthermore ambivalent in nature since it is both constructive and destructive (Rubenstein 2003:55; Cheldelin, Druckman, Fast & Clements 2003:11; Budjac 2007:38). Unfortunately, experience has shown that human beings have learned to hold a destructive view of conflict (Budjac 2007:38) and this may explain why it has often been dreaded or attended with violence. When conflict is well harnessed, it can generate a high level of creativity and positive change. It can clarify differences and make individuals or groups to become aware of their shortcomings. Conflict also enables people to understand themselves in that it clears up misunderstandings. Failure to manage conflict, on the other hand, may destroy individuals, relationships and institutions. It can even obstruct the achievement of goals when it leads to violence, hatred, rejection and more conflict.

Budjac (2007:39) observes that, according to sociological conflict theorists, conflict is inevitable and even necessary for the continued existence of a social group. Since conflict is a societal component of life, there is need to analyse its origin so as to be able to curb, avoid, face or accommodate it. Models are heuristic devices through which the understanding of conflict and its analysis is made possible because they lay emphasis on the origin and dynamics of conflict. Models are not theories; they are theories in operation or tools at the service of theories, as will be explained below.

#### **3.4.2.1 Models and theories**

Models and theories play a key role in the definition and understanding of conflict. At face value these two terms seem synonymous, especially when a model is understood “as a theory or set of hypotheses which attempts to explain the connections and interrelationships between social phenomena” (Gilbert 1981:3). However, simply defined, *models* are cognitive maps or interpretative tools or lenses through which we establish the meaning of what we allow ourselves to see (Malina 1981:16-17, Elliott 1986:5; Rohrbaugh

1996a:8; Van Eck 1995: 156-159). Conflict *theories*, on the other hand, are means by which scientific knowledge is integrated in order to understand and explain conflict. Carney (1975:8) clarifies the difference between models and theories as follows:

[A theory is] a basic proposition through which a variety of observations or statements become explicable. A model, by way of contrast, acts as a link between theories and observations. A model will employ one or more theories to provide a simplified (or an experimental or a generalized or an explanatory) framework which can be brought to bear on some pertinent data. Theories are thus the stepping stones upon which models are built.

(Carney 1975:8)

This distinction concurs with Elliott's (1986:7) point of view that models "are tools for transforming theories into research operations". From its definition, models come as a result of observation (Rosell 2008:72), in which case models are subjective, selective and speculative since each observer chooses what to observe and establishes conclusions on that which was observed.

Conflict, as a social phenomenon, affects human beings in that it tampers with relationships and obstructs the achievement of goals. These phenomena are experienced by individuals and expressed in ways that can be put into models. Conflict models are essentially based on the actual behaviour of individuals in a given context and they ease the understanding of the structural origin of conflict within society. Theories in this case are designed to explain a set of observations from which models can be established.

In easy terms, conflict models explain the *raison d'être* of conflicts within society. Even though these explanations may be subjective, they are scientific in nature because they come as a result of commonly experienced and accepted principles. Conflict theories explain how and why conflict manifests itself within societal structures in its various forms. At the basis of this activity is the understanding of human attitude and other agents as contributing factors to conflict. Even though conflict has a positive component, it can have a devastating effect on society if not well managed. Models and theories on

conflict ease the process of conflict resolution in that they go beyond the sources of conflict in order to diagnose possible solutions.

### 3.4.2.2 Conflict models

Lumley (1986:35) defines conflict as “a battle between parties who wish to use the same resources for different purposes”. Jessie (1957:113) agrees with Lumley: there will be no conflict if two undesirable objects are not placed together or if individuals are not scared by the existence of incompatible interests. This conception of conflict led him to define two conflict models which have become referential models for modern scholars. The first is the mutually exclusive model (see also Boulding 1957:131). This model is based on the theory that two opposite objects cannot occupy the same space at the same time; when this happens there is friction. The second model is called mutually incompatible and deals with incompatible interests. It stipulates that someone cannot execute two opposing functions. Dahrendorf (1958:178) refers to this model as the “opposition of interests” (Dahrendorf 1958:178).<sup>59</sup>

According to Jessie, these models are inherent in culture and nature. An example of a mutually exclusive model of conflict is when two groups with opposing ideologies cannot cooperate. This attitude is inherent in cultures where people are attached to social identities. This model, for example, explains the Jewish reaction towards non-Jews in terms of their understanding of God’s holiness: the “holy” cannot mingle with the “unholy” (Lv 19:2). The second model helps to understand why the question of Jesus’ identity and his rejection comes from the fact that he does things that militate against his claimed identity.

Based on the work of Jessie, Boulding (1957:122) develops three models based on various situations of conflict. The first situation is what he calls “issue conflict” (economist conflict). This model relates to Bernard’s mutually exclusive model (Boulding 1957:131, see also Jessie 1957:111). The model is economy inclined since conflict here results in the situation where one person wins and the other loses. What one person wins brings

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<sup>59</sup> Incompatible interests are defined by Van Staden (1990:23) as scarce resources of power and authority. He agrees that conflict will always exist as long as human beings live in a society that consists of ruling classes, rulers and the “ruled”.

him honour while losing for the other party means shame.<sup>60</sup> The second model, the interaction conflict, deals with the reaction of one party to the behaviour of the other. Conflict occurs especially when one person perceives the hostility of another person and begins to nurse conflict. The last model has to do with internal conflict and deals with disagreements within a group or between individuals themselves (which can be considered as systems).

Fink (1968:426) also develops three models for the analysis of social conflict. The social-psychological model deals with the tension within individuals and between in-groups, resulting in prejudice, hostility, hatred and stereotypes. His sociological model of conflict is concerned with incompatibility between goals and aims which, if not controlled, equally results in hatred and hostility towards out-groups. The semanticist theory explains the possible misunderstanding between two parties that can eventually result in conflict.

A close analysis of these models shows a link between Jessie's models and the models developed by Boulding and Fink. The semanticist model of Fink and "issue conflict" model of Boulding are synonymous with Jessie's mutually exclusive model. They all deal with differences in ideology and explain the misunderstanding among groups. Jessie's mutually incompatible model can further be divided into two: the internal conflict model of Bernard and the social-psychological model of Fink. Both these models explain how the attitude of an individual member of a group can affect the whole group in terms of their perception of out-groups. Conflict with out-groups often comes as the result of premeditation and stereotyping by in-group members. These two models also have a link with the sociological model of Fink and the interaction conflict model of Jessie because the choices made by in-groups further develop in them hatred, prejudice and hostility towards out-groups.

The above models are based, *inter alia*, on realistic-group-conflict theory (Levine & Campbell 1972), labelling and deviance conflict theory (Malina & Neyrey 1991a), and the social identity theory used by Esler (2002).

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<sup>60</sup> It is from this perspective that one can understand honour and shame as pivotal values of first-century Palestine in particular and the Mediterranean world, in general (Malina & Neyrey 1991b).

### **3.4.2.3 Conflict theories**

#### **3.4.2.3.1 Realistic-group-conflict theory (RGCT)**

Realistic-group-conflict theory relates to the two conflict models of Bernard (see § 2.5.2.2), that is, the mutually exclusive and the mutually incompatible models of conflict. RGCT explains conflict as deriving from two sources: the existence of incompatible goals and the competition for scarce resources (Levine & Campbell 1972:29; Baum 2003:132; Wenning 2003:87; Budjac 2007:34). Divergent incompatible goals are a source for dysfunctional conflict because the competition for scarce resources hinders the achievement of goals. It is always a win-lose competition or situation (Pienaar & Spoelstra 1996:190). This theory holds that as long as the goal competed for is of great value, groups become a threat to each other as hostilities build up gradually. It also accentuates the impact of self-esteem on individual attitudes and postulates that the perception of competition leads to conflict and inter-group hostility (Korostelina 2007:128).

According to Levine & Campbell (1972:27), RGCT predicts certain reactions from an in-group, as well as the psychological individual reactions concomitant to sustaining that group's reactions for the purpose of survival. It further explains the effect of self-esteem on in-group members and the out-group threat to in-group performance in the realisation of its goals. In summary, RGCT explains the effect of the presence of a competing neighbour on a given group. For example, when a group feels that particular interests are at stake, it becomes sensitive to any attempt that will make them to lose these interests. This explains why the presence of competitive out-group neighbours becomes a threat to the group.

Baum categorises resources into tangible resources and intangible resources. Tangible resources are physical space, staff, information and fiscal resources, while intangible resources deal with issues of status and recognition (Baum 2003:23). No matter the category of resources, RGCT holds that there is an obvious threat to the group whenever a competitor is recognised because both groups now exploit the same resources. The intensity of such threats depends on how scarce these resources are, as well as the group's longing for them.



The presence of a competing group has major effects on group performance. Firstly, it enhances group solidarity and cohesion (Baum 2003:133; Korostelina 2007:130). Different groups with almost similar ideologies turn to stick when they both have a common enemy who threatens their integrity. This is called “increased group cohesiveness” (Levine et al 1972:193). Secondly, it develops a strong sense of ethnocentrism (“we” against “them”). In the phase of competition, ethnocentrism serves the role of consolation in the consolidation of group identity (Levine et al 1972:30). Thirdly, the presence of a competing group builds up the awareness of group identity, thereby increasing and enforcing solidarity and ethnocentrism. This attitude equally builds up the hostility of the in-group (Korostelina 2007:139). Hostility fosters conflict because it increases prejudice, which manifests itself in dislike, hate, discomfort, anxiety and distrust *vis-à-vis* out-group.

RGCT justifies the constructive side of conflict borne as a result of incompatible goals and the competition for scarce resources. Firstly, it explains the source of group strength when its interest is at stake. Out-group pressure fosters in-group solidarity and causes the awareness of group identity.

[T]he exigencies of war with outsiders are what make peace insight, lest internal discord should weaken the we-group for war. These exigencies also make government and law in the group, in order to prevent quarrels and enforce discipline.

(Sumner, in Levine et al 1972:31)

Secondly, this theory insists on the importance of out-group threats in tightening in-group boundaries in order to maintain social distance. Lastly, it explains why groups, that initially seemed to disagree with each other, suddenly make an alliance when a common enemy is perceived.

#### **3.4.2.3.2 Labelling and deviance theory (LDT)**

Malina & Neyrey (1991a:97) agree that conflict inaugurates Luke’s gospel with Mary’s song and the predictions from Simeon which are later fulfilled in Jesus’ ministry (see also Cassidy 1980:124; Tyson 1983:310; France 1990:22; Kingsbury 1991:799; Desjardins 1997:75; Van Eck 2009a:24). Conflict in Luke’s gospel does not only involve Jesus, but it concerns society

at large. For example, there is conflict of identity, conflict over structures, conflict over how God should be obeyed and conflict because of scarce and limited goods such as status, authority and power. One of the ways to understand these conflicts is through the aid of cross-cultural features such as labelling and deviance (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:99), which Barclay (1999:289) simply calls the “theory of deviance”. Labels tagged on Jesus like blasphemer, being subversive or being an associate to Beelzebul made him a deviant, thus putting him in conflict with the rest of Palestine society (the Roman aristocracy, Jewish elite and the Jewish peasantry). Jesus’ trial came as a result of him being charged as a deviant. Malina and Neyrey employ the LDT in order to explain the evolution of the events leading to Jesus’ trial, his attitude during the trial and the attitude of the labellers.

Labels are tags and powerful social weapons by which people are identified.<sup>61</sup> Although labels help to show the usefulness of individuals within the social setting, they also can be employed to ostracise those who become stigmatised. This involves the “attaching of visible signs of moral inferiority to persons, such as invidious labels, marks, brands, or publicly disseminated information” (Lemert 1967:65). Negative labelling gives their victims a new status, a new identity, a new self of a negative kind (Guijarro 2002:164), cutting them off from the rest of society (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:106). Labelling also neutralises a person’s activities and interprets them negatively.

Deviance is a description of a set of behaviours judged by the labeller as susceptible to jeopardising the interests of society from the point of view of the labeller.

Deviance then has to do with violations of that shared social system of meaning and order.... What is considered “deviant” is what is perceived by members of a social group to violate their shared sense of order. In short, deviance lies in the eyes of the beholder, not the metaphysical nature of things. Deviance, moreover, is nearly always a matter of moral meaning, of distinguishing the evil and the wicked from the good.

(Malina & Neyrey 1991a:100)

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<sup>61</sup> In the gospel of Luke, there are both positive and negative labels. Negative labels that are used are, *inter alia*, polluter, unclean, sinner, tax collector, leper and blasphemer. These labels are accusations of deviance. Righteous, fisher of men, blessed and shepherd are positive labels that confirm the social status or the usefulness of an individual within the community.

A deviant is someone whose societal status has been redefined through negative labelling, because s/he is accused of having violated the sense of order (Van Eck 1995:185). Deviance depends on the judgment and perception of others who choose the way and the form of labelling. This judgement is always based on what is considered acceptable and not acceptable by a given society. A deviant thus is someone who is considered by the labeller as a threat to his/her moral universe. In a dyadic society, like that of the first-century Mediterranean world, a deviant attitude was seen as a serious crime against the society (Guijarro 2002:161).

In order to set up Jesus against the ruling cluster, Jesus was labelled as a deviant. This labelling led to his trial before the Sanhedrin. According to LDT, a labelled person's deviant status is legitimated through a well organised procedure (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:102-110; Guijarro 2002:162-163; see also Van Eck 1995:186). First, an individual's behaviour is interpreted as deviant; secondly, a person or persons who behave in a deviant manner are labelled; then a series of proofs are mounted in order to find the person(s) guilty for his/her act of deviance (going against the rules of the society); and finally the label against the deviant is legitimated and the treatment appropriate for his/her deviance is applied. The last step of this process is necessary to keep the accepted order of society intact.

During Jesus' trial he was described as one who perverts, and labelled as a revolutionary and a usurper (Lk 23:2). Jesus' attitude was seen as in contradiction with the prescriptions of the Torah. He was accused of leading people into idolatry (Ex 32:7; Ez 14:5) and uncleanness (Deut 32:5; Num 15:39). The consequence for such deviant behaviour of misleading and polluting was punishment (2 Sam 22:27; Ps 18:26; Malina & Neyrey 1991a:118). Curiously, in spite of these accusations and in the quest to legitimise Jesus' deviant behaviour, no one openly testified that s/he was actually misled (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:119). Yet, Jesus was convicted as a deviant.

This theory equally shows how the one who is labelled a deviant often tries to disown and disapprove of the label. During the trial, Jesus explained that his acts were influenced by compassion. God was working through him.

As such, he appealed to a higher authority (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:107).<sup>62</sup> This justifies why he considered himself not as a deviant (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:107). He affirmed that his works were not misleading because his ministry was that of saving lives. He went further to explain that his activities were in conformity with his Father's will. This appeal to a higher authority, according to the theory of labelling and deviance, serves to shift the responsibility of the crime for which the victim is accused to the appropriate person who is also recognised by the labeller. Malina & Neyrey (1991a:119; see also Lohse 1971:867-868) also opine that Luke clearly qualifies the Jewish trial as illegal in many respects. Jesus was physically intimidated before the hearing began and the trial was held in the high priest's house, rather than in the normal place of justice.

LDT explains how a person can be put in a difficult situation to set him up against competing systems. It also explains why and how someone's reputation could unjustly be run down especially when s/he is gaining fame and popularity. Malina and Neyrey use this theory in order to show the role of legitimation in labelling and deviance. The deviant is described in such a way that his/her attitude and the label against him/her are justified and legitimated. Legitimation is needed so as to declare the victim a *persona non grata* in society. This happens especially in societies where there is no room for innovation and any innovative attitude is considered as deviant (Guijarro 2002:163).

#### **3.4.2.3.3 Social identity theory (SIT)**

Social-identity theory (a branch of social psychology largely developed by Henri Tajfel in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s) studies the relationship between people's self-concept and membership to groups. SIT has indicated that most people (especially those who are part of a collectivist culture) obtain an important part of their self-concept from being categorised as members of a certain group. When a specific social identity becomes salient, self-perception and conduct become stereotypical of the in-group and members of out-groups are negatively stereotyped, which leads to competition between

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<sup>62</sup> According to LDT the condemned is justified if s/he appeals to a higher authority to prove that s/he is not directly responsible for the charge for which s/he is accused.

groups (see Abrams 1996:144; Esler 2002:186; Taylor 2002:577).<sup>63</sup> According to Tajfel (1986), it is this self-perception and conduct that leads to social phenomena such as racism, prejudice and discrimination (Hogg: 1996:66).

What makes someone different and feeling a sense of belonging is the fact that s/he is part of a broader socio-cultural body. Hence, belonging to a group becomes an important catalyst for the development of self-esteem. People understand themselves better by being part of a community: “we know who we are from the group to which we belong” (Esler 2002:186).<sup>64</sup> Social identity therefore involves the study of groups and individuals, including their behaviour. Belonging to a group brings psychological strength and encouragement. This could be expressed differently as “I am who I am and with whom I associate” (Malina 2001a:44). Mbiti (1990:106) also expresses the African philosophy in social identification in these terms: “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am”. An individual feels more secure only by belonging to a community.

SIT involves three main aspects: categorisation, identification and comparison (Rosell 2008:16-17). Categorisation gives access to the reality of group-level phenomena (Oakes 1996:113) and deals with the idea that persons and objects are understood better when they are categorised. This idea confirms the fact that people are often described in relation to the group to which they belong. Once categorised, people identify themselves either with the group’s characteristics or with some group members. People belonging to a social group have a better self-esteem when they compare

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<sup>63</sup> This competition has the potential to result in extremes of violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide, as it was the case with Israel, Northern Ireland, Rwanda, Sudan and the Balkans (Esler 2002:187).

<sup>64</sup> A Cameroonian proverb says “tell me with whom you spend your time and I will tell you who you are”. This assertion confirms the dyadic nature of the Cameroonian society which exerts much influence on human beings. It equally promotes a sense of togetherness and discourages life in isolation. This does not mean that those who live an isolated life do not have an identity or that their identity cannot be disclosed. Rather, it means that when people belong to a community, they do things that they will not normally do if they were alone (Sande & Zana 1997:61). Being part of the community means belonging to a social group and participating in social activities, because one’s membership in such groups constitutes a significant part of one’s identity. Legitimation takes place when other group members become an important source of approval and affection to one’s performance and behaviour. Communal life is also visible, especially on Sundays, when people move from one social group to which they belong to another, in order to express their communal feelings as well as their sense of belonging.

themselves with other groups (Fox 1996:229).<sup>65</sup> These underlying processes (Hogg 1996:67) also include self-enhancement. Self-enhancement expresses the zeal that guides the social categorisation process in a way that in-group norms and stereotypes remain in-group favouring.

In terms of membership or in relation to the hierarchical nature of the social structure, Korostelina (2007:82-83) defines eight categories of social identity (see also Fox 1996:229). People can be categorised on the basis of family, profession, region, religion, nationality, ethnicity, political and class affiliation (see also Brown 1996:171). These various categories express a person's sense of belonging. Conflict of identity occurs when people sense that the very essence of that which binds them together – their identity – is either been attacked, belittled or ignored. The acquisition of status and a positive identity as a member of a socially prestigious category or group, however, also creates prejudice and ethnocentrism between in-groups and out-groups. Groups formed on the basis of cultural or social identity are always a source of recalcitrant strife because they generate prejudice, stereotypes, xenophobia and ethnocentric feelings (Avruch 2003:55; see also Esler 1996:139; Black 2003:122). These vices come as a result of subjective belief structures that influence inter-group behaviour.

SIT essentially deals with issues of common identity which justifies the solidarity of in-group members and fosters cohesion (Dahrendorf 1958:170). Such solidarity is a binding force to all in-group members who become sensitive when they feel challenged. Challenge, as a process which enables one to enter into the social space of another, is important in SIT (Esler 2002:188). Challenge easily leads to social conflict which manifests itself in two categories: endogenous social conflict generated from within the group, and exogenous social conflict coming from outside the group. SIT explains

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<sup>65</sup> This idea does not exclude the fact that, as a member of a particular social group, one cannot still sympathise with another group's ideology. For example, even though the centurion, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were members of the Sanhedrin, they all had a strong feeling for Jesus. Some Pharisees, for example, at certain instances let aside their group ideology and protected Jesus when they warned him about Herod's threats (Lk 13:31) and the consequences of the disciples' praises (Lk 19:39).



these kinds of conflicts by means of social-structural elements of society, rather than by comparing them to historical events (Dahrendorf 1958:171)<sup>66</sup>.

In order to curb or eliminate social conflict and promote cooperation between social groups, SIT employs four methods: crossed categorisation, re-categorisation, de-categorisation and the contact hypothesis (Brown 1996:170-176; Esler 2002:195-199). According to SIT, conflict between groups is always a possibility when an in-group has built a fence of stereotypes, ethnocentrism and biased attitude against out-groups. Crossed categorisation is when members of an in-group are persuaded to identify with some traits of an out-group. As a result, a new worldview is created that negates or softens their initial attitude. This however, does not necessarily mean a change or modification of the in-group. Rather, in-group members are drilled to see and consider out-group members positively and seek to minimise their differences with them. In the case of re-categorisation a complete new type of structure is defined. Those who felt rejected or excluded now find a new sense of belonging in the structure. This method offers an alternative where both former in-group and out-group members can cohabit.

De-categorisation boils down to the dissolving of areas of discomfort which constituted a bone of contention between groups, and bringing them to understand each other. Once the “problematic boundaries” are dissolved, interpersonal interactions become possible that enable members from both groups to cooperate with each other. The difference between cross categorisation and de-categorisation is that in the former members are persuaded to change their ideology about others but remain independent groups, while in the latter method both groups maintain their ideologies and become tolerant towards each other because the element of division has been addressed. The last method, contact hypothesis, entails the bringing of two conflicting groups into contact with one another under appropriate

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<sup>66</sup> Dahrendorf’s explanation of the use of SIT is to be considered with some caution. There are many social conflicts that can be understood only from the perspective of history. Historical reconstruction can play a vital role in explaining the source of a specific conflict. Taking the xenophobic attack in South Africa in 2008 as an example, the attitude of those who perpetrated violence can better be understood if history and social structure are part of the conversation. Consequently, even though social structures are a veritable source of social conflict, the role of history should not be underestimated or overlooked.

conditions. According to Esler, this method should be used with a lot of caution (Esler 2002:199).

In Palestine, households (families) were the most important social units of society from which people derived their identity. The Lukan society, as part of the Mediterranean basin, was a group-oriented people and dyadic (Levine & Campbell 1972:8; Esler 2002:187; Korostelina 2007:84). A group always has specific features that identify its members as a homogeneous group. As a result, stereotyping occurs. Other groups are seen as out-groups. The norms of the own group become a measuring rod in examining and considering other groups. The in-group thus functions as the main point of reference (Levine & Campbell 1972:186-187). When this is taken into consideration, the question regarding Jesus' identity was crucial. One of the characteristics of SIT is the willingness of members to put their own interests and safety at risk in order to contribute to the realisation of in-group goals (Abrams 1996:162; Korostelina 2007:132). Clearly this relates to Jesus' call to discipleship.

### 3.4.3 Conclusion

Conflict in Luke has as its main source the question "who are members of the covenant people?" Jesus' mission in Luke centres on a redefinition of God in terms of compassion/mercy (οἰκτιρῶν, οἰκτιρῶν), which is a reinterpretation of Leviticus 19:2: "Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy". By definition the holiness of God understood by the Jews meant the exclusion of those (and that) which was unholy. The Lukan Jesus reinterprets God's holiness in terms of his compassion: γίνεσθε οἰκτιρῶν καὶ ὡς ὁ πατήρ υἱὸς οἰκτιρῶν. ("Be compassionate, even as your Father is compassionate": Lk 6:36). This reinterpretation fits Jesus' mission statement in Luke 4:18-19, reiterated in Luke 7:22-23. God's holiness should be understood in terms of his all compassionate indiscriminate love for both the "holy" and the "unholy". This new definition of the understanding of God led Jesus to define a new covenant (Lk 22:20) which destroys former cultural boundaries and builds a new covenant people who are inhabitants of the kingdom of God.

The implication of this message is that Jesus defines a new community in the likeness of the *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-55). This implication explains the various areas of conflict between Jesus and the different systems in Luke:

conflict of ideology, conflict over an unequal distribution of resources, conflict of interest, conflict of authority and conflict over Jesus' identity and leadership. This study is a focus on these areas of conflicts between Jesus and his opponents.

An evaluation of conflict has also shown that conflict is not necessarily negative since it has a group binding function (Levine & Campbell 1972:31). At the same time conflict can contribute in defining and strengthening group structure. The use of theories in understanding conflict is an attempt to project the positive side of conflict, without absolutely condoning conflict *per se*.

### **3.5 EVALUATION: LEADERSHIP THEORIES AND CONFLICT THEORIES**

#### **3.5.1 Leadership theories**

Triandis (1993:29) renders Fiedler's contingency leadership theory as a theory that can universally be applied. In spite of this appreciation, two important factors seem neglected. Except for the leader's qualities and the demands of the situation in which the leader functions, effective leadership cannot, on the one hand, be indifferent to the group's input and their response to leadership, and external factors such as pressure from hierarchy, on the other hand. The leader might have good qualities within good working conditions; all these can be frustrated by natural phenomena and the unwillingness of group members to legitimate his actions. Although Jesus had a misunderstood mission, he never failed to make his disciples part of it. By inquiring to know what the crowds thought about him he proved that both the contribution of the disciples and the crowds was important for the accomplishment of this ministry. This is leadership through dialogue and the acknowledgment of the worth of other members. Even during the trial he sought for the recognition of his ministry by proving to be the judge rather than being a convict.

The correction of CLT by the transactional leadership theory also has its shortfalls. For example, leaders become weak and incompetent when they depend more on the followers for the approval of their actions rather than depend first on their personal abilities and sensitivity. Quite often this situation pushes leaders to influence and lure their following to legitimate their leadership by distributing gifts. Unmerited gifts influence followers negatively because they simply become the leaders' servants or stooges. When followers know that they will have some reward in return for their compliance,

they serve leaders rather than serving the community. This attitude is likely to derail the leaders from the expected goals because they run the risk of gaining the followers' compliance rather than their commitment (Gill 2006:51). The essential part of leadership is the choices that they make.

The leader has expectancies about the probabilistic outcomes of various courses of action and chooses the one that has the greatest likelihood of accomplishing his objectives. The expectancies are based on rational assessments of the important characteristics of the task or mission to be accomplished and of the subordinates and their needs and interests.

(Chemers & Ayman 1993b:329)

Cognitive dissonance theory equally facilitates the understanding of why Jesus and Paul made specific choices in their leadership. However good, this theory needs to be applied with caution. Paul's perception of the Christian faith was so fundamentally altered at his conversion that he became an adherent. His contact with a new set of beliefs cleansed his prejudice and favoured acceptance and love. Conversely, Jesus' contact with the Jewish and Roman aristocracies strengthened rather than changed him. The difference between Jesus and Paul's situation is that Paul had a prejudice against Christianity, whereas Jesus came to fulfil and not to change the law.

In the application of the leadership theories studied in § 3.3.2 one should bear in mind that leadership is a complex issue without a concrete formula. Theories are a guide and not a panacea. Jesus had two types of followers: the crowds and the disciples. In Luke 9:18-22 he sought to know what their appreciation of his mission was. Although he knew that his mission was God's mission, he needed the validation of both the one for whom he worked (God) and those with whom he worked (God, the crowds and the disciples). It is the appreciation of the legitimacy of his leadership that enabled him to understand and manage the conflicts that were a threat to his mission. His leadership, however, did not gain the approval of his opponents. This is why he faced difficult times.<sup>67</sup> The involvement of followers is a key component of effective leadership.

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<sup>67</sup> At this point, it is important to note that leaders should not always expect absolute validation since it could come from the wrong side. If Jesus had worked according to the caprices of Satan and his opponents (Roman elite, Jewish elite and the Jewish peasantry), his authority would have been validated as well, and this would have led him to failure. In the search for validation and legitimation the leader must be conscious of the fact that the source of his power is not the opponent. All is not about legitimation; the source of the validation of the leader's authority is important as well.

### **3.5.2 Conflict theories and their importance**

#### **3.5.2.1 Conflict theories**

From the analysis of the different kinds of conflicts, it is evident that there is no single concept of conflict. Because of this, there can be no single theory on conflict (Fink 1968:412). Since no single conflict theory can adequately explain all aspects of conflict, there is a need for a specific theory on conflict for a specific kind of conflict. From the above it is clear that all conflict theories explain the prevalence of rancour and hatred among social groups. They, however, focus on different aspects of conflict. SIT and RGCT, for example, explain what forms group cohesion, but do not explain in-group conflict, as well as the source of individual resentment towards group ideology.

The theories studied above (see § 3.4.2.3) are sociological in nature and aim at explaining the contribution of sociology in the understanding of conflicts. In this process they either neglect or minimise the role of historical reconstruction. Conflict theories have dual functions; they diagnose and explain conflicts, and they propose methods of curbing or resolving conflict. The historical diagnosis and understanding of conflict is, however, also important in this process and cannot be underestimated.

The analysis on SIT and RGCT indicate that, in dealing with inter-group relations and ethnocentrism, they offer opposing explanations for the interrelation between identity and attitudes. For RGCT, conflict of interests between groups and negative interaction build and strengthen group solidarity (Korostelina 2007:130). According to SIT, in-group cohesion provokes a negative attitude towards out-groups, while projecting themselves as a better group (Brown 1996:179; Esler 2002:186). Both theories are concerned with the role of goals, in-group interests and cohesion and conflict between groups. Social identity should not be understood as a source of conflict (SIT) or as the consequences of conflict (RGCT). Instead, it should be understood as a structure that helps to establish harmony amongst individuals, a structure that provides human needs based on the principle of love, the encouragement of individual potentials and the recognition of human identity.

#### **3.5.2.2 The importance of conflict theories**

In general terms, theories are formulated to explain behaviours or attitudes on the basis of specific empirical observations. This approach minimises the sin of over-generalisation. The use of theories to study leadership and conflict

equally aims at understanding and managing the effects of conflict positively, as well as understanding, avoiding or resolving destructive conflict (Budjac 2007:39).

Conflict theories therefore inform the researcher or society that conflict should not always be viewed negatively (Dahrendorf 1968:127; see also Van Eck 2009a:9). Conflict brings about innovation and creates awareness; it reminds the parties concerned of their respective responsibilities *vis-à-vis* each other. However, conflict should be avoided as much as possible, and when it surfaces, it should lead to introspection. After each conflict the following questions need to be addressed as a preparation for future possible conflicts (Dahrendorf 1958:176):

- How did conflicting groups arise in the structure of society?
- What forms did the struggles among such groups take?
- How did the conflict effect change; and in what direction?
- What lessons can be learned from such conflict?

Any given theory, if it wants to be viable and useful, should be able to answer the above questions. If not, it becomes obsolete. Conflict is present in and between social groups for several reasons. Challenges are provoked by opposing forces within the group because people will always disagree in terms of goals and interests. In this respect, Turner mentions inequality of resources as the ultimate source of conflict (Turner 1982:181). For Van Eck (2009a:9) conflict frequently is the result of incompatible interests (ideologies). Accordingly, Esler (1989:21) observes that the clash between the old faith and the new faith introduced in the gospel of Luke was to a large degree a struggle for power because leaders of the former religion felt their power threatened.

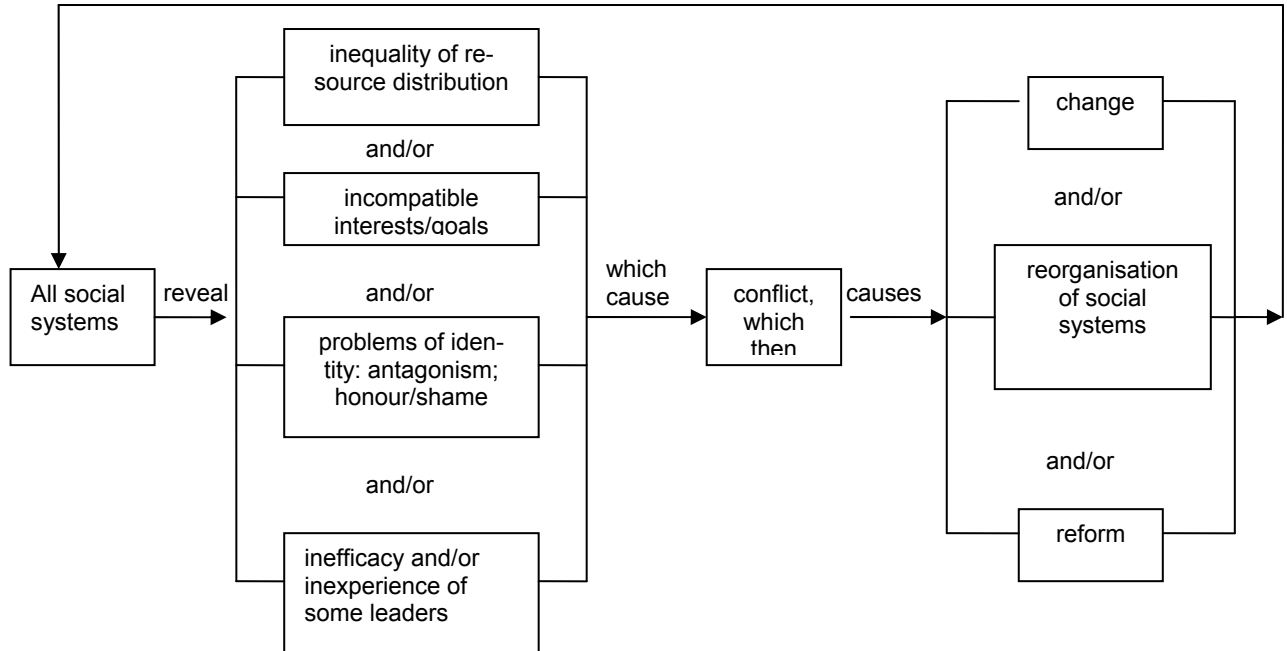
Societies are also made up of institutionalised structures which in themselves are sources of conflict. No structure can please everybody at the same time. Rubenstein (2003:55), in differentiating between constructive and destructive conflicts, defines two sources of destructive conflict: human nature, coupled with social situations or structures. From the beginning of creation people have been different from one another. Individuals within a given society are distinguished in terms of religion, politics, culture, ideology and psychology (Van Staden 1990:113). These terms in themselves are



sources of conflict because people from the same culture may still differ in terms of religion, ideology or political inclination.

As an agonistic society, the Mediterranean world was conflict ridden, especially with reference to the protection of pivotal values such as honour and shame. In addition, there is also the inefficacy of some leaders and their inexperience in conflict management. Ruling clusters do not always give sufficient attention to conflict. At times they respond to dissatisfaction with violence rather than dialogue; with resistance rather than with a search for feedback; with retaliation rather than with understanding; and dissatisfaction is always understood as a challenge to authority.

Conflict sometimes creates a vicious circle in that the resolution of one conflict is liable to create another conflict (Van Staden 1990:124). This is why in conflict resolution terms such as compromise, apology and reconciliation are always important. Each of these terms has a notion of submission, of a give-and-take process and the urge for peace. The figure below is a summary of how conflict works in the society. It is an adaptation from Van Staden (Van Staden 1990:125).



## Chapter 4

# Methodology reconsidered: Theories, models and approaches in the study of leadership and conflict in Luke and Luke 9:18-22

*Jesus set a model of suffering (risk and rejection) in his ministry (leadership), and that is the model in which the disciples walked. We in mission (leadership) today are to set a model of suffering (risk and rejection) for the gospel, whatever it costs, that we might pass on that heritage to others.*  
(Goldsmith 2000:45, my emphasis in brackets)

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is twofold. First a short review of the main aspects of the issues already discussed is given. This is done with the objective of defining the way forward, that is, the research itinerary that will be followed. The second aspect consists of making a choice on what leadership and conflict theories will be used, as well as the different approaches that will be followed in order to analyse leadership and conflict in Luke through the lens of Luke 9:18-22.<sup>68</sup> Leadership and conflict will be studied from a sociological point of view with the objective of defining an African hermeneutic in the understanding of Jesus' identity, with reference to the question "Who is the Christ?" In this regard it is important also to remember that another point of departure of this study is to evaluate possible ways of understanding, avoiding and/or appreciating conflicts positively, since conflict is not necessarily "a foe" (Lawson 1999:9).

The methodology employed agrees with Rodd's (1981:95) understanding of the application of a sociological approach in Biblical studies. According to him, this approach covers three areas of investigation. It is a study of the influence of social factors on individuals and groups, it encourages the use of sociological concepts in order to understand texts and

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<sup>68</sup> Because Luke's gospel anchors on Luke 9:18-22 (see § 3.2.4), Luke 9:18-22 will be used as a window through which leadership and conflict will be analysed and understood in Luke. Leadership and conflict in Luke 9:18-22 cannot be understood in isolation because this pericope forms part of the macro narrative of Luke that tells a story of developing conflict. The aspects of leadership and conflict present in Luke 9:18-22 have already been announced, nursed and developed in the earlier chapters of the Gospel. Leadership, conflict and the identity of Jesus have their denouement in the story of the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, after which Jesus' reigns forever, having left the legacy of leadership and the managing of conflict in the hands of the disciples.

it seeks to apply specific sociological theories to particular problems.<sup>69</sup> It is in this respect that focus is on both the theories and the approaches in the understanding of leadership and conflict in Luke. Models and theories are essential tools of interpretation because they “dictate which sets of materials are to be examined and regarded as relevant data for an investigation” (Elliott 1981:40). Leadership and conflict are societal related issues. Social scientific models and theories will thus help to understand the social aspects of the social material (Luke) to be investigated. These models play the dual role of explanation and prediction. The following remark of Elliott underscores this point of departure:

[F]or an analysis of the social dimension of disputes between Jesus and his opponents as recorded in the Gospels, a model of a typical disputing process in Mediterranean society will be useful for exposing and expanding the salient aspects of the social interaction taking place: the issues at stake (including the status and reputation [honor] of conflicting partners), the process of dispute (challenges to honor and their response), and its outcomes (Jesus’ successful defence of his honor).

(Elliott 1982:45-46)

The above remark of Elliott renders the use of models and theories imperative; social scientific models are necessary tools to understand the dynamics of, *inter alia*, conflict in Luke. Secondly, social scientific models relate to human behaviour and psychology. Lastly, the use of models and theories will help the analysis of Luke and its application to the African context. This approach will help to avoid the fallacies of ethnocentrism and anachronism. It will also enable the researcher to distinguish between two different contexts, Palestine and Africa, which differ from one another in terms of time (historical distance), language and culture.

As explained above, this study also wants to apply its results with regard to Jesus’ identity, including his leadership style and the manner in which he handled conflict, to an African context. In terms of the triad epistemology, methodology and teleology, choices will have to be made with regard to the specific hermeneutical approach that will be used in this study. Bock (2004:350) considers such a discussion on approaches and methods in the

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<sup>69</sup> Although Rodd (1981:95) defines his approach as “sociological”, it is clear from his description of the approach he promotes, that it is in essence social scientific, in character.

study of Luke obsolete. He prefers a focus on the material contained in the Gospel by means of themes. On the contrary, specific hermeneutical approaches will be used in this thesis. Social scientific criticism and narratology will be used to analyse leadership and conflict as “theological material” in Luke. This approach will further make easy the understanding of the sociological, cultural and anthropological dynamics of the life setting of Luke.

In order to ease the above exercise, the abductive reasoning will be used. The use of this methodology (also called the retroduction method) agrees with Woodson’s (1979:1) understanding of the abductive method as:

[A] process in logic of the discovery procedure of working from evidence to hypothesis, involving a back-and-forth movement of suggestion checking. In this process two pieces of data could be explained by a hypothesis, the validity of which could be corroborated by the finding of another piece of data.

(Woodson 1979:1)

Choices will also be made with regards to the different theories on leadership and conflict. The chosen theories will then be contextualised, using the two exegetical methods mentioned above. Contextualisation will focus on how African peoples and leaders wrestle with God’s word in such a way that the power of the incarnation enables them to follow the footsteps of Jesus (Pobee 1986:9). Human beings live in and are influenced by their cultural milieus. The cultural, social economical, religious and political contexts of Luke’s gospel greatly contributed to the hostilities that Jesus encountered with the various “systems” in Luke’s gospel. Jesus’ approach to leadership and conflict management in this situation will be used to contextualise Luke 9:18-22 in such a way that is relevant to African secular and ecclesiastical leaders.

## **4.2 LEADERSHIP THEORIES IN THE STUDY OF LUKE AND LUKE 9:18-22**

### **4.2.1 Introduction**

The description of leadership and leadership theories in the previous chapter has shown that leadership is a multifaceted process that involves motivation, behaviour, intelligence, task, authority, legitimation, relations, influence and

mutual support from both the leader and the followers. The description equally has shown that there are as many definitions of leadership as there are theories (Chemers 1993a:293). Currently as many as forty leadership theories can be identified (Edwards, in Gill 2006:8). Most of the models and theories on leadership described in the previous Chapter understand leadership from the point of view of the leader. In this study the choice of theories for the study of leadership and conflict in Luke 9:18-22 (and Luke's gospel) will be guided by those theories that lay emphasis on both the leaders' and the followers' contribution in leadership in the realisation of expected goals.<sup>70</sup> The approach chosen partially agrees with the point of view of Covey, namely that a "more fruitful approach is to look at followers rather than leaders, and to assess leadership by asking why followers follow" (Covey 1992:101). Effective leadership is leadership that incorporates the perspectives of both leaders and followers.

Most leadership theories and models are moderated by particular circumstances (see § 3.3). Jesus' leadership took place in more than one set of circumstances. Sometimes his opponents protested against his leadership (Jewish elite and Jewish peasantry) and at other times it was ignored (Roman aristocracy). As explanatory vehicles (see Chemers & Ayman 1993b:325), four leadership theories will therefore be used in this study to understand Jesus and his followers' actions at specific moments in specific circumstances. The first model will be the application of cognitive dissonance theory in explaining the encounter between Jesus and the devil in Luke 4:1-13. The second model that will be used is an adaptation of the itinerant/resident leadership theory of Horrell based on the power-syndrome leadership theory. This theory will especially be employed to explain the current problem of leadership in the society and the church in Africa. The third model to be used, the "contingent-transactional leadership theory," is a coinage of a combination of the transaction theory of Hollander and the contingency theory of Fiedler. "Contingency" in this theory refers to the dependence of one action

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<sup>70</sup> This does not in any way equate the leader with the follower. "Effective leadership" excludes the possibility of one person giving orders and others simply executing. Effective leadership is participatory leadership. The leader is "trainer" and guide, training others to become leaders so as to ensure continuity after the leader has left. Effective leadership also entails a situation wherein the leader and followers are both actors in the achievement of goals; all individual actions in the group are aimed at achieving the set goal. According to Land (2008:102), this type of leadership existed among the earliest believers. There was no hierarchical structure of authority. Instead, different roles depended on "separation of religious expertise rather than degrees of religious authority and power" (Land 2008:102).

or actions upon other actions, while “transaction” refers to the symbiosis between actions.

The above theories will be used, on the one hand, to understand leadership and conflict in Luke, and, on the other hand, to indicate why leadership in many situations today still carries the stigma of conflict.

#### **4.2.2 Cognitive dissonance leadership theory (CDLT)**

The application of the social scientific theory of cognitive dissonance to present day leadership is relevant<sup>71</sup> because it explains the psychological and sociological relationship between leaders and their followers in terms of their behaviours and the decisions they make as individuals. Leadership is dependent upon decision-making: the choice of collaborators, methods, tasks and the orientation of such tasks. The leader’s decision on how to lead the group has a bearing on the group’s future. CDLT explains Jesus’ attitude at certain crucial moments of his ministry. Having understood his mission well, he constantly challenged his disciples, describing them as people of little faith (Lk 8:25). In Luke 4:1-13 Satan creates dissonance in Jesus by presenting him with alternative choices (Lk 4:4, 8, 12). The opponent’s objective in most of the conflicts in Luke’s gospel is to create dissonance in Jesus. The application of CDLT will explain how Jesus’ readiness for conflict sometimes reshapes his opponents’ negative stereotypes and feelings<sup>72</sup> (Korostelina 2007:132).

CDLT also explains how and why Jesus faced aggression and opposition and the way he responded to the various deviant attitudes with which he was labelled. CDLT is an effort to reduce dissonance through a change of attitude or by reconciling an inconsistent cognitive. Jesus’ ministry is a decision-making ministry, and in many instances he is confronted with alternatives to which his responses are quite often rhetorical or “quiet-thinking” answers. Rock (2006:2) calls this a “quiet leadership” style. Jesus sometimes also gave “creative alternatives” as responses. This consisted of making an impressive innovation through preaching and miracles which, in

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<sup>71</sup> Elliott (1993:87-89) is sceptical to apply this model to present day leadership for fear of anachronism and ethnocentrism. However, he recommends precision in the mode of comparison and draws the attention of the exegete to the complexity of variable and invariable factors concerned in this exercise.

<sup>72</sup> An example of this is the hypocritical attitude of the Pharisees and that of Pilate during the trial of Jesus.



most cases, offended his opponents. In this regard Pienaar and Spoelstra (1996:201) observe that opponents by nature are always less immune to novel alternatives.

CDLT is a theory that can also be used to understand the choices and reactions of some of the characters in Luke's gospel. For example, it is at Jesus' death that the centurion legitimates his identity as a *dikaios*, that is, as a righteous or an innocent man (Lk 23:47). Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus offer to bury Jesus (Lk 23:53; see also Jn 19:38-41) in spite of their status as members of the Sanhedrin. CDLT, however, will be used and applied with care because a change of attitude is not always necessary, as was the case of Paul. His new role as a leader (apostle) helped to rectify his attitude *vis-à-vis* Christianity prior to his conversion. Contact with another role sometimes helps leaders to cleanse prejudice rather than affirm it; it also enhances understanding and acceptance rather than rejection. Jesus, for example, clashed with the ideology of the Jewish and Roman elite. Tension was always present in his relationship with these two groups, but Jesus never compromised his own point of view. He never condoned their politics of exclusion, but rather lured them to interpret God's holiness in terms of his inclusive compassion.

#### **4.2.3 Power-syndrome leadership theory (PSLT)**

The difference between power and authority has been explained extensively in § 3.3.1.3. In short, power is a commodity that is conferred on a person in a leadership position (authority) to function as a leader. Those on whom power is conferred are referred to as having been empowered. In leadership, authority is legitimated when the leader has been given the power to execute decisions on behalf of the group. Legitimation thus mediates the relationship between power and authority (Berger, Fisek, Ridgeway & Norman 1998:379). Power is sometimes abused or misused by leaders. Normally a person who no longer has a specific position of leadership loses the power embedded in the position. It sometimes happens that leaders who are no longer in office refuse to let go of the power that was conferred on them. It is in this sense that "power-syndrome" leadership theory can be understood. In most cases it is difficult to acquire power and authority (as scarce resources), and when acquired, people dread to lose them.

This theory is an adaptation of the itinerant/resident leadership theory. This theory deals with the passing on of leadership from one person to another, as was the case in the early church. After the itinerant leaders had left, the resident leaders of the different house churches were responsible for group cohesion, the maintenance of group status and the continuity and survival of the Christian movement.

The passing on of leadership has become a crucial problem today within the church and the society. While some leaders dread retirement, others dread election and fear appointments because this process goes hand-in-hand with the transfer of leadership, authority and power. One main source of conflict today is the aftermath of elections when the losers quite often contest results due to so-called election malpractices.

PSLT explains the need for the survival of an institution as a result of a change in leadership. For an institution to survive after a change of leadership a certain degree of follower's empowerment is necessary. Empowerment in this process means three things: engaging others as partners in developing and achieving a shared vision and enabling staff to lead; creating a fertile and supportive environment for creative thinking and for challenging assumptions about how a service or business should be delivered and the display of sensitivity to the needs of internal and external stakeholders (Gill 2006:211, see also Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe 2002:32-34).

The use of PSLT can facilitate the understanding of the three crucial "struggles" in leadership: the struggle to gain power, the struggle to protect power and the struggle to keep power. Van Eck defines these struggles simply with one word, that is, politics. Politics is about acquiring power and then the use (or misuse) of acquired power to stay in power for as long as possible. Power acquired most of the time is legitimated by the misuse of texts, a call on tradition, the use of the mechanisms of institutions, and the misuse of power and/or authority. The consequence of this is normally delegitimation<sup>73</sup> that results in conflict and violence. Proverbs 29:2 states this clearly: "When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan" (Pr 29:2). The "righteous" and the "wicked" here refer respectively to those whose power is legitimated and those whose leadership

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<sup>73</sup> Legitimation refers to the process by which someone (or an institution) voluntarily or by concession gives up some of his/her power and rights on control and direction to another person and approves of that person's support. Delegitimation is the withdrawal of confidence, power, authority or leadership rights hitherto bestowed on a person.

has been delegitimated.<sup>74</sup> The transfer of power from one person to another within an institution quite often entails significant social transformation. Transition in leadership therefore needs to be treated with caution because of possible after effects.

#### 4.2.4 Contingent-transactional leadership theory (CTLT)

This theory is based on the premise that effective leadership depends on three factors: the qualities of the leader, temporal factors or the context in which leadership takes place, and the followers' support by way of legitimation, devotedness, feedback, dialogue and reward. It thus focuses on both the leaders' choices and the followers' response because "theories that are *only* focused on the leader's personality or behaviour often treat followers as a back drop" (Chemers & Ayman 1993b:324, my emphasis). CTLT is a theory that envisages the empowerment of both the leader and followers in the leadership process. It holds that the leader-follower relationship or behaviour towards the realisation of goals can be affected by temporal factors. In CTLT the leader is an actor, while followers or collaborators are co-actors or co-leaders. The combination of contingency leadership theory and the transactional leadership theory is motivated by Chemer's (1993:293-294) distinction between leadership and effective leadership. He defines leadership as a process of social influence and effective leadership as the successful application of influence to mission accomplishment. In other words, effective leaders are those who are able to obtain the cooperation of other people and to harness the resources provided by that cooperation to the attainment of a goal. This study especially wants to concentrate on effective leadership. For this CTLD will be used in order to explain Jesus' leadership and, more specifically, the implication of the question-and-answer session between Jesus and the disciples in Luke 9:18-22.

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<sup>74</sup> Leadership is either legitimated or delegitimated, depending on its original source. Leadership that is delegitimated by the leader's followers can be legitimated through the manipulation of texts, tradition and people, and *vice versa*. In this situation, the process of legitimation or delegitimation becomes a manipulation of the leader through the same texts, tradition and people, for the interest of gaining popularity and keeping power. This is, in other terms, what is referred to in this study, as "power-syndrome leadership" (see § 7.5.2); that is, the "hunger and thirst" for power.

CTLT explains and elucidates the combination between the role of temporal factors, the functions of a leader and the follower's support in the struggle towards effective leadership. Temporal factors in this case do not only refer to the situation of the followers or that of the leader, but also refer to general factors (from within and from without, dependent or not on leader and followers), which are liable to impede on the realisation of goals. These could be natural factors or man-made factors such as intrigues and task or hierarchical related pressure. It is for this reason that CTLT encourages the empowerment of followers so that they can improve on their thinking and learn to manage difficult situations in the absence of the leader. These factors are temporal because different aspects of leadership can be explained by different causal relationships (Chemers 1993:296). Secondly, certain factors or crisis warrant a particular type of leadership at particular times.<sup>75</sup> Lastly, CTLT suggests that leadership sometimes operates within the constraints and punctual opportunities presented by followers (Hollander 1993:30).

CTLT recognises the followers' role in leadership. The followers of the leader's day-to-day's activities are seen as the latter's most important and strategic audience. Through legitimation, followers instil confidence and optimism in leaders, and thus motivate their enthusiasm of service. Their feedback transforms, educates and informs leaders about their leadership and its ensuing consequences. Communication through dialoguing and feedback is seen as a critical aspect of leadership because it serves the purpose of evaluation and the legitimation of the leader's control of action over the existing situation. Through communication leaders explain their mission and listen to their followers' comments. Hence the validity of Jesus' question to the disciples: "who do the crowds (and you yourself) say that I am" (Lk 9:18, 20)? Dialogue and feedback equally help leaders to know whether their leadership is understood and appreciated. The responses enable them to adapt or modify and explain the circumstances under which

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<sup>75</sup> At the time of Jesus some Jews lived with the expectation of a messiah who would free them from various types of exploitation and oppression from the Romans and the Jewish aristocracy. This is the particular situation in which the question of Jesus' identity and his leadership should be understood. The seriousness of the various conflicts with his opponents can better be appreciated when this urgent and temporal factor of the messianic expectation is taken into consideration. The crises that Jesus went through were also temporal because God vindicated him through the resurrection.

they operate. Most failures in leadership occur as a result of the leader's failure to adapt to changing circumstances (Bennis & Bob 2002). Outstanding leaders are those who succeed in times of crisis, because when crisis strikes no one person holds the truth of what is happening. Only collective information can give an appraisal of a particular situation (Mumford, Strange, Scott, Dailey & Blair 2006:139). Outstanding leaders have the ability to tap in on this collective information.

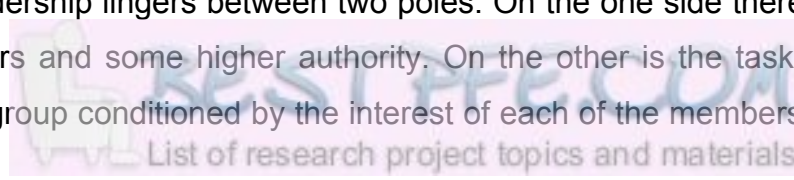
The conversation between Jesus and his disciples in Luke 9:18-22 comes at the middle of his earthly mission. He is about to round up his Galilean ministry and begin the last phase towards Jerusalem. CTLT will elucidate his intention in the questions to the disciples, as well as their various responses. It will also explain why Jesus talked about the impending situation that awaited him in Jerusalem, as well as the outcome of the conflicts in Luke.

#### **4.2.5 Conclusion**

The above theories all agree that followers play an important role in shaping the leader's actions and the achievement of goals (Hollander 1993:29). They also agree that the relationship between leaders and followers determines the "temperature" of any given group. Experience has shown that outstanding leaders are those who depend on close followers (Mumford, Strange et al 2006:138).

To this point, no theory or model on leadership has provided a satisfactory explanation of all the facets of leadership (see Gill 2006:37). This justifies the above adaptation of existing theories on leadership, as well as the introduction of two new theories for the understanding of Jesus' leadership – the power-syndrome leadership theory and contingent-transactional leadership theory. The introduction of these models, however, does not render the existing theories inadequate. Theories are never self-sufficient and should be used in a complementary manner.

Effective leadership is essentially about empowering people to be leaders themselves; it entails managerial leadership. This is what Jesus set out to do. Leadership lingers between two poles. On the one side there is the leader, followers and some higher authority. On the other is the task or the goal(s) of the group conditioned by the interest of each of the members of the



first pole. The atmosphere<sup>76</sup> within the group depends on the interaction or relationship between elements of the first pole and the group's expectation (the second pole). Leadership (managerial, effective or non-effective) is never void of conflict. The most important aspect of leadership is the way in which leaders collaborate with their followers in realising the group's goals. The effective leader is one who "knows what he can do and what he cannot do and surrounds himself with people who do well what he cannot do at all" (Meyer 2002:16).

The above theories will also be used to indicate that a group's performance is at its best when leaders empower followers so that together they manage situational related problems in such a way that it produces a positive outcome.

### **4.3 CONFLICT THEORIES IN THE STUDY OF LUKE AND LUKE 9:18-22**

#### **4.3.1 Introduction**

Conflict in Luke has a variety of sources ranging from ideological differences (incompatible interests) to the presence of scarce resources (inequality of resources). One of the reasons why Jesus had to face so many conflicts with his opponents is that he wanted to reclaim honour for the masse populace who had been robbed of their honour and self-esteem through a politics of exclusion practised by the Jewish elite and the exploitation that took place under Roman rule. The attitude of the Jewish leaders towards others showed that they did not understand what God required from them. The rectification of this misunderstanding by Jesus germinated the conflict between Jesus and those who opposed his vision for God's people.

As a contribution towards conflict resolution this study will make use of two conflict theories in order to explain the conflict overtly announced in Luke 9:18-22. The theories that will be used are the social identity theory (SIT) and labelling and deviance theory (LDT). Both these theories will be used in a broad manner. For example, SIT will summarily explain people's behaviour as members of dyadic communities in the context of conflict. LDT will address

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<sup>76</sup> The word "atmosphere" relates to situations of peace, conflict and results. A situation of peace, however, does not guarantee good results. On the other hand, it is also possible that an atmosphere of conflict can generate good results. That is why it is important to stress the interaction of the two poles mentioned above.



some cultural values of first-century Palestine (focusing on Luke's context), showing their effect in individuals who were involved in conflict. These theories will also be used to analyse social structures and change by concentrating on the way different groups within the Lukan context and the African context pursue particular interests.

#### **4.3.2 Social identity theory (SIT)**

First-century Mediterranean people in all spheres of life functioned as social beings and found their identity in terms of the group they belonged to.<sup>77</sup> In first-century Palestine ethnic groups felt secured as species because they differentiated themselves from other ethnic groups (Malina 2001d:10). Luke's gospel is no exception.

Luke's narrative world presents two distinct groups: the Jews and the non-Jews. Non-Jews' identity was either socially acquired or ascribed. Ascribed identity refers to people that were born with a non-Jewish identity such as the Samaritans and Romans. Socially acquired non-Jewish identity refers to those persons who became a victim of some natural force or as a result of their profession, an identity that was acquired by labelling. "Sinners", lepers, tax collectors, shepherds and the sick all fall in this category. These two classes of non-Jews were considered as excluded from God's presence and grace because they were considered to be "unholy". The Jewish elite consisted of the scribes, the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the religious leaders, who again formed independent "optional groupings" (Malina 2001d:45). For the sake of religion and nationalism these different groupings (each formed on the basis of personal choices) sometimes united into a common group. The latter category (the Jewish elite) will be understood in this study as those who practised a politics of exclusion. Taylor (2002:577) remarks that for a majority of the Jews the household to which they belonged through birth or through a social transaction (role and status) was the very basis of their identity. This understanding of identity was coupled with the strife for the maintenance of their special identity in obedience to Deuteronomy 7:1-9 and Leviticus 19:2 ("Be holy because I, the Lord your

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<sup>77</sup> Mullen (1997:1) is not correct when he states that human beings in all spheres of life as social beings function and find themselves identified especially when they find themselves within a distinct group, especially where there is a symbiosis of relationship between members of the group and other social factors. This is not true of all modern societies in which some people live as individuals, even making the decision not to be part of any group.

God, am holy”; Kee 2002:339). These groups were part of the ruling class in first-century Palestine, to which can be added the Roman elite.

Social identity theory will be used in this study to explain why and how these different groups generated conflict in Luke’s gospel. Tajfel (1981:31) describes the reasons for this conflict as follows:

[I]n an infinite variety of situations throughout his life an individual feels, thinks and behaves in terms of his social identity created by the various groups of which he is a member and in terms of his relation to the social identity of others, as individuals or *en masse*. It is equally obvious that this social conduct is determined to a large extent by the relations between the groups to which he belongs, as well as other groups, and that the nature of these relations is in turn largely due to the socially shared regularities of intergroup conduct... The social setting of intergroup relations contributes to making the individuals what they are and they in turn produce this social setting; they and it change and develop symbiotically.

(Tajfel 1981:31)

First of all SIT will help to define the role and attitude of the various groups in Luke. Each group (or category) in the Gospel has specific functions and character traits that can only be understood in terms of the identity of such group or category. Secondly, SIT will serve the purpose of explaining the nature of the various conflicts that arose between these distinct categorised groups and Jesus.<sup>78</sup> Jesus was a Jew by ascribed identity, but did not condone the Jewish understanding of how God should be obeyed. SIT will show why Jesus, because he eliminated the gap between the Jews and the non-Jews, was labelled as a deviant. Thirdly, by using Esler’s method of de-categorization explained in § 3.4.2.3.3, SIT will explain the conflict that resulted from Jesus’ struggle to bridge the gap between the Jews and the non-Jews. His understanding of God as compassionate brought about the destruction of ethnic, cultural, class, language and status barriers, because it presented God’s love as inclusive, contrary to the Jewish conception. The

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<sup>78</sup> The study will give special attention to the conflict between Jesus and Jewish elite (§ 5.3 and 5.7.4) and Roman elite (see § 5.4 and 5.7.5). In his effort to destroy the boundaries of exclusion, Jesus questioned those aspects that made the Jews “special” before God. In the same vein his points of view on honour, wealth, kinship, power and authority questioned the “special” position of the Roman elite (see § 6.3).

destruction of such barriers brought about a new structure: the kingdom of God.<sup>79</sup>

Even though categories are simply part of the structure of the reality to which we belong (Esler 1996:140), they have a negative impact on community growth and life together as God's people. Even though SIT is not a general theory that explains identity and human behaviour *per se* (Reicher 1996:317), its fourth importance for this study is that it will help to elucidate the meaning of the Lukan Jesus' criticism of categorisation. SIT explains Jesus' response to categorisation and the process of instituting a category-free-society through his preaching on the "kingdom of God" which entailed no categorisation. Categorisation nurses stereotypes and encourages prejudice and xenophobia and calls for different evaluations (Abrams 1996:151); it fosters hatred and ethnocentrism (see also Tajfel, in Oakes 1996:96), and gives rise to discrimination, which manifests itself in tension and conflict (Esler 1996:139). De-categorisation is a preferred process of conflict resolution because it serves a short-term purpose (Brown 1996:176) through the transformation of attitudes. Cook (1978:103) opines that contact with others is only possible when there is a change in attitude.

Attitude change will result from co-operative ... contact only when such contact is accompanied by a supplementary influence that promotes the process of generalization from favourable contact with individuals to positive attitudes towards the group from which the individual comes.

(Cook 1978:103)

Another method of reducing categorisation is Rokeach's "similarity-attraction" hypothesis (Rokeach 1960)<sup>80</sup>. This theory holds that people with similar beliefs seem to attract each other independently of the group to which they

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<sup>79</sup> In normal circumstances, when members of a group are dissatisfied with their low status, they always seek to assimilate with a group of higher status rather than redefining their own identity. Jesus' opted for an alternative, the kingdom of God (§ 6.3.4.2), which explains the conflict between him and the Jewish elite. According to them, Jesus was turning the world upside down.

<sup>80</sup> Although Brown (1996:179) argues that this theory is not tenable as an explanation for prejudice, it works in some cases because it is not easy to have a rule without an exception. Prejudice is sometimes developed as a result of incompatible beliefs. This being the case, beliefs that hitherto formed the basis of conflict cannot suddenly become a uniting factor. The hypothesis is valid in this case only if the source of prejudice is not based on beliefs. Secondly, Brown holds that if prejudice is backed by social custom, the "similarity-attraction" hypothesis on the basis of belief does not function. This idea too can be disputed because membership in a group does not exclude the possibility of personal idiosyncrasy. A person can belong to one group while sharing an aspect or aspects of another group's beliefs.

belong because attraction inspires friendship and love (Brown 1996:177). The use of SIT will therefore also help to explain why the Pharisees and the Sadducees at certain moments teamed up against Jesus, in spite of their group differences.<sup>81</sup>

In a “limited-good-society” such as first-century Palestine a person’s identity within a group is marred or made through labelling, where negative labels symbolise a deviant attitude and positive ones are symbols of honour. SIT will be complemented with the explanation of how labelling and deviance can be a serious offence to honour.

### **4.3.3 Labelling and deviance theory (LDT)**

A social scientific study of Luke 9:18-22 includes a study of the cultural values that were part of Luke’s contextual world. Cultural values such as respect, authority and social status in first-century Mediterranean Palestine were a natural link to social situations and conflict between competing groups for whom these values were considered as scarce resources (Moxnes 1996:27; Bartchy 2001:178). In Luke’s gospel labelling is either used in order to ostracise people or to discredit and eliminate a competing opponent. An old adage in relation to this attitude talks of giving a dog a bad name and hanging it. LTD is a theory that explains the process through which the search for scarce resources results in conflict.

Deviants were people considered out of place by the Jewish religious leaders with reference to Leviticus 19:2: the “unholy”, “unclean”, “impure” and profane. The first use of LDT in this study will be to explain what happens to both the victim of deviance and the labeller within the context of conflict in Luke’s gospel. In applying this theory the focus in this study will not be so much on the process of labelling, but rather on the attitude of the deviants and labellers. The core value of first-century Palestine was honour. Some of the challenges that Jesus faced in his ministry were a challenge to his honour through labelling and challenge. He also faced charges of deviance because he restored people who had socially lost their honour and self-

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<sup>81</sup> To “team up” in this sense does not mean that the Pharisees and the Sadducees worked in collaboration in Luke’s gospel. However, the fact that they all sought for means to eliminate Jesus shows an aspect of agreement, namely that Jesus was an enemy.

esteem of being honourable. Honour was the very basis of one's reputation because it meant that a person's feeling of self-worth was socially recognised (Malina & Neyrey 1991b:26; Moxnes 1996:20; Malina 2001d:48). Through the social public interaction of challenge and response people gained or lost honour by either defeating their opponents (subjecting them to shame), or being defeated by an opponent.<sup>82</sup>

LDT will also be used to interpret Jesus' attitude during his trial as an example of a challenge-response exercise. The questions of Herod and Pilate, the charges against Jesus, the role of the crowd, the people and the Sanhedrin, Jesus' own responses, and the outcome of the trial, all have a bearing on the understanding of Jesus' ministry when interpreted within the context of challenge-response. The confrontations (conflicts of authority) between Jesus and the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the religious leaders will also be studied by using LDT. LDT will equally help to understand the evolution of these conflicts (negative honour challenges; see Malina & Neyrey 1991a:122) in Luke's narrative world.

Luke's gospel is rich in terms by which Jesus is positively labelled. Examples of this labelling are Messiah, Lord, Saviour, Son of man, Son of David, Son of God, King and prophet.<sup>83</sup> These "Christological titles" were great names or referential titles of honour ascribed to honourable personalities in reference to past and/or expected glories. A good name fundamentally meant honour for one's self and for the family because it gave purpose and meaning to individual lives and represented the person referred to by the name (Malina & Neyrey 1991b:33; Malina (2001d:37). This is why an attempt to damage such a reputation was an occasion of conflict. Through legitimation (baptism and transfiguration), honour was accorded to Jesus, honour he maintained and projected in his leadership through his teaching,

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<sup>82</sup> The social interaction of challenge-response (or challenge-riposte) normally took place between equals (mostly between males). A challenge was aimed at entering another person's social space, usurping his/her reputation, robbing the receiver of honour (respect, status, self-esteem and authority) and putting the person to shame. Through this social interaction either the challenger or the receiver of the challenge earned a "new" status in the eyes of the public that served as judge.

<sup>83</sup> The labels "John the Baptist or one of the prophets of old" were also ascribed to Jesus by the crowds (Lk 9:19). Although these labels are considered by some as not having the same importance as the other "Christological titles" named above, they do have an important function in Luke's gospel.

preaching, healing, exorcism and miracles. As these activities increased his fame; hence, he became a threat to the “legitimated” worldly king (Herod) and the Jewish authorities who felt challenged. LDT will be used also to facilitate the understanding of these various titles ascribed to Jesus.

One distinctive feature of Jesus’ teaching was the urge to establish a radically inclusive society. Such teaching challenged the inherent exclusivism and status consciousness sustained by the prevailing cultural and social codes (Bartchy 2001:175). One of the main reasons why Jesus faced opposition was due to this urge to shift Israel’s context from a limited-good-society to a society of unlimited supply of the core values of honour (social status, authority and respect). He proclaimed a society of human relations where competition was expressed paradoxically by seeking to excel in giving values of self-esteem to each other (Bartchy 2001:181), a revolutionary society of transformed and renewed attitude in accordance with the *Magnificat* (Lk 2:51-55; see also Lk 14:11). The understanding of the conflicts that Jesus faced as a result of this transformation, as well as the attitude of both “the low” and “the high”,<sup>84</sup> will be eased by LDT.

LDT has a wide area of concentration because it deals with cultural values that affect individuals and their interaction with others. Most of the confrontations that Jesus had were culturally inclined. As stated above, people in first-century Mediterranean world were defined in terms of the specific group or category to which they belonged. Such categories were avenues of defining social space, which in itself was a source of conflict because such space was mapped with defined boundaries. LDT and SIT are complementary models that can be used to explain the conflicts in Luke. They both deal with the attitude of individuals within social categories, as well as the social implication of what it means when a person is accused of entering the social space of the other.

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<sup>84</sup> In this context, “the low” refers to the non-Jews in general, that is the socially ascribed or those who acquired the non-Jewish identity as a result of ethnic differences (see § 4.3.2). “The high” refers to the Jewish and Roman elite, respectively.



#### 4.3.4 Conclusion

The analysis of conflict in Luke in this thesis focuses on the social dynamics of first-century Mediterranean Palestine, with the aim of contextualising the results within an African context. It is a study of cultural values and their pervasive replication in the lives of Lukan characters. Social values such as reputation, self-esteem and honour define the social space of individuals and groups and thus contribute in the formation of their identity. The maintenance of social values, as well as their usurpation, lay at the base of conflict in Luke's gospel. This study will make use of models to understand these conflicts, and attitudes of those who were involved in them.

There are many ways to analyse the conflict between Jesus and his opponents in Luke's gospel. SIT and LDT will be used with the intent to examine the positive aspects of Jesus' life. However, it is not an exercise of proof-texting (cf Desjardins 1997), rather, it is a *to and fro* analysis from text to context, back to the text and then to its application in another context.<sup>85</sup> The life of Jesus as a leader is a life of challenge and strife, manifested in conflict. In fact, it is a "career fraught with conflict from start to finish" (Malina 2001d:64). It is in this light that the gospel will essentially be treated as a gospel of conflict.

The use of SIT and LDT will further emphasise the important role that the characters (*inter alia* as literary device) in Luke's gospel play either *vis-à-vis* each other or *vis-à-vis* Jesus' ministry. In first-century Palestine (as elsewhere), cultural values were in themselves abstract and subjective. In a dyadic structured society, individuals depend on each other (family, kin or in-group members) for the maintenance and recognition or validation of these values. For example, the public played an important role as arbiter in most confrontations whose aim was to gain honour by putting others to shame. In the words of Malina (2001d:40): "public praise can give life and the public ridicule can kill".

A study of conflict also entails anthropological and sociological facets. This deems the use of social scientific criticism necessary. SIT and LDT are

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<sup>85</sup> The text here refers to Luke's narrative world, the context is the social background and social dynamics of the text and the social context of Luke's intended audience. The second context: "another context", refers to today's audience (African context, which has been considered for the purpose of this study).

models that will serve this purpose in that they will facilitate the application of this approach.

#### **4.4 APPROACHES IN READING LUKE AND LUKE 9:18-22**

##### **4.4.1 Introduction**

There are two important issues to be raised at this point. First is a reminder that Luke's gospel is a gospel of conflicts (see § 2.3 and 2.5). Luke 9:18-22, which defines Jesus' identity and explains the conflict he faced, as well as its consequences, will be used as a mirror to analyse the conflicts between Jesus and his opponents in the gospel of Luke. This analysis of conflicts in Luke, as well as the analysis of identity (who is the Christ?) and leadership, is an African hermeneutical-critical exercise. The narratological and social scientific analysis in this study will thus be done from an African perspective. Its aim is also to use several academic disciplines such as the social sciences (anthropology, sociology and psychology), history, philosophy and religious sciences (religion and theology), in a complementary fashion.

Biblical interpretation is dynamic. New methods challenge former methods and proposed alternative methods are the order of the day. New methods play an important role in that they open up new aspects of texts that hitherto have remained obscure. They frame different questions and offer new ways of looking at Biblical texts (Resseguie 2005:17). New methods also strengthen older methods and propose areas of complementarity. It is in this respect that social scientific criticism and narratology will be used as complementary methods. These approaches will use the theories mentioned in § 3.6.1 and 3.6.2 to analyse leadership and conflict in Luke 9:18-22.

The analysis of conflict, identity and leadership will be done in four phases. The first phase is that of observation and description: events in Luke will be observed and described from the point of view of Luke and his audience. This is called an emic reading. The second phase is investigative-explanatory, that is, the phase of diagnosis. This is called an etic reading. It is investigative because it consists of diagnosing and explaining the cause of events as presented by Luke. The third phase is prescriptive or applicative: the events observed, described, investigated and explained are applied to new context. This phase can be called contextualisation. The final phase is

that of review, also called conclusion. It will review the gospel of Luke in the light of the above analysis as the “gospel of conflict”.

#### **4.4.2 Terminology reconsidered**

The aim of this section is to define the different approaches that will be applied in the study, an exercise that has, in a certain sense, already been done in § 2.2 above. It doesn't claim to offer an exhaustive definition of each of these approaches. It is rather a way of putting them side-by-side in order to expose their strengths, their weaknesses, as well as the areas of their complementarity, as they will be used in this study.

##### **4.4.2.1 Historical-critical approach**

Simply defined, the historical-critical approach to texts is a diachronic method (the study of the development of texts in history) which consists of the search for meaning “behind the text”. It is a rational use of arguments (author of text, the author's intention, date and place) and procedures in order to validate and evaluate Biblical texts. It concentrates on the “what” questions and the “that” data presented by the author. This interest to investigate the Bible historically was initiated by the awareness that the Bible is a result of both human and divine contribution.

The exegetical methods of historical-criticism (as approach) that will be used in this study are textual criticism, redaction criticism and source criticism. Textual criticism will be used to establish a working text (focusing on Lk 9:18-22), redaction criticism will be employed to identify the particularities of Luke, that is, to identify his theology. Source criticism will be used to establish Luke's credibility in his source(s) of information. As the principal text of this study, the authenticity of Luke 9:18-22 and its authorship will be established by using these exegetical methods.<sup>86</sup> In this enterprise the purpose of Luke's gospel as an orderly account about events that have been fulfilled (see Lk 1:1-4) is recognised.

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<sup>86</sup> The use of these approaches will sometimes be implied in the thesis because they are not actually the focus of the study. However, since it is an exegetical work based on a text, the need to establish its authenticity is important in order for the analytical work to be effective.

An account is a narration of past events. In this sense, Luke's gospel is a historical narration of "things that have been fulfilled". According to Lategan (2009:93), the accounting for the historical dimension of Biblical texts is for an exegete not a matter of choice but an obligation. The exegete needs to understand that history is a social phenomenon that includes events and human beings (including their attitude towards other human beings and their belief system[s]). It is with this broad understanding of Biblical history as a narration of past events concerning human beings and their belief system, that an exegete can better approach a Biblical text as narration.

#### **4.4.2.2 Narratology**

Narrative criticism was first used by David Rhoads in 1982 in an article on the gospel of Mark (Resseguie 2005:18; Van Aarde 2009:383). Narratology, as an approach of Biblical interpretation, focuses on aspects of narratives like plot, time, space, events and characters. It is an exegetical method that shifts the focus from the history behind the text to the reading of the text itself. It is a synchronic approach in that it seeks for the meaning of the text "from within" the text itself. Also, the text is studied in its final form as a cohesive whole. Texts (stories) are analysed as narrative worlds. Characters and events are understood as presented in the text. As such, narratology grants autonomy to texts in the process of interpretation. Texts are seen as producing meaning by themselves, especially in the use of features such as events, characters, time and space.

The New Testament has traditionally been divided into four literary types: gospels, Acts, letters and the apocalypse. Van Aarde suggests an alternative with two structural types: the gospels, Acts and the Apocalypse of John are narrative discourses while the letters are argumentative discourses (Van Aarde 2009:382). These divisions, however, are not exclusive because narrative texts can include argumentative discourses (as a micro text) and *vice versa*. Narrative texts also consist of micro narratives. Luke, for example, introduces his gospel as a narrative (Kingsbury 1985:95), and Luke 9:18-22 is a micro narrative within the macro narrative context of Luke's account of Jesus' story.

As an approach which seeks to “infuse originality and excitement into Biblical studies” (Resseguie 2005:17) narrative criticism cannot completely delineate itself from history and the social concerns of the audience for which texts were written (and for whom these texts are studied). Exegesis is an exercise with the purpose of understanding God’s intention embedded in human words. This intention includes what happened in history and God’s holistic plan for the wellbeing of mankind.

The difference between historical criticism and narratology is that the latter’s focus shuttles between reader – text – audience, while the former focuses on the relationship between the reader – text + historical circumstances of author and intended readers – audience. Because of this difference in focus, these two approaches pose a different set of questions. It does not mean, however, that narratology is not interested in historical questions. Narratology also operates with the conviction the exegetical exercise can not be complete without knowledge of the social context of the text and its author. Moreover, narratology embraces the conviction that the social and historical contexts of Biblical texts differ from the present day context of the exegete. These differences are historical, cultural and geographical. Biblical texts are a product of history and social systems (Malina 2001d:6; see also Holgate & Starr 2006:109). Consequently, effective understanding of these texts is dependent on a comprehensive knowledge of these social systems. The methodology that enables this activity is social scientific criticism.

#### **4.4.2.3 Social scientific approach**

In the 1960s and 1970s insights of human sciences gave rise to the development of an exegetical approach – social scientific criticism (SSC). SSC enables the exegete to understand, describe and explain the social dynamics that are part of (Biblical) texts. In the beginning this approach was termed as the “sociological approach” (see, e.g., Richter). In 1982 Jack Elliott coined the term “social scientific criticism” for this to Biblical texts (Elliott 1982; 1993; Van Aarde & Joubert 2009:423). According to Elliott (1993:7), SSC is an analysis of “the social and cultural dimensions of the text and of its environmental context through the utilization of the perspectives, theories,

models, and research of the social sciences”. It is an exercise in which theories and models of the social sciences are used in order to analyse textual and referential worlds.

SSC approaches texts from the premise that the historical contexts of texts have further social dimensions than only “that what was going on when and where”. From a social-scientific point of view, the contexts of texts also refer to social behaviour involving two or more persons, social groups, social institutions, social systems and patterns and codes of sociality. Texts, also, are likewise shaped in their language, content and perspectives by the social systems in which they were produced. Texts also serve as a vehicle for social interaction. The contexts of texts are social contexts, that is, contexts shaped by societal conditions, structures and processes. In their content, structure, strategies and meaning texts presuppose and communicate information about the social systems of which they are a product. SSC thus moves beyond the mere collection of independent social and historical data to the study of the interrelationship of ideas and communal behaviour, belief systems and cultural systems and ideologies as a whole, and the relationship of such cultural systems to the natural and social environment, economic organisation, social structures and political power. It also takes as premise the dynamic that all ideas, concepts and knowledge are socially determined (see Elliott 1993:9-16).

SSC is both diachronic and synchronic in its approach because of its heuristic function (Elliott 1993:15; Van Aarde & Joubert 2009:426). As a diachronic method it is an interaction or comparison between first-century Palestine and new contexts in which Biblical interpretation is carried out (for this study the twenty-first century African context). Synchronically, it is an examination (diagnosis) of the Mediterranean cultural, social, economical and political contexts. It is therefore a dialectic discussion between the “what” (history), the “how” (language structure, style, characters and setting) and the “why” (human society, behaviour, culture, religion, economy and politics). This relationship is established in the form of reader – text – context – audience. The advantage of interpreting Biblical texts by means of SSC is that it uses models and theories to understand social (emic) data. By using an abductive method of investigation (*vis-à-vis* the traditional inductive and/or hypothetico-



deductive methods; see § 2.2.4 above), SSC also re-evaluates the models it is using on a constant basis.

#### 4.4.2.4 Contextualisation

Contextualisation is not a method of Biblical interpretation as compared to those mentioned above. Rather, it refers to the application of these methods within a specific context. The origin of this term is credited to Shoki Coe and Sapsezian in their 1972 report “Ministry and Context”.<sup>87</sup> Contextualisation is the dynamic process of the church’s reflection through its theologians. It is the interaction between the text as the word of God and the context as a specific human situation. In the process of contextualisation the exegete tries to see how the text (as a communicative vehicle) can transform a context as a result of the incarnation of these texts into a specific context.

Bevans (1992:1) understands contextualisation as an attempt to understand the Christian faith in terms of a particular context. This definition takes into consideration four aspects: the gospel, the tradition of the Christian people, the culture in which theological reflection is undertaken, and the resultant social change as a result of theological reflection. Contextualisation is an attempt to let the gospel and the Christian faith permeate the totality of a people’s way of life and culture. This means the integration of the gospel into the everyday life situation of a people, within their cultural context.

The integration of the gospel into the social demands of a context is an exercise that depends on two factors: the exegete and the approach to Biblical texts. Reading the New Testament is a cross-cultural experience which considers first-century texts as a “keyhole, an opening through which to look into another culture, in a different world” (Rhoads 1992:136). It is therefore the task of the exegete to interpret the results of these findings and to apply them in particular socio-political, political and religious context (Hesselgrave & Rommen 1989:201). Just as there is no *one* way to interpret texts, there is no one way of doing contextualisation. It is simply a

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<sup>87</sup> Shoki Coe and Sapsezian were staff members of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1972. In their report to the General Assembly they suggested that contextualisation should be encouraged among theologians and churches. By contextualisation, they meant the application of Biblical texts to issues of human justice within societies (Ferguson 2003:165).

combination of the use of specific exegetical approaches to analyse texts and the application of the results in a given context.

It is therefore a sort of prescriptive approach which requires care and humility in respect of the autonomy of studied texts, as well as the context of application. If not, the exegete runs the risk of syncretism. In contextualisation the content of the text does not change, it is the relevance of its message that effects change when applied in a new context. Through contextualisation theology is made accessible to people in their individual setting and epoch. It is therefore a dialectic move between reader – text – context – audience + new context. Contextualisation in other words is an effort to empower an audience to become aware of the liberating power of Scripture and God's presence manifested in human lives and situations.

#### **4.4.2.5 Interrelatedness: Historical-critical analysis, narrative criticism and social scientific criticism**

The uniting factor in these three approaches is that they all focus on the Biblical text with the same objective or finality: the understanding, interpretation and explication of texts so as to enable readers to better appreciate God's love embedded in human words. New Testament scholars agree that many domains of social concerns remain uncombed in the study of the New Testament. Schüssler Fiorenza, for example, states the following in this regard:

Exegetical inquiry often depends upon the theological and cultural presuppositions with which it approaches its texts. Historical scholarship therefore judges the past from the perspective of its own concepts and values. Since for various reasons religious propaganda, mission, and apologetics are not very fashionable topics in the contemporary religious scene, these issues have also been widely neglected in New Testament scholarship.

(Schüssler Fiorenza 1976:1)

In the same vein, Lategan complements that a Biblical text can be read in many ways and with several aims:

It can serve as an invaluable historical source to reconstruct the history of the early church. It can provide an understanding of the organization of Mediterranean societies in the first century and the cultural traditions

of the time. It can yield noteworthy examples of narrative structures and rhetorical strategies and of profound ethical principles. It can also be read without any form of critical consciousness to find inspiration and/or practical guidance for the demands of daily life. It can even be read associatively, disregarding historical origins or theological content, to stimulate the reader's own imagination and creative abilities.

(Lategan 2009:65-66)

The diversity of the dimensions in Biblical texts calls for a combination of the variety of sub-disciplines involved in Biblical interpretation. In this way new or neglected areas of research can be addressed. Many scholars agree with this view. Spencer's point of view in this regard moves the debate forward in showing complementarity between approaches. According to him, historical research makes Luke's context too reductive. Biblical studies need cooperated efforts in order to succeed. In this light, he opines that "beyond tracking key historical-political events making headlines in Luke's era, it is vital to understand the pervasive social-cultural environments and symbolic-ideological universes in which Luke-Acts is embedded and from which it emerges" (Spencer 2005:120). In essence, Spencer advocates the combination of historical-criticism and SSC. This is exactly what Elliott (1993:14) proposed as early as in 1984, namely that SSC complements historical-critical analysis in that it enables historical-critical analysis

to yield an understanding of what authors said and meant within contours of their own environment. Social scientific criticism does so with an orientation and method whose questions and objectives, modes of analysis and processes of explanation are guided and informed by the theory, methods, and research outcomes of the social sciences.

(Elliott 1993:14)

From the above it is clear that no approach works in isolation because they either borrow from each other or work in a complementary manner. While historical-critical analysis reconstructs meaning from historical events (Lategan 2009:65); SSC constructs meaning from societal interactions between individuals within that history. The activity of construction is also realised through a literary study of texts which are vehicles of social interaction. The context that is focused upon in this study is Luke's narrative world, a world that is a product of the Eastern Mediterranean region of

Palestine. The distance between this world and the world of African society today can only be calculated in terms of history and the flow of events in both contexts.

Simply defined, history is a sum total of past people and events (Miller 1999:17). An analysis of a Biblical text as history (narration) is an analysis about people (collection of social data) and their activities (historical events). The combination of the above approaches, and their application to an African context, is aimed at engaging into new and neglected areas in theological research within the African context. It is also aimed at making a *rapprochement* between theology and society. Luke's story is a narration of historical events about first-century Mediterranean people and their way of life. The incarnation of these stories within the African context cannot dodge a historical, narratological and social scientific analysis.

#### **4.4.2.6 Emics and etics**

The broad aim of this study is the application of a narrative and social scientific analysis of leadership and conflict in Luke 9:18-22 to an African context with reference to the question of Jesus' identity. Such a reflection by an African entails knowledge of Luke's narrative, the understanding of Luke's context and the worldview of the Mediterranean world and, by way of analogy, making a connection between first-century Palestine and twenty-first century Africa. One of the objectives of SSC is to avoid anachronism and/or ethnocentrism; hence, the use of models and theories. The use of models and theories is an etic approach, that is, the study of a context by an *outsider*. To understand leadership and conflict in Luke and apply it to an African context it is also necessary to respect the autonomy of the Lukan story of Jesus as understood by his intended audience. This requires an emic approach, which means listening to Luke's story told from the standpoint of an *insider*.

Etic and emic are borrowed terms from language theory in order to describe the perspective from which analyses are carried out in Biblical interpretation. The term emic relates with "phonemics", which are categories of thoughts and explanations of groups that are studied (Elliott 1993:129). It is an anthropological term which refers to the report of a narration from the point

of view of those concerned; that is, the “natives”. It is a cognitive patterning of what is supposed to happen, including what actually happens (Moxnes 1991:251). Luke, in his story, gives the audience an emic description of events through the role of characters and institutions.

The term etic relates to the word “phonetics”; the science of speech sounds. It deals with how external investigators classify systems different from theirs. It refers to an analysis from a scholar’s point of view making use of theories or models formulated by the exegete to facilitate understanding. Models and theories are used by the exegete “here” to understand how people lived “there”. It is an investigation from a social scientific perspective that attempts to transform a subjective account or knowledge of a story into an objective account through the use of tools that can enable verification and authentication.

The analysis of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke will thus begin with an emic reading of Luke’s account of leadership, conflict and identity (focusing on Luke 9:18-22). This reading will indicate where conflict in Luke’s story is present, how it evolves, and how it is resolved. It will also show which characters in Luke’s narrative contested his leadership. An etic reading will indicate the different reasons for conflict in Luke (the “why” question), as well as the reasons of those that contested Jesus’ leadership.

#### **4.4.3 Social scientific criticism and narratology**

In § 2.2 and 4.4.2.5 the various approaches in reading Luke’s gospel were discussed. The point was made that the different approaches that are used to analyse Biblical texts do not *per se* exclude each other. Some of these approaches can be used in a complementary manner. This approach will be taken in this study. Narratology will be used in combination with social scientific criticism. The former is necessary for an understanding of Lukan text as a medium of communication, and the latter will be employed to bridge the gap between the contextual world of Luke and the context of the interpreter.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> The choice of these two approaches is influenced by two factors. The first is that SSC highlights, explains and complements historical-critical analysis. Elliott (2001:7) describes SSC as “a method resulting from a merger of exegesis and historical research with the resources of the social sciences”. This being the case, the use of both these approaches would mean redundancy. Secondly, the objective of this study is to address the African

This combination is triggered by Elliott's (1991:8) conviction that "sociological exegesis is the analysis, interpretation, and synthesis (correlation) of (1) the literary, sociological and theological features and dimensions of the text ... and (2) this text's relation to and impact upon its narrower and wider social contexts" (Elliott 1991a:8). In the same vein, Van Eck agrees with Peterson "that the narrative or story is probably a universal means of understanding human social actions and relationships in time"<sup>89</sup> (Peterson 1985:10; Van Eck 1995:86). From these remarks it is clear that Peterson, Elliott and Van Eck are of the opinion that a combination of reading Luke from both a literary and sociological point of view is essential for its understanding. Its importance is also due to the fact that a narrative analysis also includes the awareness of the social location, the political environment and the cultural influences behind the text that influenced Luke's audience (Resseguie 2005:39).

The combination of these two approaches will enable the understanding of Luke 9:18-22, as well as opening up certain methodological points of departure for an investigation of the possible reasons why Jesus' leadership was spiced with conflicts. A text is a medium of communication and its possible meaning is established by a study and understanding of its literary devices, that is, the way the author (Luke) has structured his narrative in order to inform his audience/readers about the realities of his community. As a medium of communication it is composed in "language". This "language" codifies the relationship between people, as well as their behaviour, belief system(s), culture and social concerns. Language is a powerful weapon in the transmission of information:

[L]anguage is more than simply grammar, syntax and vocabulary. It is rather the sum total of ways in which the members of society symbolize or categorize their experience so that they may give it order and form. Language thus includes total symbolic behaviour.

(Beidelman 1970:30)

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context and its social realities. An emic reading of Luke's gospel, as well as an etic understanding thereof, is therefore imperative. This explains the choice of a combination between SSC and narratology as an approach to the study of Luke 9:18-22.

<sup>89</sup> Peterson's describes his narrative approach to texts as a "literary sociological" approach, that is, a combination of literary and sociological tools (Peterson 1985:ix).



The insights from Peterson, Elliott and Van Eck confirm the relevance of a combination of a literary and a social scientific approach in the study of Luke 9:18-22.<sup>90</sup> Exegesis is not only a technique; it is also an art. It is a technique because it has a methodology, but also an art because it is a creative transformation of what the text said into what the text says (Kouam 2003:196; Du Toit 2009:107). Moreover, Biblical texts do not have only one meaning. They speak in different ways to different people in different contexts at different times. Because of these variations, no single method is capable or sufficient to analyse a text to its full potential – hence the decision to combine different approaches in this study to understand leadership and conflict in Luke 9:18-22.

Dynamic exegesis entails the ability to use multidimensional approaches in Biblical hermeneutics in order to arrive at informed meanings of texts. The final aim of exegetical study is not the intellectual satisfaction of the exegete. Exegesis should lead to relevant theology that addresses societal needs. The approaches chosen should be able to address these needs.

#### **4.4.4 An emic reading: Narrative criticism**

In the emic reading of Luke the following points of departure will be taken. First of all, the focus will be on the conflict between Jesus and the different characters in the narrative. Attention will also be given to Jesus' reaction to these conflicts, as well as the characters' perception of who Jesus is. Secondly, contrary to the view that Luke 9:18-22 is a non-cohesive dependent sub-unit of Jesus' ministry (see e.g., Nolland 1989a:361, 1989b:457), Luke 9:18-22 will be treated as an independent sub-unit in the macro narrative of Jesus' ministry as reported by Luke. The importance of this micro narrative within the context of the Lukan narrative gives it a vantage point between the end of the Galilean ministry and the beginning of the Jerusalem ministry. The importance of Luke 9:18-22 is disclosed in the discussion between Jesus and his disciples that has as its topic his identity and leadership, as well as the

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<sup>90</sup> Traditionally exegesis has been defined as "the historical investigation into the meaning of a biblical text" (Fee 2002:1; Porter & Clarke 1997:6). This is not the way exegesis will be understood in this study. Here, exegesis is understood as investigation and application. Investigation is done by means of scientific exegetical methods, and the results of this investigation will be applied to an African context.

consequences thereof: conflict and rejection by earthly powers and acceptance by heavenly power.

Thirdly, an emic reading of Luke 9:18-22 means the concentration on the “what” of the narrative, its structure and a description of its characters. The narrative will be read as a source for “raw data”. The emic reading will provide *inter alia* information on the frequency of the conflict that Jesus encountered, where it begins in the narrative, the way in which it evolves and how it culminates with his crucifixion. Jesus’ conflict with the different characters in the narrative will be described, and the role Luke 9:18-22 plays in these conflicts will be illuminated. The emic reading will also indicate if there is a link between Jesus’ identity and conflict, if this possible link runs through the narrative, and how Jesus reacted in situations of conflict. In this light, Holgate and Starr agree that “most good narrations involve conflict” (Holgate & Starr 2006:57). The emic reading to be undertaken will indicate if this is also true of Luke’s narrative.

The various characters referred to in Luke 9:18-22 will equally constitute a locomotive of information with relation to Jesus’ leadership and conflict. Holgate & Starr are correct when they state that “unless we read stories as stories, we will never hear the whole story” (Holgate & Starr 2006:56). Focus on Jesus’ relationship with these characters will provide information on the essence of Jesus’ relationship with the respective characters in the narrative, as well as the frequency and intensity of the conflict, if any, that existed between them and the Lukan Jesus. This reading will also elucidate the question of the legitimation of Jesus’ leadership and explain how the Lukan Jesus reveals his identity through his words and deeds.

Finally, Luke 9:18-22 will be understood as a communicative instrument of how Jesus’ early followers understood the relationship between his words and deeds, that is, his identity. The various titles (labels) mentioned in Luke 9:18-22 mediate various understandings of Jesus’ identity. Moreover, there seems to be a relationship between these labels and the conflict Jesus had to endure. A closer look at these labels will therefore help to understand why conflict existed between Jesus and these characters. Luke 9:18-22 seems to communicate answers to some hidden questions that blurred the perception of

Jesus' disciples and his contemporaries regarding his identity. In this regard, the following questions will be kept in mind when the emic reading is done:

- What was the disciples' understanding of Jesus as the Christ?
- What was the crowds' understanding of Jesus being John the Baptist, Elijah or a prophet?
- What was the impact of Jesus' prediction of his death on his disciples?
- What was Jesus' intention in inquiring about the legitimization of his person or identity by the crowds and the disciples?

Answers to these questions will also help to understand the structure of Luke 9:18-22 as a micro narrative, as well as the plot of Luke's narrative.

#### **4.4.5 An etic reading: Social scientific criticism**

SSC employs models as heuristic devices. These models help the exegete to specifically gain insight in four aspects of Biblical texts: the cultural world embedded in first-century Mediterranean Biblical texts (e.g., institutions, cultural conventions, personality), the social history of groups, the social organisation of movements and the social worlds of texts and its characters (Soulén & Soulén, in Holgate & Starr 2006:137). SSC further lays emphasis on the understanding of texts as social constructions. To understand any given text thus entails an understanding of the society that produced such a text. SSC helps the modern reader to "get under the skin" of societies embedded in texts.

Conflicts in Luke deal with human beings and their conflicting ideologies and interests. Scarce resources such as authority and power also seem to be a reason for conflict in Luke's narrative. This also seems the case with regard to uncertainty about and questions surrounding Jesus' identity. These conflicts are societal, and thus can better be understood by the use of the social sciences. Sociological, anthropological cross-cultural models guide the methodology of SCC to be coherent and logical. Their usefulness in an etic reading of Luke 9:18-22 is important in many respects. They can help to interpret social information which in turn can help to facilitate a

contextualisation of Luke as “a gospel of conflict” in other contexts. These models will also help to understand the social dynamics that lie in the background of Luke’s narrative. For Van Aarde and Joubert (2009:431), models are “the best thing we have by way of a technique”. The models used in the etic reading of Luke and Luke 9:18-22 in particular will also render the verification of facts gathered through the abductive method possible. It is for this reason that Elliott (1993:48) concludes that SSC is by definition an abductive scholarly approach to the study of the Bible. Regarding the use of models in etic reading, MacDonald concludes in the following manner:

They can bring hitherto unconscious levels of thought into awareness; they enlarge our control over data. Models can also facilitate understanding for the reader by clearly identifying the writer’s frame of reference and by making it more readily available for criticism. The use of models can lead to greater comprehensiveness when doing interpretations by providing categories and suggesting relations between categories.

(MacDonald 1998:26)

The understanding of leadership and conflict in Luke’s gospel, as well as its application to an African context, will be facilitated by such a use of models and theories. This will enable the study at least to consciously try to avoid the perils of anachronism and ethnocentrism.

The faith of the New Testament people was grounded in their socio-cultural context. An etic reading of Luke and Luke 9:18-22 makes access to this context possible. As an approach that recognises and respects the gap between cultures, SSC will facilitate an understanding of the relevance of the question “Who is the Christ?” In view of the relevance of this question in the African context, its application depends on the degree of this understanding. SSC constitutes the investigative-explanatory phase in that it will address the “why” questions of Luke 9:18-22. For example, why is the question of Jesus’ identity acute in Luke’s gospel? Why does Luke introduce his gospel in a context of conflict? Why did Jesus face fierce opposition from his contemporaries? Why did Jesus not gain the support of the public for whom he essentially came? Why were social systems a source of conflict in the Mediterranean world? Why were cultural values pivotal in Luke’s context?

Answers to these questions are a guide to the prescriptive phase, which is that of contextualisation.

#### **4.4.6 An African-hermeneutical reading: Contextualisation**

Contextualisation is the prescriptive phase of this study. Contextualisation in this study is firstly understood as the application of the findings of social scientific and narratological study (mentioned in § 4.4.4 and 4.4.5 above), in an African context. Secondly, contextualisation refers to the empowering of African peoples by establishing a link between theology and African realities. With reference to the application of the results of the emic and etic readings of Luke 9:18-22, contextualisation aims at completing the exegetical cycle: reader – text – context – new context – new text – new reader.<sup>91</sup> This exercise starts with the identification of the common traits between first-century Palestine and Africa, before proceeding to see how Luke 9:18-22 speaks within an African context, with reference to the question of Jesus' identity, as well as the relationship between leadership and conflict.

Contextualisation is not about translating Luke 9:18-22 into an African context. It is about identification and relevance: How does Luke 9:18-22 speak to an African? How relevant is the question “Who is the Christ in the African context”? In other words, contextualisation entails the identification of relevant problems within the African context that prompt a response to Jesus' question. Hence, the question “Who is the Christ?” will be treated in relation to the expectations of Africans in respect of their own realities. In contextualisation, Christianity speaks meaningfully to people in their specific socio-economic and political situation. There are problems that are common to all peoples, irrespective of differences in culture. In Africa poverty, diseases, economic inequalities and dictatorship cause an ever increasing number of refugees, exiles, orphans, conflict and misery. Only the true incarnation of the Christian message can attempt an answer of hope especially to the African people.

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<sup>91</sup> “New reader” in this case refers to the African person, who has been empowered to such an extent that theological reflection is applied to the realities of his/her environment, while the “new text” is the contextualised text. This model is not exclusively African; it could also be used in order to empower any other community as long as one remains conscious of the twin risk of anachronism and ethnocentrism.

The question of leadership and conflict addressed in Luke 9:18-22 is also relevant for the African context. Models and theories from the social sciences and cultural anthropology can also help to address the leadership crisis in African society (church and secular). In this respect, the power-syndrome leadership theory can be helpful to lead to the prescription of how conflict (involved in leadership) can be curbed, avoided, dealt with or accommodated.

As a method of empowerment, the contextualisation of Luke 9:18-22 should also listen to African experiences regarding the question “Who is the Christ?”<sup>92</sup> It is an attempt of doing theology from the perspective of the people. Empowerment also means the recognition of the value of other people’s opinion of Jesus. Healey and Sybertz (1996:75) are correct when they state that “human experience is an essential *locus theologicus* in our times” (Healey & Sybertz 1996:75). In fact, Jesus continues to challenge all cultures, ethnic groups and nations with the question of his identity: “Who do you ... say I am?” Even though responses may never be identical, they are useful, urgent and need to be respected.

The third dimension of contextualisation in this study relates to the examination of the titles that so far have been attributed to Jesus by some African scholars. In the quest to offer an African response to the question “Who is the Christ (for Africans)?” many have sought to equate Jesus with existing African honourable titles.<sup>93</sup> Jesus is identified as “Brother”, “Ancestor”<sup>94</sup>, “Medicine man”, Chief Diviner”, and “Ancestral Spirit”.<sup>95</sup> This study will treat these “titles” as African models for the understanding of Christ (Küster 2001:66). One of the fundamental questions to be addressed in the

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<sup>92</sup> The urgency of the African response to the question of Jesus’ identity is what Schillebeeckx (1980:18) calls “the account of the life of Christians”, referred to as a “fifth gospel”.

<sup>93</sup> There are about 219 names and descriptions of Jesus Christ, used in 30 African countries according to a survey done by Healey and Sybertz (1996:80-83).

<sup>94</sup> Even when the same title is being used, it does not mean that it is understood in the same way. In fact, there is no uniform ancestral religion in Africa. Nyamity, for example, calls Jesus Christ “the brother-ancestor from a Tanzanian perspective, while Bujo (1992:81) calls him “the proto-ancestor” from the Zairian perspective (Küster 2001:70-74).

<sup>95</sup> Other examples are “Victor over death”, “Great hero”, “One who intercedes for us”, “Mediator”, “One who divides everything among us” (Healey & Sybertz 1996:77). These are appropriate descriptive titles in relation to what Christ does. They come as a result of communal or personal experiences of Christ’s impact in their communal or individual lives.



contextualisation of Luke 9:18-22 is whether there is a need to address Jesus with new titles. He is the Christ! The name Christ needs to be interpreted by various cultures and not translated. A translation of the title “Christ” can easily become a form of syncretism. Although Jesus was a Jew, the name Christ is not translatable because it transcends racial, ethnic and national boundaries. Jesus cannot automatically become a European, American, African, South African or a Cameroonian by simply attaching a name to his person. In his function as Christ he *becomes like* ...; He is not .... The analysis of these African titles can only benefit African Christology. An analysis of Luke 9:18-22 will also expose the implications of the titles referred to above, in the contextualisation process. The question of Jesus’ identity remains relevant and urgent in the African context.

#### **4.4.7 Conclusion**

From the period of the Reformation the interpretation of the New Testament as sacred Scripture remains the aim of New Testament scholarship. How best to accomplish this task, however, is a different question (Wenham 2005:104). New Testament scholarship has to be relevant to society and its problems. Because of this, New Testament scholars should develop a theology that addresses specific social realities that plague its audience. A debate on approaches may not be as relevant as the issues that are putting mankind in a state of emergency: leadership crisis, wars and conflicts, hunger, illnesses, election crisis, issues of climate change, crime wave, irresponsible citizenship, moral decadence and hatred. Any Biblical interpretation that does not have at least one of these vices on its agenda is irrelevant and is deemed to be a failure. Theology has to be associated with social realities. It should be an exercise whose strength *inter alia* lays in the search for human responses to and understanding of the question “Who do you say Christ is?”

Finally, a social scientific and narratological analysis of leadership and conflict in Luke 9:18-22 from an African perspective in this study aims to be an exercise of cross-cultural communication between the Mediterranean context of Luke and a new and different context of Africa in a different epoch. It is an attempt to use models and theories in order to understand and deal with societal problems related to leadership and conflict. Such an exercise

demands careful attention and humility; and runs the risk of being done either well or poorly (Rohrbaugh 1996a:1). This risk, however, dares not to threaten the exegete, because even though there is no one way of doing theology, there is an absolute reason for doing theology: the interest and welfare of God's people.

#### **4.5 LIMITATIONS: MODELS, THEORIES AND APPROACHES**

The methodology described above to be followed in this study is not without limitations, both at the level of the models and theories being used and at the level of the chosen approaches. There is no assumption that the chosen models and theories will give an exhaustive explanation and understanding of leadership and conflict in Luke and Luke 9:18-22. However, there is the conviction that they can be of help to come to some understanding of these issues, since they provide a prediction of human behaviour. Also, because of the multicultural dimension of the African context the application or contextualisation in one region of Africa (Cameroon), may not necessarily be representative of the rest of Africa. This is further confounded by the fact that most of the conclusions will be drawn from the contributions of other African scholars, including research from a Cameroonian context. The risk of anachronism and ethnocentrism will be curbed by the use of models and theories. Lastly, models and theories that explain a social phenomenon in first-century Palestine may not adequately fit or explain occurrences in an African context because of historical, cultural and geographical differences.<sup>96</sup> For this reason some theories have been readapted in order to fit the new context of application.

One also cannot beforehand presume that the use of SSC and narratology will lead to one "final" and "correct" interpretation of Luke 9:18-22 with reference to leadership and conflict in the African context, or with reference to Jesus' identity. Approaches are a guide to interpretation, and no approach is final. The use of the above methods in this study is therefore

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<sup>96</sup> This is a sort of *sociological fallacy* that was earlier pointed out by Judge (1980), and later on supported by Stowers (Rosell 2009:82) and Rohrbaugh (1996). The risk of using models constructed from other cultures and applying them to New Testament studies does not scare the exegete. Rather, it creates awareness and alertness in the use and application of these models.

more hermeneutic than scientific. Whereas scientific methodology consists of formulating hypothesis or laws in order to describe and test constant relations between phenomena, the methodology used in this study intends to start from reality to understanding, and then move to explication. Unlike the scientific method of description – classification – explication, it is a methodology of diagnosis – classification – explication – description – verification. Even though this methodology may not be without flaws, the choice of the abductive method gives the study a coherent, persuasive and cogent approach.

Having noticed that there is no clear-cut dichotomy between exegetical approaches, the study is a marriage of combined insights from literary, historical and social critics. This is a marriage between independent bodies that may not necessarily be coherent because each of them has a specific methodology. Nonetheless, as complementary tools in Biblical criticism, these approaches will enrich the understanding of Luke 9:18-22 and its consequent application within the African context.

#### **4.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Irrespective of the approach, the interpretation of a Biblical text is an exercise which involves three elements: reader, text and audience. The direction of the interpretation pendulum depends on the interest of the reader. Historical-criticism, narrative criticism and SSC are all sub-disciplines of exegesis that will be used in a complementary manner. The contribution of this study to New Testament scholarship lies in the interest to evolve from the “that” and “what” data, to the “how”, “why” and “what for” information. This interest refers to the interpretation and application of the interrelation between texts and their contexts to a new context, with different or similar social, political, economic, cultural and religious realities.

The use of “alternative”<sup>97</sup> methods in reading Jesus’ story in Luke 9:18-22 in particular, and Luke’s gospel in general, does not conform to the idea that “everyone interprets the Bible in their own way” (McKenzie & Haynes 1999:5) in an absolute sense. Instead, it is a mark of distinction from other

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<sup>97</sup> They are alternatives in the sense that they do not purport to present a “final” interpretation of Luke 9:18-22 in particular, and Luke’s gospel, in general.

scholars who have done exegesis on Luke's gospel, either in parts or as a whole. SSC applied in this study is not about the sociology or anthropology of the Bible; it is a fusion of social sciences and exegesis. The application of SSC and narratology will be controlled by the social systems being studied, both in the past and in the present. It is a *to-and-fro* exercise between reader, text and contexts.

## Chapter 5

### Luke 9:18-22: An emic reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke

*The main problem ... for readers of the Bible, then, is that we do not know what we do not know. The sparse descriptions of context in the Bible often leave us without the essential ingredient for understanding the message.*  
(Rohrbaugh 2007:9)

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Ancient texts like those in New and Old Testament texts are described by anthropologists as “high context” documents,<sup>98</sup> because they are written within the context of the ancient Mediterranean world (Elliott 1993:11; Rohrbaugh 2007:9; Van Eck 2009b:13). The first-century Mediterranean authors of the texts of the New Testament presume a “high” knowledge of their context on the part of their readers. Consequently, little or no background information is given to these texts in order to explain the respective *raison d’être* of, for example, Jesus’ attitude, as well as that of his followers and opponents. Modern readers, most of whom are from “low context” societies, need knowledge of the “missing” information in these texts in order to understand these actions. To “fill in” this “missing” information, social scientists argue that a reading of ancient texts necessitates anthropological, cross-cultural and social scientific models and theories to avoid ethnocentrism. The latter is called an etic reading of the text, and will be attended to, later.

This chapter focuses on an emic reading of the Lukan text. An emic reader can be compared with a court magistrate whose objective is to understand the different parties involved in a dispute from their own point of view, irrespective of the possible presence of witnesses (in this case, Luke the narrator). What follows is such a reading (understanding) of the Lukan story of Jesus and the conflicts that he faced, from the perspective of a “high

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<sup>98</sup> High context societies are homogeneous societies in which contextual knowledge is widely shared by everybody. Changes are rare in such societies. “Low context” societies, on the contrary, often witness social and technological changes as well as anonymous social relations. For high context societies to be understood, more background information is required. Rohrbaugh (2007:9) spells out this difference clearly: “High context societies expect listeners to know the context and low context societies expect to have to spell it out” (Rohrbaugh 2007:9).

context” reader. This implies that the contemporary reader becomes a member of the high context society of Luke’s gospel, reading Luke’s gospel from a “native’s point of view”.

The emic reading in this Chapter will consist of re-narrating the story of Jesus in Luke, focusing on the relationships that he established with the various characters in Luke’s story. The following relationships will be attended to: 1) Jesus’ relationship with the disciples, 2) his relationship with the Jewish elite, 3) the relationship between Jesus and the Roman elite, 4) his relationship with the Jewish peasantry, and 5) the relationship between Jesus and non-Jews. An emic reading of Luke’s gospel through the lens of these relationships enriches the contemporary reader’s understanding of the interaction between Jesus and his contemporaries. It also identifies and describes the conflicts that resulted from this interaction.

In describing the above identified relationships, the following questions will be kept in mind: Why was Jesus in constant conflict with his contemporaries? What was the nature of these conflicts? What was the drive behind the reactions of his opponents? What was the reaction of Jesus? These questions will help in an emic reading of Jesus’ actions, reactions and decisions amidst a climate of conflict and tension as a result of the misunderstanding of his person by his opponents.

## **5.2 JESUS’ RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DISCIPLES**

### **5.2.1 Introduction**

In a more generic sense a disciple is a follower of Jesus. In Luke’s story of Jesus the reader is introduced to several followers of Jesus. For instance, those who followed Jesus as disciples were beyond the number twelve: some women followed him (Lk 8:2; 24:22), there existed what Luke simply calls “disciples” (Lk 6:13, 17; 19:37; 39) and there are the seventy (or seventy two) others whom he sent out on mission (Lk 10:1-12). However, “disciple” in this study will be understood as the twelve (Lk 6:13; 8:1; 9:1) whom he chose and called *apostoloi* (Lk 6:13), also referred to in the gospel as *mathetai* (Lk 8:22; 9:18; 10:23).

### **5.2.2 Jesus and the disciples**

By inference, the first encounter between Jesus and the disciples is during the call of Simon, who is immediately joined by James and John (Lk 5:10-



11).<sup>99</sup> This happens within the context of a fishing expedition. Having spent a fruitless night of fishing, Jesus appears and instructs Simon to cast his net for a catch. Simon's (reluctant) obedience to this attempt yields fruit. Simon is astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and kneels before Jesus to apologise for his incipient reluctance. Jesus' reaction is to ask Simon to follow him. Although Simon does not seem to know who Jesus was, he decides to leave everything and to follow Jesus, probably influenced by the miraculous catch he had experienced. According to Luke 5:11, James and John join Simon in his decision.

Before the next disciple, Levi, is called (Lk 5:27), Simon, James and John are witnesses of large crowds coming to Jesus to hear him and be healed (Lk 5:15). They are also present when Jesus heals a man with leprosy (Lk 5:12-14) and a paralytic (Lk 5:17-20, 24-26). Both these persons come to Jesus for healing; the latter is brought by his friends (Lk 5:18-19). After their respective healings, the leper is sent to go and show himself to the priest, and the paralytic went home praising God. With regard to the healing of the paralytic, the three disciples also witness a controversy between Jesus and "the Pharisees and teachers of the law" (Lk 5:17) from all over Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem. The content of the controversy is the question of the authority to forgive sins, a controversy Jesus clearly "wins", since everybody present is amazed and praises him (like the paralytic; Lk 5:25).

Three differences can be indicated between the narrative of the calling of the disciples and the narratives of the two healings and the narrative of the crowds coming to Jesus for healing. Jesus approaches the disciples, and after they have witnessed the catch of a large number of fish, Simon (as the *primus inter pares* of the three disciples) reflects on his "sin" (Lk 5:8), after which he is invited to follow Jesus. The leper, paralytic and the crowds of people, on the other hand, approach Jesus, and after the respective healings have taken place, they praise Jesus, but do not follow him.

Levi is called in Luke 5:2. Just as it was the case with Simon, Levi left everything and followed Jesus. Levi further responds to Jesus' call by offering a feast in his house. The result of this feast is that the disciples are accused

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<sup>99</sup> Although Jesus' call is directed to Simon alone (α πο\_ tou~ nu~n α) nqrw&pouv e!sh| zwgrw~n), Simon's partners' James and John also left everything and followed Jesus (Lk 5.10-11).

(in the form of a question) by the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, of mingling with sinners (Lk 5:30). Jesus immediately sides with his disciples and defends them (Lk 5:31). This riposte of Jesus leads to a further question (now directed at Jesus) by the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. They want to know why the disciples that Jesus has chosen to follow him ignore fasting and prayer (Lk 5:33). They thus clearly identify the disciples with Jesus.

This identification of Jesus with his disciples by the Pharisees and the teachers of the law was affirmed by the disciples themselves in the next micro narrative (Lk 6:1-5). While walking with Jesus through a grain field on a Sabbath, it is they who act in an “unlawful way” by plucking and eating heads of grain on the Sabbath (Lk 6:1-5). The reluctance of Luke 5:5 is clearly absent, and they do not even have to be invited by Jesus to do something. Now it is not Jesus who speaks blasphemy (Lk 5:21) by forgiving sins (Lk 5:20) or accepts an invitation to eat with tax collectors (Lk 5:29), but the disciples themselves that do something that upsets the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. They are now doing what Jesus has been doing since he called them. They are, however, not yet able to defend their actions. When they are confronted by the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, it is again Jesus who comes to their rescue by answering the question directed at the disciples (Lk 6:3-5). In his answer Jesus goes so far as to identify his disciples with the priests in the days of David. According to Jesus, his disciples have thus replaced the officials of the temple.

To identify himself further with his disciples, Jesus then, in the next micro narrative (Lk 6:6-11), does what the disciples did: he also transgresses that which is supposedly unlawful on a Sabbath by healing a man with a withered hand. Now, it seems, it is not the disciples anymore that are following the lead of Jesus, but *vice versa*: Jesus is following their lead. To confirm his confidence in his disciples, Jesus then chooses nine more of his followers and calls them “apostles” (Lk 6:14-16).

Having appointed his disciples, Jesus then starts to teach them specifically (Lk 6:20) while addressing a large crowd (Lk 6:17). Jesus’ teaching (Lk 6:20-49) starts out with an announcement of a change of order: the needy, the hungry, the weeping and the persecuted will be blessed with

joy (Lk 6: 21-23), while those who now have everything will lose it all (Lk 6:24-26). Jesus then spells out what attitude he requires from them (Lk 6:27-49) as the new “priests” (Lk 6:4): they must love their enemies (not like the Pharisees and the teachers of the law; Lk 6:27), give to everyone what they are asked for (Lk 6:30), and lend without expecting to be repaid (Lk 6:35). Also, others are not to be judged (Lk 6:37-38). In short, they must be merciful just as their Father is merciful (Lk 6:36). They must be good trees that bear good fruit (Lk 6:43-45), that is, what they say and do must not contradict one another (Lk 6:46-49).

In Luke 7:1-50 Jesus then sets the example of what he taught the disciples (and the crowd) about putting words into practice. He gives what is asked for (by healing the centurion’s servant; Lk 7:1-10), and blesses those who weep (by restoring the widow’s son; Lk 7:11-17). The changed order that was promised is also practised and realised: the sick are healed, the blind see, lepers are cleansed, the lame walk, the deaf hear and the poor receive good news of the kingdom (Lk 7:21-22).

At this stage of the relationship between Jesus and his disciples it is clear that an intimate relationship has been established. Peter calls Jesus teacher (Lk 7:40), the disciples travel with Jesus wherever he goes (Lk 8:1), they receive knowledge of the kingdom that others do not (Lk 8:9), and are called Jesus’ brothers because they put into practice what they are taught (Lk 8:21). Who and what they think Jesus is can only be speculated on, since the narrative is silent in this regard. What they do know is that Jesus’ ministry is about a new order (Lk 6:20-26) that includes teaching and healing. They have also thus far experienced that Jesus’ ministry, and their part therein, has created conflict with both the Pharisees and scribes, and Jesus’ own family. Finally, in their one-on-one conflict with the Pharisees and scribes, Jesus has come to their rescue without exception.

In the narrative of the calming of the storm (Lk 8:22-25) the first cracks in the supposedly solid relationship between Jesus and his disciples appear. While Jesus is asleep in the boat (Lk 8:22-25), a storm breaks out and swamps the boat. The disciples start to fear and are not able to handle the situation themselves. Their fear is expressed in the words “Master, Master, we are perishing” (Lk 8:24), to which Jesus replies “where is your faith” (Lk

8:25a) after he has calmed the storm. Instead of calming down also, the disciples are amazed and full of fear of what just happened. And then comes the same question that was asked by the Pharisees in Luke 5:21: “Who then is this?” (Lk 8:25b).<sup>100</sup> Just as the Pharisees, they do not know who Jesus is. Although they have accompanied him during his ministry, witnessed him perform miracles and received special teaching, their understanding of who Jesus is entails nothing more than that of the Pharisees. Jesus, however, pushes on with his ministry by exorcising a demon-possessed man (Lk 8:26-39), healing a woman who had been the subject of bleeding for twelve years (Lk 8:43-48), and raising Jaïrus’ daughter to life (Lk 8:40-42, 49-56) in the region of the Gerasenes.

Jesus then sends out his disciples to do what he has been doing, in spite of what happened in the boat during the storm. They receive power to preach, exorcise demons and heal the sick (Lk 9:1-2). From Luke 9:6 it can be deduced that the disciples are successful in their mission. When they return from their mission, Jesus takes them to Bethsaida to withdraw by themselves, probably to rest for a while (Lk 9:10). Crowds, however, follow them. Jesus then, as was the case in Luke 6:6-11, does what the disciples did just before their return: he teaches and heals the sick. Thus, again it seems – as was the case in Luke 7:40 to 8:21 – that the relationship between Jesus and his disciples is on track.

This situation changes dramatically in the micro narrative of the feeding of the five thousand in Luke 9:12-17. Late that afternoon, after Jesus preached and healed the sick, the disciples ask Jesus to send the crowd away to go and find food and lodging. Jesus’ response to the disciples takes on the form of a challenge: “You give them something to eat” (Lk 9:13). This challenge, if Luke 9:1-6 is taken into consideration, is supposed to pose no problem for the disciples. After being empowered by Jesus (Lk 9:1), they had no problem to do what Jesus was doing. Now they have the chance again. But they fail. Jesus has to feed the crowds. It seems that his effort with the

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<sup>100</sup> Knight (1998:98) argues that, the question surrounding Jesus’ identity in the miracle of the storm actually prepares Peter to legitimate Jesus as the Christ of God (Lk 9:20). This is debatable, since the question of Jesus’ identity already comes to the surface in Nazareth (Lk 4:22), again in Luke 5:21 (with the Pharisees) and yet again in Luke 7:20 (with the question of John the Baptist). However, it is the first time that the disciples bring the question of Jesus’ identity to the fore.

disciples was to no avail. The best they can do is to distribute what they receive from Jesus (Lk 9:16).

After the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus' ministry in Galilee is drawing to a close. In Galilee he calls and trains the disciples. Unfortunately, these disciples seem not to understand who he is. This misunderstanding, or even non-understanding, of the disciples concerning who Jesus is, exemplified by the feeding of the five thousand, most probably triggered Jesus to inquire from them who the crowds and they themselves say he is (Lk 9:18-19). The speculation of the crowds varies: Jesus is seen as John the Baptist, Elijah or one of the prophets of old. Peter's answer (as *primus inter pares*), on the other hand, seems clear cut: Jesus is "the Christ of God" (Lk 9:20).<sup>101</sup> Without any comments on the answers given, Jesus warns the disciples not to tell to anyone that he is "the Christ of God". Why? It is most probably because Peter's answer was not correct. Or maybe because his understanding of what the designation "Christ of God" really entails, is not correct. This caution of Jesus is followed by what sounds like a full disclosure of the meaning of his person and the implication of his ministry: He is the Son of Man who will suffer rejection from the elders, the chief priests and the scribes. Even though this will result in his death, he will be raised on the third day. This is who Jesus is. The one that will suffer, die, and be raised to life. This revelation of Jesus is immediately followed by a teaching to the disciples (Lk 9:23-27). To follow Jesus, to be his disciple, means to deny one's self and to take up one's cross, like Jesus is going to do.

About eight days later Jesus takes Peter, James and John up onto a mountain to pray. While Jesus is praying, he is transfigured, and two men, Moses and Elijah, appear alongside Jesus, talking to Jesus. The content of their conversation is Jesus' going to Jerusalem and what will happen there – an affirmation of what Jesus said was going to happen to him (see Lk 9:22). Peter misunderstands the whole scene, proposing to build three booths so as to remain in the company of the three. Now it becomes clear why Jesus made no comment after Peter's confession of Jesus being "the Christ of God". As

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<sup>101</sup> Among all the titles with which Jesus is identified in Luke's gospel, three times he is addressed by different disciples as "Lord": Peter (Lk 5:8), James and John (Lk 9:54) and the disciples (Lk 11:1). He is called "Master" three times also: by the disciples (Lk 8:24), Peter (Lk 9:33) and John (Lk 9:49). Peter, however, identifies Jesus only once as "the Christ of God" (Lk 9:20).

“the Christ of God” Jesus will suffer and die. Because Peter did not understand this, Jesus asked the disciples to keep quiet, so that they do not present Jesus as “the Christ of God” in a wrong way. They will therefore have to change their perception of Jesus. And if this is not enough, a voice from heaven affirms what Jesus was trying to tell them. Jesus is God’s Son, and they have to listen to him – they have to understand that they have to change their perception of who Jesus is. But they still do not want to accept this, therefore they keep quiet concerning what they had seen (and heard; Lk 9:36).

The next micro narrative (Lk 9:37-45), where Jesus heals a boy with an evil spirit, confirms this state of affairs. The disciples are unable to cast a spirit from the possessed boy. Although empowered by Jesus to do so (see again Lk 9:1), they have no control over the spirit. The reason for this is clear: Jesus and his disciples are not part of the same mission anymore. Jesus therefore again tells them about his forthcoming suffering and death (Lk 9:44). But they do not understand this. Moreover, it is not what they want. They want to be the greatest (Lk 9:46). Jesus’ reaction to this longing of the disciples is, again, to teach them. When one follows Jesus, it is not about who is the greatest. Rather, it is about being like a child, willing to be the least among everybody (Lk 9:47-48). Being the least, however, is not for the disciples. They not only want to be the greatest, they also want to be the only ones that have the authority to drive out demons in the name of Jesus (Lk 9:49), something they actually failed to do!<sup>102</sup> They want to be privileged. Jesus, however, is not willing to have anything of this (Lk 9:50).

Jesus then sets out for Jerusalem (Lk 9:51). There is now no turning back. Accompanying him are the disciples – disciples that thus far have shown that they neither have confidence in themselves nor in the mission for which they have been empowered. Jesus’ mission includes being the least, the denying of oneself, the taking up of one’s cross – even if it implies suffering and dying. For the disciples the mission of Jesus is something else. It means power and privilege. As such, they actually have become an

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<sup>102</sup> As a reminder, the first time was when they could not withstand the storm nor understand Jesus when he rebuked the storm (Lk 5:22-25). The second was their inability either to provide food for the crowd of five thousand or to trust that Jesus could provide it (Lk 9:11-17). Now, they are unable to cast out an unclean spirit, when they had been given the power and authority to do so (Lk 9:1).



obstacle to Jesus' mission. Their quest for greatness has betrayed their intention to follow Jesus.

Luke then narrates two events while Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. The first, Jesus' meeting of a few new possible followers (Lk 9:57-62) depicts what his disciples are like, and the second, Jesus' sending out of seventy two of his followers (Lk 10:1-17), depicts what the disciples should be like. Along the way to Jerusalem, Luke tells us, Jesus meets a few new possible followers (Lk 9:57-62). All of them are pictured by Luke as an example of Jesus' disciples. They are willing to follow Jesus, but are they willing to have no place to lay down their heads? (Lk 9:58). They want to follow Jesus, but first want to attend to the needs of their families (Lk 9:59, 61). Disciples like this, according to Jesus, are not fit for the kingdom (Lk 9:62).

Jesus then sends out seventy two others to prepare his way to Jerusalem (Lk 10:1) with the same mission he sent out the Twelve previously<sup>103</sup>. The seventy two are highly successful: without being empowered by Jesus they are even successful in driving out demons. This is how the disciples of Jesus should be.

As they move on, Jesus teaches his disciples on different topics like love for the neighbour (Lk 10:25-37) and hospitality (Lk 10:38-42). Being on the way with Jesus, the disciples seem to have become aware of their deficiency and the need to have confidence in Jesus. Hence, they requested Jesus to teach them how to pray (Lk 11:1). As one who has moved with them, Jesus seems to know the limitations of this request. Consequently, he proceeded to instruct them about God's fidelity, his gracious character and on the need to depend on him (Lk 11:1-13). Next in the series of Jesus' teachings to the disciples is a caution against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Lk 12:1), followed by an admonishment concerning material possessions and covetousness (Lk 12:15), and the worries of life (Lk 12:22-34). This exhortation is a repetition of the earlier admonition in Luke 9:3. Jesus urges

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<sup>103</sup> The similarity between this sending and that of the initial sending of the Twelve (Lk 9:1-6) is obvious. Probably motivated by the urgency of the mission, they are urged to travel light (Lk 10:4; cf Lk 9:3). When they enter a town and are welcomed in a house, they must stay there until they leave that specific town (Lk 10:7; cf Lk 9:4). If they are not welcomed in a specific town, they must leave (Lk 10:10-11; cf Lk 9:5). They are further authorised to heal (Lk 10:9; cf Lk 9:2). However, without being empowered – as it was the case with the twelve apostles in the first mission – the seventy two are successful in driving out demons (Lk 10:17).

them to rely on God for providence, and not to set their minds on matters of food and drink (Lk 12:29-30). Reliance on God actually means to keep focus on the kingdom of God (Lk 12:31). They are further instructed on the need to remain vigilant in the face of crisis (Lk 12:35-48), and are reminded again of his impending death (Lk 12:50).

As Jesus moves to Jerusalem, he continues to teach the crowd and his disciples on the consequences of their eagerness to follow (Lk 14:25-33). In order to avoid future regrets, they are advised to evaluate and count the cost. It entails separation from family, vulnerability, sacrifice and self-abnegation (Lk 14: 26-28). In fact, it is a ministry of absolute renunciation (Lk 14:28-33) and total commitment (Lk 14:34-35) for which they are urged to think thoroughly. By using parables, Jesus continues his teaching as he admonishes his disciples on their stewardship towards him (Lk 16:1-13). It is a teaching on faithful service and the right use of present and available opportunities at their disposal.<sup>104</sup> Before turning to the next parable, that has as its topic “a call to dutiful service” (Lk 17:7-10), Jesus warns his disciples against temptation, the risk of yielding to sin, the consequences of luring someone into sin and the need for forgiveness (Lk 17:1-4). This last warning seems to awaken much more awareness in the disciples with regards to their deficiency. Hence, they once more request Jesus to increase their faith (Lk 17:5). Jesus’ response to this demand is an invitation for self-confidence and humility.

The Pharisees’ question on the coming of the kingdom leads Jesus to mention once more the fate that awaits him in Jerusalem. This is a reminder of the fact that the journey to Jerusalem is meant for the fulfilment of scripture to which the disciples have been schooled. In response to the timing of the coming of the kingdom of God, Jesus intimates hope. Even though the kingdom has already come through his presence in their midst, his future

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<sup>104</sup> Many scholars have argued on whether the parable of the shrewd steward is apt for teaching and if Jesus was not by inference asking his disciples to be dishonest. Knight (1998:120) opines that the reason for which the master commended the steward whom he qualifies as “a likeable rogue” is not easy to discern. For Achtemeier, Green and Thompson (2001:169), it is about the use of wealth for the sake of hospitality. Plummer (1977:380) remarks that it is a passage that has received a variety of interpretations. Whatever the case, the importance of this parable should be evaluated on the basis of Jesus’ conclusion in Luke 16:9. In spite of the dishonest and unfaithful attitude of the shrewd steward, he is prudent in using present opportunities as a means to safeguard the future. It is in this sense that Jesus’ use of this parable as a medium of teaching to his disciples should be appreciated.

coming still remains imminent. Hope for the disciples means the assurance that Jesus will return but before that, suffering awaits him (Lk 17:22-25). However, in order not to be surprised on the timing, the disciples are requested to remain patient, persevering, alert, humble and respectful in their petitions to God (Lk 18:1-14).

The disciples, who have shown a steadily increasing degree of cooperation and understanding since Luke 10:25, however, again behave to the contrary when they obstruct children from coming to Jesus (Lk 18:15-17). They seem to have neglected Jesus' admonition to become like children (Lk 9:47-48) and his caution of vigilance against temptation to sin and to avoid being an obstacle to someone's faith (Lk 17:1-4). It is within this context that Jesus discloses for the last time the consequences of his ministry: suffering, scourging, killing and his subsequent resurrection (Lk 18:31-33). In spite of these explanations, the disciples still do not understand Jesus (Lk 18:34).<sup>105</sup>

This misunderstanding continues to grow when Jesus is acclaimed as king as he enters Jerusalem. This reaction of the disciples makes abundantly clear what their understanding of Jesus' identity was all about. He is the political king that will establish an earthly kingdom. Even though the disciples followed him all the way to Jerusalem, they probably did not understand who he was.<sup>106</sup>

In Jerusalem, the disciples seem passive and reticent when Jesus faces fierce opposition from the chief priests, the scribes and the principal men of the people (Lk 19:45-20:8); the spies (Lk 20:20-26); and the Sadducees (Lk

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<sup>105</sup> Paradoxically, a blind man recognises Jesus and is eager to touch him. When he is healed, he becomes a follower (Lk 18:35-43). It is a paradox because the blind man is healed only once and can see immediately. The disciples, however, are taught over and over again, but still cannot "see". They should be like the blind man, but they are not. Although they can see, they are "blind".

<sup>106</sup> Borg (2006:232) remarks that "the meaning of Jesus' mode of entry is amplified by the realization that two processions entered Jerusalem every Passover. The other procession was an imperial one. On or about the same day, the Roman governor Pontius Pilate rode into the city from the opposite side, the west, at the head of a very different kind of procession: imperial Calvary and foot soldiers arriving to reinforce the garrison on the Temple Mount" (Borg 2006:232). This assertion approves of the words of caution from some of the Pharisees, who were also present among the crowd: "Teacher, rebuke your disciples" (Lk 19:39). They were probably aware of the dangers and implications of the praises that were thrown on Jesus by the crowd of his disciples (Lk 19:38). The crowd's acclamation of Jesus as king risked being misinterpreted and misunderstood. This being the case, the Pharisees were certainly right that the crowd ignored the consequences of their emotional attitude. They saw Jesus as an earthly king, that is, as a national hero. In a nutshell, Jesus entered Jerusalem at the time when his identity was still misunderstood, even by his closest followers.

20:27-40). While on Galilean soil, Jesus came to their rescue on a regular basis when they were confronted by the Pharisees and the scribes (see Lk 5:31; 6:3). Now, when Jesus is confronted, they do nothing. In the face of this opposition, Jesus warns them against the scribes' attitude. It is a warning against the quest for public recognition, exploitation and a pretentious attitude (Lk 20:46). The turning point in Jesus' relationship with his disciples begins with Judas' involvement in Jesus' betrayal and subsequent arrest, an attitude which indicates the fact that the disciples might have had ulterior motives for following Jesus. It is also an attitude that puts their loyalty into doubt and amplifies their ignorance. In spite of Judas' attitude, Jesus decides to spend the Passover with the disciples. Peter and John are charged with the preparations (Lk 22:7-13). During supper, Jesus shares bread and wine with the Twelve. During the meal, Jesus declares that his betrayer was among them, at table. This information shockingly spurs the disciples to portray their quest for leadership and lordship (Lk 22:24-26; see also Lk 9:46-48). They seem not to understand the fact that the ministry into which Jesus introduced them is that of service. Practically, Jesus had demonstrated this by serving them during the meal. After rebuking them, Jesus unveils the privileges that await them. They are accorded dominion over the kingdom as a reward for their loyalty to Jesus in his moments of trial (Lk 22:28-30). Jesus also promises to sustain Peter in the course of his tempting moments. In what sounds rhetorical, he also reminds the disciples how sustaining their ministry have been. Now he urges them to be more alert. Once more, their response "Lord, Lord, here are two swords" (Lk 22:38) indicates that they have misunderstood Jesus. Jesus seems to reiterate about the need for spiritual and not physical preparation.

The next turning point in Jesus' relationship with the disciples is Jesus' last moments before the arrest. As he proceeds with them to the Mount of Olives, he invites them to pray against temptation. This request is soon neglected: while Jesus is praying, the disciples fall asleep. Jesus seems disappointed with this attitude (Lk 22:46). Their enthusiasm to learn (Lk 11:1; 17:5) seems to have been an act of lip service. Jesus' admonitions (Lk 17:1-4; 22:40) seem forgotten and/or neglected. In fact, the disciples seem to prove their real attitude during these last moments. Judas effectively leads

Jesus' opponents to arrest him (Lk 22:47). At his arrest, one of the disciples reacts violently by cutting off the ear of the slave of the high priest (Lk 22:49). This clearly indicates that they still see Jesus as an earthly king of an earthly kingdom that has to be defended by the sword. After Jesus' arrest, no disciple dares to follow Jesus through his trial, save Peter, who later renounces him as was predicted (Lk 22:57, 58, 60, see also Lk 22:34). This stands in sharp contrast with a large group of people, including women (Lk 23:27; 24:1) that do not abandon Jesus. They persistently follow Jesus to the crucifixion and later are the ones that go to his tomb (Lk 24:1). When they go to the eleven disciples to tell them that Jesus' tomb was empty, they do not believe them. They also seem to forget what Jesus told them earlier in Luke 9:22, 44 and Luke 18:32-33, namely that he will rise again. Instead, the women's testimony "seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them" (Lk 24:11). Even Peter, who goes to the tomb himself and sees it empty, does not know what to make of what happened (Lk 24:12). Jesus' foretelling of his death and resurrection all seems forgotten. It seems that the disciples have contracted a memory loss. Three times Jesus predicted what would happen (Lk 9:22, 44; 18:32-33), and still they do not understand.

After the resurrection, Jesus accompanies Cleopas and one of the disciples; yet they cannot recognise him.<sup>107</sup> They manifest their "foolishness" and disbelief (see Lk 24:25) to the full by recounting the experience of the women at the tomb. It is only when Jesus reintroduces himself in word and meal that the two are able to recognise him.

Jesus' relationship with the disciples during these last and trying moments of his ministry seems ambiguous. In Galilee they accepted the invitation to follow Jesus. But at the most crucial moments they deserted him. Their attitude during these last moments proves that, although they (at certain times), showed signs of understanding, they have not been convinced by Jesus. Although they travelled with him, they did not really have confidence in his person, let alone his teachings. This is probably why their attention

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<sup>107</sup> This stands in sharp contrast with the women disciples who followed Jesus all the way from Galilee up till his crucifixion. They have heeded to the advice from the two men they met in the tomb; they have actually remembered what Jesus said about his death and resurrection. By contrast, the male disciples seem to be unable to remember anything. They continue to show their ignorance in Jesus' life and person.



remains divided between what Jesus said and what they thought had manifested.

Luke's narrative ends when Jesus meets his disciples for the last time (Lk 24:36-53). Although they are full of joy seeing Jesus again, it seems that they still do not understand what actually has taken place. Jesus therefore again has to explain to them who he is and what his mission entailed. Clearly they are slow to understand, and quick to abandon Jesus. But Jesus still has confidence in them. He therefore sends them out once again. Their responsibility is to proceed to all nations, preaching about repentance and the forgiveness of sins (Lk 24:47-48). They then return to Jerusalem, praising God for what has happened. In the end, it seems, they do understand who Jesus was and what he set out to accomplish.

### **5.2.3 Conclusion**

The relationship between Jesus and the disciples is that of ambiguity. From Jesus' perspective, it is a relationship of growing confidence, perseverance, consistency and the quest for continuity. For the disciples, it is a relationship characterised by mistrust, uncertainty, misunderstanding and growing faith. In the beginning when Jesus called the first disciples, they seemed enthusiastic and followed him immediately. Quite often this enthusiasm still resurfaces in some of their requests: the request to be taught how to pray (Lk 11:1) and the request for Jesus to increase their faith (Lk 17:5). However, it appears that this enthusiasm was either wrongly motivated in the sense that it went contrary to what Jesus expected of them, or it arose out of instinct or mere anxiety. For instance, when Jesus talked about his death, they seemed to have understood him in terms of the benefit that they will reap therefrom (Lk 9:46-48; 22:24-30). When he talked about his coming kingdom, they became anxious in knowing the calendar of events (Lk 21:7). It was probably time for them to become "great". After having been with Jesus as his chosen followers they were probably sure to occupy positions of greatness. James and John further wished to show their loyalty and readiness to defend Jesus by suggesting a violent solution when the Samaritans resisted Jesus from going through their village. Unfortunately, this was not a solution that fitted Jesus' teaching (Lk 9:50). Children who were brought to see Jesus were immediately



barred from seeing him (Lk 18:15). At Jesus' arrest, one of the disciples wished to continuously defend Jesus. Hence, he cut off the ear of the high priest's slave (Lk 22:50).

These reactions from the disciples indicate that they seemed to have understood Jesus the wrong way. This resulted from the fact that they had probably fashioned their understanding of Jesus according to their own motives. They seem to have misinterpreted the relationship between the person of Jesus and his mission. This probably explains their ambiguous attitude towards Jesus and their reaction to his activities. By not asking Jesus for clarification when they ought to, shows that they probably interpreted and understood him their own way (Lk 9: 45; 18:34).<sup>108</sup>

In other words, their wrong appreciation of Jesus probably led them to lose confidence, either in themselves or in Jesus. Jesus performed many miracles in their presence and gave several testimonies in word and in action. He empowered them with the same authority that he had. Yet, they either misused these powers (violence and quest for leadership) or they lacked confidence in making use of them (Lk 9:13, 40). They even showed a lack of trust in Jesus when they felt frightened by the storm (Lk 8:24). When he entered Jerusalem their misunderstanding of his person becomes influenced with their knowledge of earthly kinship. Hence, Jesus is acclaimed as king (Lk 19:37-38). This lack of confidence, coupled with the fact that their expectations were not becoming real influenced their attitude at the end when they abandoned Jesus. He seemed to have presented an agenda that did not meet with their motives.

In spite of this attitude, Jesus' response is consistent. He probably wanted the disciples to identify him and the nature of his mission *via* his deeds and teachings. When they seemed not to understand, he rebuked, but later continued to teach them. Jesus did not give up in his relationship with the disciples; he kept on fashioning them in accordance with the motives of his mission. After the disciples' first missionary expedition (Lk 9:2-6), followed with

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<sup>108</sup> Any misinterpretation is an interpretation which goes contrary to an expected interpretation. It could simply sound like a misunderstanding from the perspective of the one who claims the right interpretation. If not, it is an interpretation based on the understanding of the person involved in the exercise. Consequently, Luke's judgment of the disciples' inability to understand could be the right approach of what was expected of them. This simply implies that the disciples understood and interpreted Jesus their own way, following their motives.

the impression that they still had not understood Jesus (Lk 9:13, 40), he organised a new mission, in the likeness of the first (Lk 10:1-12). Notwithstanding the flaws that ensued (e.g., misinterpretations, betrayal, abandonment and disbelief), they are the first persons whom Jesus sought to meet after his resurrection. Once more, he renewed his confidence in them by entrusting the rest of what he did into their care (Lk 24:44-49).

The consistency in Jesus' attitude thus resulted in the disciples finally understanding who Jesus is. This is also clear from the story line of Luke's gospel. Emplotted in Luke's narrative, the disciples will be mishandled by the rulers and the synagogue authorities (Lk 12:11-12). They will also be arrested, persecuted, delivered up in the synagogues and prisons and be brought before kings and governors, because of their mission (Lk 21:12). Although not described in the story line of Luke's gospel, this is clear when Luke's plotted time is taken into consideration. If one, at this instance, takes Luke's second volume, the Acts of the Apostles, into consideration, it is clear that what is suggested in Luke 12:11-12 and 21:12 takes place in Luke's second volume. This is a further indication that Jesus' consistency in responding to ignorance by teaching and rejection by acceptance seem to have succeeded in the lives and mission of the disciples. As witnesses they finally understood who Jesus was and what the relationship is between his person and his mission. It is in this vein that the disciples' mission is that of continuity, with all that it entails.

### **5.3 JESUS' RELATIONSHIP WITH THE JEWISH ELITE**

#### **5.3.1 Introduction**

The Jewish elite seem to be Jesus' main opponents in Luke's gospel. The relationship between Jesus and this character group is based on their understanding of who Jesus is. This becomes clear from their interaction with Jesus, Jesus' teaching and deeds, Jesus' appreciation of established Jewish institutions and the attitude of Jesus' disciples.

The main Jewish elite or leaders with whom Jesus interacts in Luke's gospel are the Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees, chief priests, elders and lawyers. The relationship between Jesus and the members of this character group is to be understood in terms of the above mentioned groups and in

terms of these group's alliances.<sup>109</sup> Their common feature is that they all opposed and rejected Jesus. Even though it seems that they understood who Jesus was, they refused to validate his activities and recognise his person. Consequently, they found fault in almost all his activities. They mounted and multiplied varied opportunities that led them to misinterpret Jesus' actions. As a result, they mar Jesus, discredit him and denigrate his personality. Finally, he is declared a *persona non grata* and crucified.

### 5.3.2 Brief definitions

The Jewish elite in Luke's gospel is not a homogenous group. It consists of a system of smaller units, whose definition will add clarity to the understanding of its relationship with Jesus as a distinct character group in Luke's gospel. The name Pharisees originates from the Aramaic root which means "separated" or "distinguished" ones. Historically, they stood for an uncompromising observance of their interpretation of the Mosaic Law and thus separated themselves from those who took a moderate approach towards its understanding and application.<sup>110</sup> The Greek word for scribe, *grammateu&v* is derived from the word *gramma* which means something drawn, that is, written letters. It is a term that designates a skill and occupation with varied roles and statutes. Scribes formed a literate group in matters of the Jewish law and custom. This probably justifies why they are often described in Luke in terms of their relationship with other groups like the Pharisees, Sadducees and the chief priests. Regarding the latter, they are

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<sup>109</sup> Powell (1990:93) observes that the relationship between Jesus and the religious leaders is a much neglected topic in Lukan scholarship. This neglect is partly due to the fact that some of the leaders (e.g., the lawyers and rulers) sometimes form coalitions with the Jewish elite that make their identification and their relationship with Jesus difficult and complicated. This study omits the relationship with individual religious leaders such Joseph of Arimathea (Lk 23:50-53), and concentrates on constituted groups.

<sup>110</sup> The Pharisees stood against the Sadducees because they accepted and endorsed the use of oral tradition in order to strengthen the law. They often turned to the scribes for guidance in applying the law to everyday life. This justifies the fact that, quite often in Luke, they associate with the scribes and not with the Sadducees. Cassidy (1978:122) observes that a great number of scribes were Pharisees. They cooperated with Roman rule and did not see any inherent conflict between Roman taxation and their administration of public order, on the one hand, and their allegiance to the law, on the other hand. They were strong supporters of the synagogue and were the custodians of Jewish tradition and custom. Saldarini (1988:178) also notes that some Pharisees were members of the Galilean governing class (Saldarini 1988:178). Hence, Jesus' relationship with the people became a threat to their position.

especially involved in judicial proceedings. They also seem to have been agents of the temple government, a position which probably gave them power and influence.<sup>111</sup>

Cassidy (1978:116) notes that the original meaning of the term Sadducees is obscure, as well as their history (see Saldarini 1988:302). What we do know is that they stood in contrast with the Pharisees on matters related to the interpretation of the law. They rejected the oral tradition adopted by the Pharisees, as well as the notion of the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees' party was mainly made up of the chief priests, followed by the nobles and some leading men of the society. From Leviticus, the priests had a variety of roles to perform as religious leaders. Temple priests, for example, were responsible for examining persons suspected of uncleanness (Lev 13:6, 10, see Lk 5:14; 17:14). They owned the prerequisite to declare people "clean" (Lev 13:6, 13, 17) or "unclean" (Lev 13:8, 14-15). They also processed people by means of appropriate public sacrifices and offerings to certify their cleanness (Lev 14:10-20).<sup>112</sup> As custodians of the temple, they worked in collaboration with the elders.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Saldarini (1988:155) observes that literate groups like the scribes were often used by governing authorities as advisors, high officials, bureaucrats, judges, teachers and low level functionaries.

<sup>112</sup> According to Malina & Neyrey (1991a:114) the task of the priests in Luke's gospel is to assemble and create a selective reading of Jesus' history to illustrate their claims that he is and always will be a deviant.

<sup>113</sup> In Luke's gospel, there are several character groups that are mentioned alongside the chief priests. These character groups are "the principal men of the people" (Lk 19:47), "the officers of the temple" (Lk 22:52), "the scribes" (Lk 22:66), "the elders" (Lk 22:52) and "the rulers" (Lk 23:13). The understanding of Jesus' relationship with the chief priests begins with the understanding of the relationship between the chief priests and each of these groups. It is clear from the group that led Jesus to the Jewish council that the elders and the scribes were partners to the chief priests (Lk 22:66). The first group of religious leaders that opposed him in the temple were the chief priests, the scribes and the principal men of the people, who probably were the elders (Lk 19:47; see Lk 20:1). At Jesus' arrest, he addressed the chief priests, the officers of the temple and the elders (Lk 22:52). By inference from the group that will later lead Jesus to the council, the officers of the temple are the scribes. Once more, Pilate invites the chief priests, the rulers and the people for consultation (Lk 23:13). It is evident from the above that the rulers referred to are the elders and the scribes. It follows from this analysis that "the principal men of the people", "the officers of the temple", "the scribes", "the elders" and "the rulers" appear as independent groups. The variety in nomenclature demonstrates Luke's knowledge of the Jewish religious system. Consequently, the principal ally group that opposed Jesus in Jerusalem was the chief priests, the elders and the scribes. They all functioned as a team.

### 5.3.3 Jesus and the Jewish elite

The first encounter between Jesus and the Jewish leaders takes place between the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. This comes within the context of healing when Jesus pronounces the forgiveness of sins to a paralytic (Lk 5:17-26). The Pharisees, in the company of the teachers of the law, “had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem” (Lk 5:17, my emphasis). Two possible reasons could have motivated their presence. Jesus’ fame might have aroused their curiosity (Lk 4:14, 37, 40; Lk 5:15) or reports about his sayings (Lk 4:18-30) and his activities (Lk 4:4:31-36; 38-41; 5:1-11; 12-13) might have caught their attention. They probably therefore came so as to bear witness to what they might have heard. In their presence, a paralysed man is lowered down from the roof. The massive turnout of the crowd was a hindrance in getting easy access to Jesus. Jesus’ immediate reaction to these efforts was the declaration of the forgiveness of sins to the paralytic.

This action of Jesus enrages the Pharisees and the scribes. Even though they do not address Jesus directly, they begin to ponder on who Jesus is to have forgiven sins (Lk 5:21). According to them Jesus is usurping God’s prerogative. Jesus immediately perceives their intention. Clearly they are not only concerned with who Jesus is, but especially interested in the authority he claims (Lk 5:25). He further challenges them by granting healing to the paralytic. In contrast to their reaction the crowd that had gathered acknowledge Jesus’ action as they went home amazed while glorifying God. Left with anger and fury, the Pharisees and scribes are later present in Levi’s house where Jesus shares a meal. Jesus’ first disciples and Levi (who has just been called) are part of this meal. The Pharisees and scribes again are angry, pondering over who Jesus is and what the source of his authority is. They especially murmur because of Jesus’ choice of followers. Because they murmur against the disciples, it can be seen as an indirect attack on Jesus. His disciples are incredible; they are described as “tax collectors and sinners” (Lk 5:30). Jesus once more perceives their intention. His response confirms that his company with “tax collectors and sinners” is adequate. Now the Pharisees and scribes decide to face Jesus directly. They observe that his disciples do not fast and pray as John’s disciples do (Lk 5:33). Unlike the first

charge against the disciples, this is an observation. Jesus then justifies his disciples' attitude with a parable that explains their actions. On the Sabbath, the Pharisees multiply the charges against Jesus' disciples. They are accused of plucking and eating heads of grain and rubbing them in their hands (Lk 6:1). Once more, Jesus is not attacked directly. Yet, he still proves his disciples right.

So far, the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders seems to evolve from the question of who Jesus is to that of his choice of followers and his interpretation of religious observance. It would therefore appear that from their first contact they might have had a glimpse of who Jesus was. Consequently, they decide to judge him while ignoring him (Lk 5:30) and raise complementary observations (Lk 5:33), rather than accusing him. Jesus' defence of his disciples also seems to show that his opponents misinterpret religious observance and the Sabbath law. There also seems to be a problem with the credibility of Jesus' disciples which also puts into doubt his own credibility. He does not only mingle with a "wrong" company, but worse of all, he is followed by incompetent and ignorant persons. It also seems to be an attempt to ridicule Jesus' personality as opposed to theirs and that of John the Baptist (Lk 5:33). This initial contact outlines a relationship of contempt, suspicion and jealousy.

With this picture in mind, they seem determined to disprove Jesus to the end. Hence, on a following Sabbath, while Jesus was teaching, a man with a withered hand is present (Lk 6:6). The scribes and the Pharisees are keen to see whether Jesus would perform healing. From previous knowledge, they seem to presume that Jesus would heal. Consequently, they watch him, but do not speak (Lk 6:7). Jesus once more perceives their thoughts. Rhetorically, he justifies the purpose of his Sabbath activities; they are meant to save life (Lk 6:9). As Jesus effectively heals the man, their fury leads them, for the first time, to embark on a discussion on what to do with Jesus (Lk 6:11). Jesus is a threat who must be dealt with. Jesus, however, describes their reaction towards him as a rejection of God's purpose for themselves (Lk 7:30).

In the next micro narrative (Lk 7:36-50), a Pharisee confirms that the religious leaders indeed have a glimpse of who Jesus is. Hence, he invites Jesus for a meal (Lk 7:36-50). Their criticism of Jesus' disciples (and Levi in



particular) during the first meal seems to influence the Pharisee's invitation. This second meal seems a counter to that of Levi. The Pharisee has masterminded Levi's meal, which was even attended by sinners. Unfortunately, the scenario of this other meal is not different. The Pharisee soon becomes crushed with the presence of a woman (another sinner; Lk 7:37), who interrupts the serenity of the meal. Coming into Simon's house, she weeps, wets Jesus' feet with her tears and anoints them. Simon's inner feeling is sarcastic: "if this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner" (Lk 7:39). Accordingly, Jesus again is accused for dealing with a sinner, who is a woman. Still, without being addressed, Jesus responds to Simon's thought. His response confirms that he is indeed a prophet. Another clue to Jesus' identity is added to the Pharisee's knowledge. Beyond what they know him to be, he is a prophet. Jesus then once more strengthens his teaching on the forgiveness of sins, which he offers. He commends the woman's act of courtesy because she offered what his host did not. On the account of her faith, she is saved. Even though these words of forgiveness of sins do not attract another accusation of blasphemy (see Lk 5:21) from the Pharisee, those at table wonder: "who is this, who even forgives sins?" (Lk 7:49). Apparently, Simon does not raise the question, because he already knows who Jesus is.

Simon's criticism of Jesus seems to be based on five counts: 1) Jesus has come in contact with a woman, 2) Jesus has once more associated himself with a sinner, 3) Jesus has again declared the forgiveness of sins, 4) Jesus saves a woman, who is a "sinner" and 5) Jesus is clearly not on their side. So far, the relationship between Jesus and the Pharisees appears to be that which is marred with misinterpretations. It is the misinterpretation of what Jesus does, of what his followers are doing and a misinterpretation of his social relationships. The meal ends with the impression that Jesus cannot be appropriated by the religious leaders as Simon would have expected. This actually confirms that he did not come (exclusively) for them, the righteous (Lk 5:32).

As Jesus returns from the region of the Gerasenes, where he had performed an exorcism, the crowd receives him with joy. Jairus, a ruler of the

synagogue is probably convinced by what Jesus is doing. Consequently, he falls at Jesus' feet and invites him to his home because his daughter was dying (Lk 8:41-42). Although he is the ruler of the synagogue, he recognises that Jesus is doing what he cannot do. Jesus honours his invitation, but is delayed by a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years (Lk 8:43-48). Jesus arrives when Jairo's daughter is dead. Jesus restores her and gives her back to her parents. Although the ruler of the synagogue seems to have an additional knowledge of who Jesus is, he is told not to disclose his experience. Jesus might have sensed that he could once more be misinterpreted. The consciousness of such misinterpretation probably inspires Jesus to engage in a conversation with his disciples. The conversation is essentially centred on who Jesus is and what this identity entails. During this dialogue, Jesus is identified by Peter as the Christ of God. Taking the cue from Peter, Jesus seems to associate the meaning of his person to the tense atmosphere that already existed between him and the religious leaders. According to Jesus' explanation, there is a tied relationship between his person, his mission and the consequences of the misunderstanding of the relationship between the two. He directly indicates that the elders, the chief priests and the scribes will eventually take the issue of his person and work as a personal challenge. These will reject him and cause him to be killed. Jesus therefore overtly predicts and explains that his mission will be that of conflict between himself and the religious leaders. Although this may culminate in his death, Jesus predicts that his death will not mean the end of the conflict, because he will be brought back to life.

At this point, fury had been nursed by the scribes and the Pharisees and plans were on the way as to what to do (Lk 6:11). Their first solution seems to be a test on Jesus' teaching. Hence, a lawyer tests Jesus on how to inherit eternal life (Lk 10:25), most probably expecting Jesus to validate his application of the law, as well as his self-acclaimed righteous attitude, referred to earlier by Jesus (Lk 5:32; see also Lk 7:41-46). Jesus uses this opportunity to challenge him on their application of the law, which is "inward" looking. At the end of their encounter, Jesus widens the lawyer's view of the law and requests him to emulate this point of view (Lk 10:37). Jesus' new lesson to the lawyer consists of seeing both Jews and non-Jews (Samaritans) alike as

neighbours. The lawyer, as the ruler of the synagogue, seems to have learnt more about Jesus.

While the lawyer fails in his plan on what to do, another Pharisee invites Jesus again for another dinner (Lk 11:37). It is probable that the Pharisees are not satisfied with the setting of the second meal (disrupted by a sinful woman). There is therefore need for correction, because Jesus is not yet on their side. Hostility soon begins when Jesus' host criticises him for eating without washing his hands. Jesus counteracts this criticism with a series of observations of who the Pharisees actually are. Although they expect external ritual purity they are themselves filthy within (extortion and wickedness). Jesus accuses them of injustice, segregation and the seeking of public admiration and recognition (Lk 11:39-44, see also Lk 18:9-14). This is Jesus' first outspoken public criticism of the Pharisees. The meal has once more turned into a disappointment for the Pharisees. The lawyers (who were apparently present at the meal) are given the same criticism (Lk 11:46-52). As a direct consequence, the Pharisees and the scribes resolve to provoke him and to lay in ambush waiting for him (Lk 11:53-54). However, in the next micro narrative, Jesus uses the Pharisees' attitude as a topic of teaching to his disciples. They are hypocrites (Lk 12:1). This is a conclusion based on their earlier interactions. Twice he has honoured their invitation to meals (Lk 7:36-50; 11:37; see also Lk 14:1). But these seemed to have become opportunities for suspicion, opposition and rejection. Jesus has recognised this intention behind their invitations. The invitations were not acts of hospitality. They were occasions to show off and lure Jesus to their side. As such, the meals were a distraction to Jesus' mission.

The next event in the narrative takes Jesus into the synagogue where he heals a woman who has been bent for eighteen years (Lk 13:10-13). This causes the ruler of the synagogue to be indignant. Yet, without addressing Jesus directly, he complains to the crowd (Lk 13:14). Jesus immediately responds to this accusation in which he associates the ruler with the Pharisees. They are both hypocrites (Lk 13:15). The ruler is hypocritical because Jesus has brought back to life the daughter of another ruler of a synagogue (Lk 8:55). This ruler of a synagogue (probably different from Jaïrus), however, stands against Jesus' activities. In what sounds like a

judgment, the crowd then reflects on Jesus' criticism. They appreciate what Jesus is doing, while his adversaries are put to shame. The hypocritical character of the Pharisees is soon confirmed when they inform Jesus about Herod's threats. They wish to protect Jesus, while at the same time, they want to trap him. Jesus' response shows no sign of regret to what he is doing. Instead, it indicates his intention not to divert from what he is doing (Lk 13:31-33).<sup>114</sup> The Pharisees, however, seem to be astute in the use of distracting mechanisms in order to deter Jesus from his mission.

Although the first two meals Jesus was invited to by Pharisees ended in conflict, in Luke 14:1-6 Jesus again accepts an invitation to a third meal at the house of the ruler of the Pharisee's (Lk 14:1-6). This is probably an opportunity for the ruler to correct the mishaps of the first two meals (offered by ordinary Pharisees). The same scenario (as the previous ones) is however repeated. There is a man present who has dropsy (Lk 14:2), and the Pharisees are keen to see what will happen. In a rhetorical way, Jesus lures them to understand why it is necessary for him to heal even on the Sabbath. While the Pharisees and the lawyers (present at the meal) do not respond to him, he illustrates his argument with a parable (Lk 14:15-24). It is once more a challenge to his host (as was the case at the first meal), who did not extend his invitation beyond family members, friends and people of social repute. Jesus' teaching concurs with that which he had earlier administered to the lawyer on the question of neighbourliness (Lk 10:37). Jesus is interested in a change of attitude and in the manner in which religious leaders (in particular the Pharisees and the lawyers), see and appreciate others.

Clearly, Jesus does not seem to succeed in persuading his adversaries through his teachings. Instead, while tax collectors and sinners eat with him, the Pharisees and the scribes murmur. As before, Jesus dispels their murmur with three parables that explain his attitude (Lk 15:4-32). These parables, misunderstood by the Pharisees, focus on their thirst for material possessions (Lk 16:1-13). Beyond being hypocrites, they are also qualified as "lovers of money" (Lk 16:14). Jesus' further teaching on the coming kingdom triggers

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<sup>114</sup> As mentioned already (see footnote 106), the Pharisees' caution to Jesus means that although they seem not to have mingled with politics, they were aware of the political activities of the city.

them to inquire about its coming (Lk 17:20). Although they do not agree with Jesus, they seem to be interested in knowing more. This anxiety does not seem unrelated to the fixed knowledge they have nursed about Jesus (see their concern for Jesus' security against Herod's threats).<sup>115</sup> Jesus' teaching might have touched on an area which they expected him to address. Jesus probably understood the misinterpretation which transpired in their question. Hence, he answers them accordingly: "the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Lk 17:21).<sup>116</sup> This conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees gives Jesus another opportunity to once more warn his disciples against the Pharisees. He uses the context of a parable to indicate in what way the Pharisees seem to adopt a judgmental attitude of self-acclaimed righteousness (Lk 18:9-14).

Jesus' last contact with the Pharisees is when he enters Jerusalem. In this narrative, Jesus' disciples acclaim him as king. The Pharisees, on their turn, urge Jesus to caution them (Lk 19:39). As was the case in Galilee, they fear that the proclamation of Jesus as king would probably attract enmity (similar to the threats of Herod) between Jesus and Pilate in Jerusalem. Jesus' response shows no appreciation. He knows the direction of their thoughts; hence he answers: "if these were silent, the very stones would cry out" (Lk 19:41)

After this dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisees, the Pharisees disappear from the scene.<sup>117</sup> They have shown a certain degree of understanding of who Jesus is. They, however, seem to have identified him

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<sup>115</sup> The understanding of the Pharisees' quest in this section is best illustrated by their eagerness to inform Jesus about Herod's threats of death. This eagerness will later be enhanced by their intimation for Jesus to keep his disciples quiet in Luke 19:39.

<sup>116</sup> Jesus' answer seems enigmatic (Saldarini 1988:180). This verse has not gained unanimity among New Testament scholars in terms of its interpretation. The difficulty stems from the interpretation of the expression *en to v u(mw~n*. If *en to v u(mw~n* is understood as "in your midst", it refers to Jesus' presence among them. On the contrary, if it means "within you", it refers to God's kingdom being situated in their hearts. The latter, according to Saldarini (1988:123) relates to an ethical interpretation of what Jesus meant. However, the former meaning sounds more probable. In the next verses Jesus refers to visible indications such as lightning, light and sky, meaning that he referred to the kingdom of God in terms of his visible presence among them, which they are unable to identify.

<sup>117</sup> Saldarini (1988:178) opines that the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees in Galilee was centred on who is in control of the Galilean society. This argument seems correct because the Pharisees not only show mastery of the Jewish law; they also show through their interaction with Jesus that they are in control of the society. They controlled Jesus' movement and activities within Galilee, and as he moved to Jerusalem. This brings to question their knowledge and understanding of Jesus' identity and activities.

with wrong motives. Their information about Herod's threats and their caution against the disciples' acclamation of Jesus as king seem to infer a wrong misinterpretation of Jesus' identity and his mission. Although they opposed him, they did not really dare to face him directly. They seem to have understood him as an important personality. Hence, the invitations to meals were probably meant to consolidate ties between Jesus and themselves. Unfortunately, nothing went as planned. Jesus is more attracted by those whom they neglect. They probably wished to have Jesus focus attention on them. Unfortunately, Jesus' attention is focused on his mission, as prescribed in Luke 4:18-19. Jesus might not have encountered as many problems with them if he had accepted to take sides and associate with them. Consequently, even though the Pharisees and the scribes seem to know Jesus thus far, they misinterpret his mission. They seem to make a wrong appreciation between Jesus' person and his mission; hence, the disagreement.

With their disappearance from the scene, the scribes now form a new alliance with the chief priests and the elders (Lk 19:47). When Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, he proceeds directly to the temple, where he drives out those who were selling (Lk 19:45). Jesus' attitude clearly affects this new alliance. Beyond chasing people from the temple, Jesus also teaches daily. Their first reaction is a search to destroy him, but they fear the people who are fascinated by Jesus' words (Lk 19:47-48). However, they soon grow in courage and directly face Jesus for the first time. So far, Jesus has been attacked either by way of inner thoughts (Lk 5:21; 6:7; 7:39), grumbling (Lk 5:30), courtesy his disciples (Lk 5:33; 6:1-2) or through a report to the crowd (Lk 13:14). Now, Jesus is faced directly. Their attack is again on who Jesus is and on the source of his authority (Lk 20:1-3). Their questions elucidate on the reasons for the opposition that exists between Jesus and his adversaries. Jesus is not only teaching in public; he heals on the Sabbath and seems to defy the temple. Their questions also touch on prerogatives. Jesus does not have the right to do what he is doing. Jesus' response to them is a counter question on the source of John's baptism. This question of Jesus catches them in their own trap; hence they discuss their response as a team. As a result they declare their ignorance to Jesus' question, which seems to have provoked them to discover that their attack was baseless. In Jesus' question they have a response to their questions. In the parable of the vineyard and the



tenants, Jesus brings the scribes, the elders and the chief priests to rage by criticising them publicly (Lk 20:9-18). In spite of their wish to arrest Jesus, they are, however, still obstructed by the huge presence of people (Lk 20:19, 26; 22:2).

Because of this obstruction, the alliance decides to connive with spies against Jesus (Lk 20:20). The spies' strategy to lure Jesus to error begins with flattering words in which Jesus is acknowledged as "teacher" (Lk 20:21). They test Jesus on the validity of paying taxes. Although Jesus defeats their intention, they still want to have him arrested, but cannot because of the presence of the people (Lk 20:26). The unanimity of the religious leaders' antagonism against Jesus is completed with the introduction of the Sadducees in Luke 20:27-40. They also come to test Jesus (with flattering words) on the content of his teaching. Their test of Jesus is based on the notion of the resurrection, in which they do not believe (Lk 20:27). Rather than providing a straightforward answer (as they might have expected), Jesus responds with an elaborate teaching on the whole notion of the resurrection. This answer defeats their aim. Some of the scribes, however, seem to consider Jesus' response as satisfactory (Lk 20:39). Hence, the Sadducees disappear from the scene and dare not ask Jesus any further questions (Lk 20:40). In spite of the apparent appreciation from the scribes, Jesus then goes on to warn the disciples against their example (Lk 20:46-47). Like the Pharisees, they seek social and public prominence and are economically oppressive. They exploit, rather than defend and protect, the widows.

Another alliance is formed when the scribes, the chief priests and the elders connive with Judas to betray Jesus (Lk 22:47-53). This seems to be an easy breakthrough since Judas (an apostle) later leads the crowd (some of whom had been a hindrance to Jesus' arrest), to arrest Jesus. The Jewish leaders' plans to get Jesus arrested have materialised. Jesus is seized and taken first to the priest's house and later appears in front of the Jewish council where they proceed with a trial conducted by themselves (Lk 22:66-71).<sup>118</sup> The judgment in the council is paradoxical because it takes the form of an inquisition about Jesus' identity. Jesus is judged on the basis of the claim of

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<sup>118</sup> Luke's account in Acts 5:34-39 seems to imply that the Pharisees were present in the high priest's house. This sounds tendentious, since in terms of practice the Pharisees did not agree with the priestly class and their allies, the Sadducees, who quite often influenced most of the council's decisions.

messiahship (Lk 22:67; see Lk 9:20) and on the basis of his relationship with God (Lk 22:70; see Lk 9:22). As a result, they pass Jesus over to the council of Pilate.

During Jesus' Roman trial, the Jewish leaders press hard on their charges. The initial charges that they had hitherto raised against Jesus in their council (Lk 22:67-70) are transformed and interpreted politically. In what sounds like new charges, Jesus is accused of perverting the nation, forbidding the paying of taxes and declaring himself king of the Jews (Lk 23:2-3). Realising that Pilate was rather interested in the third charge, they strengthen their accusation with more emphasis. Jesus is accused of stirring up the people; for teaching throughout all Judea; starting from Galilee and ending in Jerusalem (Lk 23:5).<sup>119</sup> This last charge inspires Pilate to refer Jesus to Herod. While with Herod, Jesus' accusers stand vehemently against him. Herod, however, finds himself incompetent to judge Jesus. Consequently, Jesus is brought back to Pilate. When Pilate calls together the chief priests, the rulers and the people in order to declare Jesus' innocence, they jointly respond: "away with this man" (Lk 23:18). The multitude also shout for the crucifixion of Jesus (Lk 23:21-24). Because of this unanimous front against Jesus, Jesus is delivered up to be crucified (Lk 23:25), and led away for execution. Jesus' predictions on the elders, chief priests and scribes (Lk 9:22; 19:44; 17:25; 18:32-33) have been fulfilled. After Jesus' crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea (a member of the council that pressed charges against Jesus), receives permission from Pilate to bury Jesus (Lk 23:50-52). By giving Jesus a decent burial (Lk 23:53), Joseph seems to dissociate himself from the religious leaders' opinion about Jesus and join the centurion in his remark that Jesus was *δικαιος*.

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<sup>119</sup> Three verbs describe the charge against Jesus: *diastre&fw* (Lk 23:2), *alpostre&fw* (Lk 23:14) and *al'nase&iw* (Lk 23:5). The first two verbs mean mislead, lead away or divert. Jesus is accused of misleading "the people" through his teaching and attitude. He eats and associates with sinners and tax collectors and defies the Sabbath. Through his usurped identity as Messiah and King, he misleads "the people", by drawing them to himself. The third verb means to arouse, incite or stir up. Through Jesus' authoritative teaching and empowerment, he stirs "people" against the religious and political authorities. From the perspective of the elders, the chief priests and the scribes, these accusations should be understood in relation to their understanding, interpretation and application of the Shema (Israel's confession of faith): "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut 6:4; 11:13-31, see also Num 15:37-41).

### 5.3.4 Conclusion

The relationship between Jesus and the Jewish elite is ambiguous and inconsistent. It depicts the tension that arose between two systems. In Galilee Jesus is challenged because of his social and religious activities. In Jerusalem, the Jewish elite interpret these activities politically.<sup>120</sup> Clearly speaking, Jesus' activities, his teaching, his social relationships, the attitude of his followers and the question surrounding his person and the source of his authority are the building bricks of the Jewish elite's relationship with Jesus. The Jewish elite indeed have a glimpse of who Jesus is. Unfortunately, his actions are in dissonance with their expectations. He constantly reveals his identity through the forgiveness of sins (Lk 5:21; 7:48); by identifying with a woman's touch (Lk 7:40); by healing and raising up the dead (Lk 8:41) and through his teachings (Lk 10:37). He is recognised as "teacher" by the Sadducees (Lk 20:28) and the scribes (Lk 20:39). Yet, no one seems to validate his activities and recognise his public worth.

While they see Jesus as a rival to political leaders like Herod (Lk 13:31) and Pilate (Lk 19:39; 23:1-2), they essentially consider him as a religious opponent (their own opponent). Jesus alters religious observances with respect to praying, fasting, washing before meals (Lk 5:33; 11:38) and the Sabbath law (Lk 6:1, 10; 13:12; 14:4). He also defies and challenges religious authorities (Lk 11:42-47; 12:1; 19:45-48; 20:46). Because of their perception of these actions, the Jewish leaders misunderstand the implication of Jesus' person. He stood as an incarnation of his mission. Hence several times, they lure him in order to divert his attention from his focus. They might have legitimated Jesus' person if he did not preach for a change of order (e.g., their attitude towards material possessions and the teaching on neighbourliness) or mingled with the category of people whom they despised. They also would have validated and recognised Jesus, if he recognised them as leaders and identified with them.

In summary, the relationship between Jesus and the religious leaders is that of suspicion, contempt, pretence, malice, deceit and rejection. Even

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<sup>120</sup> This blend between religion and politics relates to the fact that in Jewish Palestinian society religion was embedded in the political and social fabric of the community. Hence, involvement with religion was in itself a political and social involvement as well.

though they are unable to get rid of Jesus, they use spies and his collaborators. From Jesus' trial, the titles with which he is addressed are used as a source of provocation against him and an offence towards the political and religious systems. In spite of this tension, Jesus is not hostile. With regard to the Pharisees he wants them to change their attitude.<sup>121</sup> They are not mentioned as part of the group that will cause Jesus' rejection. This attitude of Jesus can also be detected right through his arrest and trials. Some religious leaders also stand distinct in their attitude towards Jesus such as Simeon (Lk 2:25-35) and Joseph of Arimathea (Lk 23:50-54). This indicates that Jesus does not seem to stand against the Jewish leaders as such. Rather, he stands against individuals who misuse these systems in order to misrepresent God for their own benefit (Lk 7:30). Notwithstanding, Jesus is a threat to the integrity and the authority of the religious leaders as a whole. He pulls crowds to himself rather than assist the religious leaders in their quest of public recognition. Consequently, he is fit for rejection.

## 5.4 JESUS' RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ROMAN ELITE<sup>122</sup>

### 5.4.1 Introduction

Two main issues seem to characterise the political context of Luke's gospel. Firstly, the gospel is introduced within the context of Roman rule. For instance, the angel's announcement to Mary is about the coming of Jesus,

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<sup>121</sup> The behaviour of the Pharisees seems not to have been commensurate with their status. Franklin (1994:196-197) agrees with Jesus' frustration that: "Luke sees the Pharisees, not as representatives of any contemporary group – though there was no doubt Pharisaic activity in his time – but as figures primarily from the past, as representatives of that group who by their pith, their zeal, their covenantal seriousness, and their response to Israel's election should have been those *who* would have been expected to respond to Jesus to see the Law and prophecy taken up and fulfilled in him. The tragedy is that they had not, that though they had a natural affinity with Jesus and with the proclamation about him, they had been unable to take on board the newness within the continuity that the coming of Jesus means" (Franklin 1994:196-197).

<sup>122</sup> According to Carter (2006:3) the texts of the New Testament are *inter alia* products of a world dominated by the Roman Empire. At the time of Jesus, that is, from about 6 AD onward, Judea was ruled directly by Pilate, the Roman governor. In contrast, Herod, a local Roman-approved ruler, administered Galilee. The relationship between the Romans and the Jews was that of cooperation, through the Jewish elite and their institutions. It is in this interest that Herod is considered in this study as a member of the Roman elite, because he ruled with Rome's permission and promoted Roman interest (Carter 2006:3). In spite of this relationship, the emperor in Rome was supreme. In terms of religious commitments, the Jews did not compromise with God's sovereignty. Hence, controversy sometimes arose between the Jews and the Romans because of their position *vis-à-vis* idolatry. Dedicated Jews strongly opposed any form of worship that contravened their belief in one God.

who is an agent of God's sovereignty (Lk 1:32-33, see also 2 Sam 7). Mary's own response is a song, which expresses her joy for the overthrow of human rule. Jesus' birth described by the shepherds as good news (Lk 2:11) is situated within the context of imperial rule (Lk 2:1-2). Jesus is identified with political and what seem like aggressive credentials; he is King, Saviour, Son of the Most High and Lord. Simeon testifies that he "is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel" (Lk 2:34). Anna predicts that he will redeem Jerusalem (Lk 2:38). John the Baptist describes him as one with a winnowing fork, who will clear, gather and burn (Lk 3:17). Secondly, Jesus' language in Luke 4:18-22 also sounds political. He will "release" many, because it is the "acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk 4:19). This agenda is about what seems an alternative society, with an alternative rule. Jesus' birth is thus situated within a context wherein Roman rule seems to shape the political, economic and social life of the Lukan context.

This section is therefore centred on the interaction between Jesus and the Roman authorities. This relationship will be understood through Jesus' interaction with Herod, Pilate, the centurions and soldiers, as well as some of Jesus' comments about Roman elite.

#### **5.4.2 Jesus and the Roman authorities**

Two important Roman authorities who will later confront Jesus are announced at the beginning of Luke's gospel. Herod is introduced in Luke's gospel as king of Judea (Lk 1:5) and tetrarch of Galilee (Lk 3:1, 19; 9:7). For Pilate, he is the governor of the Judean province (Lk 3:1). The first contact between Jesus and a Roman authority is within the context of his healing activities in Capernaum (Lk 7:1-10). Jesus meets a centurion by courtesy of the elders of the Jews, who invites Jesus to heal his servant. The elders' request on behalf of the centurion is followed by their comments on the centurion's credentials. In their opinion, he merits Jesus' attention because of his love for the nation. In fact, he had built a synagogue for God's worship (Lk 7:4-5). These comments seem to persuade Jesus. When he approaches the centurion's home, the actions of the centurion confirm the prior remarks of elders about his character. He also confirms his position within the Roman system through the testimony from friends (Lk 7:8). Recognising Jesus as "Lord", he seems to



be convinced that Jesus can heal by word of mouth, even from a distance. Jesus describes this attitude as that of faith (Lk 7:9). On the basis of the centurion's conviction, Jesus heals his servant. This initial contact between Jesus and a Roman authority gives a clue about their relationship with the community. They seem to be rich; some of them are even loving and benevolent. Jesus seems to approve this as the correct attitude expected from authorities.

Jesus' second contact with a Roman authority is through the courtesy of Herod's desire to see him (Lk 9:7-9). As tetrarch of Galilee, where Jesus' activities were centred, Herod most probably has been informed about Jesus and his activities; consequently, he is perplexed (Lk 9:7). He has received varied speculations as to who Jesus is. While some have identified him with John, who might have been raised, others thought of Elijah yet; some others thought he was one of the prophets of old who might have risen (Lk 9:8). Herod, however, is not convinced by these speculations because he knows that he beheaded John. Hence, he wonders: *τί & ν δ ε ε) σ τ ι ν ο υ ( τ ο υ*; His perplexity about Jesus is situated around Jesus' person and the things that he does, which have caught his attention.

As tetrarch, he might have been informed about the shepherds' reaction at Jesus' birth (Lk 2:20), as well as the testimonies of Simeon and Anna. Later, Jesus' person, his teaching, his attitude and his activities have accorded him fame through all the surrounding region of Galilee (cf Lk 4:14, 22, 37; 5:15; 8:40). Jesus is calling disciples (Lk 5:1-11, 28; 6:11-12-16) and challenging religious authorities (Lk 5:21, 32; 6:11). As a result of this, he is gathering a huge following which includes women (Lk 4:42; 6:17; 8:2). He has healed many people among whom is a centurion's servant (Lk 7:10). The most recent of Jesus' activities might have been the impact from the missionary journey of the twelve (Lk 9:1-6).

In respect of these activities, Jesus definitely seems a threat to Herod. The reminder of what he did to John is an indication of what he might do to Jesus; hence, he sought to see him (Lk 9:9). This anxiety transmits Herod's doubts; even though he is not sure about the speculations, he wishes to see the person concerned. Herod seems to have identified a link between what Jesus does and the person of Jesus himself. Herod seems the opposite of the centurion. While the latter believed Jesus without seeing him, the former



seems to cast doubts and wishes to see him. Their intentions are not the same. While the centurion acknowledges Jesus supreme, compared to his own position (Lk 7:6-8), Herod seems threatened. His first reaction is a reminder of what he did to John whom he saw as his rival (see Lk 3:19-20). Herod makes no comments about the other personalities with whom Jesus has been identified, probably because he had no encounter with any of them. However, whoever Jesus is, he wishes to see him.

A verbal report from the Pharisees later confirms the probable reasons of Herod's quest to see Jesus. Their report discloses Herod's plans to kill Jesus (Lk 13:31). This report unveils Herod's initial desire to know who Jesus is and what he is doing. Apparently, Herod's desire to see Jesus has been transformed into jealousy, fear and hatred. Jesus' person and activities seem to provoke a negative impact on Herod, as was the case with John the Baptist whom he beheaded. Jesus, according to Herod, is another rival who has to be dealt with. Jesus' response to the Pharisees apparent attitude of goodwill is a reaction he expects his informants to carry back to Herod. First, he describes Herod as a "fox".<sup>123</sup> Secondly, he is not willing to alter his agenda of activities, but to carry out his task to the end. Lastly, he releases his plans to proceed to Jerusalem. Jesus' response shows that even though he is aware of Herod's hostility, he is determined to ignore his influence on him. He must finalise his activities only when he is in Jerusalem.<sup>124</sup> Nothing seems to distract Jesus from his mission; not even a threat on his life. The Pharisees' report also introduces the political authorities in Galilee as Jesus' adversaries.

As Jesus enters Jerusalem, he is faced with political challenges. Spies are charged to trick him and set him against Caesar's authority on the issue of the paying of taxes (Lk 20:20-26). Jesus understands their trap and offers an intriguing answer: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Lk 20:25). It is a response which seems to ridicule both the religious and political authorities.<sup>125</sup> With respect to the right

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<sup>123</sup> By this definition, Jesus thus depreciates Herod's personality and identity, viewing his role as being destructive (see Ez 13:4) and secondary (Cassidy 1978:51).

<sup>124</sup> Keck (2000:116) seems to disagree with this view, arguing that the Pharisees' report was instead a strategy to get Jesus leave their jurisdiction. Whatever the case, Jesus' decision to leave was not dependent on Herod's threat. Rather, it was in conformity with the agenda that he had set for himself.

<sup>125</sup> The fact that the Jewish spies carried a *dhna&rion* with them (Lk 20:24) disproves of their loyalty to the Mosaic Law which they supposedly protected. The coin bore Caesar's

attitude that is expected of the disciples, Jesus predicts the reaction of political authorities as an eventual impediment to their mission. He forewarned the disciples: “they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name’s sake” (Lk 21:12). Jesus paints the political leaders as cruel authorities who do not favour the expansion of his ministry. They also are a wrong example of leadership to be emulated by his disciples. With the growing quest of power within the disciples, Jesus also warned them: “the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves” (Lk 22:25-26).<sup>126</sup> This also sounds like a direct critique on the political system of Jesus’ time. Even though Jesus has not yet come into direct contact with the Roman authorities, he has a sound knowledge of their attitude. As oppressive authorities, they accord more importance to what they will reap as personal profit

The first member of the Roman elite that Jesus encounters directly is Pilate (Lk 23:1). Jesus is brought before Pilate by the religious authorities who accuse him on three charges. Jesus is accused for perverting the nation, for forbidding the payment of tribute to Caesar, and for claiming to be king (Lk 23:2). These charges clearly are political, but also distort Jesus’ person and mission. He is presented as a political rival to Pilate. Curiously, Pilate ignores the first two charges that had direct political impact on his rule. Instead, he nuances the third charge and makes it more definite. He asks Jesus if he is “the King of the Jews?” (Lk 23:3). Jesus’ answer triggers Pilate’s verdict: Jesus is innocent (Lk 23:4). Jesus’ opponents, having taken note of Pilate’s digression; then insist on Jesus stirring the people throughout Galilee (Lk 23:5). The mention of Galilee urges Pilate to refer Jesus to Herod. The

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likeness, which attests to the fact that they were partisans of idol worship. The inability of the religious leaders, who sponsored the spies to arrest Jesus or to confront him, is because already they might have fallen guilty of idolatry. Consequently, they remained silent (Lk 20:26). Jesus’ response also ridicules Caesar, because Caesar does not own anything; God owns everything. This point of view of Jesus ignores the sovereignty of Caesar and thereby projects God as proprietor of the world and all that is therein (see Ps 24:1).

<sup>126</sup> According to Schmid & Leaney (1958:269), Jesus’ reference to “benefactors” refers to the Roman emperors such as Augustus, who used this title with reference to themselves.

encounter between Jesus and Pilate presents the latter as a dubious character. Even though he twists the first charges, identifying them in their proper context, he does not remain firm in his decision. He is easily overtaken by the last charge from Jesus' opponents, which is simply a mere repetition of the first charge.

Jesus' first physical encounter with Herod (Lk 23:8-12) coincides with Herod's longing to see Jesus (Lk 9:9), probably to kill him (Lk 13:31). Curiously, Herod who had longed to see Jesus in order to kill him absurdly welcomes him happily (Lk 23:8). His intentions seem to have changed in the course of time. His hope to see Jesus perform some sign instead implies that he either misunderstands who Jesus is, or he might have been motivated by Jesus' indirect encounter with the centurion (Lk 7:1-10). This apparent (mis)understanding of Jesus probably influences Herod to minimise the charges against Jesus, and to develop interest in seeing him perform miracles. However, on the basis of the chief priests' and the scribes' vehement accusations, Herod treats Jesus with contempt, mocks him, dresses him as a king and sends him back to Pilate. Before Herod, Jesus refuses to utter a word, contrary to his attitude before Pilate. Luke remarks that on this account, Pilate and Herod became friends (Lk 23:12).<sup>127</sup> This remark makes this alliance suspicious. By dressing Jesus gorgeously, Herod seems to confirm Pilate's impression that Jesus' principal charge is that he is king of the Jews. Herod, who had sought to see Jesus, finally got his opportunity, but refuses to exploit it. By sending Jesus back to Pilate he seems to affirm that Jesus is innocent.

From this analysis, the relationship between Jesus and Herod is that of rivalry, suspicion, malice and misinterpretation. Jesus' popularity has been mistakenly interpreted by Herod. He discharges Jesus, yet dresses him with attire which misrepresents Jesus and gives of him a specific public opinion. He clearly uses Jesus in order to mend and strengthen his relationship with Pilate.

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<sup>127</sup> Cassidy (1978:95) remarks that during Herod's rule he fought to stay in the good graces of Rome so as to remain in power for as long as possible. This probably justifies why he dressed Jesus in kingly attire before sending him back to Pilate during the trial; an attempt to deceive Pilate?



## 5.5 JESUS' RELATIONSHIP WITH THE JEWISH PEASANTRY

### 5.5.1 Introduction

The peasantry in Luke's gospel are the "common people", for example the fishermen, craftsmen and farmers. They also include those who have lost the sense of being human as a result of some natural or man-made circumstances (e.g., the sick and the poor). They form the category of the peasantry as opposed to that of the elite as studied above in § 5.3. In Luke's gospel, they are called "the crowd", "the people" or "the multitude". They are the people who constitute popular opinion about the person and ministry of Jesus.

Luke's gospel makes a clear distinction between the various categories of this character group, who followed Jesus; especially the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  (people) and what he calls the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  (crowd). Before Jesus gets in contact with the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  and the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$ , Luke presents another character group, which is only identified as  $\rho\alpha\nu$  (all). Jesus' encounter with the  $\rho\alpha\nu$  indicates how Jesus should be known and understood. Consequently, the relationship between Jesus and the peasantry is highly influenced by this distinction. Hence, Jesus' relationship with the peasantry will be understood at three levels to mean his relationship with the  $\rho\alpha\nu$  (all); his relationship with the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  (crowd) and his relationship with the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  (people). Specifically, the distinction between  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  and  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  merits special attention. This distinction justifies a short excursion which is intended to clarify Luke's usage of these terms and their importance in the rest of the narrative.

### 5.5.2 Excursion: $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$ (people) and $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ (crowd)<sup>128</sup>

From the English translation of the Revised Standard Version (RSV), it is difficult to make a distinction between who is addressed as  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  or "people" in Luke, and who is the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  or the "crowd". Many scholars, including Nestle-Aland in their English translation of the Greek text being used, have fallen victim to this error. For example, whereas Nestle-Aland rightly

<sup>128</sup> Luke's gospel is familiar with both  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  and  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  in singular and plural, respectively. For easy reading and comprehension, both nouns will only be used either in the nominative singular or in the nominative plural, as the case might be, irrespective of the cases in which they both appear in the Greek text.

translates  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  to mean people, multiple translations are given for  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ .  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  is translated as “multitude” (Lk 3:7, 10; 5:15; 8:45; 12:1, 13, 54; 14:25; 19:39; 23:4, 48) and “company of” (Lk 5:29) or “people” (Lk 4:42; 5:1, 3; 9:18; 11:14; 13:17). This translation defeats the implicit emphasis of Luke’s vocabulary. Quite often, Luke also uses  $\rho\lambda\eta\sim\gamma\omicron\nu$  to refer to a multitude (Lk 1:10; 2:13; 5:6; 6:17; 8:37; 19:37; 23:1; 23:27). In this case, it is used as a quantifying adjective. He equally uses  $\rho\alpha\nu$ , which goes beyond the simple meaning “all” (Lk 4:15, 22, 36, 40).  $\rho\alpha\nu$  probably refers to a mixture of either  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  or  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$ . A brief study of Luke’s use of  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  and  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  will clarify the distinction between these two nouns. This study will be done on the basis of how they appear in the Greek text.

$\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  appears for the first time in Luke 1:10, referring to devoted Jews; that is, people of the Jewish faith or Judaism. This term is used in the gospel of Luke before the story about Jesus is told. The  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  terminology continues unchanged in the same line of thought (although Jesus is already introduced), until Luke 3:7, when the word  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  is used for the people that gather around John the Baptist. In between, Luke introduces another character group, which he simply identifies as  $\rho\alpha\nu$  (Lk 4:15, 22, 36, 40). This group seems to be distinct from  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  and  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ , in terms of their relationship with Jesus. However, the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  of Luke 3:7 are members who will eventually be initiated into a new community by John the Baptist. That is why they are addressed as  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ . In Luke 3:21, these have been baptised as  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$ .

In Luke 6:17,  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  reappears, with a second meaning. It is used to describe those who came from Judea, Jerusalem, and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon. This  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  does not necessarily refer to devoted Jews only. It is a mixed group from all over the region of Palestine. They are simple Jews, devoted or not; Jews, irrespective of status; either proselytes with ascribed or acquired status. From now on, the configuration of the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  remains beyond Judaism as a faith; but continues to centre around the Jews as an ethnic group.  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  appears again for the last time in Luke 24:19 to confirm that Luke uses this term in an exclusive manner to refer to believers in the Jewish faith in particular and the people of Israel as a nation.



The  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\iota$  are also those whose interest the religious authorities seek to protect; they constitute the nation of Israel. Jesus is accused for stirring up and perverting the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  (Lk 23:5, 14). According to Cleopas and the unnamed disciple, the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  are those for whom Jesus supposedly came (Lk 24:19). Also in the gospel, some authorities are identified as part of the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$ . It is the case of “the principal men of the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$ ” (Lk 19:47) and the “elders of the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$ ” (Lk 22:66).

On the other hand,  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$  (in plural) appears for the first time in Luke 3:7 as a distinct inquisitive group that seeks for admission into a new movement which is introduced and led by John the Baptist. Henceforth, the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  continues to be those who listen convincingly to John’s teaching. Jesus begins his ministry in Luke 4 when news about him has spread and will continue to spread throughout the surrounding country (Lk 4:14-15; 37). Jesus becomes famous because of the announcement of his plan of activities (Lk 4:18-19) and its effective realisation that is taking place in Capernaum and beyond. Those who sought him and came to him are the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$  (Lk 4:42). These are members of the category announced by Jesus in Luke 4:18, who are being healed, fed and liberated (Lk 4:39; 7:22; 18:43).

Jesus continues his ministry with the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$  from Luke 4:42, until when they are joined by the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  for the first time in Luke 6:17. Here,  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  is identified with reference to the disciples: “a great crowd of his disciples”. Hitherto, Jesus’ disciples are known to be his followers. In Luke 6:17, the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  becomes part of the organised and apparently conscious group that follows Jesus. Henceforth, the number of the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  continues to swell as a result of Jesus’ teaching and miracles. Apart from those who are physically healed from their infirmities, sinners and tax collectors also form part of the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$ . It is a new community. In Jerusalem, the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  are Jesus’ sympathisers (Lk 19:39). They are a strong force behind him. This is why Judas wishes to betray Jesus only when the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  is absent (Lk 22:6).  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  reappears in Luke 23:48 and resumes its initial meaning as members of the new group that sympathises with Jesus when they beat their breasts and return home with dissatisfaction. This action takes place after the crucifixion. Apparently, the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\iota$  has fused with the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$  to become one group.

In effect, the distinction between  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  and  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  is made clear in Luke 6:17 and 18. Here, Nestle-Aland is faithful to the Greek translation of  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  and  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ . First, there is an  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  of disciples and second there is a  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon. They both come to listen to Jesus and to be healed of their diseases (Lk 6:17). When their aim has been fulfilled, they are all identified as the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  that sought to touch him so as to receive power (Lk 6:19). This distinction is also made clear in one of the charges against Jesus. He was accused for stirring up the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$ ; not the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  (Lk 23:5, 14). Jesus' accusers probably found the charge against Jesus and the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  irrelevant and awkward, because they appeared to have been enthusiastic being Jesus' sympathisers. Consequently, the relationship that posed a threat to the community was that with the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$ . Jesus is accused of misleading Israel as a nation. A better accusation would have been that he misleads those who are following him; that is, the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ . The authorities seem to be angry because Jesus is destroying the community of  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  in favour of a new community of  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ .

In spite of the above remarks on  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  and  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ , three verses in this regard need special attention, namely Luke 9:13; 22:47 and 23:4. When the disciples realised that it was getting dark, they beckoned Jesus to send away the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  so that they could go and get something to eat (Lk 9:12). When Jesus challenged them, they seemed to have become angry. Consequently, they changed what was initially a worry of concern for a group that they had identified with (the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ ), to an angry reaction. It is a reaction that seems to dissociate them from the group that Jesus is challenging them to feed. The group which they earlier identified as  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  automatically becomes the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$ . When Jesus had blessed the loaves and the fish, the disciples are asked to set it before the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ . The availability of provision makes the audience to assume its normal appellation as  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ . This change of attitude simply depicts the fact that although the disciples temporarily claimed to know who Jesus was, they effectively did not still hide their personal feelings. Initially, they were right to address those who listened to Jesus as  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ , but their later appreciation of the same  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  as  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  demonstrates ignorance.

Luke reports in Luke 22:6 that Judas agreed to betray Jesus only when the *ο!xlov* is absent. It is then curious and erroneous that he leads an *ο!xlov* to arrest Jesus (Lk 22:47).<sup>129</sup> Two possible reasons could explain this apparent contradiction. The first probability comes from the composition of the *ο!xlov* in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' arrest. Horsley (1993:95) remarks that ordinarily, the crowd was a mass of the common people from the rural folk and the urban poor, who were all economically dependent. The arrest of Jesus coincides with the period of the Passover festival in Jerusalem. During this period, the normal community of citizens were joined by thousands of their peers who were pilgrims from the surrounding towns and villages. Incoming pilgrims for the purpose of the Passover festival might have heard and seen Jesus without having had a personal experience with him. It is therefore possible that they might have easily been convinced by the authorities to stand against Jesus. Consequently, the composition of the Jerusalem "crowd" in Luke 22:47 is different from that of Luke 22:6.

Secondly, the contradiction is apparent because Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples, had also been part of the "*ο!xlov*"; he has even been referred to by Jesus as an apostle. His identity became distorted only when he went into negotiation with the religious authorities to betray Jesus. It might have been the custom for the authorities to manipulate people to work or act in their favour. Before Jesus' arrest, some people were already manipulated as spies against him (Lk 20:2).<sup>130</sup> This being the case, the *ο!xlov* in Luke 22:47 were surely a manipulated *ο!xlov* like Judas himself. Since the authorities had originally feared Jesus' audience, they seem to have thought of a better strategy, which consisted of distorting the *ο!xlov* that followed Jesus from Galilee in order to get access to Jesus.

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<sup>129</sup> Traditionally, the term "crowd", had a negative connotation, referring to a mob. In Jerusalem it was a constituted group that often rose and stood against the poor treatment from the rulers. In the absence of a legitimate vehicle through which the ordinary people could express their grievances, the outcry from the "crowd" served that purpose. According to Horsley (1993:95), they were described by Josephus as "rebels". An example is that of thousands of workers who rioted because they became unemployed after the completion of the Temple. Another example is the mob that rose against Pontius Pilate because he had erected images of Caesar in Jerusalem by night for the interest of public worship. This was considered a provocation to the worship of God. Even though the "crowd" was known to be a social pressure group they were not revolutionary, because they did not challenge the system; they simple stood against its abuse of power.

<sup>130</sup> See also Acts 6:13, where false witnesses are also prepared to witness against Stephen.

Whatever the case, the “crowd” of Luke 22:47 stand distinct as a distorted  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ .<sup>131</sup> This being the case, Luke wishes to show that although the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  followed Jesus, their conception of Jesus’ identity was uncertain. Secondly, Luke wants to show that not all of the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  stood on Jesus’ side. Just like the disciples, the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  knowledge of Jesus’ identity remains unstable. The situation becomes worse when Pilate reports on Jesus’ innocence to the chief priests and the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$  (Lk 23:4). In this particular case, the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$  still act as accomplices, or as a distorted  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$ . This situation is repaired when Pilate later convened the chief priests, the rulers and the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  (and no longer the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$ ) for his final verdict (Lk 23:13). At this point, Pilate seems to acknowledge that those who are particularly affected by Jesus’ teaching (according to the new charge against Jesus) are the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$ , and not the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$ . He is accused for perverting the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  (Lk 23:14). This probably justifies why the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$  are no more part of the story line. Those who request and acclaim Jesus’ crucifixion are the chief priests, the rulers and the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  (Lk 23:16, 21). In the later part of the narrative, Luke reports that even though a multitude of  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  followed Jesus, only the women wailed and lamented (Lk 23:27). However, it is important to note that once more, the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  of Luke 23:27 simply become the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$  in Luke 23:48, as a result of their conviction with the centurion that Jesus was an innocent person, a  $\delta\iota\&\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\nu$ .

From the above, Luke’s distinction between  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  and  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  in the gospel should be understood in terms of the universality of Jesus’ mission and in terms of the knowledge of who Jesus was, prior to and after a personal experience of him and his activities. The neglect of these factors leads to a misinterpretation of Luke’s intention. For example, Jane Via (1983:131) remarks that “although the crowd (*ochlos*) sometimes participates in Jesus’ death, other crowds (*ochloi*) gather at the cross, and return home beating

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<sup>131</sup> The presence of a distorted crowd is not doubtful within this context. Horsley (1993: 96) also opines that quite often, there was a symbiosis between the Jerusalem “crowd” and its “king”. This was the case with the “crowd” that stood against Cumanus in 4 BCE. On the fourth day of the festival, a Roman soldier had stood naked, exhibiting his genitals to the multitude. This action created anger and rage on onlookers, who considered this attitude as an offence against God; as blasphemy (Horsley 1993:97). Hence, instead of standing in defence of the right of the populace, the crowd stood on the side of Cumanus, by interpreting his attitude religiously.

their breasts after Jesus dies (Lk 23:48)". Luke does not present a variety of crowds in the gospel. Rather, he defines people, and crowds, in terms of their relationship with Jesus. Thirdly, he wishes to show that irrespective of any character group, some members within each group served as foils to the others. Luke's fourth intention in the distinction between  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&v$  and  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron v$  is certainly to show that the gospel begins with  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&v$  (Lk 1:10), and ends with  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&v$  (Lk 24:19). Yet, Jesus commissions his disciples to go not to the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&v$  nor to the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron v$ , but to  $\rho\alpha\&nta\ ta\ e!\eta\eta\eta$ , that is, to all the nations: (Lk 24:47).

### 5.5.3 Jesus and the $\rho\alpha v$ (all)<sup>132</sup>

Jesus' ministry is launched by reports about him in the surrounding country (Lk 4:14). His defeat of the devil in the wilderness seems a merit and confirmation of himself as God's Son (cf Lk 3:22). This defeat seems to have created an impressive impact on those simply referred to in the narrative as  $\rho\alpha v$  (*pas*) or "all". Hence, they became a vehicle of Jesus' praise, glory and fame as he taught in their synagogues (Lk 4:15). These teachings later took Jesus to the synagogue in Nazareth, where he read from a scroll. He seems to have once more impressed the  $\rho\alpha v$  with the announcement of the content of his ministry (Lk 4:18-19) and the presentation of himself as the content of this ministry (Lk 4:21). They seem to have understood who Jesus was, and what it implied for him to be the content of his ministry. In response, they speak well of him (Lk 4:22). However, their later identification of Jesus with Joseph poses a problem between them and Jesus. They either probably misunderstood Jesus or they were confused by the credentials which Jesus had presented in the synagogue and those which they knew (as Joseph's son).

Jesus does not seem to approve of the identity with which they understand him. Hence, he dissociates himself from what seemed a distorted

<sup>132</sup> It may be difficult to say at this point with certainty that the  $\rho\alpha v$  in Luke 4:15, Luke 4:20 and those of Luke 4:36 are the same as the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\_v$  in Luke 3:21. From the Jordan, to Galilee, then to Nazareth and to Capernaum, the context is changing, and so too is the audience. Consequently,  $\rho\alpha v$  at this point of the gospel probably refers to a mixed group of onlookers from a Jewish religious context ( $\lambda\alpha\omicron i$ ) and those who might have a different and convinced feeling about what Jesus is doing ( $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron i$ ). Their distinction as  $\rho\alpha v$  may come from the fact that it is not a homogeneous group.



identity and compares his mission to that of Elijah and Elisha. The *pav* probably understood the implication of what Jesus said. His mission will surely go beyond Israel. Consequently, they rise up against him (Lk 4:29). Although they seem to have acknowledged Jesus in his pronouncements, they are still convinced that he is Joseph's son. This understanding creates a dissonance between Jesus' presentation of who he is and their expectation of who Jesus should be and what he should do.

The next micro narrative takes Jesus to Capernaum (Lk 4:31-37) where the *pav* seem more responsive. They seem not to have prior knowledge about Jesus. Hence, they come to know him through his teaching in the synagogue. On the basis of Jesus' teaching they are astonished, because his words have authority (Lk 4:32). Jesus seems to have approved their first impression about him. Contrary to the refusal to heal in Nazareth, he heals a man with an unclean spirit by word of mouth. This healing reinforces the enthusiasm of the *pav*, who are not only amazed, but discuss this authority with one another. Their conclusion is that Jesus indeed speaks with authority. He even has the authority and power to command unclean spirits (Lk 4:36). Unlike in Nazareth, the *pav* in Capernaum seems to know Jesus from his preaching and from his actions (healing). He is the one who has power and authority to command. This then is probably the content of the reports they carry to every place in the surrounding region (Lk 4:37).

In Simon's house, he proves right the reports of his authority and power to heal when he rebukes the fever from which Simon's mother-in-law is suffering (Lk 4:38-39). By this time, a new composition of *pav* is coming to the fore. Jesus' action in Simon's house impresses his audience. Consequently, "all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them" (Lk 4:40). Jesus once more shows that he is the embodiment of the power and authority of the words with which he heals. At the same time, he rebukes the demons for identifying him publicly as the "Son of God" because they knew that he was the "Christ" (Lk 4:41).

Following this micro narrative, Luke becomes explicit about who is following Jesus: whether it is the *o!xlov* or the *laov*. It would appear that the earlier narratives lay preparatory grounds for the discovery of who Jesus



is. So far, there seems to have been several groups of individuals in Luke's gospel whose reaction towards Jesus is varied. First, Jesus is baptised when all the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  had been baptized (Lk 3:21). They are witnesses to the "voice" that identifies Jesus as God's Son (Lk 3:22). They are probably part of the group that later on proclaims his fame (Lk 4:15). When Jesus enters the synagogue in Nazareth, he meets another group of  $\rho\alpha\nu$  that receives him with what seems as a preconceived agenda. When Jesus' attitude does not fit with this agenda, they rise up against him. When he progresses to Capernaum, the interest of the  $\rho\alpha\nu$  in Capernaum grows as they witness him act with authority and power.

The relationship between Jesus and this character group at the beginning of Luke's gospel is that of self-revealing and self-discovering. Jesus reveals who he is, and the  $\rho\alpha\nu$  at the same time discovers Jesus' identity. He is the content of his ministry. He is an embodiment of the authority and power with which he acts. While those whose minds are free try to understand him through his preaching and actions, those who have preconceived knowledge about him feel disappointed. It would appear that right at the beginning of his ministry, Jesus intends his audience to know and understand who he is through his words and deeds, and not through what those who came in contact with him assume, think and conjecture.

#### 5.5.4 Relationship with the $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$

The  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  that came to Jesus the first time were those whom he healed from various infirmities (cf Lk 4:40). They seemed to have loved Jesus' company; hence, they would not allow him to depart from them. Jesus uses this opportunity to reiterate the core of his ministry, namely to preach the good news of the kingdom of God (Lk 4:42-44; see also 5:15; 7:24; 8:4; 9:11). Their love for Jesus' company is manifested in their wish to hear the word of God (Lk 5:1, 3), their quest to touch him (Lk 6:19), their eagerness to follow him (Lk 7:9, 11) and their joy in welcoming him (Lk 8:40). It is this zeal that probably presents them as an obstruction between Jesus and the paralytic seeking healing. In return, Jesus responds to the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  with solidarity through his teaching, healing, table fellowship (Lk 5:29) and by providing for

their physical needs (Lk 9:11-17). At this initial stage, the relationship between Jesus and the  $\phi!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  seems to be that of anxiety and cooperation.

Jesus' growing concern for the  $\phi!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$  is manifested when he asks the disciples who the  $\phi!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$  think he is (Lk 9:18). Jesus probably had noticed their enthusiasm, and wished to know if they actually knew who he was. He might have also noticed that they manifest traits of misunderstanding through their zeal (they had just obstructed a paralytic from meeting him). The impression of the  $\phi!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$  would also probably help him to shape their attitude. While they continue to sympathise with Jesus, they also inform him about his disciples' inability to effect healing (Lk 9:40). Once more, they appear more critical and keen than the disciples. They become Jesus' informants, and he seems to trust them. Unfortunately their attitude soon changes as Jesus moves towards Jerusalem. Their appreciation of Jesus' healing activities is diverse. When Jesus casts out demons, they respond with mixed feelings. First they marvelled (Lk 11:14), and then they disagreed in their appreciation of Jesus' action. While some of them accused Jesus of working in connivance with Beelzebub (Lk 11:15), others requested for more signs (Lk 11:16). This ambivalent attitude proves that they seem not to know who Jesus is.

In spite of this ambivalent attitude, they still follow Jesus in large numbers (Lk 12:1). Jesus seems to be aware that their attitude exhibits traits of pretence. Hence, in their presence, he warns his disciples against the "leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Lk 12:1). This warning seems directed equally to them. In the course of teaching, he is interrupted by a question from the  $\phi!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  (Lk 12:13); a question which identifies Jesus as a worldly arbitrator. This conception seems to betray their perception of who Jesus is. Although they follow him, they seem to attribute to him a wrong identification. As they continue to listen to Jesus, he once more warns them against false prophets in relation to eschatological happenings (Lk 12:54).

Their public importance is again manifested when the ruler of the synagogue uses them as judges. Jesus' Sabbath healings had brought controversy between Jesus and the ruler of the synagogue (Lk 13:14). The  $\phi!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ , however, approves of Jesus' action by rejoicing in the glorious things Jesus is doing (Lk 13:17). This joy seems to transmit the fact that they

have understood who Jesus is and what he was doing. It also implies that they disagree with the misinterpretation of Jesus' attitude by the ruler of the synagogue. Again, conscious of their deficiency, Jesus explains to them what it entails to be his follower (Lk 14:25-33). Hereafter, they follow him and proclaim his fame as he moves to Jerusalem (Lk 18:36).

While in Jerusalem, their enthusiasm again becomes an obstacle for Zacchaeus (Lk 19:3) who wishes to meet Jesus. After this micro narrative, the ο!xlov disappear from the scene. They only reappear in the company of Judas when Jesus is arrested (Lk 22:47), and is consulted by Pilate during Jesus' trial (Lk 23:4). Finally, they become the first group to join the centurion in his testimony that Jesus was innocent (Lk 23:48). They thus appear like a convinced character group that has finally understood who Jesus was.

The relationship between Jesus and the ο!xlov is that of solidarity, concern and witnessing. Even though they seem to misrepresent Jesus through some spontaneous responses, they often save Jesus' face and take interest in the disciples' attitude in their support for Jesus. Their uncertainty about Jesus' identity comes to its climax in Jerusalem when they acclaim him as a worldly king (Lk 19:39), but soon after this is rectified. As a sign of conviction, they beat their breasts while returning home after Jesus' crucifixion (Lk 23:48).

### 5.5.5 Relationship with the λαο&v

Following the chronology of events in Luke's gospel, the relationship between Jesus and the λαο&v can be separated into two phases. The first phase is the events that take place in Luke 6:17 and Luke 21:38. The second phase takes place in Luke 23; where they seem to passively follow Jesus. They do this right up to the cross, when they become ο!xloi. The first time that the λαο&v, as a distinct character group in Luke's narrative, comes in contact with Jesus is after the news about his healing miracles, including his teachings, in Capernaum and beyond. They probably follow Jesus in order to listen to him (Lk 6:17; 7:1), or out of enthusiasm. They are not only keen listeners; they also praise God for what Jesus is doing. Jesus' raising of the dead to life becomes an act of praise from their side (Lk 7:16; 18:43). Quite often they also act as witnesses. On his way to heal Jairo's daughter, Jesus

is touched by a woman who has bled for twelve years. When she realises that Jesus has taken notice of her touch, she falls before him and bears witness in the presence of the *laov* (Lk 8:47). Jesus uses the *laov* as witnesses when he cautions the disciples against the attitude of the scribes (Lk 20:45).

As the *laov* follow Jesus and listen to him, they seem to become a force to be reckoned with. Their adherence to Jesus' teachings makes it impossible to have him arrested (Lk 19:48). The religious authorities are conscious of their presence, and they control their attitude *vis-à-vis* Jesus. In fact, they are to be feared. It is the wish of the chief priests and the scribes to put Jesus to death, but they fear the *laov*. They are part of Jesus' audience and hang upon his words (Lk 19:48; 20:6, 19, 26; 22:2).

In the second phase of Jesus' contact with the *laov*, they are used by Pilate, also as witnesses. They seem to hold a strong opinion concerning public decision. Instead of inviting the chief priests and the *o!xloi* – as he previously did at the beginning of Jesus' trial – Pilate invites the chief priests for the second time, together with the rulers and the *laov*. In their presence, he declares Jesus innocent once more (Lk 23:13).<sup>133</sup> From here on, the *laov*' attitude towards Jesus becomes ambiguous. The religious authorities seem to have lured them into a request to have Jesus crucified (Lk 23:15). Towards the end of the passion story they resume their attitude as a curious and passive group that follows Jesus. Even though they follow him to the cross, they seem to remain passive (Lk 23:27). They stand by and watch while the rulers scoff Jesus and the soldiers mock him (Lk 23:35) without intervening, as they did on previous occasions.

The ambiguity of the *laov* towards Jesus probably stems from the fact that as onlookers they become excited and curious in hearing Jesus and seeing him perform miracles. Apart from this, they remain neutral in their relationship with Jesus and do not seem to take position with any group against Jesus, until Luke 23.

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<sup>133</sup> Cassidy (1983:152) opines that Pilate invited the *laov* at this point because he expected them to support him and thus facilitate Jesus' release. This sounds plausible. But what other justification could be offered when Pilate invited the chief priests and the *o!xloi* at the beginning of the trial (Lk 23:4)? It is far more possible that at this point, Pilate probably intended to use them as witnesses from an ethnic point of view. After the story of Jesus' arrest, this is the first time that *laov* is announced as a character group.

### 5.5.6 Conclusion

The way in which Luke uses the nouns  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  and  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  is clear. Luke has a specific reason in referring to one group of followers of Jesus as  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  and to another as  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ . They are two distinct character groups whose attitude towards Jesus and his movement differ. In Luke's terminology,  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  has to do with religion and a particular ethnic group, whereas  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  is a group that goes beyond ethnic and religious inclination. The Gospel ends with the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  becoming  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$ . This seems a breakthrough from exclusivism to a new inclusivistic movement. Luke shows that both the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  and the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  attest to Jesus' popularity, in spite of the growing opposition between him and his opponents.

$\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  and  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  are two character groups in Luke that constitute a major threat to Jesus' opponents. They both present an ambivalent attitude, which depicts their uncertainty about who Jesus is. Most especially, the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\iota$  follow Jesus because he makes promises of what seems to be a new era, a new reign, wherein they can find a place alongside the elite. Luke's presentation of  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$  and  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$  *vis-à-vis* Jesus confirms that, in relation to who Jesus is, characters do not have any stable characteristics.<sup>134</sup>

## 5.6 JESUS' RELATIONSHIP WITH NON-JEWS

### 5.6.1 Introduction

In the context of this study, the non-Jews referred to are understood as non-Jews by virtue of birth. Consequently, attention will be given to the Samaritans in particular and the Gentiles in general (excluding the Roman elite).<sup>135</sup> Although there is no particular instance in Luke's gospel where Jesus

<sup>134</sup> The  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&\nu$ , and sometimes the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ , are a symbol of those who follow Jesus out of curiosity. They can be compared to what Goldsmith (2000:48) refers to as "skin Christians". "Skin Christians" are those who present an outward Christian look but when scratched, they are mere followers underneath in the heart. This situation depicts that of a suffering African. From an African perspective, misery, poverty, oppression, hunger and diseases constantly push the mass to rally behind those who spring up as liberators. In this situation, their loyalty is highly conditioned by the ability of the "liberators" to quench their aspirations through satisfactory leadership, from the masses' point of view.

<sup>135</sup> The name "Gentile" is a generic term referring to all the non-Jews who were not originally chosen by God as a "people" (Lk 2:32; 21:24, 25; 22:25). It also refers to humanity, including Israel (Lk 12:30; 21:24; 24:47). Thirdly, it could also refer not particularly to a group in terms of ethnicity, but to the attitude of sinful humanity (Lk 18:32). According to Old Testament prophecy, the life of Israel both as God's people and as individuals was to act as a magnet to draw the Gentiles to God by means of their lifestyle and their attitude: "I will also make you a

comes into physical contact with a “Gentile”, his relationship with the non-Jews can be evaluated in terms of his general attitude towards non-Jewish activities. One of the main disagreements between Jesus and his Jewish contemporaries in Luke’s gospel seems to derive from the fact that Jesus mingled with non-Jews.<sup>136</sup> It is therefore a relationship between Jesus, a born Jew, within the context of his Jewish counterparts and their relationship with “outsiders”.

### **5.6.2 Jesus’ relationship with the non-Jews**

The first non-Jewish activity carried out by Jesus is the healing of the centurion’s servant (Lk 7:1-10). This healing puts Jesus in contact with the centurion through the courtesy of the elders of the Jews (Lk 7:3) and “friends” (Lk 7:6). Twice, the centurion avoids meeting Jesus. The reason given by the centurion himself is because he feels himself “unworthy” (Lk 7:6). He clearly sees Jesus as someone important. He therefore asks the elders of the Jews to intervene on his behalf. The remarks of the elders (Lk 7:4-5), the centurion’s concern for human life (Lk 7:7), and his comments about Jesus (Lk 7:6c-7) entice Jesus to commend his faith (Lk 7:9). Jesus’ acknowledgment of the centurion’s faith implies that this attribute (faith), is not a monopoly of Israel. Jesus indicates that the right attitude is to show love for fellow man and to have an indiscriminate compassionate attitude towards the needy (cf Lk 10:33-35). Jesus’ remarks about the centurion’s belief also testify to his interest in the attitude of non-Jews. On the other hand, Jesus has concern for all who show love and compassion, irrespective of their origin.

The return of the twelve apostles from the first mission in the next micro narrative (Lk 9:1-6) is followed by what seems to be shortcomings on their part. In spite of the empowerment that they had received from Jesus (Lk 9:1), they are unable to heal a boy possessed by a demon (Lk 9:40). When Jesus spoke about his death, they misunderstood him and preoccupied themselves

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light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth” (Is 49:6). Strikingly, Simeon interprets this prophecy as being fulfilled not in Israel as a nation or individuals, but in the infant Jesus as a provider of salvation (Lk 2:32, 31).

<sup>136</sup> As discussed in the previous section, the non-Jews by birth had the same status as those who lost their Jewish status as a result of some calamity, sex or their social status. For the Jews, God was Holy: “Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy” (Lv 19:2). Hence, Jesus’ attitude towards the non-Jews was considered as a contradiction in terms of their belief.



with how great they will become as his successors (Lk 9:46-49). In what follows, John seems to render the situation worse by complaining to Jesus that they forbade a man from casting out demons (Lk 9:49). This for Jesus sounds ironical, because they forbid someone from doing what they are unable to do. When Jesus faces his way to Jerusalem, he resolves to go through Samaria, in spite of the resistance from the Samaritans (Lk 9:54).<sup>137</sup> This resistance most probably depicts the existing relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans. The violent suggestion from James and John to call down fire on the Samaritans (Lk 9:54-55) also testifies to this fact. By all indications, Jesus' decision seems risky. He probably risks being criticised by both parties for nursing what appeared as an undiplomatic relationship. In spite of this, Jesus remains determined and keeps on focussing on his objective.

His later decision to send out the seventy-two to every place where he himself was about to go (Lk 10:1) confirms his zeal to expand the good news about the kingdom of God beyond Israel.<sup>138</sup> This urge seems to have been motivated by the disciples' reaction towards the Samaritans. This second mission is in some way a duplication of the mission earlier assigned to the twelve apostles (see § 5.2), but also a correction. It includes places where the disciples did not go in the course of the first mission and serves to invoke a change of attitude in the disciples. There is a probable need to sharpen the disciples' view of Jesus' mission to include those outside of the Jewish community.

The mission of the seventy-two is a prelude to the story of the "Good Samaritan" (Lk 10:25-37), which in a way also can be seen as a replica of the story of the centurion whose servant was healed by Jesus (Lk 7:1-10). It is a parable which shows the paradox in the relationship between a Jew and a

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<sup>137</sup> This decision minimises the existing historical enmity between Jews and the Samaritans in 7 AD. Some Samaritans had defiled the Temple in Jerusalem by scattering dead animals in the Holy of Holies. The Jews took this sacrilegious act as a serious offence against God's holiness. Goldsmith (2000:77) remarks that Herod worked hard to reconcile the two camps. Jesus most probably was presented in the temple at the same time. Therefore, growing up as a young Jew, Jesus knew of this tense relationship and also tried to establish a new atmosphere between the two groups.

<sup>138</sup> Luke 10:1 has a textual problem which presents the number of those that were sent by Jesus as seventy or as seventy two. The debate on the exact figure is not the concern of this thesis. Consequently, the figure seventy two will arbitrarily be adopted as a neutral figure. However, in Jewish thought the number twelve represents Israel as a nation while the figure seventy was used to refer to the Gentiles (the number of Noah's children through Shem, Ham and Japheth).

non-Jew (Samaritan). This story also stands to condemn the attitude of the priest and the Levite (fellow Jewish religious leaders) for not carrying out a humanitarian and compassionate task (like the centurion in Luke 7:7-10), because of what seems like religious priority and purity, respectively. They fail to show solidarity, generosity, love and compassion that accompany their respective offices to a fellow Jew who was robbed and left in a miserable state. In contrast, the story presents a Samaritan who comes to the rescue and offers assistance. The Samaritan actually acts like the centurion. They both show compassion to those who are beyond their respective ethnic groups. The story of the Samaritan is a response to a lawyer's quest to know who someone's neighbour is. In this parable, Jesus explains that neighbourliness does not depend on belonging to the same community. Jesus expects the lawyer (his disciples and other Jews) to learn from this story that genuine love goes beyond ethnic boundaries to address human needs (Lk 10:37). The question of neighbourliness is also preceded by the question of what it means to inherit eternal life (Lk 10:25). From the conversation between Jesus and the lawyer, coupled with the understanding from the parable, an indiscriminate heart of compassion seems to be the only way to inherit eternal life. The relationship between Jesus and the non-Jews therefore is a challenge to the Jews. Jesus advises the lawyer, as a Jewish representative, to "go and do likewise" (Lk 10:37).

In the parable of the great banquet (Lk 14:16-24) Jesus elaborates on the broad view of his ministry. The parable presents three categories of guests invited at different intervals for the same feast. The first category is those for whom the feast was initially intended, but who prioritised other activities (Lk 14:17-20). The second group are the poor, the maimed, the blind and the lame. Even though these invitees accept and honour the invitation (Lk 14:21), there is still more room (Lk 14:22). Because of this, the third category of people is invited. They are people from beyond the city fence who are compelled to honour the invitation (Lk 14:23). This parable alludes to the different missions contained in Jesus' agenda: mission to the "original guests" (the Jewish elite); mission to "common people" (the Jewish peasantry) and mission to those beyond (the non-Jews). The telling of the parable of the "great banquet" at this point of Jesus' ministry (on the way to Jerusalem), seems to have a dual purpose. It shows Jesus' concern even to those outside of the Jews. Secondly, it describes the nature of his ministry. While he will not

receive the favour of some people, others will follow him, and yet some others will be coerced to accept him. The last category depicts the nature of his “Gentile” and Samaritan missions.

On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus is met by ten lepers who lift up their voices in a request for mercy (Lk 17:11-13). Jesus’ prompt reaction is to command them to go and present themselves to the priests as was the custom (Lk 17:14). After Jesus healed them, one returned, praising God. He is a Samaritan (Lk 17:15-16). Through the story of the ten lepers, Jesus once more shows faith as another element that grants eternal life (Lk 17:11-19; see also Lk 7:9). Jesus marvels that ten lepers were healed, and that the one that returned in thanksgiving is a Samaritan. The nine others (Jews) went away, taking Jesus’ healing for granted. The Samaritan, who returns, then receives wholesome healing, which seems to depict an extension of God’s love and favour to non-Jews. The Samaritan clearly has understood and recognised Jesus’ identity in his offer of healing. Just like the story of the centurion (Lk 7:1-10), this story implies that the recognition of who Jesus is, coupled with belief and trust in his person, are what Jesus requires, irrespective of one’s nature and origin.

### 5.6.3 Conclusion

The relationship between Jesus and the non-Jews breaks down the barriers of enmity between Jews and non-Jews. It is a teaching relationship to both the Jews and the disciples, as he widens the scope of his ministry to include the non-Jews. This vision is an open challenge to the *status quo*, wherein the disciples and the Jews at large are called upon to fashion their view of who Jesus is and what his mission entails. The centurion is commended as a person of strong belief (Lk 7:9); some elders of the Jews seem to be in favour of Jesus’ missionary expansion (Lk 7:4); the attitude of the Samaritan is an example to be emulated (Lk 10:37); the attitude of a Samaritan leper earns him wholesome healing which the others (Jews) do not receive because they take it for granted (cf Lk 14:17-20).

Through this relationship, Jesus defines the various dimensions of his mission: mission to the Jews (elite and peasantry) and mission to the non-Jews. He confirms this view by finally commissioning the disciples to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins to all nations (Lk 24:47). It is therefore

a relationship that dictates what seems like requisites that he requires from his followers: indiscriminate love and compassion for one another.

## **5.7 AN EMIC READING OF LUKE 9:18-22: LEADERSHIP, CONFLICT AND IDENTITY**

### **5.7.1 Introduction**

It is apparent from the above emic reading of the various relationships in which Jesus was involved that misunderstanding surrounded his person and works. This misunderstanding engendered antagonism between Jesus and his contemporaries. Jesus revealed who he was through his teaching, his interactions with various groups of people, his activities, and the way he responded to spontaneous reactions and attitudes. In Galilee, Jesus' identity is an object of controversy from both cosmic (Lk 4:1-13) and human authorities such as his disciples (Lk 8:22-25), John the Baptist (Lk 7:18-19), the Jewish peasantry (Lk 4:22-30), the Jewish elite (Lk 5:17-22, 30-32, 33-39; 6:1-5, 6-11; 7:39-50) and the Roman elite (Lk 9:7-9).<sup>139</sup> Because his identity was conceived differently, Jesus wishes to make a personal disclosure of who he is, including its consequences, to his disciples. But first, they must tell him how much knowledge they have gathered about him from the crowds, and what they themselves thought of him. The situation of Luke 9:18-22 within the macro-context of Luke's story line of Jesus and his activities explains and summarises the conflicts that evolved between Jesus and the different relationships he established. However, beyond being a summary of Jesus' activities in Galilee, it also introduces and projects the Jerusalem ministry and its consequences.

In what follows, Luke 9:18-22 will be read and understood with reference to these relationships. What is presented is an emic reading of Jesus' relationship with the disciples, the Jewish peasantry, the Jewish elite and Roman elite, through the lens of Luke 9:18-22. Besides its position within the macro narrative of Jesus' Galilean ministry (Lk 4:1-9:50), and its transitional function *vis-à-vis* the Jerusalem ministry (Lk 9:51-23:38), this micro narrative indicates a certain degree of closeness with the micro narrative of the

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<sup>139</sup> Jesus' question in Luke 9:18-22 is relevant because it is not about a specific crowd. Crowd(s) in the plural refers to the various groupings of crowds in the narrative. Jesus inquires to know what these various groupings say about him. Although his activities create an impact within the cities, his identity is still misunderstood.

transfiguration of Jesus (Lk 9:28-36). This closeness justifies the presence of a reflection on the relationship between Luke 9:18-22 and Luke 9:28-36.

### **5.7.2 Luke 9:18-22 and the relationship between Jesus and the disciples**

Luke 9:18-22 has the form of a dialogue between Jesus and his disciples. Prior to this dialogue Jesus had empowered his disciples to heal all illnesses and had given them authority over demons (Lk 9:1). It is an empowerment for them to do what he was doing. After their return from this mission (Lk 9:1-6), Jesus does not seem to be satisfied with their performance and attitude. Although the crowd that followed him in Bethsaida was growing, they do not seem threatened by natural phenomena like darkness, hunger, and insecurity (Lk 9:10-12). On the contrary, the disciples seem threatened; hence, they asked Jesus to disperse the crowd so that they could secure lodging and feeding (Lk 9:12). The disciples seem to forget or lose confidence in the one who has shown supremacy over natural events such as a storm (Lk 8:24), death (Lk 7:15; 8:55) and diseases (Lk 5:25; 6:10; 7:10; 8:39, 48 cf Lk 7:21-22). Jesus challenged their ignorance by asking them to provide food for the crowd (Lk 9:13). Because of their inability, Jesus blessed the five available loaves and two fish and gave it to the disciples to share with all present (Lk 9:16). The disciples most probably once again were astonished (cf Lk 8:25) when they collected twelve baskets full of leftovers (Lk 9:17). The increasing number of the crowd and the apparently disappointing attitude of the disciples probably triggered Jesus then to dialogue with the disciples on the question and meaning of who he is (Lk 9:18-22).

In prelude to the dialogue, Jesus prays, and although the disciples are present with him, they do not (Lk 9:18). They still do not seem to understand that what they see Jesus doing is an embodiment of who he is. Jesus' habit of praying prior to major events is a recurrent attitude in Luke's narrative.<sup>140</sup> The

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<sup>140</sup> Among these events, three are similar in terms of their context, with reference to his death. The discussion of Luke 9:18-22 ends with Jesus' prediction of his death. The prayer session at the transfiguration (Lk 9:28) unfolds with Jesus discussing with Elijah and Moses about his death in Jerusalem. The events of his arrest and subsequent death in Jerusalem are also preceded with prayer (Lk 22:41).

apparently passive attitude of the disciples does not seem strange either. They had earlier been criticised for not fasting and praying (Lk 5:33). Their nonchalant attitude is a proof of the fact that although they have been following Jesus for quite a while, they are not ready to emulate him; they still seem not to take their new task seriously. Then, after Jesus prayed, he inquires from them who the crowds think that he is (Lk 9:18).

It would appear that Jesus was not as interested in the crowds' response as he was in what the disciples themselves thought. After having informed Jesus what the crowds thought about him, they themselves become the focus of Jesus' attention. Hence, he asks them: "but who do you say that I am?" (Lk 9:19). Apparently, the disciples seem to have confirmed through their silence that Jesus' question was an embarrassment. It is Peter alone who offers a response; Jesus is "The Christ of God" (Lk 9:20). The rest of the disciples' silence implied that they either did not know what to say, or they agreed with Peter's response. Jesus then, after Peter's response, commands them sternly not to disclose "this" to anyone (Lk 9:21). In what follows, as a justification of this caution, Jesus releases another self-identification: he is the Son of man (Lk 9:22). This identification is accompanied with other attributes: he will suffer, be rejected, be killed, and on the third day be raised (Lk 9:22). Jesus' description of his identity thus sets forth what will befall him. He will suffer because of the rejection of the elders, the chief priests and the scribes. Those who will be responsible for his killing are not named. In what seems like a result of this suffering, rejection and killing, Jesus will be raised on the third day.<sup>141</sup> The core of this micro narrative seems to be two issues; namely, the question of Jesus' identity and the implications that follow this identity. For Jesus, it was important to check from his followers if they were aware of these issues; if not, it would be appropriate for them to be informed. Jesus is driving towards the end of the Galilean ministry. He therefore most probably hopes that this dialogue will enhance the disciples' understanding of his identity and what the events are that will befall him. As a result of this

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<sup>141</sup> It is common in Greek Biblical texts for God to be the implied subject of verbs in the passive voice when it has not been indicated. In the context of Luke 9:22, where the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders in respect of his identity culminates in his death, God avenges by legitimating this rejected identity.



information, he probably expected them, unlike before, to develop trust, confidence and commitment in their new task. Jesus was aware that his disciples were deficient. He probably linked the misunderstanding of their mission to this deficiency. Consequently, he wished them to know that the understanding of their mission is conditioned by their understanding of who he was. Hence, he explained his identity in terms of suffering, rejection and dying. The fact that he will be raised serves as a proof of his innocence.

The dialogue with the disciples plays a triple role. In terms of Luke's story line of Jesus and his activities it is a summary of the events that characterise and explain his Galilean activities. Secondly, it serves as an educative session, and thirdly it serves as a projection of what still awaits him. The dialogue intervenes between Luke's story line at the end of the first phase of Jesus' missionary activities (Lk 4:1-9:50), and the second phase still pending (Lk 9:51-21:38). The first phase seems to have begun without a proper preparation and introduction of what Jesus expected from the disciples. Hence, they seem to have followed him without knowing who he was, as well as the implications of his ministry (see Lk 5:11, 28). The pitfalls of this ill preparation had negative repercussions with regards to their attitude during the Galilean ministry. Their recurrent mistakes might have prompted Jesus to find out if they knew who he was. Although he had so far disclosed who he was through his deeds, teaching and interaction with the different social groups, he had not concretely informed the disciples about who he was and what he was trying to accomplish. Only by inference the disciples sometimes have understood the content of the ministry and what it probably meant to "catch men" (Lk 5:10). In Jesus' answer to John's disciples, they might also have understood that Jesus' mission was that of healing, exorcism, raising the dead and preaching (Lk 7:21-22). In spite of this, they might not have known what it implied and what Jesus expected from them as a response. It is in this vein that the dialogue seems to be a correction to a wrong start and a preparation for the next phase of the mission.

In effect, the dialogue seems to be an educative session.<sup>142</sup> Jesus' person and work implied something different from what the disciples expected and thought. They had been recruited from various backgrounds (e.g., fishermen and tax collectors). So far, they had lived and functioned in a particular life pattern and thought form, which have probably influenced their understanding of Jesus' person and activities. The consciousness of this context might have prompted Jesus to embark on an educational phase in order to ensure that they understood one another. Jesus knew that the ministry in Jerusalem would be more difficult than the one that they were just about to conclude. Hence, the question: "But who do you say that I am?" (Lk 9:20). This question also enabled him to measure the disciples' level of understanding. Jesus wanted his disciples to be aware of what was going to happen when they entered Jerusalem. The question put to them thus was an opportunity to educate them on the implications attached to his person. It also gave him the opportunity to dispel ignorant and preconceived ideas which they were nursing prior to and during the course of the Galilean ministry.

The discussion equally played the role of a caution as it served to explain the nature of their next itinerary; the Jerusalem ministry. The disciples had witnessed the antagonism between Jesus the Pharisees and the scribes. In fact, they themselves had quite often been the object of criticism (Lk 5:17-26, 27-32, 33-39; 6:6-11). Unfortunately, they did not understand what was going on. At this point of the narrative, they had not yet seen Jesus in action

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<sup>142</sup> In the first century AD the Jews lived with an expectation of a nationalistic leader, a Davidic heir (Danker 1979:20), who would free them from Roman oppression. According to Culpepper (1995:97), these expectations were varied. While some Jews expected a royal Davidic messiah who would re-establish the kingdom of Israel, others looked for a priestly messiah to purify the worship system of Israel. Whatever the situation, these expectations were nursed within the socio-political background of Israel. In Jesus, the crowds and probably the disciples saw someone doing just this – Jesus was influencing their human setting and bringing about order. Jesus' activities foreshadowed God's promise of deliverance. Their understanding of his identity is therefore linked to such expectations. Two reasons militate for the fact that the disciples' conception of Jesus' identity was not quite different from that of the crowds. First is the fact that they echoed the crowds' opinion without further comments on their implications. Secondly, it is Peter alone who answers Jesus, whereas Jesus' question is addressed to all the disciples: *ei) ~pen de\_ au)toi~v u(me i~v de\_ ti&na me le&gete ei) ~nai*; Finally, Peter's response is also an echo of previous testimonies. Jesus thus needed to caution them. Their understanding of Jesus had to be reshaped. It is, however, only towards the end of the gospel that Jesus explicitly acknowledges himself as the Christ (Lk 24:26). The particularity of Luke 24:26 verse lies in the fact that two important words from Luke 9:22 are repeated verbatim by Jesus: *e!dei* and *pagei~n* (see also Luke 24:46). The rest of the verse is a reflection or an expansion of Luke 9:22.

with the chief priests and the elders. Jesus therefore predicts the outcome of these conflicts. His conflict with the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will result in suffering, rejection and killing. However, there is nothing to worry about, because he will be raised. The dialogue is thus also about a prediction which seems to prepare the disciples for future events. In forbidding them from disclosing the content of their discussion to anyone, Jesus most probably thought that the disciples were not ready and courageous enough to understand and digest this information.

As the narrative unfolds, it subsequently becomes clear that, in spite of this dialogue, the disciples did not understand Jesus. They neither understood who Jesus was, nor the meaning of what he said. Although they temporarily gave the impression that they had understood him (Lk 11:1; 17:5), they often still acted their own way. Time and again, when Jesus reminded them again about his impending death, they misinterpreted him because of their expectations (Lk 9:46; 22:24, 50). However, Jesus' perseverance and focus in the end of the narrative seem to have yielded fruits. At the end of his mission, the disciples seem to have understood who he was, and what his mission entailed (cf Lk 12:11; 21:12): they became witnesses and preached repentance and the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem (Lk 24:47-48).

### **5.7.3 Luke 9:18-22 and the relationship between Jesus and the peasantry**

The intimacy between Jesus and the crowds seems visible in Jesus' quest to know what they thought about him. Jesus was impressed by their enthusiasm from the beginning of his ministry. In Nazareth they manifested mixed feelings of acceptance (Lk 4:22a) and rejection (Lk 4:29). Although they referred to him as Joseph's son (Lk 4:22b), his spontaneous reaction proved that this was a misinterpreted identity to fit their motives (Lk 4:23-27). In Capernaum they became glued to him because he spoke and acted with authority (Lk 4:31-36). In the synagogues of Judea they pressed him to hear his teaching (Lk 5:1). The more people he healed, the more the crowds followed him (Lk 6:17). They seemed passionate to listen to him; a passion that also led them to follow him. While following, they were neither threatened by night nor by exposure (no lodging) or hunger (Lk 9:12). This attitude was perceived by Jesus as unflinching loyalty. Thus, coming towards the end of his Galilean

ministry, he thought it appropriate to know from the disciples what these crowds<sup>143</sup> thought about him, and if they were conscious and convinced about what they were doing in following him.

During his Galilean ministry many from the crowds became Jesus' disciples, such as the woman who were healed (Lk 8:20) and the blind beggar (Lk 18:43). Others from the crowd opted to serve him (Lk 4:39 9:38), while some others wished to follow him (Lk 9:57-61). These positive reactions from the crowds triggered Jesus to inquire from the disciples, who had just returned from their mission, to know who these crowds said he was. The response from the disciples echoes three speculations: Some say Jesus is John the Baptist, others say he is Elijah, while others suspect Jesus to be one of the old prophets who has risen (Lk 9:19).

These speculations clearly are a reflexion of what they see Jesus doing. Jesus' activities remind them of events and figures from the past, especially some prominent figures that are part of their history.<sup>144</sup> Those in the crowds

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<sup>143</sup> There exist more than one alternative reading for  $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \omicron\iota\theta\ \omicron\iota\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota$  in Luke 9:18. The first alternative reading,  $\omicron\iota\theta\ \omicron\iota\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota\ \epsilon\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ , is proposed by  $\kappa^*$  and supported by B L  $\equiv$  f<sup>1</sup> 892. 2542 pc, and can be translated as "the crowds are saying". A second alternative reading,  $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \omicron\iota\theta\ \alpha\ \eta\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\omega\iota$  is suggested by A, supported by 579. 1241. 1424 pc e sa<sup>mss</sup> bo, and reads "the men are saying". The edited Nestle-Aland's text with  $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \omicron\iota\theta\ \omicron\iota\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota$  is suggested by P<sup>75</sup> and supported by N<sup>2</sup> C D W Q Y f<sup>13</sup> 33 M. It reads: "the crowds are saying". The ages of the first group of witnesses range between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, those of the second group between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE, while in the last group they range between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> century CE. P<sup>75</sup> of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century appears to be the oldest of the manuscripts. On this basis, the edited text with  $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \omicron\iota\theta\ \omicron\iota\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota$  is to be preferred as most probably the best reading. In terms of internal evidence, there is no theological difference between the suggestion of the first group of witnesses,  $\omicron\iota\theta\ \omicron\iota\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota\ \epsilon\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ , and the edited text that reads  $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \omicron\iota\theta\ \omicron\iota\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota$ . Both translations can be rendered "the crowds are saying". The major textual problem in Luke 9:18 is the alternative reading  $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \omicron\iota\theta\ \alpha\ \eta\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\omega\iota$ . Both parallel texts (Mk 8:27-31//Mt 16:13-21) refer to  $\alpha\ \eta\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\omega\iota$ . The second group of witnesses referred to above, are probably concerned with the need of harmonising the three different readings by giving preference to  $\alpha\ \eta\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\omega\iota$ . Also,  $\alpha\ \eta\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\omega\iota$  with an article is sometimes translated as "people", referring to men. Hence, if this variant is considered as the original reading, Jesus' question could be rendered as "who do the people (men) say that I am". This translation poses a theological problem with regard to those who constituted Jesus' following. Those who are following Jesus, as a result of his ministry, are beyond sex as defined in his inaugural teaching in Nazareth (Lk 4:18-19; see also Lk 8:2). Secondly, a thorough reading of Luke's gospel shows that Luke is conversant with the terminologies of  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\upsilon$ ,  $\alpha\ \eta\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\omega\upsilon$  and  $\omicron\iota\lambda\lambda\omicron\upsilon$ . In the Lukan vocabulary none of these words are used arbitrary (see § 5.5.2). On this basis, the use of  $\omicron\iota\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota$  in Luke 9:18 cannot be a coincidence. Consequently, from both the internal and external evidences, the edited text with  $\omicron\iota\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota$  is preferred as the original reading.

<sup>144</sup> The presentation of Jesus' identity with reference to prophecy was part of Lukan literary art (Greene 1980:32). In the early beginnings of the gospel, Mary and Simeon in their respective canticles prophesied about Jesus' identity (Lk 1:46-56; 2:30-35). Anna identified Jesus in the line of the redemption of Israel (Lk 2:38). John the Baptist's words about Jesus

that were baptised by John the Baptist and who listened to his preaching see a connection between Jesus' teachings and those of John the Baptist (compare Lk 3:7-14 and Lk 6:20-45). They were also present when Jesus gave his inaugural speech and declared that he was anointed (Lk 4:18).<sup>145</sup> This, for some, connected him with the Baptist. Others see him as a new Elijah or Elisha (Lk 4:25-27), based on his healing miracles in likeness of the healings of Elijah. Maybe his ability to predict people's thoughts also influenced some in the crowds to see him in the light of a prophet. More than once Jesus predicted the thoughts of the scribes and the Pharisees (Lk 5:21, 30, 35), and he immediately knew that a woman touched him (Lk 7:39). From some in the crowds' point of view, these activities squarely fit Jesus in the role of one of the prophets of old.<sup>146</sup>

So far, Jesus' relationship with the crowds and the rest of the peasantry seems to be influenced by preconceived thoughts as a result of past experiences with prominent historical figures. Hence, their knowledge of Jesus is misinterpreted and understood in terms of what they already knew and what they probably expected. However, as the relationship grows from Galilee to Jerusalem, Jesus continues to reveal himself differently. By being arrested, the peasantry is probably lured to think that they might have followed the wrong person. But at the end of Luke's story, they too seem to have finally understood Jesus. As a result, all the peasantry become the crowds of Luke 9:18, while they beat their breasts and returned home (Lk 23:48). They are probably convinced with the centurions' remarks about who Jesus was; he was innocent.

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were prophetic (Lk 3:5-6, 16-18). In the last section of the gospel: "New perspectives", the disciples on the way to Emmaus presented him as the expected prophet (Lk 24:19). In these various presentations, Jesus is described in terms of the functional roles that are likened to the prophetic ministry.

<sup>145</sup> With reference to anointing, three categories of people were anointed in the history of Judaism: kings, priests and prophets. It was therefore normal to have thought of Jesus in terms of a prophet.

<sup>146</sup> Williams (2003:142) squarely describes Jesus' as executing prophetic representational functions. It is in terms of these representational functions as elaborated above, that the crowds identified him as a prophet. However, Jesus' identity seems to go beyond that of a prophet because he explains his suffering, rejection and dying as a *dei-* (cf Lk 22:37; 24:7, 44).



#### 5.7.4 Luke 9:18-22 and the relationship between Jesus and the Jewish elite

The question on who Jesus is, is immediately followed with what seemed to be the *raison d'être* or the very foundation of the dialogue. The speculations of the crowds and Peter's response are followed with words of caution (Lk 9:21). Jesus, however, does not leave his disciples in suspense – his words of caution are immediately followed with a justification, introduced by *ei)pw\_n* (Lk 9:22a). The verb *ei)pw\_n* explains who Jesus is in terms of what will befall him. He will suffer many things, be rejected and be killed and on the third day be raised (Lk 9:22b). The principal accusers that will orchestrate Jesus' suffering, rejection and subsequent killing are the Jewish elite, represented by the elders, the chief priests and the scribes.

Jesus spares the Pharisees, who now clearly have identified themselves as one of his adversaries, but keeps on conversing about their allies, the scribes (Lk 5:21, 30; 6:7). In Galilee he tried to minimise the antagonism directed at him by the Pharisees and the scribes. As he proceeds to Jerusalem, he predicts a new alliance (different from that of the Pharisees/scribes); whose relationship with him will be built on absolute rejection. It is clear that the problems Jesus faced with the Pharisees and the scribes are linked to his identity. Initially, they had questioned his identity, which was linked with his authority to forgive sins (Lk 5:21; 7:49). They also questioned his identity with relation to the company he keeps and his choice of followers (Lk 5:30, 33; 6:2).

However, in Galilee, Jesus was opposed and discredited, but not rejected. He did not consider the victimisation that he experienced as suffering. In Jerusalem, however, it would be different. Whereas Galilee was the nursing ground for conflict, Jerusalem appears to be the executing ground. The first contact between Jesus and the elders, chief priests and the scribes takes place in the temple where they seek to destroy him (Lk 19:47). The mechanism for rejection then matures during Jesus' trial, where he is condemned by means of false charges. On three accounts, Pilate proves him innocent (Lk 23:4, 14, 22); Herod does not condemn him either (23:11); and the centurion confirms that he is indeed innocent (Lk 23:47). In spite of these



proofs, Jesus' opponents insist in rejecting him: "away with this man" (Lk 23:18); "crucify, crucify him!" (Lk 23:21).

#### **5.7.5 Luke 9:18-22 and the relationship between Jesus and the Roman elite**

Luke 9:18-22 also seems to reflect the relationship between Jesus and the Roman leaders. The conjectures from the crowds are similar to those that have been echoed by Herod (Lk 9:7-8). The mention of three distinct personalities implies that it was not clear who Jesus was. It is also an indication that the question of his identity was a threat to Herod. The narrative line of the relationship between Jesus and the Roman elite later reveals that he is neither John the Baptist, Elijah, nor one of the prophets of old. The Roman officials convicted Jesus as "king of the Jews" (Lk 23:38). On the basis of this inscription, Jesus' death seems to have been motivated by the question of who he was and what he did. Dying as "king," it is clear that he was seen by the political authorities (the Roman elite) as a political opponent; but more as a religious opponent to the Jewish elite.

Jesus' prediction of his fate (Lk 9:22) does not spare the Roman elite as part of those who orchestrated his death. Those who were involved in the passion narrative are Jesus, the peasants, the Jewish elite, the Roman elite and God. Jesus is the subject of suffering; the Jewish elite are the direct subject of rejection; and God the implied subject of raising Jesus. The subject of Jesus' "killing", however, is ambiguous. The fact that the Roman elite were unable to rescue Jesus, in spite of their pronouncements on Jesus' innocence, implicates them as part of the group that constitutes the subject of those who "killed" Jesus. Hence, just as it is the case with the Pharisees, Jesus predicted the relationship between him and the Roman elite as that of acceptance (they declare him innocent) and rejection (they declare him a victim, by accepting his crucifixion).

#### **5.7.6 Excursus: Reading Luke 9:18-22 and Luke 9:28-36**

One of Luke's literary devices is that he sometimes repeats salient events, most probably for the purpose of clarification. The reading of Jesus' manifesto

in Luke 4:16-21 is better understood against the background of the prediction of his identity by the angel (Lk 1:32-33; 2:11); the shepherds (Lk 2:18); the *Magnificat* (Lk 1:47-55); the *Nunc Dimittis* (Lk 2:29-32, 34-35) and Anna (Lk 2:38). Luke 4:16-21 also serves as the background of his message to (the disciples of) John the Baptist (Lk 7:22-23).

In terms of who Jesus was and the consequences of what his identity entailed, Luke 9:18-22 offers an elaborate explanation of the different relationships between Jesus and his contemporaries. The understanding of this micro narrative is enhanced when it is read side-by-side with the story of the transfiguration of Jesus in Luke 9:28-36. Towards the end of the Galilean ministry Jesus realised that his identity had been interpreted wrongly by his contemporaries. To address this misunderstanding, Jesus gathers not only with his disciples, but also with them that followed him in Galilee. He then inquires what the crowds were saying about his identity. The speculations on his identity centre on what Herod already echoed. Jesus, however, would like to know what the disciples themselves think. Peter's identification of Jesus as the Messiah of God seems to distance Jesus from the popular opinion about him. With these responses, Jesus is fully aware that the crowds and the disciples still do not know who he is. Hence, he complemented their conjecture with several implications.

His identity is only to be understood when it is linked to his suffering, rejection, death and resurrection. This clarification of Jesus appears to instil more confusion in the disciples. Consequently, eight days later, he took Peter, James and John with him for a divine demonstration (Lk 9:28-36); a divine demonstration that replays the scene in Luke 9:18-22.

As a didaskalos (Lk 7:40; 8:49; 12:13; 18:18; 19:39; 20:21, 28, 39; 21:7), Jesus wants his identity to be clear to the disciples. It was therefore necessary to dispel the speculations that surrounded his identity. This is done in Luke 9:28-36, a micro narrative that mirrors Luke 9:18-22. Both micro narratives centre on Jesus' person and the fate that awaits him in Jerusalem. Luke 9:18-22 focuses on Jesus' identity and the implications thereof. Luke 9:28-36, on the other hand, is a succinct presentation of the lapses in the speculations about Jesus' identity in Luke 9:18-22, as well as a confirmation of

who Jesus is. This is sealed by a legitimation and a command from God: Jesus must be listened to. He is God's chosen Son (Lk 9:35).

The drama of the transfiguration in Luke 9:28-36 replays the scene in Luke 9:18-22 in six stages. First, Jesus is in the company of some of his disciples and prays (Lk 9:18//9:28-29, 32). In the transfiguration scene the three apostles are just as passive as in Luke 9:18-22 in that they fail to pray. Secondly, the speculations of the crowds are being replayed. Jesus appears in splendour in the presence of two figures: Elijah and Moses. Elijah is one of the figures the crowds identified Jesus with, and Moses represents one of the most prominent prophets of old (Lk 9:19). John the Baptist is conspicuously absent. This absence is probably justified by the fact that, from Herod's report, he had been beheaded. Elijah and Moses are pictured as being in a discussion with Jesus. In the third act the content of the discussion between the three is disclosed. They discuss the things that Jesus will accomplish in Jerusalem. These things are those that Jesus earlier announced as the consequences of his person and works (Lk 9:22//Lk 9:31). This accomplishment seems a necessity: *dei* (Lk 9:22; 24:26, 45). Jesus' appearance and his clothes witness a change. He is in the presence of prominent prophets who, although dead, are alive. Their presence symbolises Jesus' transition from life to death and back to life. The fact that his face changes into what they had hitherto not known, means that he is not an ordinary man; he is divine, the Christ of God (Lk 9:20).

Yet, the question remains: Who is Jesus? In the fourth act, Peter's reaction still shows an attitude of ignorance and misunderstanding. He suggests that they must build three booths to make it possible for Jesus to stay in the company of Elijah and Moses. This will prevent him from going to Jerusalem where he would die (Luke 9:33). Peter clearly does not want Jesus to die. This attitude makes him an obstacle to Jesus' mission. He professes Jesus as the Christ, but does not seem ready to accept the consequences.

In the micro narrative of Luke 9:18-22 Jesus was the speaker. In Luke 9:34-35 God is the one who speaks through a voice. Jesus no longer needs to explain the implication of his identity. This time the voice, which also spoke at Jesus' baptism, announces that Jesus is God's chosen Son. The legitimation of Jesus as God's chosen one echoes Peter's declaration that Jesus is "the

Christ of God” (Lk 9:20; 23:35). The voice plays the role of legitimation; it legitimises the discussion between Jesus and the two prophets and sanctions the earlier dialogue between Jesus and the disciples. Jesus is the one who should be listened to. In the last scene of Luke 9:28-36, Jesus no longer cautions the disciples not to disclose what they had seen and heard; the three apostles seem to have decided on their own to keep quiet. Hence, they told no one anything of what they had seen (Lk 9:21//Lk 9:36).

As indicated above, the story in Luke 9:28-36 is no longer a dialogue between Jesus and his disciples as was the case in Luke 9:18-22. It is a replay of Luke 9:18-22, with Peter, James and John as representatives of the disciples watching and reacting, and a voice speaking. Unfortunately, upon return, they do not disclose what they saw.<sup>147</sup> These two passages portray the misunderstandings in knowing who Jesus is as he moves from Galilee to Jerusalem. However, either understood or not, Jesus continues to reveal himself through his activities and through his relationships. He is not John the Baptist, Elijah or one of the prophets of old; he is the Messiah whose credentials will be justified through suffering, conflict, rejection, death and his subsequent raising by God.

This understanding of the transfiguration narrative, as a replay of Luke 9:18-22, stands to discourage all forms of speculation with reference to the comparison between Jesus and Moses (Evans 1965 Moessner 1983:584; Brawley 1987:22, 24; Tuckett 1996:85). Moses’ presence at the transfiguration does not imply that Luke 9:28-36 should be read from a deuteronomistical point of view (Evans 1965; Moessner: 1983; Tuckett 1996). Such reading relegates the presence and significance of Elijah to the background. It equally obscures the meaning and implication of who Jesus is. The appearance of the two prophets and their discussion testify that Jesus is more than a prophet: he will suffer, be rejected and killed as a result of misunderstanding and conflict. As an expansion of Luke 9:18-22, the micro narrative of the transfiguration of Jesus (Lk 9:28-35) directs the attention to Jesus’ identity and the

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<sup>147</sup> The three disciples (as *primus inter pares*) still did not understand who Jesus is. When Jesus, in Luke 9:44, repeats what he said in Luke 9:18-22 (which was replayed in Lk 9:28-36), they still misinterpreted who Jesus is. Rather than misunderstand or misinterpret Jesus, as they do in Luke 9:46-48, Peter, James or John – who were present at the transfiguration scene – should have been able to assist the other disciples in understanding who Jesus is.

consequences that will befall him as a result of a misunderstood identity (Danker 1976:30). The micro narrative is directly followed with Jesus' encounter with another "great crowd" (Lk 9:37). In the crowd there is someone who seems to know who Jesus is; hence, he reports about the disciples who, on the contrary, do not understand who Jesus is (Lk 9:37-43). Both micro narratives, Luke 9:18-22 and Luke 9:28-35, centre on the same topic: Who is the Christ? This common concern confirms the relationship between these two micro narratives.

### 5.7.7 Conclusion

The dialogue between Jesus and the disciples in Luke 9:18-22 is clearly an important micro narrative in Luke's gospel. First, it announces the popular speculations about the person of Jesus and explains the relationship between Jesus and his contemporaries in terms of their misinterpretation of his identity. Secondly, although Jesus seems interested in these personifications, he wishes to explain the implication of what it entails to be the "Son of man" (Lk 9:22).<sup>148</sup> Thirdly, the dialogue confirms that Jesus' Galilean ministry was essentially animated by the question: "who is this?" or "who is the Christ?" In Galilee Jesus revealed who he was through his activities. As he moves to Jerusalem, this question still needs to be addressed. As such, the dialogue in Luke 9:18-22 becomes a point of reference for the rest of the narrative. It explains Jesus' conflict with the Roman elite and justifies his innocence. At the resurrection the women who had come to the tomb with spices are reminded by the two men present to "remember" Jesus' words while he was still in Galilee (Lk 24:6; cf Lk 9:18-22). It is the remembrance of these words that gives them assurance that Jesus has been resurrected (Lk 24:8-11).

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<sup>148</sup> Explaining Peter's response, Goldsmith (2000:38) opines that "Jewish theology does not attribute divinity to the Messiah, he (Peter) probably did not mean that Jesus was God incarnate. He presumably meant that Jesus was the long-awaited deliverer, the liberating saviour, the one who would come to save his people. Peter was acknowledging Jesus to be the Messiah, the anointed King, the son of the living God" (Goldsmith 2000:38). This implies that Jesus probably understood the direct implications of Peter's response, as well as the conjectures from the crowds; hence, his stern reprimand to the disciples not to diffuse these speculations. Jesus' explanation can be seen as a correction of the limitation of Jewish theology which might have influenced these various responses. This makes the responses from the crowds, the disciples (Peter) and Jesus complementary and not exclusive; so long as they will include suffering, rejection and dying, as a *dei-*.

Without locating the antagonism between Jesus and his adversaries geographically; the position of Luke 9:18-22 justifies Luke's gospel as a gospel of conflict. It situates the antagonism between Jesus and his contemporaries within the context of their relationships on the issue of who he is. Jesus' complementary explanations are an elaboration of the prophetic words that had been said about him at the "early beginnings" of the gospel (see § 3.2.2). The identification of Jesus as the Christ had been announced by the angel to the shepherds (Lk 2:11); Luke himself testified about what had been revealed to Simeon, namely "that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Lk 2:26). Even the demons knew Jesus as the Christ (Lk 4:41). His baptism concludes with the confirmation of his messiahship (Lk 3:21-22). In a certain sense, therefore, the micro narrative in Luke 9:18-22 can be seen as a summary of Luke's gospel. This micro narrative serves as key to the understanding of the rest of the gospel story, especially with regard to Jesus' relationships with the various character groups in the Gospel, as well as the question on his identity.

## **5.8 AN EMIC READING OF LUKE: SOME REFLECTIONS**

Previous approaches on leadership and conflict (as discussed in chapter 2) have led scholars to various answers to the question of who the Christ is. An emic reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke has led to similar conclusions. For instance, it agrees with Wenham (2005:63) that Christ was the Jesus of continuity; continuity between Judaism and the new movement of followers (see Tuckett 1996:64; Brawley 1987). It also agrees with Van Staden that Jesus was the Jesus of compassion (Van Staden 1990:4), one who restored lost hope to the afflicted. Although the various character groups did not understand who Jesus was, all the events surrounding his identity were shaped by God's will and not by the devil, the Roman elite or Jewish politics (Spencer: 2005:117). His mission in Galilee and Jerusalem qualify him as a missional Jesus (Goheen 2005), who prepared the disciples for the future ministry (Moessner 1983:579). It was a mission of risk-bearing (Wilkes 1998:127; compare the Samaritan mission [Lk 9:51-55]), based on the principle of service (Nyawung 2005), and not lordship (see Lk 22:25-27).



Jesus appears to be an enigmatic figure. This is probably why most of the reservations of the religious leaders and the disciples concerning Jesus' identity were quite often kept to themselves (Lk 5:21-22; 6:7-8; 7:39; 11:38; 15:1-2; see Powell 1990:105). The Lukan Jesus seems to be a Jesus of scriptural empowerment. He begins his ministry by using scripture as a tool in defence of his adversaries, and ends it with scripture (Lk 24:46) as he further empowers and commissions his disciples. Henceforth, his identity can be discovered by reading and interpreting scripture, because he is the Christ of scripture.

Apart from divine declarations, no other character group seems to have a grip of who he is as the Gospel unfolds. Although Jesus is Joseph's son (Lk 4:22), he has a heavenly mission.<sup>149</sup> His relationship with the different systems of his time was marked with paradox. Although he showed concern and confidence in the disciples, they doubted him. In spite of his continuous teaching and words of caution, Judas betrayed him, Peter did not keep his promise, and the disciples deserted him at the time he needed them. When they were expected to mediate on Jesus' behalf, they misunderstood and

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<sup>149</sup> Luke's gospel does not seem to lay as much emphasis on Jesus' relationship with Joseph as it does on his relationship with Mary. Although Joseph seems less committed in the identification of Jesus, he works positively in the background. Luke does not describe his reaction when he discovers Mary's pregnancy. However, what is evident is that he does not divorce her. On several occasions, he shows solidarity towards Mary and "her son". First, he accompanies her to Bethlehem for the purpose of enrolment; he witnesses the birth of a son, made provision for the baby because the baby is wrapped in "swaddling clothes" for comfort (Lk 2:7). For the first time in Luke, he is a personal witness to divine testimonies about Jesus from the angels and shepherds and later by Simeon and Anna. While Mary kept everything that was said about Jesus in her heart, nothing is still said about Joseph's reaction (Lk 2:18). However, he continued to support Mary as they both brought Jesus for presentation in the temple to offer sacrifice. Their presence in the temple with the required items testifies to their mutual understanding to bring the baby Jesus up in safety. Once more, according to tradition, they both moved to Jerusalem for the celebration of the Passover, and on their return discovered that Jesus was not with them (Lk 2:44). Joseph accompanies Mary in search of "her son" (Lk 2:48). Even though Jesus is said to have remained obedient to his parents (Lk 2:51), apparently Joseph seems to remain quiet while Mary is the one who dialogues with Jesus (Lk 2:48). From this point, Joseph vanishes from the scene of Jesus' story; while Mary is reported to be present and caring (Lk 8:19-21). *Vis-à-vis* the Cameroonian tradition, where a father (whether adoptive or not) is considered the head of the family, Joseph is passively active. Luke does not explain Joseph's opinion when Mary is found to be pregnant or in the naming process; Mary reprimands Jesus while Joseph seems quiet (Lk 2:48). However, while Simeon's prophecy establishes a relationship of pain between Mary and Jesus (Lk 2:35), Jesus' relationship with Joseph is shown in his lineage to David (Lk 2:5). This element is important because it links the genealogy of Jesus: He is "the son (as supposed) of Joseph, and Joseph is from the lineage of David, which links up with "Adam, the son of God" (Lk 3:23, 31, 38). By contrast, the character of Jesus' divine sonship remains prominent and runs through the entire Gospel.

misinterpreted him in terms of their own expectations. They did not even believe in the story of the resurrection, nor recognised him when he appeared in their midst. Yet, at the end, they seemed to have understood Jesus; hence, they became witnesses and were commissioned to pursue in the ministry of preaching repentance and the forgiveness of sins to all nations (Lk 24:47-48).

While the Jewish elite connive with the peasantry to ignore and reject him on the basis of his activities and declarations, the Roman elite simply seem to have become cowards, and do not play their expected role. However, in each of these character groups, some individuals seem to have distinguished themselves. Simeon the priest spoke well of Jesus (Lk 2:30-35). Some elders of the Jews seem to recognise and recommend what he does. Hence, they seem to stand in support of missionary expansion (Lk 7:1-10). Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Jewish council, offers to bury Jesus (Lk 23:50-56), while the centurion declared him as *dikaios*. At the end of the gospel, the *laos* associate with the *o!xlov*; they confirm that Jesus was innocent (Lk 23:48). Even though some of the religious elite (the Pharisees) seem to have shown hospitality to Jesus, they seem to have been wrongly motivated (Lk 7:36; 11:37; 14:1-6). Jesus seems to have identified traits of hypocrisy in such acts.

In a nutshell, for Luke's story to be understood, each character group must be read from their own perspective. No character group needs to be treated as bad or evil, otherwise Luke risks being misjudged or misinterpreted. In other words, the Jewish elite, as well as the Jewish peasantry should be understood from their context. For example, there seems a difference in Luke's use of *laos* and *o!xlov*. Even though those present in the Jerusalem triumphant entry were the *o!xloi*, this seems not to have been a homogeneous composition. The religious leaders later on lured both a distorted *o!xlov* and a distorted apostle to arrest Jesus. At the end of the trial, the *laos* approved of his crucifixion. It is therefore erroneous to quickly affirm that the crowd that sang hosanna to Jesus immediately turned against him at the crucifixion. However, this argument neither exonerates the *o!xlov* nor any other character group, including present day humanity. It is in this light that Cleopas' report about Jesus' trial needs to be re-read with careful attention. Seemingly, the chief priests and the rulers are not to be held solely

responsible for Jesus' death (Lk 24:20). The "evil generation" (Lk 17:25) or "the Gentiles" (Lk 18:32) seem to be held responsible. All the character groups in Luke seem to fall within this context.

In recent scholarship, the question of Jesus' identity is mistakenly attached to who is responsible for his death (Cassidy 1983: 146-167; Jane Via (1983:122-145). This seems to be a misinterpretation and a misdirection of the conflict that Jesus faced in his ministry as a result of his person and mission. Such misinterpretation can possibly lead to the development and propagation of an anti- or pro-Semitic theology. Hence, the use of social scientific analysis in the study of the conflict in Luke's gospel seems a solution to this misinterpretation. Goldsmith opines that

We must not forget that the New Testament (with the possible exception of Luke, although that too is debatable) is written by Jews and therefore the charge of anti-Semitism is unlikely to be well-founded despite the rejection of Jesus and the Christian church by the great majority of Jews.

(Goldsmith 2000:73)

Who Jesus is and how he was understood can responsibly be assimilated when every reader sees him/herself as representing one of the systems that were in relationship with Jesus. In other words, a possible approach to the understanding of who Jesus was (and is) should begin with the perspective of the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\&v$  and end with that of the  $\omicron!\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ . Jesus' person and work in Luke's gospel is described in terms of continuity. The lawyer is expected to behave differently; the ruler of the Jews in the temple is in favour of missionary expansion, the centurion legitimates Jesus' innocence. And the disciples are requested to bear witness to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

## Chapter 6

### **Luke 9:18-22: An etic reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke**

*We must be careful that we do not import into the text what is not there and consider these impositions as word of God. We must also be conscious that we do not miss what it is that the text does not seek to convey and what effect and formative power it would wish to have on us and the communities of faith that surround us.*

(DeSilva 2000:18)

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

From an emic point of view there seems an inseparable link between the understanding of Jesus' person and works and the understanding of the various relationships in which he was involved. These relationships seem to have been the principal medium through which he revealed himself, and through which he was known and understood by the various character groups in Luke's gospel. The conclusions of the previous Chapter indicate that the relationship between Jesus and the various characters of Luke was that of conflict characterised by misunderstanding, misinterpretation, prejudice, contempt, ambiguity, suspicion, hate, distrust, malice, deceit, risk, conspiracy, rivalry and tension. At the background of these vices lies the question "who is the Christ?"

This atmosphere was not strange to a first-century Mediterranean reader being part of an agonistic society. For a modern reader, however, the case is different. The eagerness of the modern reader to understand these relationships places him/her in a position of someone struggling to "sing the Lord's song in a strange land" (Rohrbaugh 1996:2; see also Ps 137:4). The same can be said of the modern reader coming from an African background.

First of all, an African reader is also confronted with the social, cultural and historical distance between the first-century Mediterranean context and that of the twenty-first century Africa. Because of this difference, many scholars are of the conviction that a responsible reading and interpretation of the Bible has to be a cross-cultural activity that demands careful attention to these differences. The fact that the Biblical stories are stories about people further necessitates this kind of reading. The moment one takes the notion

seriously that the lives and behaviour of the people we meet in the Bible should be understood within a particular cultural and historical setting, a cross-cultural reading becomes the obvious route to go (see Elliott 1993). It also makes the modern reader, as an outsider to the text and its world, aware of the temptation to understand a different culture and its social systems from the point of view of that which is known, that is, the culture of the reader. Ethnocentrism always creeps in where the own culture serves as yardstick in evaluating other cultures.

The second problem that faces the modern African reader is that the texts of the New Testament are “high context” texts, produced by societies that leave much to the reader or hearer’s imagination and common knowledge (Malina 2001a:2; see again § 5.1). The authors and original readers of the Biblical texts shared the same social system and experiences. Contemporary (African) readers come from a different social system than that of the Biblical authors. These social, cultural and historical gaps become an even bigger handicap when the modern reader is a member of a “low context” society. To overcome this difference in order to gain access to the social system of the original audience, modern scholarship often stresses imagination. This, of course, supposes a certain level of assumption. Or, put differently, it compels the modern reader to devise a methodology that will enable him/her to penetrate the social, cultural and historical setting in which these texts (like Luke’s gospel) originated. By using these models, the reader at least can try to grasp an understanding of these texts in more or less the same way the original audience would have done.

The understanding and interpretation of the relationship between Jesus and the different character groups in Luke’s narrative world require a sociological, anthropological and historical study of these groups and the social context of first-century Mediterranean society. This approach can broadly be labelled a social scientific approach, an approach that can engage a dialogue between the modern reader and Luke’s gospel and its social setting. It is also a historical activity because social scientific criticism (SSC) is seen as an extension of the study of the historical dimension of texts (see § 4.4.2.5). Social scientific criticism operates through the use of models and

theories, which are reading scenarios that make Jesus' story of conflict in Luke's gospel accessible and relevant to the present-day reader.

Although SSC is both diachronic and synchronic, this Chapter will focus on the synchronic facet thereof, that is, the examination of the social, cultural, political and religious context of the first-century Mediterranean world. The diachronic approach is reserved for the next Chapter when the African context will be compared with that of Luke.<sup>150</sup>

The aim of SSC in this section is to provide an etic reading of leadership, conflict and identity surrounding the person of Jesus in Luke's gospel. Within the context of this thesis, it is the phase of diagnosis and explanation. It is an attempt to explain the nature of the relationships that Jesus engaged with his contemporaries, including their outcome. Inasmuch as the emic reading concentrates on what the natives thought, the etic reading is interested in investigating why they thought the way they did, and not otherwise.<sup>151</sup> An etic reading will therefore provide further explanation to the social codes embedded in Lukan texts, which have not been explicitly mentioned or explained because of its "high context" position. It is therefore an immersion into the Jewish and Greco-Roman background in order to "enter" Luke's story of Jesus.

The etic reading of Luke's gospel, focusing on the question of Jesus' identity, his leadership and the conflict he experienced, will be dealt with in three sections. The first section examines the socio-cultural setting of Luke's context by the use of certain models. The application of these models interrogates the Lukan texts in a new way. This does not mean, as put by Esler, that "a model is ... a set of pigeon-holes into which data is slotted. It is a heuristic tool, allowing comparisons to be made with the texts for the purpose of posing new questions to them. The texts must supply the answers, not the model" (Esler 1994:12-13). Models will therefore be used to guide and

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<sup>150</sup> As a process that prompts new questions and enhances a to-and-fro shuttling between the models that are used and the data in Luke's story of Jesus that are studied, SSC in principle, is based on the abductive method of interpretation (Garrett 1992:95-96; Esler 2006:4). The aim of the back and forth process is to avoid an anachronistic and ethnocentric prejudgement.

<sup>151</sup> With the etic reader coming from a "low context" society, SSC acknowledges that different cultures may have different ways of construing, describing and explaining reality as they live and experience it (Elliott 1993:39).



control the investigation of the social world of Luke, and not the reverse (Carney 1975:5). Moreover, the selection and application of the models and theories to be used also take into consideration the fact that “[t]here is ... no single theory on which most anthropologists agree” (Overholt 1996:4-5; see also Esler 2006:4).

The second section focuses on the application of the models selected and described in § 4.2 and 4.3. This will serve the purpose of elucidating Jesus’ story of conflict and leadership in Luke. The new answers provided by this exercise will surely enhance the understanding of the issues that surrounded Jesus’ identity in Luke, and the leadership style he adopted as a consequence of the conflict he faced because of the actions of his opponents. The last section will centre on an etic reading of Luke 9:18-22 – a reading of Jesus’ relationships and the ensuing misunderstanding and misinterpretations from the point of view of an “outsider”.

This etic reading is inspired by the following questions: Why did Jesus come into conflict with the various character groups (systems) of his time? Why was the relationship between Jesus and almost all of the characters in Luke marred with misunderstanding? Why did some characters exhibit an ambivalent attitude towards Jesus? Why was Jesus’ identity a problem for his contemporaries? Why were the social and cultural systems present in Luke a source of conflict? Why does Luke introduce the “good news of Jesus within the context of conflict? In answering these “why”- questions, models will serve as speculative instruments for the purpose of organising, profiling and interpreting the raw material gathered as a result of the emic reading done previously (§ 3.4.2).

## **6.2 THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF LUKE’S GOSPEL**

### **6.2.1 Introduction**

It was argued in § 2.6 that conflict in Luke is social, cultural, economical and political in nature, that is, societal (Neyrey 1991a). Consequently, a social scientific critical (SSC) approach to Luke’s text was prescribed as an alternative approach for the understanding of Jesus and the hostilities that he faced. It was further argued that sociological, historical and literary studies on Luke’s gospel had failed to connect Jesus’ identity to the question of conflict

and leadership. The emic reading of Luke's gospel has confirmed that there is a definite connection between Jesus' person, his leadership and the different conflicts he was engaged in with his contemporaries. The point of departure for the use of SSC in the understanding and interpretation of Jesus' story in Luke as stated in § 4.4.5 is the use of sociological and anthropological models and theories. For this task, earlier research by pioneer scholars must be taken seriously.<sup>152</sup> So far, their very astute approach has left little room for compliments in recent works.

It is the rich variety of well developed models and theories treated by these scholars that justifies the brevity with which some cultural and social values of first-century Mediterranean society will be dealt with. However, for the sake of clarity and cohesion, these values will in short be introduced and thereafter applied as models in the etic reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke. In effect, the main areas that characterise and define the socio-cultural context of first-century Mediterranean society are: 1) social relations; 2) social dynamics; and 3) cultural dynamics. Motivated by the pivotal values of honour and shame, all these characteristics are dependent on each other because they define the social behaviour of individuals and groups.

## **6.2.2 Honour and shame: Pivotal values of first-century Mediterranean society**

### **6.2.2.1 Honour and shame in first-century Mediterranean society**

In the Mediterranean society, honour and shame as the very base of its culture were dominant over all other concerns (Esler 1994:25; Rohrbaugh 1995:183; Moxnes 1996:19; Downing 2000:13; DeSilva 2000:23; Malina 2001d:27; DeMaris & Leeb 2006:180; Hanson 2008:39).<sup>153</sup> For this reason,

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<sup>152</sup> Many scholars have done elaborate, recommendable and sustainable works on this topic. For detailed information, the following could be consulted: Carney (1975); Pitt-Rivers (1977:21-23); Polanyi (1977); Malina (1981); Gilmore (1982); Eisenstadt & Roniger (1984); Elliott (1986); Bechtel (1991); Moxnes (1991); McVann (1991); Neyrey (1991a); Esler (1994); Van Eck (1995); Rohrbaugh (1995); Hanson (1996); Downing (2000); DeSilva (2000); DeMaris & Leeb (2006).

<sup>153</sup> Downing (2000:21) opines that while honour and shame are strictly Mediterranean values, they remain strange to the Western world, especially North America, where the "profitable" is rather considered as the central value (Malina & Neyrey 1991b:26; Esler 1994:27; Neyrey

the concern for honour and shame permeated and shaped every aspect of social and public interaction in the world of Luke. Jesus attests the importance of these values in Luke 14:8-10:

When you are invited by anyone to a marriage feast, do not sit down in a place of honor (prwtoklisi&an), lest a more eminent man (e)ntimo&tero&v) than you be invited by him; and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give place to this man', and then you will begin with shame (ai) sxu&nhv) to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher'; then you will be honored (e!stai soi do&ca) in the presence of all who sit at table with you.

(Lk 14:8-10)

Honour and shame were subjective values because it is the community that determined what was honourable and what was shameful within its setting. In comparative terms, honour in the Mediterranean society was a dynamic and relational concept. It was a claim to worth by an individual, followed by a social recognition of such worth. Simply put, it was a value of public reputation, because worthy honour was that which was validated by the public. It was also a claim of superiority and excellence over others, or to demand rights on the basis of social precedence (Pitt-Rivers 1977:21-23; Rohrbaugh 2007:32). Within the world of Jesus, honour was either ascribed or acquired.<sup>154</sup> Conversely, shame was a situation when someone's behaviour was contrary to the values of the group. Simply put, a shameful person was someone

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1996a:115; DeSilva 2000:26; Malina 2001d:52). Peristiany (1965:9-10) had argued the contrary. According to his observation, all societies have their own forms of honour and shame, which either have significant analogies and/or significant differences. This idea is justified by the fact that honour and shame are more subjective than objective values, depending on the society. However, Moxnes (1996:19) observes that even though these values may exist in other societies, they play a minor role. In fact, Downing's judgement as well as that of others might have been influenced by the fact that they write from the perspective of a "low context" society, whereas the Mediterranean society is that of the "high context", where habits are uniform. Secondly, honour and shame are "high context" words (Plevnik 1993:93) whose meaning is only deduced from the social behaviour of individuals within that context. Thirdly, DeSilva's belief in values such as self-esteem and worth may be influenced by the nature of the capitalist world from where he and the others write, because in these societies it is all about individualism.

<sup>154</sup> Ascribed honour is through birth, when someone either grows to inherit a reputation as a member of an honourable family or when it is a grant bestowed by someone in a powerful or honourable position. In this case, it refers either to status or position. Honour can be acquired later in life through adoption into a more honourable family, or through personal excellence when it is conferred on the basis of virtuous deeds or by excelling over others in various forms of social interactions (Gilmore 1982:191; Moxnes 1996:20; DeMaris & Leeb 2006:180). It is possible for someone to have both ascribed and acquired honour in the society.

without value. In fact, honour made the reputation of someone, while shame marred it. Hence, honourable persons were considered as models because they drew attraction and popularity.<sup>155</sup>

As subjective values, what was honourable varied among the elite and non-elite. Even though each group of individuals understood the importance of honour, as well as the degrading consequences of shame, they had different perceptions of how honour was obtained and preserved, while shame was universally avoided. For example, Rohrbaugh (1996:9) remarks that the accumulation of surplus that constituted honour among the elite was considered a shameful thievery by the peasantry. Honour or shame could be acquired through the process of challenge-response (or challenge-riposte).<sup>156</sup> Even though honour and shame as corporate values applied to both sexes (Van Eck 1995:167) they had gender implications within the Mediterranean society. Hence, while honour was considered as masculine, shame had a feminine connotation.<sup>157</sup> Men demonstrated honour in public places through strength, wisdom and courage. Women occupied private or domestic space of home, because they were considered as embedded in the identity and honour of some male (DeSilva 2000:34). As such they were regarded as a point of vulnerability to the family's honour.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> In such a society (as first-century Palestine), honourable persons are a prime indicator of social status. It becomes important to know with whom one eats, converses, walks and interacts. Honour is also gained through such association.

<sup>156</sup> The exercise of challenge-riposte was that of social communication whereby, the public arbitrated in a confrontation between two equals. It was a process by which honour was either publicly acknowledged or despised. Consequently, the claim to honour that was not publicly recognised was seen as foolish (Rohrbaugh 2007:32).

<sup>157</sup> For a discussion on the gender implications of the values of honour and shame, consult Weidman (2003: 519-530) and Rosell (2008:88-89).

<sup>158</sup> It is in this sense that shame as modesty, esteem and shyness can be appreciated in its positive side as a value of the Mediterranean culture. The value of shame also offered a woman the right to preserve her chastity. In the negative sense, shame was applied to both males and females (Moxnes 1996:21). For example, the physical condition of the woman in Luke 13:10-17 placed her in a shameful situation within society. Her restoration by Jesus means the recovery of her normal social status as a woman, and through that the restoration of her human dignity and honour.

### 6.2.2.2 Honour and shame in Luke's gospel

Luke's gospel presents various situations of honour and shame, and is one of the main sources of conflict between Jesus and the various systems of his community. These could be summarised in more or less three domains. Firstly, Jesus voiced his inaugural words of renewal and transformation (Lk 4:18-19) within the context where social discrimination had imposed shame on its victims.<sup>159</sup> Concretely, his healing sessions (Lk 4:38-41; 5:17-26; 6:6-10; 7:1-10; 14:1-6; 18:35-43) are aimed at restoring lost hope because social rejection had reduced human dignity into a situation of misery, despair and exclusion. In fact, these healing sessions serve the purpose of rehabilitation. In addition, Jesus' concern and interaction with people of low repute such as tax collectors and sinners (Lk 5:27), the woman in the Pharisee's house (Lk 7:37-50); the woman who bled for twelve years (Lk 8:43-48); the crippled woman (Lk 13:10-17) and the lepers (Lk 5:12-14; 17:11-19) are well understood when they are read with the lenses of upliftment.

Jesus expressed and commanded honour by showing supremacy over natural events such as death (Lk 7:11-17; 8:50-56), the storm (Lk 8:22-25) and demonic beings (Lk 8:26-39; 9:42-43; 11:14); all symbols of chaos. Publicly he defied, criticised and discredited the Pharisees (Lk 11:37-44; 12:1; 18:9-14); the lawyers (Lk 11:45-52); the scribes (Lk 20:45-47) and the ruling elite as a whole (Lk 20:9-18). Jesus' actions implied shame on the ruling classes that hitherto considered its structures and leadership as honourable. On the other hand, the criticism over Jesus' choice of disciples (Lk 5:33; 6:1-2) and his association with sinners and tax collectors (Lk 5:30) were all attempts by his opponents to denigrate him and bring shame to his person and his activities.

Secondly, Jesus' activities were actually those that credited him honour and respect at the expense of the established honour gained and imposed on the society by the ruling Roman and Jewish elite, respectively. He confirmed leadership status by calling disciples (Lk 5:1-11, 27-29; 6:12-16) and by assigning them for specific mission (Lk 9:1-6; 10:1-12). The multitude that followed him (Lk 5:19; 7:11; 8:2; 9:10-17; 57-62; 14:25), defended him (Lk 19:48; 20:6, 19, 26; 22:2), rejoiced over his activities (Lk 13:17) and

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<sup>159</sup> As rare and competed commodities, honour gained by one party was shame inflicted on the other party. Hence, by definition, socially impaired persons were shameful by nature. Jesus' words of restoration therefore implied the institution of a new community where the shameful recovered their dignity.



acclaimed him (Lk 19:28-40), testified that he was a person of dignity and honour. This honour was further bolstered by the successes during several sessions of challenge-riposte (Lk 4:1-13; 5:17-26, 29-39; 6:1-5, 6-11; 7:39-50; 11:14-20, 37-54; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 20:20-26, 27-40).

Thirdly, Jesus was addressed with titles that endowed him with maximum honour (Malina & Neyrey 1991b:47). From the beginning of the gospel to the end, Luke conditions his audience on how to identify Jesus; he is from the lineage of David (Lk 1:27; 2:4; 18:38). His credentials present him as the most honourable person in Israel (Lk 1:32-33, 35; 2:11).<sup>160</sup> His genealogy attests to his kinship relations (Lk 3:23-38). Through the Holy Spirit, God himself confirms his sovereign status both at baptism (Lk 3:22) and in the story of the transfiguration (Lk 9:35; cf. Ps 2). In fact, Jesus is introduced as one who must be listened to. After the crucifixion, the centurion summarised Jesus' honourable status by declaring him innocent of all the charges that had so far been labelled against him (Lk 23:47). His resurrection further confirms his supreme status and vindication by God. Jesus confirms his status by interpreting his suffering (and death) as a means to "enter into his glory" (Lk 24:26), which is a place of honour.

Summarily, the disruption of the *status quo* by Jesus disfavoured the existing system, bringing shame to its structures, as well as uplifting the honour of the less privileged. The uplifting of the socially impaired persons implied a reversal of status (see Mary's *Magnificat* in Luke 2:48-54). Jesus discredited existing political and religious authorities and became the point of focus of the populace. The confrontations he had with his contemporaries are better understood when they are analysed within the context of the quest for the latter to maintain and preserve their social status of honour. Jesus was thus discredited with negative labels, which accorded him the status of a deviant and rendered his activities invalid and illegal.

### **6.2.3 Social relations in first-century Mediterranean society**

Social relations in first-century Mediterranean society had an economic and religious impact. In fact, the economic and the religious systems were inseparable because even the control of economic resources meant the

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<sup>160</sup> These credentials are worthy of note because they come from credible agents such as angel Gabriel (Lk 1:32-33), Simeon (Lk 2:30-32) and Anna (Lk 2:38). Malina & Neyrey (1991b:54) observe that testimonies from honourable persons (especially of higher status), counts for much in the context of first-century Mediterranean society.



exercise of power (Moxnes 1988:27). With regards therefore to kinship, two models – dyadic personality and patron-client – were characteristic of this society because they constituted the basis of honour.

### 6.2.3.1 Kinship<sup>161</sup>

“Kin” refers to being of the same sort as oneself. According to Hanson (1996:62) kinship is “an abstraction relating to the network of relationships based on birth (either real or fictive) and marriage” (Hanson 1996:62), that is, a network built on family relationships.<sup>162</sup> Hence, the Mediterranean society was organised on the basis of kinship institutions such as families, clans and kindred, which were considered as fundamental seats of group honour. There was a distinct division between kin and non-kin, that is, between family members and non-family members. Basically, a person’s family of origin constituted a primary source of reference, location and identity. In like manner, someone’s merit begins with the merit of the person’s lineage or the reputation of the one’s ancestral house (DeSilva 2000:158).

In Jewish culture it was customary for people to be known first of all by their father’s name, whose reputation became the starting point of his children’s reputation. In this respect, Luke’s gospel opens with Jesus’ genealogy which links him with Joseph (Lk 3:23), Adam and God (Lk 3:38).<sup>163</sup> In § 2.5.3, it was argued (according to Desjardins) that Jesus was sometimes responsible for the controversies that were raised against him by his contemporaries. His attitude seemed to have impinged on the traditional

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<sup>161</sup> Malina (1986b 152) distinguishes kinship, economics, politics and religion as four basic social institutions by which basic human values are realised. Even though kinship has been singled out as the main institution in first-century Mediterranean society (Heilbroner 1972:37; Finley 1973:50; Van Eck 1995:210), these four institutions are not discrete entities that operate in isolation. However, kinship appears as the most protected institution because it is interactive (Hanson 2008:27). Hence, everything that goes with kinship dictates the economic, political and religious pace of the society, and *vice versa*.

<sup>162</sup> In this case, the name family is generic and means different things in different contexts. It could refer to biological relationship as well as people with a common ideology (political, religious and economic).

<sup>163</sup> Although genealogies in first-century Mediterranean society were complex social constructs (Hanson 2008:30), the point at stake is not a comparison between Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus and Luke’s account. Each of the two evangelists certainly had a targeted audience with specific intentions. Consequently, by concluding the genealogy of Jesus with Adam and God, Luke intends to point to the inclusive vision of Jesus’ ministry. In Matthew, Jesus’ genealogy links him to Abraham (Mt 1:1), as a reference to Israel’s faith.

notion of kinship, thereby upsetting the acceptable societal norm. For example, the call of disciples (Lk 5:1-11, 27-32; 6:12-16) had serious social, economic and religious implications.<sup>164</sup> Socially, Jesus explained true discipleship in terms of its implications within and without the family. In addition to Jesus' implied chaos and division within families (Lk 12:49-53), discipleship also meant absolute renunciation (Lk 9:57-62; 14:26). It is a conception of the family that seemed an offence to the *status quo* because it affected the sense of family honour. Secondly, the call of disciples implied an economic loss in terms of productivity and the payment of taxes (from fishermen) and the loss in man power (tax collector). Lastly, by calling the disciples, Jesus constructed a new kind of kinship with different religious demands and different and new relationships (Lk 8:19-21).

A new community was therefore being defined in terms of those "who hear the word of God and do it" (Lk 8:21; 10:37), and not necessarily in terms of ethnic claims (Lk 3:8; 8:20). Jesus' understanding of kinship went beyond ethnicity. Hence, while the crippled woman is referred to as "a daughter of Abraham" (Lk 13:16), Zacchaeus is also identified "a son of Abraham" (Lk 19:9). Jesus thus gave an inclusive picture of the society that he intended to build. Jesus' understanding and application of kinship should not, however, be misunderstood or misinterpreted. By using the model of kinship he contextualised his mission in terms of what God required. He did not disapprove of earthly kinship; rather, he redefined and reshaped the traditional notion of kinship (Hanson 2008:26). It is a redefinition of kinship which marched with God's principles of love and compassion: "Go and do likewise" (Lk 10:37). By scolding his disciples for obstructing little children from coming to him (Lk 18:15-17), Jesus upheld children as the first constituents of earthly (fictive) kinship. The fact that he remained obedient to his parents as he grew up (Lk 2:51) testifies that the religion which he professed and taught, was that of unity, respect, love and concern.

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<sup>164</sup> In first-century Mediterranean context, personal change was downgraded because of in-group/out-group and dyadic personality. Hence, once called, the disciples acquired new status as members of Jesus' fictive family. It is a decision that enabled them to give up their former status and all that it entailed, in order to follow Jesus (Malina & Pilch 2006:312).

### 6.2.3.2 Dyadic personality

Just as it is the case with the African society, first-century Mediterranean society was not a monadic and individualistic society.<sup>165</sup> Rather, it was a society of “group-oriented”, “collectivist” or “dyadic” personality, since people derived their identity from the group to which they belonged.<sup>166</sup> As described in § 6.2.2.1 above, people of first-century Mediterranean society saw and qualified themselves only through the eyes of others (Malina & Neyrey 1991c:73; Van Eck 1995:175). In such societies, people are often engaged in a sort of “psychological symbiosis” wherein one person’s weaknesses are complemented with another person’s strengths. Harré (1984:105) explains this phenomenon of mutual dependency as follows:

Psychological symbiosis is a permanent interactive relation between two persons, in the course of which one supplements the psychological attributes of the other as they are displayed in social performances, so that the other appears as a complete and competent social and psychological being.

(Harré 1984:105)

In spite of this stress, people were responsible for their individual attitude, especially if they acted contrary to group norms. Hence, abnormal persons were considered as deviants. The social scientific model of social identity theory equally explains that in such societies, groups tend to develop strong feelings in order to affirm and protect their identity as members of a particular group (see § 4.3.2). This is also a means to build stereotypes, hatred, prejudice and bias *vis-à-vis* outer groups.

The context of first-century Mediterranean society was that of “strong group persons” (Malina & Neyrey 1991c:74); a context that influenced and

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<sup>165</sup> A comparative analysis of first-century Mediterranean society and Africa on the one hand, and European and North American societies on the other hand, has led Bell (1976:16) to remark that individualism has been a threat to Western civilisation since the sixteenth century. However, this conclusion does not approve and elevate any one of the practices over against the other, because they both have their strengths and weaknesses. It all depends on their applicability to each of these communities.

<sup>166</sup> It is in this light that special note should be taken of the remarks made by Biblical authors against certain characters. These remarks often play the role of identifiers, especially in Luke’s gospel. For example, Zacchaeus is identified as a chief tax collector (Lk 19:2); Naaman is the Syrian (Lk 4:27); there is “the ruler of the Pharisees” (Lk 14:1); the Samaritan leper (Lk 17:16) and Simon of Cyrene (Lk 23:26). These qualifiers identify characters as members of social groups, profession or trade or as stereotyped personalities.

justified the formation of distinct religious groups such as the Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees, elders, chief priests and the disciples of John (Lk 5:33; 7:18). These groups were built on the characteristics of collaboration, solidarity, group values, group loyalty and group honour (Rohrbaugh 2007:10), which in turn identified and separated members of one group from those of another. Group members, as well as other individuals, had a personality that was described both in terms of external control and in terms of external responsibility (Malina 1992:77-78; Van Eck 1995:336).<sup>167</sup>

In Luke's gospel, Jesus redefined first-century Mediterranean dyadic personality. His redefinition of a dyadic society also implied a redefinition of society as a whole. Hence, a dyadic society is that of like-minded people who "hear and do" what God requires (Lk 8:21; 16:29-31). It is a community of transformed, empowered, assertive and self-reliant individuals that henceforth do not need to depend on external responsibility. Consequently, the disciples are challenged: "you give them something to eat" (Lk 9:13). Also, Jesus does not depend on mob conjecture to substantiate his identity. The disciples need to think and express for themselves what they feel: "But who do you say that I am?" (Lk 9:20). Jesus' vision of a dyad society is that of people who are conscious of their acts "Go and do likewise" (Lk 10:37). On the other hand, his healings and exorcisms were equally a means to declare the ineffectiveness of external control. His quest for restoration meant the annihilation of satanic influence over "a daughter of Abraham" (Lk 13:16; see also 6:17-18; 8:26-39; 9:37-43; 11:14); death itself had lost its power (Lk 7:11-17; 8:49-56). The Sabbath law (Lk 6:1-5, 6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6) and Jewish regulations (Lk 5:33-39; 11:37-41) were no longer a hindrance to his restorative works. It is in this light that Jesus could declare forgiveness of sins instantly (Lk 5:23; 7:48). While the lepers are still on their way to present themselves to the priests, they are made well (Lk 17:11-19). It is therefore a

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<sup>167</sup> External control could derive from the fact that (Mediterranean) society in general has an influence on the activities of each individual. Examples of external control on Jesus could be situated at the level of cosmic forces (Lk 4:1-13) and at the level of social forces (Lk 4:22-30; 9:54-56; 18:15; 22:50). External responsibility is simply about the social duties that a person has *vis-à-vis* his/her peers as a member of the dyadic community. Even though Jesus' clash with his fellow Jews could be interpreted in terms of his attitude, he was basically rejected because he failed to function in conformity with their expectations. In other words, Jesus was rejected because he failed to execute his expected external responsibilities (the role he had to play according to the society's expectations).

society of joy, repentance and forgiveness (Lk 15:1-7, 8-10, 11-32); a society void of hindrances (Lk 17:1-4; 18:15-17; 19:1-10), where even stones can praise God (Lk 19:40).

### **6.2.3.3 Patronage and clientism**

Patron-client relationships are a form of dependency relation, involving a reciprocal exchange of unavailable goods and services. The situation of unfair distribution of resources in first-century Mediterranean society had created an imbalanced society of unequal status between the privileged (elite) and the less privileged (the peasantry). The privileged citizens had access to honour, wealth, goods, protection, and opportunities of employment, which they offered to the less-privileged in the form of a gift. The honourable activity of receiving assistance placed the receiver in the position of a client, while the giver was the patron. It is a practice which instituted and increased the chances of a long-term potential relationship between patron-client (Elliott 1996:144; DeSilva 2000:97). In this context, a patron was considered a benefactor while the client was the beneficiary.<sup>168</sup> Patronage was a relationship of dyadic contracts, where both patron and client had reciprocal obligations (Malina 2001d:105). While the client benefited from the patron's protection, advancement and appointments into administrative posts, equality in or freedom from taxation and support in legal cases, he offered the patron a variety of services, and was obliged to enhance and uphold the integrity, prestige, reputation and honour of his patron in private and public life (Elliott 1996:149). According to Block,

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<sup>168</sup> Batten (2008:50) observes that in first-century Mediterranean society, there was an absolute distinction between patronage and benefaction. Unfortunately, this distinction seems to have hardly been respected by many scholars (Joubert 2000:59-60, 62-63). The main difference resides in the fact that unlike patronage, benefaction exists between equals and is void of self-interest. However, within the context of first-century Mediterranean society, there existed two types of patronage; reciprocal patronage between individuals and personal patronage. Reciprocal patronage was engaged within patrons (the elite) themselves or within clients (the peasants). In order to maintain good relations a patron who did not have desired goods requested by his/her client contacted another patron for the satisfaction of his client. Hence, a patron who provides access to another patron for his/her client was called a "broker". This type of reciprocal patronage between patrons was good for their personal status because a client contributed to the reputation and power base of the patron and therefore became an important asset to be loved and protected. Personal patronage was a simple relation between single patrons and their clients.

[p]atronage is a model or analytical construct which the social scientist applies in order to understand and explain a range of apparent different social relationships: father-son, God-man, saint-devotee, godfather-godchild, lord-vassal, landlord-tenant, politician-voter, professor-assistant, and so forth. All these different sets of social relationships can thus be considered from one particular point of view which may render them comprehensible.

(Block, in Moxnes 1988:41)

Within the context of Luke's gospel, Jesus presents himself both as a benefactor and as a broker. As a benefactor, he executed acts of benevolence such as healing, teaching, feeding and support for the poor and the weak. As a consequence, he became indebted to public love, support, protection and honour. The climax of this attitude was the offering of himself on the cross (Lk 24:26). Contrary to Malina's view (1988:13-14), Jesus acted as a patron in the eyes of the less privileged, who were charmed by his person and works. In his efforts to prepare the community for the coming of God's kingdom, he acted as a broker, recruiting disciples, making new converts and challenging the *status quo* (Van Eck 1995:172). He warned his disciples from emulating religious leaders who served as "negative brokers" and failed to perform their right functions. In fact, they frustrated access to God through the misuse of the temple and the Torah (Moxnes 1991:256). Pharisees are described as exploiters and distortioners (Lk 11:39), honour seekers (Lk 11:43), hypocrites (Lk 12:1) and lovers of money (Lk 16:14); they serve the enemy (Lk 7:30) rather than serving God. Lawyers are burdensome and pretentious in their attitude (Lk 11:46-48), while scribes are chastised for seeking social and public prominence and being economically oppressive and exploitative (Lk 20:45-47). As a corrective, Jesus recommends the "Good Samaritan" (Lk 10:33-37) and Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10). The Pharisees and even the disciples are advised to give alms (Lk 11:41; 12:33). It is in his service as a broker that Jesus faced fierce opposition from his rivals.

Jesus delegitimizes religious leaders by criticising and putting into question the traditional practice of patronage based on inequality, reciprocal solidarity, alliances and friendship, coercion, exploitation and the search for honour, self-interest and power (Garnsey 1988:58; Moxnes 1991:248; Batten 2008:50). He redefines patronage in the form of "brokerage" and benefaction.



It is benefaction wherein human beings commune and deputise on behalf of God. In Jesus' definition of patron-client relationship, all believers become involved in the process of making and becoming Jesus' disciples because they have become witnesses (Lk 24:48). It is therefore a community of brokers where its members are benefactors; in fact, a community of equals and not a community of clients where wealth, status and honour determine social relations. Rather, Jesus' view of a new community is that where the reciprocity of services and utilities are not expected: "when you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbours, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid" (Lk 14:12). In summary, Jesus previews a community of love and concern for each other. It is a society where nobility is derived from humble, responsible stewardship and a serviceable attitude (Lk 9:46-48; 22:25-27); a society that relies on God, and not on human patrons (Lk 11:9-11; 12:29-31; 18:29-30).

Jesus' view of human relationship was indeed an attack on the very basis of patronage. The Roman and Jewish elite, respectively, had power over control of land and wealth. In this respect, patron's often used power or threat of recourse to military force against peasant clients (see Lk 3:14, 19; 13:1, 31-34). Religious leaders misused their authority and the institutions that they served in order to extort and exploit the society (Lk 19:45-48). Jesus stood against this practice and as a result, he was seen as a rival or a usurper, or as one whose intention was to weaken their authority and power, and thus bring shame and simplicity into their respective offices. Religious leaders interpreted Jesus' activities as a profanation of the honourable activity in which they were involved; hence, the question: "tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority" (Lk 20:2). It was on this basis that Jesus was considered and rejected as a deviant.

## **6.2.4 Social dynamics of first-century Mediterranean society**

### **6.2.4.1 Limited goods**

In the early sixties, Foster (1965:296) had viewed the society of limited goods from the perspective of the peasants.

By “Image of Limited Good”, I mean that broad areas of peasant behaviour are patterned in such a fashion as to suggest that peasants view their social, economic, and natural universes – their total environment – as one in which all of the desired things in life such as land, wealth, health, friendship and love, manliness and honor, respect and status, power and influence, security and safety, exist in finite quantity and are always in short supply, as far as the peasant is concerned. Not only do these and all other “good things” exist in finite and limited quantities, but in addition there is no way directly within peasant power to increase the available quantities.

(Foster 1965:296)

This definition is correct when the term “peasant” is understood in its generic sense to mean persons regardless of their occupation, within the context of first-century Mediterranean society (Malina 2001d:81). The culture of this society was grounded on the belief that all goods, both material (food, land, crops, livestock, money and other goods) and immaterial (honour, fame, respect, status, influence, security, safety, influence, power and authority) were limited and scarce (Moxnes 1988:77). As discussed in § 6.2.2, the only way to increase the supply of these resources, was at the expense of someone else. Consequently, honourable persons worked hard in order to preserve what they had, instead of accumulating more, which would be considered as stealing.<sup>169</sup> It was also conceived in such a society that everything good was already distributed and that nothing could be increased (Neyrey & Rohrbaugh 2008:239).

Luke’s gospel is written within the context of a limited-good-society, where the confrontation between Jesus and his opponents could be explained in terms of the quest for limited good, manifested in the form of envy. In other words, Jesus’ identity and leadership were rejected as the consequences of envy. By transforming the society of want into a society of abundance, his acts and attitude were misinterpreted by his contemporaries. Jesus’ vision of the society was that of limitless material and immaterial good, where one person’s gain would not imply another’s expense; in fact, a society of little or no anxiety (Lk 12:22-31). His was a society where riches were expressed in terms of how much has been given out; and not how much is gained or

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<sup>169</sup> In this respect, Esler (1994:5) remarks that the notion of expanding economies (capitalism) was unknown in first-century Mediterranean society. As a matter of fact, first-century Mediterranean society had no independent and identifiable economic institution.

preserved. His ethical teachings on wealth (Lk 6:20-25; 12:13-21; 18:18-30); the stories of the “Good Samaritan” (Lk 10:25-37), the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31), the chief tax collector in Jericho (Lk 19:1-10) and the example of the widow’s offering (Lk 21:1-4) all testify to Jesus’ interest in transforming the traditional society of scarcity into a society of limitless goods.

Jesus’ teaching and actions triggered envy<sup>170</sup> between him and the peasants, the Jewish elite and the Roman elite. From this perspective, the questions surrounding his identity are better understood. The hostile reaction of the Nazarenes in Luke 4:22 (peer envy) is an open admission of loss on the part of the peasantry. The doubts cast on Jesus’ identity by the Pharisees and the scribes (Lk 5:21; 7:49), the question over the source of his authority (Lk 20:2), the questions of test posed by the spies (Lk 20:20-26) and the Sadducees (Lk 20:27-40), as well as the charges levied against Jesus (Lk 23:2, 5) were all attempts to disprove Jesus as a competent professional competitor. Herod’s cogitation (Lk 9:9), his quest to see Jesus (Lk 13:31-33), his attitude of contempt and mockery (Lk 23:11) and his untimely alliance with Pilate (Lk 23:12) are also aspects of contemptuous envy.

Summarily, Jesus’ public attraction pulled an undeserved honour and fame in the eyes of his adversaries, which were interpreted in terms of loss on their part. Jesus thus became a common enemy whose public activities caused a negative effect on the *status quo* at all levels. Hence, various methods were used to discredit his person and his activities; he was slandered, criticised and capped as a rival before being made an object of prosecution and death.

#### 6.2.4.2 Agonistic society

Naturally, the situation of rivalry, envy and the scarcity of resources as stated above, lead individuals to live a defensive lifestyle, because they are in a constant strife to either protect what they already have or to increase it, if possible. First-century Mediterranean society was an example of such a

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<sup>170</sup> Envy, according to Neyrey & Rohrbaugh (2007:247), “is pain or distress at another’s success, a sense of being injured, which seeks redress”. It appears and manifests itself in five stages: the form of envy, what is envied, who envies whom, how one envies and how one avoids envy. Three forms of envy can be distinguished in Luke’s gospel: peer envy between Jesus and the peasants, professional envy between Jesus and the Jewish elite and contemptuous envy between Jesus and the Roman elite.

society of instability, imbalance and contest (Eisenstadt & Roniger 1984:76). It was a society of power struggle, mutual suspicion, tension and fear. These characteristics make the context of Luke's gospel that of an agonistic society. Freyne (1980:177) describes agonistic societies as follows:

No matter what step of the ladder one had reached there was always someone higher, a situation which made life essentially unstable, if not precarious. Even Antipas could be deprived of his possession, and benevolence to the deprived does not dominate in such a situation.

(Freyne 1980:177)

Oakman (1991:168) paints first-century Mediterranean society as a society where violence was a regular and normal part of societal experience (Rohrbaugh 1996:6); a society of continually agonistic social dynamics (Neyrey & Rohrbaugh 2007:248). Paradoxically, this was equally a society where solidarity, trust, harmony and cooperation were the hallmarks of the interactions between kinship and ethnic. Also, it is this same spirit of competitiveness within dyad groups that created stereotype behaviour and described 'outsiders' as enemies. People outside of an individual's kinship or ethnic group were considered as potential rivals and even enemies. For instance, the disciples' (John and James) suggestion to call down fire on the Samaritan village (Lk 9:51-55) was as result of the long time antagonism between the Jews (insiders) and the non-Jews (outsiders). A second example is the disciples' aggressive attitude in "protecting" Jesus (Lk 22:50). This was a protest from the disciples, with the wrong motive of protecting Jesus.

The world in which Jesus lived and ministered was therefore characterised by high levels of controversy and antagonism, conditioned by the strife for honour, the system of patronage and the presence of limited good. As a challenge to this society, Jesus offered a new orientation to the disciples. Their aggressive attitude of retaliation does not fit within the context of the new mission. Consequently, he condemned James' and John's spirit of retaliation (Lk 9:55), and restored the ear of the high priest's slave (Lk 22:51). Contrary to Desjardins (1997:72), Jesus did not condone violence nor promote it. Instead, he stood against a society where violence was the norm. His birth is heralded by the announcement of the release of Israel from

enemies, foretold in the *Benedictus* (Lk 1:68-69). This is confirmed in his manifesto in Luke 4:18. In a society where controversy thrived, Jesus' reinterpretation of the Torah and other Sabbath regulations was understood by the religious leaders as an attack on their institution, while his teachings were interpreted as subversive.

Jesus' death is a revolt against the agonistic nature of first-century Mediterranean society.<sup>171</sup> The resurrection approves his strategy to build a society of love and compassion. In the phase of physical confrontation, Jesus responded with persuasive arguments and miracles. He did not preach armed revolt; he rather constantly advocated a non-violent attitude: "No more of this" (Lk 22:51). He condemned violence and saw it as an ineffective tool in altering God's control over human history (see § 2.5.3).

## **6.2.5 Cultural dynamics of first-century Mediterranean society**

### **6.2.5.1 Clean and unclean**

In first-century Mediterranean society, persons (and materials) were labelled "clean" or "unclean", not with reference to hygiene or concern for viral or bacterial infection. Rather, these were cultural maps that defined boundaries between "in-group" and "out-groups". As maps of identification, they became marks of kinship and ethnicity, where the "clean" labelled "out-group" members as "unclean", and through that excluded them from all forms of interaction and fellowship (Neyrey 1996b:90). In other words, "clean" and "unclean" were values that defined both ethnic status and social description in relation to bodily defects. To be labelled as "unclean" was therefore a mark of deviance and exclusion.<sup>172</sup> One of the major reasons why Jesus' opponents did not credit him with divine origin and functions was because he came in contact with the "unclean" either through social interaction (Lk 7:39), or through fellowship meals (Lk 5:30).

As defined already in § 5.6, the "unclean" within the context of Luke's gospel can be grouped into two categories. In terms of social description, the

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<sup>171</sup> The centurion's testimony (Lk 23:47) implies the disapproval of the former system of "blind" rivalry, controversy, misinterpretation and antagonism.

<sup>172</sup> Jesus' association with the "unclean" and his task to remove the scar of "uncleanness" were a strategy to rehabilitate its victims and to create a homogeneous society void of boundary marks of exclusion.

“unclean” were identified with the dead (Lk 7:11-17; 8:54-55), those with defective bodies (Lk 4:40; 5:17-25), lepers (Lk 5:13; 17:11-19), menstruants (Lk 8:44), the blind (Lk 7:21), as well as tax collectors and sinners (Lk 5:24; 7:47; 15:1-32; 19:1-10). In terms of ethnicity, they were assimilated to non-Jews like the Samaritans. Either in terms of social description or in terms of ethnicity the “unclean” were all ranked low and inferior when compared to the “clean” (Neyrey 1991b:291).

Contrary to the Jewish understanding of God’s holiness to mean separation and exclusion (Lev 19:2; see also Lev 11:44-45), Jesus’ activities drew new cultural maps which gathered in those who were hitherto excluded. As God’s “limit breaker”<sup>173</sup>, he restored and rehabilitated the “unclean” by making them “clean” (Lk 5:12-13; 7:22; 17:14-17). The declaration of his mission (Lk 4:18-19), the journey through Samaria (Lk 9:51-56), the sending of the seventy-two (Lk 10:1-12) and the command for his name to be preached to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Lk 24:47) confirm and indicate his intention to abrogate and reform former boundaries of hatred and conflict (Malina 2001a:165). The new community, according to Jesus, was that of God’s love and compassion (Lk 1:50, 54, 58, 72, 78; 6:36; 10: 25-37). It was a community of inclusion where preferred guests at the banquet were those on the “highways and hedges” of the society in particular, and of Israel as an ethnic group in general (Lk 14:12-13, 23-24).

Jesus’ contemporaries (the Jewish elite, the Roman elite and the Jewish peasantry), condemned him and considered him as an enemy, who caused a revolution, turning the society upside down. From an etic point of view, Jesus rather drew new maps which restructured and reformed the Jewish society in conformity with God’s principles of love (Neyrey 1991b:298). It is from this perspective that part of the conflict which Jesus faced with his contemporaries could be centred on the right understanding, interpretation and application of scripture and tradition.

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<sup>173</sup> Limit breakers were special agents, who were socially recognised and authorised to cross lines in order to deal with the “unclean” of the society (Malina 1986c:143-154; Neyrey 1991b:292).



### 6.2.5.2 Ceremonies and rituals

In first-century Mediterranean society ceremonies and rituals were like building blocks. They both served the purpose of ordering, that is, drawing and redrawing boundaries around natural and social spaces and identifying them as “good or bad, inside or outside, clean or unclean, high or low” (McVann 1991:334; Van Eck 1995:179-180). However, they remained two distinct values. For instance, while ceremonies served the purpose for the confirmation of roles and status of persons, rituals served that of the transformation/reversal of these roles and status (McVann 1991:334-335; Van Eck 1995:180). Also, ceremonies were considered as special regular and predictable time taken off by individuals and societies from daily, weekly or annual routine, in order to observe a pause or to intensify aspects of their activities. When these periods become irregular and unpredictable (when needed), they were called rituals.

Ceremonies in Luke’s gospel strengthened group identity, its stability and its continuity. They were relevant when food and table fellowship were concerned. In this society, individuals always strove to structure their world in an orderly manner. Hence, people only ate with those with whom they shared certain values (Neyrey 1991c:364; Van Eck 1995:181). It is in this light that the Pharisees and the scribes criticised Jesus for sharing with sinners and tax collectors (Lk 5:29-32; 15:1-2; 19:5-7). Jesus castigated and disapproved of such fellowships because they were scenarios for public display and social discrimination where people sat according to their status (Lk 14:7-14; 20:46). Through this, he introduced a new formula for table fellowship (Lk 14:16-24; see also Lk 22:14-23) based on equality and conviviality.<sup>174</sup>

It was argued in § 2.2.4 that the table (meals) were structures through which Jesus defined a new order that depicted the nature of God’s kingdom (Malina 2001b:10; Moxnes 2001:200). In Luke’s gospel, he reformed and transformed fellowship meals into symbols of inclusiveness. For instance, in the ceremony of the Lord’s Supper with the disciples, Jesus served as a servant, and not a leader (see Lk 22:27). In this micro narrative (Lk 22:14-

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<sup>174</sup> Neyrey (1991c:363) observes that in view of their social status, elite such as the scribes had special seats of honour during feasts. These seats fostered and confirmed their social status within the community and offered them special honour.

22), the table stands as a symbol for the abolition of hierarchy. Meals for Jesus are ceremonies and even rituals of status transformation, where the ceremonial master is a servant. In the feeding miracle at Bethsaida, Jesus destroyed the barrier of separateness by attending to a mixed group of the sick (unclean) and other peasants (clean).

On the other hand, rituals were activities that guided, shaped and sustained group boundaries, as well as one's identity in first-century Palestine. They played the role of the guarantor of social order, because the rites of reinstatement established lost legitimacy and status to its victims (Peristiany & Pitt-Rivers 1992:2). Jesus' healing activities and his social contacts with Jews and non-Jews alike were activities of status transforming rituals in which he became the "new" ritual officer. In fact, his declaration to have come for the unrighteous implies a redefinition of social boundaries (Lk 5:32).

Jesus suffered conflict with his adversaries because he used and interpreted ceremonies and rituals the opposite way (see Lk 1:46-56), thereby turning the *status quo* upside down. In Luke's gospel he offers himself as the person whose responsibility it is to reform and transform status through traditional ceremonies and rituals.<sup>175</sup> Consequently, he must be listened to (Lk 9:35). Rituals for Jesus became unconditional activities of absolute rehabilitation. The ten lepers on their way to see the priests are healed instantly (Lk 17:11-19). By eating with the rejected of the society, he assured them of their humanness. He equally blurred the lines separating observant and non-observant Jews and disapproved of the core value of "separateness". His Sabbath activities (and those of the disciples) indicated that he devalued the system of laws that structured temple activities (Neyrey

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<sup>175</sup> McVann (1991:341, 359); Neyrey (1991c:361) and Van Eck (1995:288-291) agree that Jesus' baptism was a ritual, wherein Jesus' status was transformed from that of a private resident of Nazareth to that of a public prophet (sic). As a Jew (ascribed identity), Jesus went through the traditional rituals of circumcision (Lk 2:21) and purification (Lk 2:22-35); not as rituals for the reversal of status but as ceremonies of boundary markers that confirmed and consolidated ethnic boundaries between Jews and non-Jews. Also, Jesus' baptism was simply another ceremony of status confirmation (ascribed status) because his identity and mission were already prescribed and disclosed in the micro narratives of the "Early Beginnings" (Lk 1:26-2:52). It seems therefore misleading and inadequate to interpret Luke 3:1-4:30 exclusively as a micro narrative of Jesus' status transformation (see McVann 1991:341-360). In the same vein, other examples such as the question-and-answer session (Lk 9:18-22), the transfiguration story (Lk 9:28-36) and the centurion's declaration (Lk 23:47) can equally be understood still, as ceremonies of status confirmation.

1991c:384). Meals for him are henceforth ceremonies that abolish boundaries of social discrimination. He concretised this by eating with both the Pharisees (Lk 7:36-50; 11:37-44; 14:1-7) and the rejected ones of the society (Lk 5:29-32; 15:1-2; 19:5-7).

### 6.2.6 Conclusion

From the models and theories described above, three conclusions emerge in terms of first-century Mediterranean society. Firstly, the conflict surrounding Jesus' person and ministry were due to the socio-cultural, political and economic context of its environment. Secondly is the fact that Jesus' leadership skills were in response to the realities of his context. Consequently, there is a close link between his person and the question of his leadership. Thirdly, from an etic point of view, these conflicts can be summarised in five categories. For the purpose of continuity, more emphasis will be laid on this last conclusion.

The first conflict was a conflict over "limited goods". By redefining and repositioning pivotal values of honour and shame, Jesus disrupted the *status quo* and provoked a reversal of status. This was a discredit to the existing political and religious system of Luke's context; a discredit which had social, political, religious and economic consequences on society. The second conflict is that of interest. Jesus reformed, informed and transformed the society of human interest into a society that lives according to God's interest. His redefinition of social relations implied the collapse of the *status quo*. Thirdly, there is the conflict of identity. Jesus' identity posed a threat to his contemporaries who saw him as an impostor and a usurper. His identity was a replicate of his mission; something that seemed strange, even to his disciples. It is in this vein that Luke's gospel could be summarised under the question: Who is the Christ? Fourthly, there is also the conflict of ideology. Jesus was concerned with the question of how God should be understood. The understanding of God to mean inclusivism and compassion challenged the traditional teachings and practices of religious authorities. Lastly, the fact that first-century Mediterranean society was an agonistic society equally gives less room for the identification of the nature of hostilities surrounding Jesus. By nature and from birth, he was identified as one who will cause the fall and

rising of many (Lk 2:34). This is also coupled with the fact that where there is social interaction, there is conflict.

Summarily, Jesus faced hostility; not because he abolished Jewish socio-cultural practices, but because he used traditional social and cultural values in order to inform, reform and transform society. His, is a new society that challenges consciences, destroys boundary maps of ethnicity and ensures equality and love among God's people. It is this attitude of information, reformation and transformation from within that led him into fierce confrontation with his contemporaries. He was seen as an adversary, who turned the world upside down.

### **6.3 ETIC READING OF JESUS' IDENTITY: WHO IS THE CHRIST?**

#### **6.3.1 Introduction**

In spite of the fact that scholars do not agree on the starting point of conflict in Luke's gospel, they remain unanimous that Luke's focus in the gospel is the question of Jesus' identity (see § 2.3.1): "Who is the Christ?"<sup>176</sup> It is a question about Jesus' social relationships, his religious activities and the political and economic implication of his teachings. Brief, it is a question of who Jesus is, and of what he does. From the perspective of first-century Mediterranean context, it is a question of Jesus' honour, vis-à-vis that of his contemporaries. It is in this respect that his identity has been interpreted differently by various authors (see § 2.3). Irrespective of all the sources and the nature of conflict elaborated on in § 6.2.6 above, Kingsbury (1985:100) is correct that the misconception, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of God, embedded in the Messiah-title of Jesus, was at the basis of almost all the conflict in Luke.

In what follows, two models (labelling and deviance theory and social identity theory) will inspire the etic reading of Jesus' identity and thus facilitate

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<sup>176</sup> With reference to the starting point of conflict in Luke's gospel, scholars have varied positions. These conflicts, according to Edwards (1981:33) and Fitzmyer (1981:137), actually begin with the encounter between Jesus and the devil (Lk 4:1-13). For Kingsbury (1985:101) and Culpepper (1995:13), they are launched by Jesus' attitude in pronouncing forgiveness of sins to the paralytic (Lk 5:17-26). Both ideas seem to ignore the fact that whether conflicts started with cosmic agents (Lk 4:1-13) or with human agents (Lk 5:17-26), these are situations that were already announced in the infancy narrative (Tyson 1983:315). It is therefore this theme of conflict that is later on carried forward in the rest of the gospel narrative.

the understanding of the question: “Who is the Christ?” These are neither hypotheses nor mathematical formulas that provide an answer to the question of Jesus’ identity. Rather, they are explanatory tools that offer a clue to why Jesus was identified and labelled with varied titles by the various Lukan characters. The aim of these models is also to diagnose and interpret Jesus’ identity from the very content of his teachings.

### **6.3.2 The question of Jesus’ identity**

The question of Jesus’ identity starts with the legitimation of the declarations of angel Gabriel (Lk 1:26-38; 2:9-14); the *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-56); the *Nunc Dimittis* (Lk 2:29-32, 34-35); the prophetess Anna (Lk 2:38); the Holy Spirit and of other human agents. It finally proceeds to the challenges of this identity by both cosmic and specific earthly characters, respectively.

#### **6.3.2.1 The legitimation of Jesus’ dual honourship**

As discussed in § 6.2.2.1, the legitimation of Jesus’ identity in Luke’s gospel is at the same time that of his honourship. The beginning of Jesus’ ministry is heralded by the recognition and validation of his identity by the Holy Spirit (Lk 3:21-22). The significant role of the Holy Spirit in this micro narrative is that of the confirmation of Jesus’ ascribed honour and a grant of acquired honour. Based on this declaration (of dual honourship), Jesus is confronted by his adversaries on the nature of his sonship, of his teachings and activities and the source of his authority. While the devil lures him to doubt his divine sonship, his peers in Nazareth remind him of his real lineage, as Joseph’s son (Lk 4:22). In the same vein his teachings, his activities and the source of his authority are questioned by the religious authorities. All these sessions are attempts to ridicule and disapprove of the legitimation of this dual honourship that constitute the grounds for Jesus’ person and works.

In effect, Jesus’ ascribed identity (honour) is announced by early Lukan characters (as mentioned above), and by Luke himself. The genealogy that follows the acknowledgement of Jesus’ dual honourship bolsters and substantiates the pronouncements of the Holy Spirit and other heavenly and human characters. A genealogy is a list of a person’s relatives. It serves as a ground for a person’s claim to power, status, rank, office or inheritance in

earlier ancestors. Anthropological studies indicate that genealogies are meant to preserve tribal homogeneity or cohesion, to inter-relate diverse traditions, acknowledge marriage contracts between families, legitimate fictive kinship, and maintain ethnic identity (Rohrbaugh 1995:187). In first-century Mediterranean context, genealogies were used by rulers to justify their right to rule (Wilson 1992:931). Their purpose also depended on the interest of the redactor. In the case of Luke's gospel, Jesus' genealogy is an interlude to public acknowledgement of the divine sonship of Jesus. In presenting this genealogy, Luke establishes Jesus' status and makes it authentic. It is a confirmation of Jesus' pride and aggrandisement. In short, it is recognition of his ascribed honour.<sup>177</sup> From the beginning of the gospel Luke ascertains, legitimates and presents Jesus' identity to all the social, political and cosmic characters of his gospel through a succinct and clear description of his pedigree, which situates him in a particular kinship within the Jewish setting.

By acknowledging Jesus as his Son, according to the tradition of first-century Mediterranean society, God accepted responsibility for him, declaring him as his heir (ascribed honour), in whom he was pleased (acquired honour). This was also an occasion for God as Father, to ascertain his Son's status within the community. Jesus' acquired honour is later confirmed through his social activities of healing, teaching and preaching. These activities influenced further legitimation as it was the case with the crowds and Peter (Lk 9:18-20), the voice at the transfiguration (Lk 9:28-36) and the centurion (Lk 23:47). Jesus' dual honourship thus became a paradox. On the one hand the crowds and Peter seemed to have understood and interpreted its meaning in human terms to mean Jesus' honour and that of the Jewish race. On the other hand, Jesus explained and justified the consequences of what they heard, saw and conceived, in terms of what appeared to be humanly shameful: conflict, suffering rejection and death. From the perspective of Luke's story plot, Jesus validated the centurion's declaration by foretelling his vindication (Lk 9:22). It is in this sense that his declaration to the disciples is better understood: "Was it not necessary that the Christ

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<sup>177</sup> This study is an etic reading of Jesus' identity in Luke's gospel. Consequently, it is not interested in the question of the historicity of Jesus' genealogy. For further information, these questions are dealt with by Fitzmyer (1981) and Hood (1961).



should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” (Lk 24:26). The glory in question (see Lk 24:12-27) was about the confirmation of his dual honourship.

### 6.3.2.2 Challenges to Jesus’ identity and honour

The challenges to Jesus’ honour in Luke’s gospel are a test and/or a protest of the credibility of his identity and that of his authority, as attested by human agents and confirmed by the Holy Spirit (Lk 3:2-22). The declaration of his dual honourship constitutes the grounds for this credibility test, which is perpetrated at both cosmic and human levels, respectively. At cosmic level, Jesus’ identity is challenged, tested and put to doubt by the devil (Lk 4:1-13). The latter’s introductory words are self evident: “If you are the son of God” (Lk 4:3). His ensuing requests indicate that the customary conclusions from the genealogy as well as the legitimation from the “voice” were seemingly all wrong. In this encounter, every foundation of Jesus’ honour is put to question and doubt. Rohrbaugh (1995:189) rightly describes this micro narrative as a test of Jesus’ honour.

At human level, Jesus is challenged by his Nazarene peers, by the religious leaders, by Herod and his soldiers and by other Lukan characters (see Lk 23:35-39). Jesus’ Nazarene peers appear as those who knew him best: his origin, his family and the circumstances under which he grew up. The premise of their remark: “Is this not Joseph’s son?” (Lk 4:22) is the genealogy, where Jesus had effectively been identified as Joseph’s son (Lk 3:30). In response, Jesus’ criticism (Lk 4:23-27) implies that their remark had two implications. It refers to his person both as an individual and as a member of a dyadic community. At the level of an individual, the issue at stake is that of Jesus’ identity and that of his origin. From every indication, Jesus’ perceived identity seemed incompatible with what they knew him to be: a peasant’s son. Although they knew of his earthly origin, they ignored his status as “Son of God”; his ascribed and acquired identity (honour) that had made him famous in the eyes of the public (Lk 4:14) and his own declarations of self-acclaimed identity (Lk 4:18-21). Jesus was right to have taken their

reaction for an insult or a mockery.<sup>178</sup> To identify him as Joseph's son was a way to cut his claim of honour down to size. Jesus did not tolerate this approach; he would have been identified through the wrong (human) source that put his divine identity into question.<sup>179</sup> Besides, the question from Jesus' peers refers to him as one of their community member. It is about a matter of boundary and kinship relations that draws Jesus' attention that he is one of them. As a consequence, the extension of his mission to those out of the "Jewish boundary" was unacceptable. They therefore attributed to Jesus an identity that reduced the scope of his mission to an ethnic consideration. Jesus' corrective reaction instead defined and granted a universal vision to his mission, which became an embarrassment to the Nazarenes; hence, his rejection became apparent and outright.

The religious leaders used Jesus' social relationships, his activities and his teachings as an alibi to challenge his identity and leadership. He is ridiculed for feasting with sinners and tax collectors (Lk 5:30; 7:39; 15:1-2; 19:1-10), making wrong choices (Lk 5:33; 6:1-2), defiling Sabbath regulations (Lk 6:6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6) and for not cooperating with the powers-that-be. His public teachings seem to position him as their equal. In first-century Mediterranean society inferiors had no authority of their own. They were not permitted to address the public, let alone initiate a conversation. Hence the question: "Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority" (Lk 20:2) is a challenge and a disapproval of Jesus' identity (dual honourship) and works. According to the Jewish religious authorities, Jesus had neither of the prerequisites that qualified him as a public speaker. Rather, his birth status accorded him credentials due a personality of inferior

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<sup>178</sup> Jesus' peers knew his earthly background. In this respect the question: "Is not this Joseph's son" seems indeed, to have been ironic. Traditionally, the Nazarenes knew that Jesus was a "bastard" son of a simple peasant – Joseph. Consequently, Joseph's profession and the circumstances surrounding Jesus' conception, his birth and his naming, would not have offered him the dual honourship, which he now claimed (Lk 4:21). The task even became more complicated when his peers were requested to listen to him (Lk 9:35).

<sup>179</sup> Jesus' reaction implies that, to identify him through human origin is a misrepresentation which brings dishonour to him because it misinterprets his identity and mission. Instead, his divine identity is adequate and defines the leadership role that befits him (contrary to that which has been defined by the devil). Hence, the multitude's remarks can be considered as ridicule to his birth status and through that, an insult to his personality (Rohrbaugh 1995:195).

status.<sup>180</sup> In this vein, the crowd that sometimes made his fame was also considered invalid to ascribe honour to Jesus, because they were not classified (see § 5.5).

Herod and his soldiers joined the cue of challenge by administering a treatment of contempt towards Jesus (Lk 23:11). In fact, the treatment of Jesus as a misfit constituted a point of reconciliation between Herod and Pilate (Lk 23:12). Just as it was the case at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the picture of the temptation micro narrative (Lk 4:1-13) is recast at the crucifixion, which appears as a conclusion to his ministry (Lk 23:35-39). Another opportune time having come, the devil once more challenged Jesus' identity through the rulers who scoffed at Jesus (Lk 23:35). Their challenge is rested on his expected and prophesied salvific works (Lk 1:51-54; 2:31). The soldiers mock Jesus and offer him vinegar (Lk 23:36). Through this, they challenge the very foundation of his identity as king. Finally, one of the criminals who were crucified alongside Jesus focuses on Jesus' very claim of messiahship: "Are you not the Christ?" (Lk 23:39). Jesus' identity is therefore an object of an enormous challenge throughout his ministry. Suddenly, the trend of events is reversed, with the centurion confirming, ascertaining and reinstating this identity: "Certainly, this man was innocent" (Lk 23:47).

Jesus performed his earthly ministry within the context of challenging events from cosmic and human forces, respectively. These challenges became an object of conflict, rejection and hostility faced by him. They also became a test to his identity, as well as a medium through which he confirmed the dual honourship conferred on him by the various Lukan characters. Irrespective of this pressure, Jesus maintained the identity and

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<sup>180</sup> Within the context of the Mediterranean society of honour and shame, an inferior person did not initiate a conversation; let alone teaching in the presence of those who were considered as "superior". The question about Jesus' identity warranted him to have recognised his inferior status, and to have admitted it by staying quiet. In this light, Rohrbaugh (1995:186) remarks that in antiquity people were expected to act in accord with birth status and anyone who defiled this represented a troublesome social anomaly. On the basis of this concept, Jesus' attitude was considered abnormal; hence, a justification was needed because he seemed to have claimed a mistaken identity. Such a justification was in conformity with the Babylonian proverb that "a servant in a strange town may be taken for a high officer" (Harper, in Rohrbaugh 1995:186). Curiously, Jesus riposted because he was not in "a strange town". This attitude of his demonstrated the equality of status between him and his opponents.

honour of Christ, the suffering servant (Lk 24:26); an identity which is further attested by his resurrection.

### **6.3.3 Labelling and deviance theory (LDT)**

As it was observed in § 4.3.3, LDT has a wide area of concentration because it deals with cultural values that affect individuals and their interaction with others. For the case of Luke's gospel, it was equally observed that the question of conflict and identity could be approached from the view point of LDT (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:99). One of the ways through which Jesus' identity (dual honourship) and leadership were challenged was through labelling and deviance. Deviance is the consequence of the application by others of rules whose infraction by an "outsider" is considered as an offence. A deviant is therefore someone to whom this label is applied. By interpreting its norms and principles, society determines who and what is deviant from who and what is not. In this vein, Barclay (1999:293) remarks that "what makes an act socially significant as deviant is not much that it is *performed*, as that it is *reacted to* as deviant and the actor accordingly labelled" (Barclay 1999:293). As a social product, deviance is either an ascribed or an achieved status. LDT will thus be used in order to explain the various ways through which Jesus was identified. This will mean an examination of the theoretical framework for applying LDT in the understanding of conflict, identity and leadership in Luke's gospel. In the second phase, LDT will be applied in order to understand and interpret the above themes.

#### **6.3.3.1 Labelling and deviance theory in Luke's gospel: Theoretical framework**

The relationship between Jesus and his adversaries in Luke's gospel is situated around Galilee and Jerusalem. In Galilee four aspects characterise the nature of the controversy between them, with reference to the nature of Jesus' identity. Firstly, his activities of teaching, preaching and healing are a confirmation of his dual honourship. They testify who he is and what he intends to do. Secondly, his claim of divine authority is an indication of the presence of God's rule (see Lk 17:21), which is mistakenly misunderstood by the Pharisees and the scribes. Thirdly, his social relationships defy the normal

order because they are not an extension of the traditional cultural maps of ethnicity. Lastly, Jesus' attitude towards the Mosaic Law is an introduction of an era of new ethical values. In the eyes of the public, Jesus was seen as the authoritative leader, as compared to the religious authorities. Such consideration meant a gain of fame and honour for Jesus at their detriment. It is with this impression of mixed feelings that Jesus is received and acclaimed as a successful leader as he enters Jerusalem (Lk 19:28-40).

His principal opponents in Jerusalem are the scribes, the chief priests and the elders of the people. The antagonism and hatred between them is triggered by three factors. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem actually confirms him as Israel's Messiah-king (see Lk 3:15-16; 7:18-23), in conformity with his early comparison with God (see Lk 5:21; 7:48). As a second factor, Luke presents the temple as a source of conflict (Tyson 1986:153). His arrival in Jerusalem also ushered him into the temple, where he launched a symbolic reform in its activities. Hitherto, its functionaries and other agencies had made the temple to lose its power to make holy (Elliott 1991b:223).<sup>181</sup> Henceforth, the temple will no longer be a place of exploitation and robbery (Lk 19:45-48). It has once more resumed its rightful place as the house of prayer (Lk 19:46), learning (Lk 3:46), teaching and preaching (Lk 20:1). Jesus' attack on temple activities is an attack on the very seat of his opponents' authority and power (Elliott 1991b:235; Kingsbury 1997b:156). His critical reforms make the temple a symbol of their failure in leadership. The third factor relates to Jesus' criticism of their leadership as depicted in the parable of the vineyard and the tenants (Lk 20:9-18).

The religious leaders read and interpreted all the reforms initiated by Jesus in practice and in his teachings as an insult to their authority and leadership. He seems to have presented himself as the true representative of

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<sup>181</sup> The temple had become an institution where priests and Levites protected their interest rather than rendering compassion (Lk 10:31-32). The Pharisees became more interested in their religiosity rather than being righteous and just (Lk 11:2; 18:9-14). The widows had become victims of exploitation from the scribes (Lk 20:46-47). In the same way, the temple had become an institution where the chief priests and the Sanhedrin connived to thwart justice (Lk 22:2). In fact, the temple had been polluted and administered contrary to its intended purpose of being a place of reverence.



God. Hence, they galvanised every effort to destroy him (Lk 19:47; 20:19a).<sup>182</sup> Unfortunately, they still “did not find anything they could do, for all the people hung upon his words” (Lk 19:48; see Lk 20:19b, 26). Conflict in the temple pursues its course when Jesus is further attacked on the source of his authority. These agitations from the religious authorities constitute some of the vital reasons for which Jesus is declared a public enemy to be ostracised.

From Galilee to Jerusalem, Jesus’ opponents mount mechanisms in order to trap him in his words and actions. In this process, Jesus is addressed with negative labels that humiliate, discredit and disprove him.<sup>183</sup> The purpose of this approach is to declare Jesus a deviant and thereafter ostracise him. Progressively, he is tagged a blasphemer and usurper (Lk 5:21). With these labels Jesus’ adversaries intend to put him in conflict with God. He is further criticised as an antinomian citizen who tolerates and promotes the non-respect of religious regulations (Lk 6:33; 6:1-5; 6-11; 11:38; 13:10-17; 14:1-6) and an associate with “outsiders” (Lk 5:30; 7:39). According to the perceptions of Jewish culture of the understanding of “clean” and “unclean”, Jesus was absolutely “out of place”. On the account of his healing activities, he is called demon possessed (Lk 11:15). During the trial, he is accused as a false prophet and a false Christ (Lk 22:63-71), before being referred to the highest Roman political authorities. Before Pilate he is described as a “polluter” and a “revolutionary” (Lk 23:5); that is, as a leader of a rebellious faction. This is a masked and misrepresented picture of Jesus, painted by the religious

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<sup>182</sup> The hatred and antagonism between Jesus and his opponents is progressive. In Galilee, the discussion is still centred on what to do with Jesus (Lk 6:11). When he criticised and condemned the Pharisees (Lk 11:37-44; 16:14-15; 18:9-14), the lawyers (Lk 11:45-52) and the scribes (Lk 14:7-11) on his way to Jerusalem, the question is not yet about killing him. The scribes and the Pharisees rather continue in search for a means to trap him in his words (Lk 11:53-54). Even when he labelled the Pharisees (and the ruler of the synagogue) as hypocrites (Lk 12:1-3; see Lk 13:15) and lovers of money (Lk 16:14), they neither dared to arrest and kill him (see Lk 22:53) nor to convict him. The plans to arrest and destroy Jesus are nursed only after his (provocative) entry into Jerusalem (Lk 19:28-40) and his reaction to temple activities (Lk 19:45-46). Further criticism on their leadership (Lk 20:9-18) and the labelling of the scribes as extortionists (see Lk 20:45-47) later served as additional evidents to their quest.

<sup>183</sup> Neyrey (1991a:99) remarks that such labels that come as a result of developed stereotypes are able to inflict injury on their victim, especially when they come from influential persons. For the case of Jesus, most of the negative labels were derogatory names that were forced on him as acquired status by religious authorities with the intention of giving a subversive tone to the charges levied against him (Hagedorn 2006:231). Since a new label defined a person in a new way, this exercise was aimed at declaring Jesus as a deviant.



authorities to his fellow Jewish public and the Roman leaders. In the process of labelling and deviance, the labeller usually sought for testimonies and other endorsements from prominent persons. Hence, during and after the trial, the quest for new alliances became serious. Spies, the *laov* and the *oxlov* are exploited as witnesses. They play the role of an incredible majority, whose objective is treachery and falsehood. Pilate and Herod are lured as superior and malicious authorities. These Lukan characters apparently succeed in according Jesus acquired status of deviance.

In order to strengthen these labels, Jesus is tested on the very basis of his authority (Lk 20:2) and his teachings. Spies are used in order to confront him (Lk 20:20-26), while the Sadducees test him on the basis of his teaching concerning the notion of the resurrection (Lk 20:27-40). Earlier, the lawyers had done the same when they tested Jesus on the issue of eternal life (Lk 10:25). Suspicious alliances<sup>184</sup> are also formed in order to testify against him. Unable to successfully trap and arrest Jesus, his opponents conspired with a distorted and traitor disciple – Judas (Lk 22:4). The *laov* that was initially feared is engineered into a distorted *oxlov* of accomplices who join in Jesus' arrest (Lk 22:47) and are later persuaded to label Jesus as an instigator (Lk 23:4). The *laov* are further taken as witnesses (Lk 23:13). This makes the involvement of the peasant class in convicting Jesus to be complete. At the end, the *laov* successfully declared Jesus a deviant and agreed with his crucifixion (Lk 23:18, 21, 23). In the same vein, the Pharisees who did not agree with the priestly class suddenly became part of the Sanhedrin (see Acts 5:33-35; 23:6-10), while Herod and Pilate became friends. As a whole, every effort was made to ensure that the labelling and rejection of Jesus was effective.

On the other hand, these negative labels did not annihilate Jesus' identity and works. Various Lukan characters appreciated Jesus differently as they attributed him with positive labels, even though some came as a result of the misinterpretation of his actions. For example, Jesus is announced by

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<sup>184</sup> Kingsbury (1997b:162) analyses these alliances as a "coalition of darkness". He is certainly right that the presence of the Sadducees in the passion narrative is a weakness on the part of the opponents of Jesus. Their inability to ask Jesus further questions (Lk 20:40) testified that they had no fundamental basis to discredit and ostracise Jesus. Yet, they continued their "dark" plans by associating other agents. They certainly needed the support of the Jewish public so as to validate the change of status inflicted on Jesus.

angel Gabriel as “Son of the Most High” (Lk 1:32); “Holy, the Son of God” (Lk 1:35) and “Saviour, Christ the Lord” (Lk 2:11). Demons equally identify him as “the Christ” (Lk 4:41). The crowds, a Pharisee and Herod identified him as a “prophet” (Lk 7:16, 39; 9:8, 19). While some characters addressed him as “teacher” (Lk 5:5; 7:40; 8:24, 45, 49; 9:33, 38, 49; 10:25; 11:45; 12:13; 17:13; 18:18; 19:39; 20:21, 28, 39; 21:7), others knew him as “Lord” (Lk 5:8, 12; 6:46; 7:6, 13; 9:54, 59, 61; 10:17, 40; 11:1; 12:41; 17:5, 37; 19:8). For Peter, Jesus was the Christ of God. The centurion’s positive label as the *δικαίον* crowned his identity as an innocent suffering servant-leader. While some Pharisees (and some scribes) seemed to have perceived his true identity (Lk 7:36-50; 11:37; 14:1; see also Lk 20:39), and tried to preserve it (Lk 13:31-33; 19:39), they refused its legitimation. Although the above labels (positive and negative) seem to present Jesus with a dual identity, his true identity was only incarnated in what he did and in conformity with what God required.

### **6.3.3.2 Application: The arrest, trial, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus as rituals of status transformation**

Jesus’ arrest, trial, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension can be examined as rituals of status transformation (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:99). While the rituals of the resurrection and ascension are those of status restoration, those of the arrest, trial and crucifixion are a mechanism to degrade and change Jesus’ identity. During his trial, the charges levied against him served the purpose of labelling and deviance. It was a ritual of status transformation, where Jesus’ identity was deformed so as to march with the corresponding charges of deviance. This ritual also fell within the context of challenge-response, which was a process by which honour was either acquired or lost (Moxnes 1996:20; Malina 2001d:33).

Generally, the exercise of challenge-response happened between equals, and in four stages. It started with a challenge whose intention was to enter the social space of the other.<sup>185</sup> The second stage was the perception of

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<sup>185</sup> Once more, challenge-response as an exchange for public recognition of honour was worthy only when it took place between social equals, if not it lost its *raison d’être*. By virtue of status, the honour of a superior person was already recognised as opposed to that of an inferior. Consequently, public interaction was of no value because the challenge of an inferior was shameful. The exercise of challenge-response was done verbally, through symbolic

the message by both the one who was challenged and the public (the opponent's readiness to respond or not). Thirdly, was the reaction from the opponent, which could be a positive refusal to act, or the acceptance of the challenge followed with a counter challenge or a negative refusal to act, which could imply dishonour.<sup>186</sup> The fourth stage was the public's verdict, which could consist of a grant or a loss of honour. At this stage, the public played a very important role because as an arbiter, it had the power to either make someone's personality or mar it (Neyrey 1995:141).

The process of disfiguring Jesus was launched by his arrest. From public praises of honour in Galilee (Lk 4:14-15, 22) and in Jerusalem (Lk 19:36-38; 20:39), he was publicly arrested as a criminal (Lk 22:47-62). Further, he was verbally abused, beaten and blindfolded (Lk 22:63-64). After these preliminary attempts to dishonour him and render him impotent, he was led to be tried. His trial was carried out at two distinct levels: the Jewish trial (Lk 22:63-71) and the Roman trial (Lk 23:1-7, 8-12, 13-25), with the former playing a preparatory role for the latter. Present in the Sanhedrin were the elders of the people, the chief priests and the scribes (Lk 22:66). The Pharisees were presumably also present (see Acts 5:34-39; 23:6-10) alongside the οἱ ἄλλοι and other onlookers. The objective of the Jewish trial was to interpret Jesus' attitude with reference to Jewish cultural values and traditional religious regulations.

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gestures or with the use of physical force. Rohrbaugh (1995:185) remarks that it was an exercise liable to disrupt relationships, because it sometimes resulted in violence and instability. Most controversies between Jesus and his opponents were in the form of challenge-response (Lk 4:1-13; 5:17-26, 29-39; 6:1-5, 6-11; 7:39-50; 11:14-20, 37-54; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 20:1-2, 20-26, 27-40). Quite often, Jesus initiated the challenge (Lk 16:14-18; 19:39-40, 45-48; 20:41-47). However, there is need to distinguish between a positive challenge and a negative one. A challenge is positive when it is triggered through a word of praise, a gift or a sincere request for help. An example is the request from the centurion (Lk 7:3), from Jairus (Lk 8: 41), the cry from the ten lepers (Lk 17:13) and the acclamation by the multitude in Jerusalem (Lk 19:37-38). A challenge is negative when it starts with an insult, a threat or a physical affront. The questions from the high priests, scribes and elders on the issue of Jesus' authority (Lk 20:1-2; see Lk 22:67-71); the question on paying of taxes by the spies (Lk 20:20-26) and that on the notion of the resurrection by the Sadducees (Lk 20:27-40), are examples of a negative challenge. Esler (1994:27) also notes that there is also an ambiguous challenge that leaves the public confused whether an insult is intended or not. Examples of such challenges could be Jesus' identification by the demoniac as "son of the Most High God" (Lk 8: 28) and that of the ruler as "Good Teacher" (Lk 18:18).

<sup>186</sup> This reaction can come in various ways. It could be a compliment, or a comparable reaction of equal weight could be meted, or the reaction could even be more violent than that of the opponent. Rohrbaugh (1995:185) remarks that not to respond at all to a challenge is to have no shame. This of course, is considered to be worse than simply been ashamed.

In the Jewish trial Jesus' opponents sought to assemble a case record and create a selective reading of Jesus' activities in order to substantiate the claim that Jesus was effectively a deviant (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:114). Hence, in vain, he is lured to agree with the labels of false prophet (Lk 22:63-65) and false Christ (Lk 22:67), with which he will soon be addressed.<sup>187</sup> With these charges they intended to see Jesus lose face so that they could subsequently step into a chargeable offence. It could therefore be guessed from this trial which took the form of an inquisition that, Jesus was being labelled as "a pretender" or "a deceiver". His activities had so far been interpreted as a threat to the divinely ordained temple system (and its authorities) and a danger to the Jewish nation. As a consequence, Jesus overtly affirmed his place of honour. Henceforth, he will sit at the right hand of the power of God, as Son of man (Lk 22:69). This declaration which further challenged his opponents testified that he effectively knew their intention. It is a declaration which confirmed his relationship with God, as well as assigned him a place of authority and leadership. On this basis, Jesus is considered a deviant. Yet, Roman approval was still needed in order to bolster their claim.

Apparently, the Jewish trial initially intended to gather clear charges against Jesus seemed to have failed. However, the trial ended with the formulation of three charges that all seemed new. With these charges, Jesus was led before Pilate for the beginning of the Roman trial. He was accused for perverting and stirring up people; for forbidding the paying of tributes to Caesar and for imposing himself as Christ and king (Lk 23:1-5, 13-25). These were political charges which distorted Jesus' identity and mission. The issue at stake in these charges was that of national integrity. Jesus was charged for violating the rules that preserved the society's solidarity and identity. It was an accusation that recapitulated Jesus' activities from Galilee to Jerusalem. Identifying the first two charges in their rightful context, Pilate decided to question Jesus on the basis of the last charge by linking his kingship to his

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<sup>187</sup> Jesus had earlier preached and acted as a prophet (Lk 4:18-19; 7:16). He had also alluded to the accustom rejection of prophets (Lk 4:24). He had compared himself with former prophets (Lk 4:25-27; 7:26; 13:31-35). His activities earned him a prophetic figure in the eyes of Herod (Lk 9:8) and the crowds (Lk 9:19), for which he does not raise a direct objection. In the same vein, Jesus had also confirmed the angel's declaration for being anointed (Lk 4:18; see Lk 2:11) and did not comment on Peter's confession that he was the Christ of God (Lk 9:19). By claiming to be the Christ, he proved to be greater than David (Lk 20:41-44).

Jewish origin (Lk 23:3).<sup>188</sup> Certainly, Jesus is not a political rival; instead, he is accused for religious reasons. Hence the question: “Are you the King of the Jews” (Lk 23:3). Pilate interpreted Jesus’ rhetorical answer to mean his innocence. But when he was informed that Jesus was a Galilean, he referred him to Herod.

The charge of perversion was taken for a serious crime, from a Jewish point of view. In the LXX, perversion meant to lead into a situation of idolatry (Ex 32:7; Ez 14:5) or uncleanness (Deut 32:5; Num 15:39). In other words, Jesus pollutes the nation and subverts its values and structures. The analysis of Jesus’ teaching effectively showed him as directing God’s people according to his purpose. Since his instructions did not favour the *status quo*, they were interpreted as subversion. Jesus had rightly reformed and transformed the former order of things in the society through his preaching, his healing activities and his challenging teachings. The reforms instituted by him had ridiculed religious leaders, rendering them strangers in their profession. Also, rather than forbid the payment of taxes, Jesus had earlier challenged the religious leaders and their allies, the spies, to render to Caesar the things that were Caesar’s and to God the things that were God’s (Lk 20:25). Concerning the last charge, even though Jesus had declared that he was anointed (Lk 4:18-19), nowhere did he proclaim himself as King of the Jews. On the contrary, he constantly contested the misinterpretation of his activities, which attributed him an earthly kingship with reference to Jewish messianic expectations. Consequently, Pilate was right to have read the charges against him as religious charges. Jesus was neither an enemy to

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<sup>188</sup> When taken seriously, Pilate’s interpretation of the charges against Jesus implied that Rome declined its responsibilities of convicting Jesus. In other words, by Roman standards, Jesus was not due capital punishment. It is in this vein that Luke records a series of ironies in the process of labelling and disfiguring Jesus. Firstly, the Jewish trial was illegal because Jesus was physically tortured even before the hearing began (Lk 22:63-65). Also, the trial took place, not in the Sanhedrin, but in the high priest’s house (Lk 22:54). Secondly, although Jesus is accused of stirring and misleading the *laos*, no one explicitly stood from among the multitude to confirm this charge. Thirdly, Pilate who owned power and authority showed powerlessness and weakness in the face of mob pressure. Fourthly, although he found Jesus innocent, he still wished to chastise him, before releasing him. Fifthly, an insurrectionist is liberated while an innocent is convicted for the charge against insurrection. Lastly, at four different instances, Jesus was declared innocent (Lk 23:4, 11, 14, 22) by the most authoritative voices of Rome; yet, he was condemned. In terms of Luke’s story-line, this series of ironies renders the proper reason for which Jesus was crucified obscure and absurd. However, for Luke’s story-plot, Jesus suffered conflict and rejection as a necessity, so as to enter into his glory (Lk 24:26; see also Lk 9:22).



Pilate nor to Caesar; he was rather a religious rival to the Jewish religious authorities.

Jesus' presence before Herod quenched the latter's quest, for, he had earlier desired to see Jesus (Lk 23:8). While Jesus' opponents kept accusing him, Herod's anxiety led him to question him at length. In normal circumstances, an honourable person whose identity has been put into jeopardy or to some other challenge to honour is culturally conditioned to retaliate or offer a riposte that will counter the challenge and preserve honour in the public eye intact. Curiously, Jesus refused to alter a word before Herod. In continuation of the labelling and deviant process, Jesus is mocked and disfigured in gorgeous attire which attested him as king of the Jews (Lk 23:11). Such deviant attire confirmed the religious charge against him and at the same time re-established lost friendship between Herod and Pilate (Lk 23:12). Before being referred back to Pilate, both were unanimous that Jesus was a religious rival.

Once more, before Pilate, the labelling process is pursued and completed when the chief priests, the rulers of the people and the laos&v successfully denounced Jesus and instead preferred Barabbas, the real insurrectionist (Lk 23:13-25). From the arrest to his trial, Jesus is further led to be crucified, as a deviant. According to the verdict, he is a public nuisance. As the degradation process continued, Jesus was led to the crucifixion, where he was declared "statusless" and crucified in the company of other discarded deviants (Lk 23:33). Jesus was thus redefined with new labels as a convicted criminal, an outsider and his Messiah-kingship was repudiated. Curiously, he was also rejected, even by the peasants whom he defended most. Instead of protecting him as they had done so far (Lk 19:48; 20:19, 26; 22:2), they were coerced to denounce him and cause him to be crucified (Lk 22:47; 23:4, 13, 18, 21, 23). However, with the disfiguring process taking its course to the end, his garments were divided (Lk 23:34), while his body was punctured (see Lk 24:39), before being buried. Apparently, no traces of Jesus are left for any eventual identification. At this point, he seemed to have lost in the conflict. Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion are followed by events leading to his resurrection and ascension. From an etic point of view, these events serve as rituals of status restoration for Jesus. It is a phase that stood in contestation



of the labelling and deviant process that initially led to the misrepresentation of Jesus. The first immediate impression came from the centurion, whose testimony rehabilitated and legitimated Jesus as a *di&kaiov* (Lk 23:47). This was followed by an impressive *laov* (Lk 23:13) that became the *o!xlov* (Lk 23:48). The beating of their breasts was a sign of regret for their false testimony and misguided verdict. It also meant the recognition and approval of the centurion's legitimating remarks. Also, while Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Jewish council offered an honourable burial to the dishonoured and rejected Jesus (Lk 23:50-53), the women prepared spices to anoint his body (Lk 23: 55-24:1). Three days later, he was raised as a victor (Lk 24:6-7), in correlation with his earlier predictions (Lk 9:22; 23:33). He was finally lifted up to heaven where he permanently occupied the place of honour (Lk 24:51), having passed through the appropriate procedure as the Christ (Lk 24:26, 44-45). These new rituals testified that Jesus was effectively the appropriate leader for Israel, for which the religious and political leaders were a farce (Kingsbury 1997b:157)<sup>189</sup>. With this, the *Magnificat* was also fully realised, with God reversing human fortunes (Lk 1:46-55). Events from the centurion's remarks to Jesus' ascension are a reference to Jesus' early credentials.

In sum, society did not treat Jesus the way they were expected to do. For example, he did not benefit external responsibility from Pilate, who had the powers to vindicate him. The crowd and the people who had been healed by him did not stand to testify about his deeds. Members of the ruling class such as the centurion whose servant was also healed (Lk 7:10) and Jairus, whose daughter was restored (Lk 8:55) failed to testify Jesus' benevolence in public. In spite of this, Jesus died maintaining his identity as the Christ of God as attested by his resurrection and ascension. He alone remained a true and honourable leader, and not the Roman authorities nor the Jewish leaders.

#### 6.3.4 Social identity theory (SIT)

<sup>189</sup> Noteworthy is the fact that the conflict between Jesus and the authorities is also a conflict over "who is the right person to assume leadership and authority over Israel?" Jesus posits himself as the right leader; he offers what the other leaders have failed to provide (healing, teaching, preaching and the forgiveness of sins). His compassionate love is inclusive and restorative.

It was argued in § 4.3.2 that the Jews and the non-Jews were the two principal character groups that constituted the narrative world of Luke's gospel. Each of these character groups had specific character traits that identified them as homogeneous groups, distinct from each other. On the other hand, the conclusions drawn in § 3.4.2.3.3 also indicated that the structure of the dyadic community of first-century Palestine was that which favoured the development of conflict. While the less privileged (peasants and non-Jews) strove to defend and denounce their status as defined by the privileged (Jewish elite and Roman elite), the latter used their social status in order to better define its hegemony. It is in this vein that social control will be studied as the strategy through which the Jewish elite and their Roman counterparts maintained and manifested their superiority over against the peasants and the non-Jews. Besides, one of the reasons why Jesus faced fierce opposition is because he sought to correct the pitfalls of a society that had been built on categorisation. Consequently, Jesus' approach of de-categorisation (Brown 1996:170-176; Esler 2002:195-199) will be examined as a model to dismantle the vices of prejudice, hatred and stereotype created by the Jewish elite and their accomplices (see § 3.4.2.3.3). As another means of conflict resolution, the theory of "similarity-attraction" will equally be studied to further show how Jesus' struggle to destroy the effects of categorisation disfigured him and distinguished him as a deviant.

#### **6.3.4.1 The question of social control**

Within the context of this study, social control refers to social activities that enabled the Jewish elite and the Roman elite respectively, to exercise and maintain an edge of superiority over the peasants. In fact, because of their social status, they assumed to have had (1) control over the proper understanding of God, (2) control over salvation, (3) control over the distribution of limited goods and (4) the strife to control and maintain the *status quo*. Although it is difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between these factors because of their interrelatedness, they each have their specificities. For instance, the Jewish religious leaders claimed the monopoly of a better understanding of what God required. Hence, when Jesus pronounced the forgiveness of sins to the paralytic, the Pharisees and the

scribes interpreted his action as blasphemy (Lk 5:17-26). When he healed on the Sabbath (Lk 6:1-5, 6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6), he was accused of disrespecting the Torah. When he performed exorcism, he was accused for being an accomplice of Beelzebul (Lk 11:15). His relationship with Levi, other tax collectors and his disciples (Lk 5:30; 15:1-2); the woman who anointed him (Lk 7:37-39) and Zacchaeus (Lk 19:7), was criticised and these victims were labelled as “sinners”. In each of these cases, Jesus disproved his opponents; his attitude was rather a fulfilment of his mission: “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Lk 5:32; 19:10 see also Lk 15:1-7, 8-10, 11-32). According to Jesus, God’s holiness did not mean exclusivism or segregation. On the contrary, it referred to his compassionate nature, which was beyond ethnic consideration. His teachings were therefore a disapproval of the religious leaders as the right interpreters of God’s intentions as depicted in the parable of the vineyard and the tenants (Lk 20:9-18).

The claim over an authoritative interpretation of scripture by the religious authorities equally implied the control over salvation. In Luke 18:10-12 the Pharisee’s prayer projected him high above the tax collector. In this prayer, the Pharisee symbolised the Jewish religious elite while the tax collector represented *oi (loipoi\_ tw~n a)nqrw&pwn* (Lk 18:11); that is, the non-Jews. Lukan Jesus disproved his opponents in several occasions. Three times he used the expression *h( pi&stiv sou se&swke&n se* (Lk 7:50; 17:19; 18:42), to indicate the situation of wholesomeness that accompanied those who believed in him. The woman who interrupted the serenity of the meal offered by the Pharisee received wholesome healing because of her faith (Lk 7:37-50). The Samaritan leper received salvation by acknowledging Jesus as being worthy of praise (Lk 17:18-19). The conviction of the blind beggar that Jesus could offer compassion led him to receive instant salvation: (Lk 18:36-42). Besides, Zacchaeus also gained instant salvation on the account of his encounter with Jesus (Lk 19:1-10). Jesus proved that the temple was no longer the lone place of God’s saving grace where the temple leaders held the monopoly of salvation. Salvation was henceforth based on people’s relationship with God and their response to Jesus and his preaching.

In this way Jesus liberalised salvation that was hitherto, considered as an exclusive possession of the religious authorities.

It was equally observed in § 6.2.4.1 that Luke's gospel was written within the context of a limited-good-society, where the confrontation between Jesus and his opponents could be explained in terms of the quest for limited goods. Within the context of social control, the powerful elite used their potentials in order to raise their honour, while the peasants remained in a perpetual situation of shame, dependency, indebtedness and need (see Lk 12:57-59). The confrontation between Jesus and his opponents testified that the latter did not hold the monopoly of social values (material and immaterial). Hence, his acts of solidarity, restoration and rehabilitation were aimed at destroying the edge of superiority and the situation of dependency that had impoverished the peasants and rendered them more vulnerable. The parable of the prodigal son was an example of restored dignity (Lk 15: 11-32). At his return, he was clothed, fed and integrated among his kin.

One of the concerns of the religious authorities was also the strife to maintain the *status quo*. This was sometimes done through the reinforcement of purity laws, as symbols of Jewish group identity. In the Jewish context, purity laws were very important because they strengthened group solidarity. This equally referred to the preservation of cultural identity, with all its consequences. This quest created a climate of suspicion and dislike between the "holy" (Jews) and those whom they considered "unholy" (the non-Jews). The social status of the Jews motivated them to build a strong identity and to think of their traditional practices as a norm for the rest of society. This conception caused them to develop a stereotyped behaviour *vis-à-vis* out-group members because the "more important the group identity the stronger the tendency to treat the out-group as having uniform characteristics" (Gudykunst 2003:267; Collier 1994:39). In this condition, those who found themselves without power and social integration were conditioned to remain weak. Jesus appeared as an opponent, whose responsibility was an urge to maintain the *status quo*, as defined in his conception of the kingdom of God as a new household.

Summarily, Jesus' mission targeted situations of inequality created by the practice of social control within the Jewish society, as presented in Luke's

gospel. This practice came as a result of a categorised society built on hatred, prejudice, xenophobia and stereotype. Unfortunately, his attempt to erase and destroy these cultural maps of division met with fierce rejection from both the elite and the peasants, who misinterpreted his actions and took him for an enemy.

#### **6.3.4.2 De-categorisation: The kingdom of God preaching**

Categorisation is one of the main aspects of SIT, which holds that people and objects are better understood with reference to the group to which they belong. Unfortunately, in Luke's gospel, categories were a source of recalcitrant strife because they were formed on the basis of cultural identity. Hence, they generated prejudice, stereotypes, xenophobia and ethnocentric feelings (Avruch 2003:55; see also Esler 1996:139). De-categorisation therefore intervenes as a solution to the problems posed by categorisation. It is a process through which problematic areas of discomfort between social groups are destroyed and interpersonal relationship between antagonist groups is fostered and encouraged. In other words, it is an attempt to reconstruct a category-free-society of love and concern.

As a result of categorisation the practice of social control cultivated indelible marks of hatred and suspicion within the society of Luke's gospel, at all levels. Economically the rich used their social status to inflict misery, indebtedness, exploitation and dependency on the poor and further enriched themselves.<sup>190</sup> In fact, they had equated economic and social standing with access to eternity (Lk 18:18). Politically, local leaders used their powers to render the population vulnerable. For instance, they exploited the masses in order to survive and further sustain their power. An example is that of heavy taxes levied on the peasants through the complicity of the Roman administration (see Lk 20:20-26).<sup>191</sup> Socially, Lukan context was a stratified society where people fellowshiped and formed coalitions on the basis of

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<sup>190</sup> This situation of dependency can further be testified by the abundant use of terms such as rich man (Lk 16:1), servants and master (Lk 12:35-48; 19:11-27).

<sup>191</sup> According to Oakman (2008:12) Cicero criticised Caesar for expropriating property in order to bestow benefits on others. In the same vein, Plutarch equally reported how the same Caesar ran up huge debts for the purpose of sustaining his own political position and agenda (Oakman 2008:12-13).

their social status (see Lk 14:12) and for the protection of their common identity (Neyrey: 1991c:362; Rohrbaugh 2007:85), as well as their personal interest. Hence, both the Sadducees and the Pharisees independently agreed to treat Jesus as a social nuisance. In like manner, while the Pharisees became associates in the Sanhedrin (see Acts 5:33-35; 23:6-10), Herod and Pilate became friends (Lk 23:12). In the religious domain, religious leaders used their positions to practice injustice, to exploit and extort from the peasants (Lk 11:39-44; 20:45-47). Religion had simply become an important commercial activity for personal enrichment (Lk 19:45-48). In a nutshell, categorisation had fostered inequality and instituted a permanent situation of misery in the whole society, where the weak remained weak and poor, while the strong grew stronger and richer.

Jesus' process of de-categorisation consisted of dismantling the barriers of exclusion established by the practice of categorisation. He denounced injustice and exploitation but encouraged peace-making. Hence, people were advised to settle their matters in an amicable manner, without going to court (Lk 12:57-59). The rich were equally advised to share their wealth with the poor (Lk 18:22). Politically, Jesus' messages defined the essence of leadership, which is humility and service; and not lordship (Lk 22:14-22, 25-27). Socially, his preaching was reforming, transforming and liberating. It contained messages that caused a revolution within the system. He destroyed the myth of social control and made the accessibility to God possible to both Jews and non-Jews. For him, religious authorities were wrong examples of leaders to emulate (Lk 12:1; 20:46-47). They see the speck in other people's eye, but do not see the log that is in their own eyes (see Lk 6:39-42). Through cleansing, he rehabilitated the temple as God's house of prayer (Lk 19:46). Henceforth, it can no longer serve as the centre of Jewish political, economic and social power (Elliott 1991b:223). Jesus also refused to form an alliance with the religious leaders. Their invitations for table fellowship were not acts of hospitality. Rather, they were a trap, meant to lure him to condone with their evil practices. The rejection of their attitude towards worship and the understanding of God meant an institution of true worship, based on Jesus' understanding of the kingdom of God. In his approach, he refashioned the traditional "Be holy because I, the Lord your



God, am holy” (Lv 19:2; see also Lev 11:44-45) into: “Be compassionate even as your Father is compassionate” (Luke 6:36). This feeling motivated him to forgive sins, heal diseases, and recommend love as a kinship-rooted value (Pilch & Malina 1993:30).

Jesus’ mission was contained both in his manifesto (Lk 4:18-19) and in his eagerness to preach: “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose” (Lk 4:43). In this assignment, teaching and healing played a complementary role (Lk 9:1-2). The urgency of this mission is implied in the instructions to the apostles and the seventy two: no material burden (Lk 9:3; 10:4), no anxiety for life concerns (Lk 12:22-34), the need for absolute renunciation of material and other social entanglements (Lk 9:57-62; 14:26) and self-sacrifice (Lk 14:27). They were urged to participate in building a new society wherein, the benefits of the kingdom are to be shared by members of the new community (Lk 10:5-9). It was a preaching that introduced God’s kingdom on earth as the new household of social relationships, characterised by fellowship meals, healing, generosity and hospitality. Indeed, Jesus’ vision was that of a society of transformed values with the Lord’s Supper symbolising a society of equal opportunities where both masters and followers share from the same table, with the leader playing the role of a servant (Lk 22:14-23; see Lk 14:13-14). Even though he had noticed that Judas was an agent of the devil (Lk 22:3) and perceived that Peter and the rest of the disciples would eventually abandon him (Lk 22:31-34), he neither retaliated nor rejected them. In the same way, the mission assigned to the disciples (Lk 9:1-6) and the seventy two (Lk 10:1-12) was that of followers who had been saved to serve. Throughout their mission, the restoration of homes through healing and fellowship meals would be an indication of God’s saving presence (Lk 9:4; 10:6-10; 19:1-10). In the new structure, Jesus defined generosity and hospitality as honourable to God because they led to lasting wealth, encouraged friendship and fostered social relationships. Consequently, the rich ruler was advised to sell his possessions, give alms and provide himself with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail (Lk 12:33; see also 14:12-14; 16:9; 18:22).

Jesus' choice of the twelve apostles was followed by a series of preaching, which painted the picture of the envisaged new community of social change and transformation, characterised by broken boundaries and where hatred was reciprocated with love (Lk 6:27-36). This picture was further illustrated in the example of the Good Samaritan, who indebted himself in order to rescue a Jerusalemite (Lk 10:35). The new community offered by Jesus was that of a reign where God's compassion was replicated with Jesus' willingness to indebted himself for the welfare of human dignity. It was a picture of a new society in the likeness of the *Magnificat*, where the world is turned upside down (Oakman 2008:180). It is the uncertainty of such a society that provoked conflict between Jesus and his contemporaries. In this context, Crossan (1973: 55) is certainly right that "when the north pole becomes the south pole, and the south the north, a world is reversed and overturned and we find ourselves standing firmly on utter uncertainty" (Crossan 1973:55). In Jesus' de-categorised community, the household became a true symbol for the kingdom of God, where Jesus is the broker. It is thus a society of restored honour and dignity in the light of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32).

Jesus' principle of de-categorisation put order in a society of disorderliness where purity laws had become part of societal pressure levied on individuals. In the former society, the integration of non-Jews within society had been highly compromised by their social status because protection against pollution and the preservation of social identity were important aspects of boundary protection. The rule on temple purity system was also a restriction to social interaction because it controlled the social identity, social classifications and social boundaries of the Jews as the holy people of God (Elliott 1991b:221). In fact, the rules on purity were an obstacle for the emancipation of non-Jews. In spite of this, Jesus respected the purity norms of his society (Lk 2:22-34, 41; 5:14; 9:51 17:14; 22:7), though with reservation. If not, he disregarded aspects that oppressed human beings. For example, he defied purity rules and associated with sinners and tax collectors (Lk 5:8-10, 27-30; 7:29, 34, 37-39, 15:1-2; 18:9-14; 19:1-10), the Samaritans (Lk 9:52, 17:11-19; see Lk 10:29-37) and Gentiles (Lk 4:26-27; 7:1-10; 8:26; 24:27). He disregarded ritual cleansing (Lk 11:37), dietary regulations (Lk 10:7-8) and ignored Sabbath regulations that did not enhance life (Lk 6:1-5, 6-

11; 13:10-16; 14:1-6). His picture of the kingdom (the new household) destroyed boundaries of a limited-good-society and declared all goods available. His, was a society of unlimited goods and the restoration of “full human life” to the poor (Moxnes 1988:104). In this case, Luke’s description of the poor implies not only a lack of physical or spiritual resources but also to the situation of social standing and the inability to meet social requirements (Moxnes 1988:103; Malina 2001d:92). Jesus’ conflict with his adversaries was therefore a protest against the control over the distribution of resources and a fight for the values that break the existing boundaries of ethnic, cultural, class, language and status distinctions.

One of the features of SIT is the need for in-group members to suppress their egos for the sake of community interest. To this effect, Jesus’ struggle to curb and destroy categorisation exposed and led him to the cross as a confirmation of the fact that leadership is synonymous to risk bearing (Wilkes 1998:127). Through the process of de-categorisation, he also demonstrated that all human beings were endowed with the same values as children of Abraham (see Lk 3:8).

#### **6.3.4.3 The theory of “similarity-attraction”**

Some five decades ago, Rokeach (1960) remarked that people with similar beliefs seemed to attract each other, irrespective of their group differences. The theory of “similarity-attraction” is a method of conflict resolution, which consists of bringing to the fore points of convergence between social groups, while shunning areas of disagreement. It is much easier for individuals within society to make friendship on the basis of their common areas of interest. This theory can be applied to Luke’s gospel in two distinct ways, depending on the interest at stake. On the one hand, some of the coalitions in Luke’s gospel were as a result of the fact that Jesus’ opponents, irrespective of their social groups, defined him as a common enemy and lured anyone else to agree with them. Consequently, the Pharisees and Sadducees forgot about their respective in-group characteristics which differentiate them as religious groups, and agreed that Jesus was a criminal. Herod and Pilate, who had been enemies, saw things the same way during the trial of Jesus. Although they agreed that Jesus was innocent, Herod facilitated Pilate’s task by

dressing Jesus in a deceitful attire, which depicted him as a king (Lk 23:11-12). In like manner, Judas became an ally to the religious leaders, while the *ō!xlov* were lured to witness against Jesus. On the other hand, Jesus strove to bridge the gap between Jews and non-Jews by defining their point of contact as daughters and sons of Abraham, respectively (Lk 19:9; 13:16). Four examples from Luke's gospel will be used briefly in order to show how Jesus applied the theory of "similarity-attraction".

Firstly, Jesus defied the Sabbath injunction as a means of moralising the Jewish religious opponents. For instance, the justification for healing a woman who had been crippled for eighteen years was that she was "a daughter of Abraham" (Lk 13:16), who deserved God's compassion as well. The description of this woman as "a daughter of Abraham" provoked a mixed reaction within his audience. While his adversaries were put to shame, the *ō!xlov* rejoiced at his glorious performances (Lk 6:17). This was an indication that Jesus had unveiled the truth which they pretended to ignore. His defence, served as the right legitimation to his activities. The woman, who had been victim of an acquired identity of shame (a non-Jew), saw her ascribed honour and Jewish identity restored. Because of her kinship (daughter of Abraham), she was entitled to the privileges of health, as any other Jew.

The second example is found in the parable, traditionally labelled as "the parable of the Good Samaritan" (Lk 10:25-37). In this parable, Jesus proved that love and compassion were true virtues that were inherent in all individuals, irrespective of their ethnic inclination. The Samaritan was paradoxically presented as a model of good behaviour, whose attitude was recommended to the lawyer. In other words, the Samaritan (a non-Jew) exhibited approved character traits that were commensurate to the requisite for inheriting eternal life, which the lawyer (a Jew) did not have. He had a commendable character, because he treated a stranger as a family person (Oakman 2008:178). This was something which the Levite and the priest failed to do as it was expected of them. Through this parable, Jesus defined neighbourliness in terms of compassion; it is blind, and has no limits. In a compassionate-driven- community, love and concern ignore cultural and ethnic identity and initiate friendship and sacrifice (material and immaterial).

Besides, Jesus also offers himself in this parable as a true broker, who has come to pay the “debts” incurred by sinners (see Lk 5:32; 19:10). It is in this light that he invited the lawyer to join him in his compassion crusade towards the restoration of the “lost”, rather than oppose him, because by rejecting him, they equally rejected God’s purpose for themselves (see Lk 7:30).

The story of the rich elite and Lazarus portrays three elements of contact between the elite and the peasants (Lk 16:19-31). Even though they had different social status while they were still alive, they both succumbed to death at last, where these statuses were reversed. Secondly, they all faced judgement during which they were both treated on the basis of their social relationship while on earth. Lastly, they were both recognised as Abraham’s children. While the rich man enjoyed from his social status as Abraham’s son, when he was alive, Lazarus is identified as Abraham’s messenger (Lk 16:24). In his new status, he enjoys from Abraham’s comfort (Lk 16:25). In principle, these common traits were an invitation for the Pharisees, the scribes and the lawyers to have a different view of out-group members and treat them with fairness. Jesus thus offered an opportunity for his opponents to appreciate their social relationships with out-group members with dignity.

In the last example, the dialogue between Jesus and Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10) indicates that salvation was not an exclusive possession of any social class. It was actually free and available to all who believed in Jesus. It is a dialogue which confirms that the labels of “sinners” and “tax collector” were derogatory. According to the exercise of social control as described in § 6.3.4.1 above, the Jewish religious leaders claimed the control over salvation. The gift of salvation to Zacchaeus the “sinner” and tax collector was an indication that God’s gifts were indiscriminate and that repentance and faith were the lone prerequisites for salvation.<sup>192</sup> Secondly, Jesus justified that

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<sup>192</sup> Rohrbaugh (2007:86) seems to agree with Fitzmyer (1985:1220) that the aspect of repentance in the dialogue between Jesus and Zacchaeus is a Western interpretation, because Jesus did not say anything that provoked a call to repentance from his host. On the contrary, Zacchaeus’ single-minded eagerness to encounter Jesus in the story is self-explanatory (Nickle 2000:197). True repentance is that which comes from an attitude of self-conviction. Zacchaeus’ decision to do acts of generosity and restore back what he had extorted came as a result of self-examination. It was a concretisation of his inner thoughts. He might have learnt about Jesus’ fame and his challenging preaching; hence, his response. Besides, it is this prompt response that instigated Jesus’ own reaction: “Today salvation has come to this house” (Lk 19:9).

salvation accorded to Zacchaeus was legitimate because he too was Abraham's son (Lk 19:9). This remark led Jesus' audience to suppose that the coming of the kingdom of God was imminent (Lk 19:11). It is a conclusion which presented both Jews and non-Jews as beneficiaries of the kingdom, destined for Abraham's children.

It is sometimes helpful in conflict resolution, when groups involved in social conflict are reminded of their common kinship. In this vein, Jesus used an approach that could be likened to that of the theory of "similarity-attraction" in order to refer his contemporaries to their common glorious ancestry. This approach dismantled the walls of prejudice between in-group and out-group members and encouraged friendship on the basis of a common lineage. In this configuration, Jews and non-Jews alike are defined as part of the essential kin group of Abraham. To crown it up, Jesus assigned his disciples to pursue his mission and preach repentance and the forgiveness of sin in his name to all nations (Lk 24:47).

### **6.3.5 Conclusion**

The practice of social control is an exercise which further confirmed first-century Mediterranean society as an agonistic community. While it enabled in-group members to preserve and promote their common identity, it promoted hatred and enmity between its members and out-group members. Jesus seems to have understood that the problems of his social context were linked to the fact that the Jewish elite practised the politics of exclusion, which categorised them as the "holy people" of God. While he struggled to denounce and reform the social order imposed by such a system of stratification, he was mistakenly identified as a deviant. By reinterpreting God's holiness to mean his compassion, he became God's broker, whose presentation of the new household turned the world, upside down and raised his contemporaries against him. Jesus presented a new and inclusive society of social relationships, generosity, hospitality and friendship that identified him as a missionary of social reforms.

As a result of the application of de-categorisation and the theory of similarity-attraction, some members from within Jesus' adversaries changed their traditional appreciation of who out-group members were. While a scribe



indicated his intention to become a follower of Jesus (Lk 9:57; see Mt 8:19), other scribes who were present when Jesus was confronted with the Sadducees showed satisfaction with his responses (Lk 20:39). Two Roman centurions equally exhibited an exemplary character. While one showed compassion towards his sick servant and at the same time built a synagogue for the nation (Lk 7:2-4), another one got out of the norm and legitimated Jesus' activities and his identity. Jesus was truly a *δικαίος* (Lk 23:47). At his death, Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin distanced himself from the Jewish and Roman decision to crucify Jesus. Consequently, he accorded Jesus a befitting burial. The concluding events of Luke's story of Jesus' activities therefore testify that his efforts to destroy the effects of categorisation were successful. Henceforth, his disciples as witnesses will preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins to all nations (Lk 24:47-48). Jesus therefore left a legacy of mission to his disciples and died as a *δικαίος*.

## **6.4 ETIC READING OF LEADERSHIP AND CONFLICT IN LUKE**

### **6.4.1 Introduction**

The conclusions concerning leadership in § 3.3 attest that the conflict surrounding Jesus' ministry were linked to the question of his identity and the nature of his mission (see also § 2.2; § 2.3 and § 2.4). From these studies, effective leadership means that leaders must be in the midst of their followers, influencing them, providing guidance, sharing a common vision, complementing each other and empowering them to become effective leaders. This is the picture of leadership as proposed and applied by Jesus. As suggested in § 4.2, two models will be used in the etic reading of Jesus' leadership in Luke's gospel. The first model is the cognitive dissonance leadership theory (CDLT). Dissonance usually occurs when two cognitions are inconsistent within an individual. This is common when it comes to decision making. As indicated in § 4.2.2, leadership is dependent on decision-making. For Jesus, his leadership was essentially about a decision-making-ministry. This sub-topic is therefore about Jesus' decision to define and maintain his identity, and his effort to lure his contemporaries to understand his mission. The second model is contingent-transactional leadership theory

(CTLT). So far, this study has agreed that effective leadership depends on three factors: the leaders, the followers and the context of leadership (see § 3.3.2.1; § 3.3.2.2 and § 4.4.2). Thus, CTLT is about how Jesus managed both his audience and the situations that surrounded his leadership in order to achieve his mission, which was that of serving as God's broker of a new household.<sup>193</sup> It is in this respect that his approach to leadership was highly influenced by the response of his followers and the attitude of his adversaries.

#### **6.4.2 Cognitive dissonance leadership theory (CDLT)**

CDLT holds that conflicting ideas (from within or from without) are always liable to cause a dissonant behaviour within individuals. Such dissonant behaviour inspires leaders to the choice of leadership that they employ in order to attain their set goals. CDLT therefore facilitates the understanding of Jesus' approach to leadership in Luke's gospel. The challenges to his person and leadership, the attempt to deviate him from his objectives, as well as the change of decision witnessed by some Lukan characters are better understood when they are analysed within the context of first-century Palestine values of honour and shame. Hence, two main questions will guide the etic reading of leadership in this section. For instance, what were the effects of dissonance on Jesus and other Lukan characters? How did Jesus effectively apply CDLT?

##### **6.4.2.1 The effects of dissonance on Jesus**

The legitimacy of Jesus' leadership in Luke's gospel is challenged at several instances by his detractors: the devil, the Nazarenes, the disciples, the religious leaders; the Roman elite and even the Jewish peasantry. The aim of this challenge was to create dissonance, distract him from his divine mission (§ 4.2.2) and offer him with other leadership alternatives. Unfortunately for them, Jesus knew his mission so well that nothing could distract or lure him into error. The several attacks on his identity that led him into conflict instead enabled him to develop leadership abilities that later led him to a well projected and successful end of ministry. Due to the constraints of space,

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<sup>193</sup> This was a community that was neither built on ethnic origin nor on cultural heritage, but that which was built on the principles of kingdom compassionate love (see Taylor 2002:577).

emphasis will only be laid on the encounter between Jesus and the devil in Luke 4:1-13.

This encounter has been interpreted differently by various scholars. For example, Rohrbaugh (1995:189) qualifies it as an encounter of testing. Earlier on, Gerhardsson (1966:19) and Fitzmyer (1981:512) had also agreed that it was effectively about a test of Jesus' kinship. Yet, other commentators, according to Rohrbaugh (2007:38), observe that it is about Jesus' possible misuse of his miraculous powers. Even though these speculations are correct – since they lay emphasis on the point of Jesus' kinship identity – they remain incomplete. The confrontation between Jesus and the devil was equally centred on Jesus' leadership role, because it contains elements of dissonance and distraction. In the *Magnificat* and the *Nunc Dimittis* Jesus' role had been outlined, but how he would lead this mission to its accomplishment, as God's Son, remained the main issue. Jesus' coming had coincided with the era of the Jewish messianic expectation. Hence, he was expected by some to inaugurate a new exodus and establish a new covenant. It is within this context that the devil offered some alternatives. Fundamentally, the confrontation between Jesus and the devil can be read as an exercise of challenge-response with the intention to offer Jesus with alternative modes of leadership.<sup>194</sup> In this light, one can distinguish three leadership modes from this confrontation: leadership by command or authoritative leadership (Lk 4:3); leadership by covetousness and corruption (Lk 4:5-7) and leadership by coercion and power (Lk 4:9-11).

As mentioned above this encounter, to an extent, was about Jesus' kinship and his role in maintaining his dual honourship to the end. In the exercise of authoritative leadership the devil expected Jesus to meditate on his divine sonship as "Son of God". By this, he was conscious of the fact that Jesus would certainly lose honour if he misused power and authority conferred on him. To this effect, Jesus' response was challenging. Authoritative leadership was not an end in itself; rather, it was a means to an end. Leadership by

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<sup>194</sup> It would be erroneous to describe Jesus' encounter with the devil in a clear-cut manner. In the second test the devil's claim to be God's broker is an attempt to subject Jesus into a situation of patronage. Even in this context, it is the question of Jesus' loyalty that comes to the fore as the devil distracts him with false alternatives.

covetousness and corruption was a fact about misplaced priorities in a leader's agenda. Jesus was faced with various options that could bring him honour, authority and pride. The cost price of these values was his submission to the devil in the form of worship. The devil's proposal was an offer for Jesus to lead according to human caprices and to rely on himself, rather than depending on God for guidance. It is a form of idolatry, because friendship with the world is contrary to loyalty with God. In corrupt leadership leaders generally become mean and inferior to their followers. Jesus refused to serve two masters at a time (Lk 4:8; see also Lk 16:13). As a last resort, the devil coerced Jesus with an option to be a spectacular and military star. Jesus was proposed an option of coercive leadership, wherein he would use violent means in order to arrive at his mission. Jesus considered coercive leadership as faulty. He understood that it depicted the leader's inferiority and weakness. In fact, coercion is a method which intervenes when reasoning and agreement with followers have failed. In other words, leadership by coercion is failure and tempting (Lk 4:12). Having felt defeated, the devil withdrew in order to see how Jesus would effectively apply his convictions (Lk 4:13). The departure of the devil from the scene did not necessarily mean that he submitted to Jesus' leadership options. Rather, he pursued his mission by using other Lukan characters.

By rejecting the alternative leadership approaches proposed by the devil, Jesus set out for his mission where he was subjected to further tests. In Nazareth his peers expected him to corrupt and cajole them through his miraculous healings as he would eventually do in Capernaum (Lk 4:23). Unfortunately, they felt frustrated. They had wished to establish dissonance between Jesus' earthy identity (as Joseph's son) and the heavenly mission that he proclaimed. Later on, Herod manifested similar anxiety to see Jesus the spectacular figure (Lk 9:9; 23:8). Peter wished to see him manifest his coercive leadership to the end (Lk 9:33; see also Mk 8:32; Mt 16:22). Even though the disciples desired to witness him in his lordship, they were rebuked (Lk 22:24-27). On the cross the people (peasants), the soldiers and one of the thieves challenged him to act as an authoritative leader (Lk 23: 35-36, 39). In all these events, Jesus remained focused, because for him "it was necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory" (Lk 24:26).

Jesus opposed coercive leadership when the disciples (James and John) wished to command fire on Samaria (Lk 9:55-56) and when one of the disciples cut the ear of the high priest's slave (Lk 22:50-51).

From an etic point of view, Jesus sometimes applied leadership approaches proposed by human and cosmic characters, though without expressly obeying their instructions. For example, he healed the sick, forgave sins, fed the hungry with bread, calmed the storm, raised the dead to life and challenged the *status quo*. By grooming the disciples in leadership skills, and by challenging the oppressive systems of his time, he commanded and maintained honour, respect, power and authority, according to the Father's will.

#### **6.4.2.2 Lukan characters and dissonant attitude**

Apart from Jesus, dissonance in other Lukan characters was caused by traditional cultural and religious beliefs that defined a specific *status quo* of social control which ruled the community. The inconsistency witnessed in the disciples' attitude was due to the effects of dissonance which they faced at two levels. Firstly, even though they followed Jesus, they seemed to have failed to evaluate the cost. In fact, they had initially left everything and followed Jesus probably without evaluating the cost (Lk 5:11, 28). Hence, the experiences of their former professions still seemed to conflict with their new mission of self-sacrifice and absolute material and family renouncement. It is in this sense that Jesus reminded them of the consequences of their choices. For him, concrete evaluation inspires wise choices (Lk 14:25-33). Secondly, they might have understood Jesus' coming to mean the inauguration of a new era, where they would occupy important positions of leadership. Consequently, each time Jesus talked about his death, they understood him in terms of their personal benefits (Lk 9:46; 22:24). Unfortunately, Jesus' definition of leadership as service and humility instead placed them in dissonance with their expectations (Lk 22:25-27). His further teachings on the meaning of discipleship – family and material renunciation – might have aggravated their doubts on their initial choice to follow Jesus. The consciousness of such internal conflict within the disciples surely led Jesus to constantly persevere with their shortcomings and accept them just as they

were. After all, they had been detached from the dominant social institution of kinship, which was an important reference for honour and respect.

From an emic perspective, there seemed to have been no homogeneity in the attitude of religious leaders. The Pharisees were enthusiastic in inviting him for fellowship meals (Lk 7:36; 11:37; 14:1-6) and in defending him from being killed (Lk 13:31; 19:39). Unfortunately they were at the same time driven with egoism when they faced dissonance caused by their eagerness to maintain social control over the community. In the same way, some scribes were impressed with Jesus' teaching on the issue of the resurrection (Lk 20:39), while one of them even manifested the intention of following him (Lk 9:57). In spite of this, they were still torn between allegiance to Jesus and his teaching and the quest to forego their status. Jesus created further dissonance by refusing to condone their attitude of exploitation and self-centredness. Through his teachings he challenged them (Lk 10:37) and set them against each other (Lk 20: 27-38). For the religious leaders, their pendulum on the scale of dissonance weighed in favour of in-group and personal interest, at the detriment of community interest. As a result, Jesus was taken for an adversary who needed to be eliminated.

Unlike the above religious leaders, dissonant ideas within the leader of the synagogue (Lk 8:40-42, 49-55), two Roman centurions (Lk 7:1-10; 23:47), and a member of the Sanhedrin (Lk 23:50-56) caused them to prioritise community interest over against in-group and personal interest. Without declining from his role as a leader of the synagogue, Jairus knew and believed in Jesus' supremacy. While the first centurion mentioned in the gospel became a patron by building a synagogue for the community and by sending his servant to be healed by Jesus (Lk 7:1-10), the second simply drew a conclusion from all the conflict narrations of Luke's story. For him, Jesus was a *δικαίος*. At Jesus' death, Joseph of Arimathea defied in-group beliefs and offered Jesus an honourable burial (Lk 23:50-56).

Judas Iscariot's attitude of betrayal could also be explained by the fact that the religious leaders implanted dissonance in his mind and persuaded him to see Jesus according to their painting. This was the same with the *οἰκλῶν* that was lured to offer Jesus to his adversaries (Lk 22:47) and testify against him (Lk 23:4). However, this *οἰκλῶν* and the *λαοὺν* later overcame



the dissonance and beat their breasts as a sign of regret for their false testimony (Lk 23:48).

In a nutshell, some Lukan characters seemed to have shown ambiguous attitude because of the effects of dissonance within them. They seemed to have found it difficult to reconcile on the one hand, the one whom they expected and on the realities that they witnessed on the other hand. They equally seemed to have considered Jesus' utterances and his activities in dissonance with his person. Finally, Jesus' teaching of God's inclusive character seems to have placed his Jewish counterparts at dissonance with their conception of God in terms of his holiness.

#### **6.4.2.3 Recapitulation: Jesus' application of CDLT**

In applying the CDLT, Jesus devised several leadership skills in order to respond to aggression and opposition. Among the methods that he used in order to transform dissonance into consonance within himself and between him and his adversaries, four are outstanding. He minimised dissonance; fought to reconcile inconsistent cognitive within himself; admonished his opponents to a change of attitude and lastly, he practised the politics of acceptance through the forgiveness of sins.

Firstly, Jesus minimised dissonance by showing his detractors a mastery of his mission. For example, whether the devil believed it or not, Jesus proved that he was truly God's Son by refusing to succumb to his capricious demands. When the Nazarenes confused his earthly identity with his divine mission, he redressed the situation by redefining his goal (Lk 4:24-27). When Peter tried to derail him from his mission, he remained focused and undistracted (Lk 9:33). None of the challenges from the religious leaders caused him to cast doubts on his focus. Towards the end of his ministry he was neither threatened by physical pain nor by humiliation from Pilate, Herod, the Roman soldiers and the *laos*. In fact, Jesus knew his goal and did not allow any obstacle to deter him from achieving it.

Secondly, Jesus reconciled inconsistent cognitive attitudes within himself through the use of prayer which was a sign of personal commitment to God. His dual honourship (identity) was confirmed by the Holy Spirit within the context of prayer (Lk 3:21). Before his first confrontation with the religious

leaders (Lk 5:17-22), he had earlier withdrawn to the wilderness where he prayed (Lk 5:16). Probably motivated by an imminent situation of conflict, he urged his disciples to bless those who cursed them and pray for those who abused them (Lk 6:28). Important decisions taken by him were always preceded by prayer. He prayed before choosing the twelve apostles (6:12); before launching the dialogue with the disciples (Lk 9:18); and before the encounter with Elijah and Moses that resulted in a legitimation of his identity (Lk 9:29). His arrest on Mount Olives equally coincides with a prayer session (Lk 22:41). Also, when he perceived that Peter would not be able to contain his attitude as a result of dissonance, he promised to pray for him (Lk 22:32). The disciples probably noticed the effect of prayer in Jesus' ministry. Consequently, they requested him to teach them how to pray (Lk 11:1). In fact, nowhere else in the gospel do the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to do something. Only in Luke 11:1 did they make a request for Jesus to "teach" them: "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk 11:1).

In order to cause his opponents to a change of attitude, Jesus confronted them according to the circumstances in which they found themselves. When faced with their attitude of incomprehension, he offered creative alternatives. In this vein, his miracles and parables were self explanatory because they addressed familiar contemporary societal issues.<sup>195</sup> The understanding of Jesus' miracles was sometimes reflected in his interpretation of God as compassionate, as opposed to the traditional understanding of God as "holy". Jesus' miracles and parables offered an innovation, which paradoxically became an inevitable source of conflict for his opponents. His rhetorical responses were a means for him to bring his adversaries to self-conviction. He used rhetorical questions when he was questioned about his Sabbath activities (Lk 6:3-5, 9; 13:14-16; 14:5) and the source of his authority (Lk 20:4). Rhetorically, he responded to the spies' question on the issue of taxes (Lk 20:21) and when he faced both the Jewish council (Lk 22:67b-69) and the Roman council (Lk 23:3b). Jesus also used "quiet-leadership" style (Rock 2006:2) in order to defeat his opponents. His

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<sup>195</sup> Van Eck (2009b) has written a commendable piece of work on parables, their interpretation and their use from a social scientific perspective. For Oakman (2008:25), Jesus' parables represent his attempt to publicly express critical truths about his community.

response to Herod's anxiety to see him perform some sign was silence (Lk 23:8-9). He continued to keep a low profile even when the chief priests and the scribes accused him vehemently (Lk 23:10), and when Herod and his soldiers treated him with contempt, mocked him and disguised him (Lk 23:11). This method, as opposed to violence, yielded positive results because Jesus was held as hero at the end of Luke's gospel when he was lifted up to his heavenly rule.

Jesus' approach to reduce dissonance between the Jews and the non-Jews was embedded in his forgiving of sins. The conflict between him and the religious leaders was inaugurated by his proved ability to offer the forgiveness of sins to a paralytic (Lk 5:20). He had understood that forgiveness of sins was double-way traffic. It did not only bring liberation to the beneficiary, but it also brought inner peace and satisfaction to the benefactor. In this case, the forgiveness that Jesus offered appeased him, because it was motivated by God's compassion. The importance of this virtue was reflected in his teaching to the disciples: "forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Lk 6:37), and the content of the Lord's Prayer (Lk 11:4). For him forgiveness must be offered as many times as possible, so long as the one who sins requests for it (Lk 17:4). Before his death, he requested his Father to forgive those who orchestrated his betrayal and death (Lk 23:34). Jesus' compassionate acts and his persevering attitude were both motivated by his policy of forgiveness. Even though his disciples abandoned him during his trial, he sought for them after his resurrection and continued to show confidence in them. The decision to commission them in a mission of repentance and forgiveness to all nations equally means that Jesus had forgiven his adversaries, including the soldiers who had cast lots to divide his garments (Lk 23:34), and mocked him (Lk 23:11, 36); the leaders who had scoffed him (Lk 23:35) and the criminal who had questioned his messiahship (Lk 23:39).

In sum, two important remarks were made, based on the emic reading of leadership and conflict in Luke (see § 5.8). Firstly, for Luke's story to be understood, each character group must be read from their own perspective. Secondly, no character group needed to be treated as bad or evil; otherwise Luke risked being misjudged and misinterpreted. The application of CDLT acknowledges that these characters effectively need to be understood in

terms of the internal conflict they underwent as a result of their expectations and the realities that they lived as a result of Jesus' teachings.

### **6.4.3 Contingent-transactional leadership theory (CTLT)**

CTLT is a theory that focuses on the leader's choices, the followers' response and the context of leadership. Effective leadership has been defined as a leader's ability to harness followers and the various internal and external forces that intervene in the exercise of leadership, in order to attain positive results. In other words, effective leadership is about leaders empowering their followers so that together, they can arrive at expected goals. In this section, the analysis of Jesus' leadership *vis-à-vis* his followers will determine his understanding of the relationship between leaders and their followers. The application of CTLT to leadership at this level will be brief because further application is ensured below, in the etic reading of Luke 9:18-22 (see § 6.5.2).

#### **6.4.3.1 Jesus' leadership *vis-à-vis* his followers<sup>196</sup>**

As stated earlier, Jesus' leadership intervened within the context of the Jewish messianic expectations where the elite, the peasants and Jesus' followers were all driven by personal and national motives.<sup>197</sup> In this case, it is Jesus' failure to act according to their prescribed principles that caused dissonance in their response to his leadership. Notwithstanding, Jesus' leadership was inspired by his attitude of acceptance and his policy of leadership empowerment. This was done through his challenging and educative messages, his acts of liberation and rehabilitation and the active co-option of the apostles in his day-to-day activities. In return, those who seemed to have understood him legitimated his leadership through their declarations, while others responded through benevolent services.

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<sup>196</sup> In the context of this study, "followers" refers to the large number of those who had contact with Jesus, irrespective of their ethnic inclination. In general terms, it refers to all those who followed or encountered Jesus (apart from the Jewish elite and the Roman elite), either supporting him or discrediting his mission.

<sup>197</sup> Jesus had two situations to manage. Firstly, he had the task of persuading his audience through his leadership that, in spite of the dissonance in their expectations, he was indeed the Messiah. His second task was that of enabling his followers to understand his mission, so that together, they could bring it to a successful end.

In order to lure his community to accept his identity and his mission, Jesus' activities pulled a great number of followers, whom he expected to become aids in the accomplishment of this mission. Hence, he started by choosing followers, whom he empowered with the authority to preach, heal and cast out demons (Lk 9:1-2). This commission was repeated after his resurrection, and before his ascension to heaven (Lk 24:47-49). Apart from this, he considered teaching as an important aspect of his ministry (Lk 4:18-19 & 43; see also Lk 8:1). Consequently, the choice of the twelve apostles was followed by an extended lecture on the type of society which he envisaged (Lk 6:20-49). His messages were such that they instigated a change of attitude in his hearers (followers). To his apostles he recommended creativity (Lk 9:13), dutiful (Lk 17:7-10) and humble service (Lk 22:26-27). To his followers in general, he prescribed total commitment as a requisite to discipleship (Lk 14:25-33). For effective service, the disciples were warned against the wrong approach to leadership in the likeness of the kings of the Gentiles (Lk 22:25; see also Lk 12:1-12; 20:45-47). In spite of the waywardness of his followers characterised by rejection, misunderstanding and incomprehension, he taught them without ceasing. This implied his willingness to equip them with the precepts that embodied his mission. This methodology did not only set them free from the ignorance of hatred but also, it led them to understand Jesus' identity and his mission.

Jesus' attitude of liberation and rehabilitation was a replicate of his efforts to destroy fences of discrimination and hatred that had been fostered by the politics of exclusion. By rehabilitating the non-Jews into the community of the Jews and through his politics of acceptance, Jesus established a community of friends; that is a fictive kinship. His attitude made a blend between leadership, acceptance and tolerance. Jesus also empowered his followers by involving them in his day-to-day activities. It is an empowerment that enabled the followers to improve on their thinking and to learn to manage difficult situations in the absence of the leader. Twice, he included Peter, James and John in his activities at specific moments. For instance, they were present during the restoration of Jairus' daughter (Lk 8:51) and at the event of the transfiguration (Lk 9:30-31). Jesus also involved his disciples in preparatory activities towards missionary journeys to the Samaritan village

(Lk 9:52) and to Jerusalem (Lk 19:29). He later charged Peter and John to prepare the Passover (Lk 22:8). The disciples were not left indifferent in his efforts to make his identity explicitly known. Hence, when they returned from their missionary trip, he assembled them to find out what the crowds and they, themselves thought about him (Lk 9:18-22). Four times, Jesus made clear the events that awaited him in Jerusalem (Lk 9:22, 44; 17:25; 18:32). In the same vein, he never spared his followers of the dangers involved in leadership (Lk 9:5; 10:3; 22:39).

The loyalty of Jesus' followers was evident in their legitimation of his leadership, their devotedness, their feedback and the atmosphere of dialogue that reigned between Jesus and themselves. For instance, in spite of their lack of trust and confidence, they remained committed to their new mission. It is this sense of commitment which earned them the reward of a renewed commission at the end of Jesus' ministry (Lk 24:48). Their feedback concerning the crowds' impression about him also enabled Jesus to have a general feeling about the appreciation that the peasants had about him, as well as their own personal conviction. At Jesus' death, the peasants (λαοὶ and οἱ ἄλλοι) that had served as an obstacle to his earlier arrest equally continued to legitimate his identity and works when they beat their breasts and returned home (Lk 23:48). Even though Jesus' identity and his leadership did not draw unanimity, in general terms, he was acknowledged as a missionary of reformation and social transformation.

The diverse nature of Jesus' followers at the end of his ministry testifies for a successful management of the surrounding circumstances of his leadership. Among others, Jesus gathered and transformed tax collectors and forgiven sinners; he reformed Roman centurions and members from the Jewish council; he convinced the οἱ ἄλλοι and λαοὶ; challenged and recommitted the apostles. It is the diversity in the composition of this new household that makes God's holiness inclusive. Jesus himself was the leader of this heterogeneous (in terms of ethnicity) but homogeneous (in terms of kingdom principles of compassion and solidarity) community, where everybody had a seat on the same table of friendship and fellowship, with the leader playing the role of a servant (see Wilkes 1998:13).



#### 6.4.3.2 Recapitulation: Jesus' understanding of leadership

From the analysis above it stands clear that, beyond the Jewish messianic expectations and all its consequences (intrigues, contempt, anxiety, personal and national interest, and misunderstanding); dissonance between the expectations of Jesus' followers and his defined goals, as well as the practice of social control were all important temporal factors that influenced Jesus' leadership. Also, his understanding of God as all compassionate stood at dissonance with their interpretation of God's holiness. In this perspective, his ability to harness his followers to manage these factors confirmed him as *to\_n xristo\_n tou Qeou* (Lk 9:20); in fact, as a *di&kaiou* (Lk 23:47). It is evident from the etic reading of leadership and its surrounding factors in Luke's gospel that Jesus defines and recommends various types of leadership: Compassionate leadership; servant leadership; sacerdotal leadership; participatory leadership; leadership by action and purposeful leadership.

Effective leadership according to Jesus must be animated by empathy towards followers and the vocational or professional passion towards the realisation of estimated goals. This is what may also be referred to as indiscriminate and compassionate leadership (Lk 10:25-36). Failure to read and analyse Jesus' attitude within the context of these two principles, his contemporaries misinterpreted his actions and rated him as an opponent. Jesus wished that the compassionate attitude of the Samaritan could be emulated by the lawyer. In his opinion, the effectiveness of leaders begins from their readiness to accommodate their followers, irrespective of their ethnic, religious, political and cultural differences and their ability to show a sense of responsibility towards tasks which are human centred. The diversity in beliefs is never necessarily a sign of enmity and conflict. Rather, when diversity is well managed within the group, it equips and complements its members' shortcomings and thus facilitates their joint efforts in achieving greater results.

Jesus exhibited indiscriminate compassion through a servant leadership approach. He interpreted meaningful leadership as leadership that was motivated by service (Wilkes 1998:9, see also Wehrli 1992:104, Nyiawung 2005). In other words, it is leadership that is guided by the leader's attitude of

submissiveness and humility. This approach defies the traditional paradigm of leadership which means to rule and command. Even though the term “leader” may be opposed to that of “servanthood”, Jesus’ attitude proves that the leaders’ joy comes from the services that they render to their followers and the satisfaction they derive thereof. As a leader, he had all authority in heaven and on earth as Son of God, but as servant, his lordship was that of service. His example implies that power and authority are useful only when they are used as instruments of service. Even though he was a leader, he sat among his disciples as a servant (Lk 22:27). His position and his attitude at table (Lk 22:14-23) modifies the understanding of leadership. It is not lordship; it is service (Lk 22:26).

Jesus’ willingness to serve even at the expense of his life gave his leadership a sacrificial approach. He prescribed sacerdotal leadership to his disciples: no material, no anxiety about life issues, renunciation of family and self-abnegation. Comparatively, He gave preference to urgency in realising group’s goals, as opposed to the quest for personal gain. Sacrificial leadership moves hand in gloves with risk bearing and self-giving. Jesus’ ability to bear risk resulted in his willingness to offer himself and to suffer as a necessity, in order to enter into his glory (Lk 24:26, 45). His ministry was that of innovation through the reformation and the transformation of traditional social control mechanisms. For this, he neither feared innovation (Wilkes 1998:127), nor compromised with unacceptable dehumanising practices. By effecting change through the delegation of power, he exposed leadership and its implications, thereby training the disciples to become future effective leaders. Sacerdotal leadership is that which involves stress, frustration, isolation, rejection, pressures. In general terms, leaders are prime targets for attack and enmity (Spriggs 1993:145). Notwithstanding, Jesus did not only face it, but he recommended it to his disciples.

Jesus’ success in leadership also stemmed from the fact that he fostered and practised participatory leadership. This was leadership that resulted from the experiences and the contributions of his followers. Without counting the cost and their effectiveness, Jesus took them just as they were, with their strengths and their shortcomings. His open minded attitude created an appropriate atmosphere that enabled the disciples to express their

feelings. Their reports about the crowd's speculations concerning his identity and Peter's response (Lk 9: 19-20; see Lk 9:7-8) enabled him to fashion his leadership in reaction to the expectations of his followers. In participatory leadership, followers assist leaders in moulding leadership which is appropriate to their context. On the one hand, Jesus' participatory approach to leadership enabled him to dispel the misunderstanding and misinterpretation that surrounded his identity. On the other hand, it increased the steadfastness of his followers and their zeal to support him; certainly, Jesus was a *di&kaiov*.

Nowhere in Luke's gospel (apart from Luke 4:18), does Jesus explicitly refer to himself as the expected Messiah. Throughout the gospel he allowed his works to testify about his person and his identity. Elsewhere in the gospel, various human characters identified him, according to their perceptions, and with reference to what they witnessed him perform. It is this leadership approach that is here referred to as leadership by action. In response to inquisition about his messiahship in the Sanhedrin, Jesus pointed to action: "But from now on the Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God" (Lk 22:69). Before Pilate and Herod, he never proved to be king. Paradoxically he was dressed in a corresponding attire of kingship and action (Lk 23:11). His dependence on the divine legitimation of his identity and the divine source of his authority were a bolster to his leadership. Hence, from his earthly actions, he earned the legitimation from the crowds and the disciples (Lk 9:19-20). His ability to successfully manage societal crisis to the end, earned him the approval of the centurion and the peasants (Lk 23:47, 48). Incontestably, Jesus' lordship was legitimated as a result of his actions (services). In other words, leadership by action is leadership where leaders' performances lead to the legitimation of their power and authority, and not the reverse.

Jesus' eagerness for service led him to a persevering and purposeful leadership approach. He knew his responsibilities so well that neither did the dissonance from cosmic agents, nor the distractions from earthly forces caused him to deviate from his mission. Humiliation and suffering did not even deter him; rather, they were a necessity and a source of encouragement (Lk 9:22; 24:26). Although his leadership was doubted and contested from the

point of view of its source and its application, he remained focused and unperturbed. In a nutshell, his focus towards mission achievement and his leadership approach were some of the principal causes of conflict with his opponents. Having understood the meaningfulness of his mission, he prayerfully offered himself to God's guidance and courageously gave himself "as it was determined" (Lk 22:22).

Jesus' leadership success prescribes humility, tolerance, perseverance and forgiveness as necessary leadership virtues. His forgiving spirit added an impetus to his mission. He achieved greatness by avoiding the human way of gaining honour and authority and by opting the humble and humiliating way. His tolerant and forgiving attitude enabled him to cope with torture from religious and political authorities; insults from soldiers and the thief; the capricious attitude of his disciples (their lack of faith, incompetence, incomprehension, mistrust), the vacillation of the peasants, his loneliness and rejection from his peers (Spriggs 1993:159). As a result, his perseverance yielded positive fruits in that the followers finally understood his identity and took over the leadership of the mission which they seemingly did not understand from the beginning.

#### **6.4.4 Conclusion**

Three aspects animated Jesus' leadership: his person and his works; the support from his followers by way of legitimation and the understanding of his context of leadership. From an etic point of view, the enigmatic nature of Jesus' character became the source of dissonance in Lukan characters. His followers were hesitant to trust in his leadership because he was never understood. For this reason, he seemed not to have been the right person to follow. The religious authorities did not recognise his leadership because he refused to collaborate and condone with their leadership approach. Considering the fact that legitimation has an important role to play in leadership (Read 1974:190), Jesus counted more on divine legitimation than on human legitimation. The recognition of his identity by the Holy Spirit at his baptism aided him to dispel dissonance from his detractors and attract confidence in his followers. The legitimation from Peter and the crowds spurred him to define his mission in a better way, and prepared him for his

Jerusalem expedition. His success was ensured by his ability to control all temporal factors that influenced his leadership, in order to arrive at a successful end.

In response to the circumstances that surrounded his leadership, he did not use one lone type of leadership. His application of leadership was highly influenced by punctual situations and events (see Hollander 1993:30). For instance, the various responses that he offered during his trial and other occasions of challenge-response depended on the intention of his antagonists. Situated within the context of the Jewish messianic expectations his leadership was full of misinterpretations. The Jews had wished that Jesus could use the different leadership alternatives offered by the devil: leadership by command or authoritative leadership (Lk 4:3); leadership by covetousness and corruption (Lk 4:5-7) and leadership by coercion and power (Lk 4:9-11). Unfortunately, he understood each of these approaches as an attempt to satisfy their ego. Consequently, he chose the servant way, which paradoxically seemed contrary to their wishes. This was an approach which brought him the support from a Roman centurion, a member of the Jewish council, the peasants and the disciples who were later on commissioned to preach the repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations.

## **6.5 LEADERSHIP, CONFLICT AND IDENTITY: AN ETIC READING OF LUKE 9:18-22**

### **6.5.1 Introduction**

From an emic point of view Jesus' identity within the surroundings of Galilee was that of conflict and controversy because the various groups with which he interacted did not only misinterpret his actions, but also conceived his identity differently (see § 5.7). Luke 9:18-22 is therefore Jesus' check of information from his disciples and a personal disclosure of who he is, including its consequences. This micro narrative does not only summarise the nature of the conflict in Luke's gospel but also, it unveils the future of Jesus' ministry. In addition, it depicts his leadership ability and highlights the importance of human and divine contribution in the process of legitimating Jesus as God's choice in bringing salvation to all peoples; a light to Gentiles and glory to Israel (Lk 2:30-32).

The etic reading of Luke 9:18-22 will therefore lay emphasis on Jesus' leadership, the conflict that he faced in his relationships and the legitimization of his identity as God's broker. These aspects will be grouped into two areas of study: contingent-transactional leadership theory (CTLT) and a reading of Luke 9:18-22 through the lenses of some cultural values of first-century Mediterranean society. The intention of applying the CTLT to read Luke 9:18-22 is an attempt to evaluate Jesus' leadership, in terms of his relationship with his followers (disciples) and their contribution to the attainment of goals. It is thus about the implication of the question-and-answer session between Jesus and the disciples. A focused reading of Luke 9:18-22 also shows a close connection between the conflicts that Jesus faced during his ministry and the application of his leadership. In this way, the use of first-century Mediterranean values of honour and shame and the models of labelling and deviance will emphasise the place of legitimization in the theoretical framework that explains the relationships mentioned above.

### **6.5.2 Contingent-transactional leadership (Lk 9:18-22)**

According to the contingency leadership theory, the success of leaders depends on their efforts to manage influencing situations in order to achieve expected goals, depending on the leaders' priorities. In this prescription, leadership is the sole responsibility of leaders. Transactional leadership, on its part, compliments contingency leadership theory in that it recognises the importance of followers in the process of leadership. As explained in § 4.2.4, CTLT rehabilitates both the leaders and their followers in the management of internal and external forces in order to attain goals. Luke 9:18-22 offers an example of how such collaboration is effected because it defines the place of dialogue within the context of leadership. This micro narrative also emphasises the importance of feedback through investigation (Lk 9:18-20) and its effects on both leaders and followers (Lk 9:20-22).

#### **6.5.2.1 Reading Luke 9:18-22 as a dialogue**

A dialogue is a conversation between two or more persons. In leadership, it is a democratic approach that gives room for both leaders and followers to participate in leadership by providing personal opinion, criticism and



feedback. It is one of the characteristics of dyadic communities whereby dyadic persons expect others to give feedback about their activities. Jesus inaugurates the dialogue between him and his followers in Luke 9:18-22 with a prayer session, where they paradoxically do not participate actively (Lk 9:18a). After this quiet moment of meditation, self dedication and communication with God, he asked them a fundamental question about his identity, in two phases. Firstly, he inquired about popular opinion: “Who do the crowds say that I am” (Lk 9: 18b). Secondly, he sought to know what the disciples themselves thought: “But who do you say that I am?” (Lk 9:20a).

Malina (1996b:45) opines that “who do people [others] say that I am” was a typical Mediterranean question, because it was a norm that a person needed at least one other person so as to ascertain who they really were. Through this question Jesus acknowledged that he did not live in isolation, but that as a dyadic personality, community impression about his identity was important. The importance of this question therefore lies in the fact that it goes beyond Jesus’ mere identity in order to address the ministry that he incarnated. It is also a question that inquired about what was said concerning the new message that he preached and the leadership which he commanded through the apostles whom he used. It is feedback about Jesus, the new understanding of God, the disciples, as well as the new vision that they shared. From a dyadic point of view, Jesus’ use of “I” in these questions connotes to an extent an implied “we”, referring to Jesus and the new community.

Notwithstanding, Jesus was convincingly followed by huge number of persons who found themselves in two categories: the “crowds” and the disciples. The “crowds” in this case were a combination of the several groups of people whom he attended to from Capernaum (Lk 4:31) to Caesarea Philippi (Lk 9:18), passing through Bethsaida (Lk 9:10-17), and those to whom the disciples administered (Lk 9:1-6). While he prepared to set his face towards Jerusalem (Lk 9:51), he expected an appreciation from both this thronging public and his in-group members. He was aware that an objective response coming from those who had followed his day-to-day activities would be helpful for the rest of the journey. According to Malina and Neyrey (1991c:84), dyadic persons always needed constantly to be told their role,

identity and status by those around them (see also Rohrbaugh 2007:74). The dialogue gives an impression that Jesus might as well have expected a comparison to be made between him and someone whom they probably expected or whom they knew. It is in this sense that his question addressed to them should be read in comparative terms. Consequently, the crowds' speculation as echoed by the disciples was adequate. Comparatively, Jesus' activities categorised him with some New Testament and Old Testament figures, respectively: John the Baptist, Elijah and one of the prophets of old. For Peter and the other disciples, Jesus was simply "the Christ of God". By linking Jesus to these personalities, the crowds and the disciples sought to authenticate him as an agent empowered by God to establish his reign in their midst. Peter's response did not in any way cancel nor did it contradict the speculation from the crowds as earlier echoed by Herod (Lk 9:7-9). Rather, it was their contribution as a response to Jesus' question.

Interestingly, Jesus neither disagreed with the conjecture from the crowds nor the alternative from the disciples. Rather, by offering a complement to all these responses, Jesus legitimated the place of dialogue and the importance of the followers' contribution in leadership. He confirmed that in a dyadic society the contribution from in-group members is important. In the same vein, Rohrbaugh (2007:76) observes that "all the legitimate questions about Jesus have to do with groups" (Rohrbaugh 2007:76). Hence, the *kai* which introduces Jesus' compliments plays an adversative role. In spite of the fact that the crowds and the disciples had a glimpse of who Jesus was, their conjecture carried consequences that needed to be digested, understood and explained more profoundly.

Through dialogue, Jesus became aware of the limitations in the disciples' knowledge of whom they were following. By introducing his identity as "Son of man" (Lk 9:22), he explains their responses in terms of the conflict that he already faced with the religious leaders and its continuance as he forged ahead. Jesus concluded his explanation by indicating the outcome of the conflict; he will eventually be vindicated. Unfortunately, the dialogue does not indicate whether the disciples understood Jesus as much as he had understood them. However, he summarised the content of his ministry to his followers by defining its working; its goals and its consequences. With this

information, he is certain that his followers are aware of the content of the mission that they are called upon to exercise.

One of Jesus' intentions during his ministry was to make more brokers for the new community that he moulded. From Nazareth, up to the point where Jesus now found himself, he had introduced a new teaching in preparation for a new community. Consequently, he launched a dialogue that enabled him to ensure that the group that he was forming was a coherent group that understood who he was and what he did. He had wished to constitute a group that was coherent in knowledge (of leader and mission), if not, it would rather mean a betrayal of group cohesion. Malina and Neyrey (1991c:73-74) describe such a community as that of "strong group persons" (see also Van Eck 1995:335). Jesus therefore chose dialogue as a leadership approach because he knew that by recognising who he was, and by understanding their limitations, he will inevitably enable his disciples and the crowds to become clients and brokers. As clients they would have a better understanding of Jesus' identity and his mission. And as brokers, they would certainly serve God in a convincing manner. By legitimating Jesus as "the Christ of God" (Lk 9:20b), the disciples, just like the centurion who recognised Jesus as  $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\nu$  (Lk 23:47) and the  $\omicron\!\times\lambda\omicron\nu$  who beat their breasts (Lk 23:48), effectively became brokers.

By choosing the way of dialogue, Jesus did not intend to avoid conflict; rather, he envisaged managing and curbing it to the minimum. The discussion with the disciples was based on the conflict that he already faced; it explained the subsequent conflicts that still awaited him. Even within the context of the discussion, he still faced the conflict of misunderstanding with his disciples. Jesus' example indicates that conflict is inherent in leadership. Hence, the leader's responsibility is an endeavour to investigate, know, understand, manage and curb conflict.

### **6.5.2.2 Leading through investigation (Lk 9:18-20)**

The dialogue between Jesus and his followers in this micro narrative can be analysed as a complete independent sub-unit. Whereas verse 18 introduces the subject matter of the discussion centred on the question about Jesus' identity, the last verse offers a solution, which compliments other responses

that had been provided by the crowds and the disciples. The dialogue takes the tune of an investigation where Lukan Jesus seeks the participation of his followers in the making up of his Christology. Already, Jesus had known where he was going, and the nature of the events that awaited him. But then, he did not know whether at this point, the disciples and the host of his followers had known who he was, and the events that he was about to face. Even if they had, it was still doubtful whether they had understood their implications.

Nickle (2000:92) remarks that it is often very difficult to detect the intentions behind questions posed by leaders imbued with power and authority. Jesus' investigations on the issue of his identity did not seem strange, nor did it appear to bear strings. His authoritative preaching, his healing miracles and exorcisms, his astounding acts of providence and the missionary expedition of his disciples had already created an impact within the vicinity of Galilee. As he moved further for the purpose of accomplishing his mission (Lk 9:51), he therefore sought to know from the disciples if they were conscious of the consequences involved in the mission that was set before them. He probably knew that a satisfactory mission depended on how much information they had concerning his identity. However, the devil had earlier interpreted Jesus' identity in terms of wrong motives (Lk 4:1-13). Also, the question; "who do...say that I am" (Lk 9:18b, 20a) had also been echoed already in Nazareth by the peasants (see Lk 4:22) and later on by John the Baptist (Lk 7: 20). The Jewish elite, through their religious leaders, had been interested in this question, without having in mind a specific response (Lk 5:21). Herod, the Roman elite, had speculated on the same issue although, with doubtful responses (Lk 9:7-9). Jesus' activities had also embarrassed his disciples, who could not find a response as to who he was (Lk 8:25). At this point, there was no way for the latter to avoid the question; and for this, Jesus needed a precise response: "But who do you say that I am?" (Lk 9:20a).

Jesus understood that success in mission depended on how much knowledge the followers had of their leaders including their agenda of activities, and their response by way of feedback and legitimation. He also knew that the survival of leadership depended on leaders' ability to inform, educate and inspire their followers in their weaknesses and on the intricacies

involved in the leadership to which they all aspired. Thirdly, he knew that such education could only come as a result of a thorough investigation. Hence, the question: “But who do you say that I am?” To this effect, Peter’s declaration perhaps represents a climactic confession in terms of Jesus’ identity (Rohrbaugh 2007:74). However, even though it was an important declaration, it does not constitute the plot of Luke 9:18-22. Jesus’ question (in two phases) was a simple medium to define the intricacies involved in the meaning of his identity and the consequences they had on his mission. In fact, the intention of this investigation is contained in the intimation for the disciples to remain silent. More especially, it is to be found in the role played by the expression “ei)pw\_n” (Lk 9:22a). “Ei)pw\_n” introduces the *raison d’être* of Jesus’ question and at the same time concludes the dialogue. Peter’s confession would be climactic if Jesus had explicitly declared that this response was right while that from the crowds was wrong. Instead, he seemed to have authenticated and complimented the both responses. In either case, Jesus is neither John the Baptist nor Elijah, nor one of the prophets of old. Even though he is the Christ of God, his messiahship defies the traditional expectations of the Jewish messianic expectations, because it is linked with suffering, rejection humiliation, death and vindication.

The investigative question directed by Jesus at the disciples was purposeful. In leadership, investigation serves the purpose of evaluation, appreciation and legitimation. The first purpose for Jesus was that it enabled him to associate the disciples with his plan of leadership. Secondly, he wished to provide the disciples with terms of reference for the mission that will soon become theirs. At his resurrection, the women at the tomb are referred to this discussion. They are asked to remember Jesus’ words, while he was still in Galilee (Lk 24:6). Henceforth, the discussion of Luke 9:18-22 would remain a point of reference and a key to their mission. Thirdly the speculations from the crowds and the disciples aided Jesus to define a true understanding of his messiahship. His Christology is a combination of suffering, rejection, humiliation, death and vindication. Fourthly Jesus unveiled the mask of misunderstanding that still haunted the disciples and the crowds. Even though they seemed to have had a glimpse of who he was, they had not yet understood the implications of what it meant for him to be

“the Christ of God” (Lk 9:20b). The investigation therefore enabled Jesus to know the atmosphere that characterised his identity and his leadership. The strict warning for the disciples to keep the contents of the discussion in secret actually implies that they still had a lot to learn (Nickle 2000:97). Lastly, Jesus used this opportunity to present the bitter side of leadership. It entails suffering, humiliation, rejection and even death for which, all aspirants must count the cost.

### **6.5.2.3 The unwanted side of leadership (Lk 9:21-22)**

In the context of first-century Mediterranean society where leadership is synonymous to honour, power and authority (see Malina & Neyrey 1991b:26; Moxnes 1996:35), Jesus’ remarks appeared as an unwanted explanation. Instead of maintaining the honour which he had brought to this community as they had expected, they implied shame and disappointment in many respects. They implied a different definition of leadership as compared to the traditional notion of leadership that they already knew and applied. They equally implied that the mission he began would remain uncompleted. These remarks were in fact a discredit to his teachings because they brought shame to the new community that he was forming. And finally, they portrayed a bleak future for the disciples, who had initially left everything and to follow him.

By associating suffering, rejection, humiliation and death with his identity, Jesus meant to indicate the unwanted side of leadership, especially within the context of a limited-good-society. This painting was in agreement with his understanding of leadership which challenged its traditional notion to mean gain, command and lordship. In this way, Jesus remained consistent in his definition of leadership:

And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.

(Lk 22:25-26)

With this new conception, meaningful lordship and authority, according to Jesus, must be translated into selfless service. Apparently, the disciples seem to have understood this aspect of shame more than they understood that of



honour implied in Jesus' predicted resurrection. Consequently, they constantly clamoured on who would be the greatest (Lk 9:46). Secondly, Jesus' words meant that his mission was coming to an end. This declaration was a sign of frustration and despair for the Jews, who still expected their total political and economic liberation from the Romans. It was ironic and abnormal for one who was expected to lead Gentiles to light and at the same time inspire glory and salvation to Israel (see Lk 2:30, 31, 32) to talk about his immanent and premature death. Jesus' declaration therefore made his leadership and person to become unpopular.

His teachings had been that of reforming and transforming the community in the likeness of God's plan of salvation for Israel. They had contributed to the formation of a new community that derived their providence (material and immaterial) from his benevolence. It was therefore unacceptable that the liberation that he had begun was about to be brought to a sudden end. Through several occasions of challenge-riposte (Lk 5:17-25, 27-32, 33-39; 6:1-5, 6-11; 7:36-50), Jesus had shown the triumph of a new community over against the "old" community led by the religious leaders. During these encounters Jesus had defeated his enemies and brought honour to his community. A recount of the events that awaited him in Jerusalem meant their return to the leadership that Jesus had initially defeated. Initially, the disciples had left everything and followed Jesus. Even though they had not understood him, they had gained honour in the eyes of the public as "Jesus' followers". Their social status had motivated them to aspire for greater leadership in the new community. Unfortunately, Jesus' explanation of who he was and what his mission entails seem not to favour them. It is in this respect that Nickle (2000:97) is right that although Peter gave the right answer, it was for incomplete reasons.

The above elements constituted what could be termed as "the unwanted side of leadership", because Jesus' declaration did not favour the expectations of the disciples and the crowds. Jesus probably knew about this disillusionment. Hence, he began his investigations with a prayer session, which points to the importance of the subject-matter contained in the dialogue. In short, Jesus' dialogue with the disciples is better understood

when it is studied within the context of first-century Mediterranean cultural values of honour and shame and the models of deviance and dissonance.

### **6.5.3 Luke 9:18-22 and cultural values of first-century Mediterranean society**

From an etic point of view Luke 9:18-22 can be interpreted through the medium of two sets of models. Firstly, it is a micro narrative which exposes issues of dissonance, legitimation and honour. Secondly, it embodies first-century Mediterranean values like honour, shame and deviance. In essence, Jesus' response to the question of his identity is about the reversal of status. In spite of his humiliation by earthly leaders, who apparently seem to win, his vindication will come from a divine source to confirm his innocence, his victory and his legitimate leadership.

#### **6.5.3.1 Dissonance, legitimation and honour (Lk 9:18-20)**

It was observed in § 6.4.2.1 that the confrontation between Jesus and the devil was aimed at creating dissonance in Jesus. During that encounter the devil lured him with various alternative leadership approaches. In Luke 9:18b-22, it is the turn of human agents (the crowds and the disciples) to cajole Jesus by identifying him with John the Baptist and prominent Old Testament figures. Unlike the case with the devil, Jesus appears to be the main actor in the dialogue. His first quest is to know who the crowds say that he was (Lk 9:18b). The crowds' speculations, as echoed by the disciples, identified him with a variety of personalities. While for some he was identified with John the Baptist, for others, he was Elijah. Yet for some others, he was simply one of the old prophets that had risen (Lk 9:19). According to these conjectures the crowds did not seem unanimous. Whatever the case, they all agreed that there was an inseparable link between who Jesus was and what he did. Their various responses were in relation with their experiences of what Jesus did; what these Jewish figures had done in the past and their expectations of the promises of Old Testament prophets (Lk 1:54-55; cf. 2 Sam 7:12-16).<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Nyiawung (2008:48) observes that the idea of hope and salvation has been part of Israel's life and history. That is why in the Old Testament the Israelites are in a constant quest of a Saviour-hero. This is a probable reason why the crowds were immediately motivated by

These responses bore elements of dissonance because all the figures mentioned above suffered conflict, humiliation and rejection from their respective contemporaries. For instance, John the Baptist had been beheaded for his criticism against Herod (Lk 9:9). Elijah had suffered threats from King Ahab and Jezebel (1 Ki 19:2-3). Jesus had also remarked that prophets were without honour, respect and recognition (Lk 4:24), because they had suffered from persecution (Lk 11:47).

When Jesus addressed the same question to the disciples, Peter identified him as “the Christ of God” (Lk 9:20). The common factor between the responses from the crowds and that from the disciples was that Jesus was a nationalistic leader from God. After having reflected on leadership possibilities proposed by the devil, Jesus was once more confronted with a crisis of identity. His personal response in verse 22 made a blend of the crowds’ observations and the disciples’ confession. By alluding to himself the title of “Son of man”, Jesus agreed with the crowds that he could be identified with Old Testament figures and prophecies (cf. Dn 7: 9-14; Enoch 45-57). He equally agreed with Peter that he was the Messiah. However from here, Jesus showed the limitations of both responses by associating his messiahship with Isaiah’s idea of the “suffering servant” (Is 52:13-53:12).<sup>199</sup> This compliment freed Jesus from dissonance and focused him on his purpose. Even though he would suffer conflict, rejection, humiliation and death (as other Old Testament figures), he was different from a nationalistic figure, because he would be raised on the third day.

Beside aspects of dissonance, the crowds and the disciples were also concerned with the legitimation of Jesus’ honour. Consequently, they both identified him with Old Testament and Jewish personalities of honour and dignity. For both of them, Jesus had a divine origin. In other words, his authority and his power were divinely inspired. In the Palestinian context,

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Jesus’ activities to identify him with prominent figures who had left a glorious history in the process of the liberation of God’s people.

<sup>199</sup> This position has been contested by many scholars who consider it inappropriate to associate the “suffering servant” of Isaiah with Jesus’ mission in the New Testament (see e.g., McKenzie 1981:132; North 1956:208). However, the fundamental issue resides on the fact that Isaiah does not situate the events of the suffering servant within any time frame. Notwithstanding, Jesus’ coming coincides with the Jewish expectations of a liberator. Unfortunately, Jesus’ approach seems to differ with these expectations.

where someone's source of authority and power played an important role in defining the one's status within the society (Lk 20:2), the authentication of Jesus' honour and dignity in this dialogue was legitimate. In this vein, Moxnes (1996:20) confirms that public (e. g., the crowd) opinion was important in legitimating an individual's social status. Whatever the case, Jesus was recognised as an honourable person. The recognition of his status added impetus in the realisation of his mission. Although their motives might have been wrong, they were inspired to see Jesus unlike other ordinary beings within the Jewish society.

The importance of the dialogue with the disciples also resides in the role of the leaders' followers in the legitimating process of their leadership. Jesus had earlier defined kinship in relation to those who hear the word of God and keep it (Lk 8:21). With this understanding, Jesus' disciples and the crowds could be considered as members of the new household. Honour derived from one's kinship was important in public eyes. Hence, having become members of Jesus' kinship of the new order, the disciples and the crowds had an important role in legitimating his identity, and through that, his leadership. Even though they might have had half truths about his identity, they nevertheless recognised that he was a person of high social repute.

### **6.5.3.2 Deviance, honour and shame: The reversal of status (Lk 9:21-22)**

Having listened to recommendable identities from both the crowds and the disciples, it was absurd for Jesus to define his identity with contradictory characteristics of deviance. Apparently, Jesus had given them the impression that he was engaged in a losing battle in which the religious leaders would be the winners. This was absurd, because the disciples might have expected Jesus to raise a confirmation of the status that had been conferred on him. Instead, he defied all their expectations and placed himself in the position of shame. He will suffer, be humiliated, be rejected and be killed by religious leaders. This meant by implication an extinction of Jesus' movement which implied the end of their aspirations. The one who had been described as an honourable leader did not seem to fit with their expectations. Rather than looking like an honourable leader, he was in fact a deviant

Conversely, Jesus did not allude to himself the status of shame. It is the definition of his messiahship that gave a false impression to his disciples. Luke 9:22 (ei)pw\_n o#ti dei~ to\_n ui(on tou~ a0nqpw&pou polla\_ pagei~n kai\_ a)podokimasqh~nai a)po tw~n presbute&rwn kai\_ a)rxiere&wn kai\_ grammate&wn kai\ a)poktanqh~nai kai th~| tri&th| h(me&ra| e)gerqh~nai) presents three main features. Its importance as an explicative verse is in the introductory ei)pw\_n. Secondly, apart from the verb ei)pw\_n, the subject of the verbs pagei~n, a)podokimasqh~nai and a)poktanqh~nai is explicit: the elders, the chief priests and the scribes. For the verb e)gerqh~nai, its subject is implied; it is God.<sup>200</sup> Thirdly, of all the conjunctions of kai\_ mentioned in this verse, the kai\_ in the expression kai\ h~| tri&th| h(me&ra| e)gerqh~nai plays a special function. It is an adversative kai\_, which implies a reverse in action. It articulates a contrast between what has been said, and what follows. In the context of this verse, the elders, the chief priests and the scribes would inflict Jesus with suffering, rejection and death; but this will not be the end. As a reaction, God will restore him through the resurrection.

God's activity in this verse is that of the restoration of Jesus' status which has been disfigured as a result of the attitude of his adversaries. Jesus' followers did not understand the reversal of status implied in his response. His process of reformation had not ended; rather, it was on-going. The vindication offered by God after three days meant a reversal of status wherein Jesus' honour, dignity, leadership and identity would be re-established. In a society that was conversant with the consequences of the exercise of challenge-riposte, the disciples had not understood that Jesus' vindication implied shame to his opponents and victory to the new household. The reversal of status announced by Jesus is thus similar to the prediction of the *Magnificat* and the *Nunc Dimittis*. The opponents' honour was defined as temporary: three days; after which they will acquire shame indefinitely, because Jesus will reign forever. Unfortunately, the disciples did not

<sup>200</sup> Quite often in the Greek New Testament texts God is the implied subject of verbs in the passive voice. Consequently, God is the subject of the verb e)gerqh~nai (see footnote 141).

understand that they had chosen the right leader, who was moving in the right direction.

Summarily, Jesus' prediction of the reversal of status confirmed him as a person of honourable status. It implies that the opinion of the crowds and that of the disciples is partially valid. It proves that the right way to honour is God's way, through the cross. It also dismisses the identity of deviance that will be attributed to him. By being raised on the third day, God defines deviance, labelling, honour and shame in a new way; in fact, the reversal of status is complete.

#### **6.5.4 Conclusion**

The dialogue between Jesus and the disciples (Lk 9:18-22) is probably one of the most important passages in the gospels in particular and in the New Testament in general. It explains and justifies the relationship between Jesus and his contemporaries. It provides a summary of the peasant's and the disciples' conception of Jesus' identity. It projects Jesus' identity and redefines his leadership in terms of what he does. It announces God's plan to restore honour on shameful human attitudes. It is a point of reference to the whole gospel and the New Testament. In fact, it summarises Luke's gospel: Who is the Christ?

An etic interpretation of this micro narrative indicates that it is not enough to repeat what others say about Jesus. A true response concerning his identity derives from personal experience and a close relationship with him. Any understanding of Jesus that excludes his purpose for the world and God's activity in restoring and legitimating his identity is incomplete. In other words, Jesus would be like John the Baptist, Elijah or one of the prophets of old, only when the picture of these Old Testament figures is complemented with that of his humiliation, suffering, rejection and death on the one hand, and that of God's vindication, on the other hand.

#### **6.6 CONCLUSION**

Luke tells the story of Jesus within the context of a community that doubts and puts Jesus' credibility into question; that is, his identity and his leadership. The common factor between the early beginnings of his gospel



(Lk 1:1-3:38)<sup>201</sup> and its ending (Lk 22:1-24:53) is the legitimation of Jesus' divine identity and his self disclosure in Luke 9:18-22. The legitimation of Jesus' identity and his leadership plan thus justify his relationship with the various systems of his time and the conflict that resulted from these relationships. Consequently, the position of these legitimations (at the beginning and at the end of the gospel) is purposeful. The one whose identity and leadership is contested is in fact the one who was chosen and anointed by God. The vindication from God was in agreement with the centurion's remark that he was legitimately *δικαίον*; that he was indeed the Christ of God. Therefore, from the basis of empirical evidence, five areas of conflict can be developed from the etic reading of Luke. These are: conflict of interest, conflict of identity, conflict of ideology and conflict over the limited goods of honour, authority and power; including the fact that by nature Luke's gospel is situated within the context of an agonistic society. These conflicts depict the nature and quality of the relationships mentioned above. They have contributed enormously in defining Jesus' identity and leadership.

Unlike the conclusions from § 5.8, the micro narrative of Luke 9:18-22 does not only accentuate on the question "Who is the Christ?" Rather, it provides a sketch to possible ways of deducing who Christ is. From an etic point of view the answer concerning Jesus' identity is not necessarily embedded in the speculations of what the crowds feel, think and say about him. It is mostly found in personal experiences that individuals develop as a result of their encounter with Jesus, his self disclosure and the response thereof. For instance, even though the woman in Simon's house (Lk 7:37-50), the Samaritan leper (Lk 17:18-19), the blind beggar (Lk 18:36-42) and Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10) all received salvation, they did not share the same experiences, nor respond in the same way. Although they lived in almost the same environment, they neither shared the same context nor the same

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<sup>201</sup> Very peculiar in this beginning section is the non-negligible position of the genealogy which serves as a transition between Jesus' baptism and the Galilean ministry. As mentioned earlier, genealogies in the Mediterranean context served the purpose of a map for social interaction. They were also a source of pride, a justification for privilege, a device for social recognition and a claim to authority in all its forms. They established the credibility of a person's social status. In this sense, the position of Jesus' genealogy in Luke's gospel is understandable, when compared to Fitzmyer's view that this position seems awkward (Fitzmyer, in Rohrbaugh 2007:35).

history. The crowds followed Jesus all the same; but they were not unanimous when it came to his identity. The crowds and the disciples were all his followers, but their response to who Jesus was did not agree. Although the apostles were with Jesus, only Peter offered an idea about who Jesus was. Consequently, the response concerning Jesus' identity cannot easily draw unanimity. Personal contribution and Jesus' self disclosure all have an important role to play in the whole process.

Secondly, from a missionary perspective, the meaning of Jesus' identity cannot be an imposition on a community. It is a derivation from a dialogue between their socio-cultural and historical contexts and Jesus' proclaimed intention and mission. It is a blend from these factors that is capable of unveiling the incompatibility between the community's expectations and God's plan of salvation for the world. Thirdly, adequate Christian theology is that which is produced through a participatory approach wherein the community concerned is involved in building a convincing Christology. Theology which excludes the participation of its "consumers" is a failure if it treats the existing community members as 'empty heads'. Jesus' leadership approach was successful because he involved his contemporaries in curbing the chasm between their understanding of God's holiness to mean exclusivism and the interpretation of God's holiness to mean his compassion, as preached in the new religion which he taught. In the question "Who is the Christ?" Jesus therefore introduces by implication two alternative ways of doing theology: participatory theology and investigatory theology.

Once more, the etic reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke confirms that effectively the micro narrative of Luke 9:18-22 occupies an important place in the story of Luke's gospel. In terms of story-plot, Luke's story of conflict between Jesus and his adversaries is found in the events associated with Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension (Kingsbury 1997b:163). The situation is different when the same story is read in terms of its story-line. In Luke 9:18-22, the evangelist summarises and explains conflict in his gospel, stating its antagonists, its protagonist, its causes, its consequences and its denouement. In fact, this pericope bears the kernel of Luke's gospel, which is an answer to the question, "Who is the Christ?" The conclusions drawn above, testify that Jesus' approach of

informing and reforming his audience was that of contextualisation. In other words, the teaching of Jesus' story to a community such as the African context will make sense only when it is translated into that community's social, cultural and historical context with the consciousness that it would be invalid to transpose social and cultural values from the Mediterranean context by way of generalisation (Downing 2000:13) to the African context, for example.

## Chapter 7

### Luke 9:18-22: An African hermeneutical reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke

*It is a delightful paradox that the more Christ is translated into the various thought forms and life systems which form our various national identities, the richer all of us will be in our common Christian identity.*  
(Walls 1996:54)

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

As was stated in § 4.4.1, an African hermeneutical reading of leadership, conflict and Jesus' identity in Luke's gospel consists of a contextualisation of the conclusions reached from the etic reading of Luke's gospel. The word contextualisation derives from the root "context", which refers to the interpretation of the "object" by the "subject" (Pobee 1992:38). It starts from the clear recognition of one's own identity, one's own value as an individual and as a society, and concludes with the recognition that God speaks to all people at all times, in all places and in all circumstances. Contextualisation is a Protestant approach to the interpretation of scripture, which is a parallel to the Catholic approach of inculturation (Küster 2001:24).<sup>202</sup> Biblical stories narrated from the perspective of a particular context call for reinterpretation when it comes to its application in a different context, at a different epoch. Contextualisation is also a methodology that imposes on the exegete a strong grip from the past. There is an absolute need to understand the past because, "we cannot know where we are unless we appreciate where we have come from" (Gadamer 1979:273, 337; see also Esler 1994:3). The understanding of what God did in the past is a boost to what he is able to do today. Human challenges of the past are an encouragement to face life much more positively in the present, because human problems remain similar and recurrent. Consequently, there will be a move from what the text meant to its original audience to what the text means to Africans in their context in the twenty-first century. It is therefore an approach that attempts a solution to the several crises of conflict and leadership that plague the African continent.

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<sup>202</sup> While contextualisation targets a particular context as its focus, inculturation is mostly interested with the incarnation of the gospel into specific cultures.

An African hermeneutical reading within the context of this study is the application phase where the analysis of leadership, conflict and Jesus' identity in Luke's gospel is applied to the African context, taking into consideration its socio-cultural, political, religious, ecological and historical realities. Rather than take off from the context of African realities, this hermeneutical reading will take its root from the context of the original audience of the gospel before proceeding to emphasise on the relevance of the "good news" of Jesus to the African context.<sup>203</sup> It is about how the question of Jesus' identity and his leadership approach can be addressed and interpreted within the social, cultural and religious context of the African people. In so far as the etic reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke is facilitated through a study of first-century Mediterranean worldview, an African hermeneutic reading of Luke is possible only when the study of the African context is taken seriously (Ukpong 1994:40).

Just as it was the case with the context of New Testament texts, the African context is that of a "high context" society, compounded with the existence of a variety of cultures. This diversity has caused any study in Africa to become a huge and complex activity, considering the fact that each African community has its cultural practices, codes and symbols that are only known to them (Hyden 2006:11). The epithet "African" therefore relates to a very vast continent, with a great diversity in terms of peoples, culture, beliefs and language. Pobee (1992:58) has remarked that Africa is not only a polyracial and a polyethnic continent, but it is also polycultural in terms of its structure. It is such a rich diversity that makes it difficult to localise Africa within the context of this study. However, the term Africa will refer to the whole continent,<sup>204</sup> but particularly to black Africa, or Africa, south of the Sahara. Comparatively, the African context has a lot in common with the Mediterranean Bible than the Western and American worlds would do

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<sup>203</sup> Rather than being another theological slogan, contextualisation is about a non-negotiable application of leadership, conflict and the implications of Jesus' identity to a specific context. In this case, it is a movement from text (Lukan text) to context (African context), and not the reverse (see § 4.4.6).

<sup>204</sup> The study in African context is an eye-opener for the development of authentic theological reflections in other contexts so that the meaning of Jesus as the Christ is understood and interpreted within these contexts.

(Rohrbaugh 1996:2). Consequently, a few more directives will guide non-African readers from a different context who, paradoxically, need an etic reading to further understand the relevance of Luke 9:18-22 and the realities of the African context.

The hermeneutic reading of leadership, conflict and Jesus' identity in Luke will be divided into two phases. The first phase deals with the diachronic application of SSC (see § 6.1, above), focusing on the comparison between first-century Palestine and the twenty-first century African context. This phase will be treated in two sections. The first will deal with the socio-cultural values of the African context, while the second treats the socio-political, economic and religious realities of the African context as a result of its contact with Europe and North America. This phase will be concluded with an African (attempted) response to the question: "Who is the Christ?" In the second phase, emphases are laid on the hermeneutical reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke's gospel. It will offer a contextual reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke by making use of the sociological theories of power-syndrome leadership theory and that of labelling and deviance, respectively. This phase will also be concluded with a hermeneutic reading of Luke 9:18-22, with reference to leadership, conflict and identity. It is therefore an effort to make meaningful Jesus' identity and his life within the context of Africa, and his implied response to the present vices that cripple Africans and reduce them into a situation of constant need.

The work in this Chapter is not apologetic to support the fact that contemporary Christianity has effectively become a strictly non-Western religion in terms of its concepts, as Barrett (1970:50) had predicted more than two scores ago. Rather, while agreeing with Bediako (2000:3) that Christianity is a universal religion, this hermeneutical approach strives to interpret Jesus' leadership, as well as the conflicts that he faced as a result of his identity in terms of an African worldview. Besides, this approach is not geared towards developing a systematic theology on African Christology. Rather, it is an approach from a New Testament perspective that facilitates the understanding and application of Jesus' leadership pattern within the African context. Secondly, it is about the search for an African response to the question of Jesus' identity: "But who do you (*African*) say that I am?" (Lk



9:20a). This search passes through a scrutiny of some African models for the identification of Jesus as the Christ. Certainly, Africa forms part of the nations to which the disciples were assigned to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins with respect to that which they had witnessed (Lk 24:47-48). The understanding of this “good news” implies a grip of his person, his works and the conflict that was inherent in his identity. In this case, mission would refer to the contact between this good news and the cultural context of the African audience (Küster 2001:17).

## **7.2 SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES OF THE AFRICAN CONTEXT**

### **7.2.1 Introduction**

Conclusions from the etic reading of Luke’s gospel attest that there is a close connection between Jesus’ person, his leadership and the different conflicts in which he was engaged in with his contemporaries. This conclusion was enhanced by the analyses of important values of first-century Mediterranean society. Even though Jesus was not born in an African society, its context inhibits characteristics and factors that can influence human relationships and probably cause the same effects as was the case with the context of first-century Palestine. The main issue addressed in this Section is the question whether Jesus would face the same problems if he was born within the context of Africa. From this perspective, a study of the socio-cultural values of the African context will lead to an analysis of its social relations, social dynamics and its cultural dynamics. Besides, it remains a fact – as was stated in § 6.2.1 – that the social behaviour of individuals is highly dependent on their social relations, social dynamics and cultural values. It is for this reason that the analysis of these aspects of social relations is a requisite to an adequate African hermeneutical reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke’s gospel.

### **7.2.2 Social relations of African societies**

In the context of African society, social relations will be studied in terms of models such as kinship, dyadic personality and the relation of patronage-clientism. As mentioned above, Africa has a lot to share in common with the Mediterranean context. By implication, only specific issues will be raised at

this juncture, so as to avoid a duplication of what has already been raised in § 6.2.

### 7.2.2.1 Kinship

In African societies kinship is defined in terms of relationship to the household, the family<sup>205</sup>, the clan or village, the tribe, the nation and the colour of the skin. Households and families are linked by the same ancestral relationship. As a result, African people live in clusters known as clans and tribes, sharing a common history and almost the same culture.<sup>206</sup> This implies that kinship is defined in terms of blood relationship; and especially with “the house” (Geschiere 2000:11). In short, it is an ascribed status, because one is born into a family or a clan. Kinship is one of the strongest forces in traditional African life because it controls social relationships between individuals. That is why in Africa it is possible to understand and interpret almost all concepts concerned with human relationships through the kinship system to which they are identified (Mbiti 1990:102). Playing a referential role, it reminds individuals of the original founder of their family, clan or tribe. Hence, people belong to families, clans and tribes by means of their family name or the name of their ancestor with which they are identified. As a consequence, tribal identity is not transferable. However, the definition of kinship varies when Africans find themselves out of their respective clans, tribes and nations. For example, a South African and a Cameroonian would more easily become a family when they meet in Paris for example, than when they meet in Ghana.

The system of kinship in Africa has an effect on societal life. For instance, relationships become more intimate, depending on kinship. Hence, members of two different kin groups would obviously look at each other with suspicion, fear and distrust. As a boundary map of security and identification,

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<sup>205</sup> The composition of an African family is that of an extended family. It comprises of children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews and nieces; brothers and sisters.

<sup>206</sup> Because of the negative connotation attached to the word “tribe”, authors like Mbiti (1990:99) have sometimes preferred to use the terminology of “people” or “peoples”. Whatever the case, several households form a family, while several families make up a clan. In the same way, clans put together form tribes from which nations are built. Unfortunately, as a result of the balkanisation of Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1885, clans and tribes cut across nations. Hence, members from the same clan or tribe can be found dispersed in many other neighbouring nations. Clans and tribes are distinguished by their cultural practices. Quite often people from the same clan speak the same language; but this is not the norm.

it fosters an atmosphere of conflict, prejudice, xenophobia and ethnocentrism among individuals. It has an adverse effect on development because employment in certain areas is only offered to the indigenes, while “outsiders” are considered as “strangers” or “come-no-gos”.<sup>207</sup> As a mark of identification, members from a dignified ancestral lineage bear more esteem than those from a little known clan, who may suffer from stigmatisation as a result of labelling and deviance.

By being born into a family, Jesus approves of the importance of kinship; yet, he defines it differently. Although Mary was still in a situation of betrothal to Joseph, she was promised a baby – Jesus (Lk 1:26-38), who eventually became a member of Joseph’s kinship, from the lineage of David (Lk 2:4; see also 3:23-38). This redefinition of kinship is in fact beyond blood relationship. It is a new household which comprises of all “those who hear the word and do it” (Lk 8:21). In this new dispensation, there are no boundary maps of segregation. It is a new household of mutual concern where those who are saved have the responsibility to save and serve others (Lk 10:5-12). It is also a new family where people are invited to share its benefits with each other; not on the basis of friendship, but motivated by love and concern for one another (Lk 5:1-11, 27-28; 6:13-16; see also Lk 14:12-14, 15-24).<sup>208</sup>

#### **7.2.2.2 Dyadic personality**

Mbiti (1990:106) expresses the sense of solidarity and the sacredness of the human community in Africa in terms of “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am”. In the same vein, Appiah-Kubi (1997:66) remarks that in Africa, “a man is truly a man in community with others”. Pobee (1992: 66), on his part, declares that “to be is to belong and live in a kinship group”. These expressions confirm the fact that individual life in Africa is meaningful only when it is shared, because a “member of the tribe, clan, the family, knows that he does not live to himself, but within the community” (Stinton 2006:144; Mulago 1969:139). In other words, individuals do not exist nor live in isolation. They exist as corporate bodies and owe their existence to one another. The

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<sup>207</sup> “Come-no-gos” is a derogatory slogan in Cameroon, which refers to “settlers”, who are not members of a particular kinship. Such members are treated with suspicion and contempt.

<sup>208</sup> Through the call of the disciples, Jesus sets an example of a new homogeneous community that is formed from a heterogeneous kinship combination.

community serves as a mirror to each individual and at the same time offers assistance whenever and wherever necessary (Gehnam 2000:51).

In Africa, dyadic relationship is defined in terms of identity and kinship. Individuals are perpetually recognised as being in a communal relationship with their kin members. It is therefore believed that death does not sever the bond between the living and the dead. That is why the dead are called “living dead” because they remain revered. Death ceremonies in this case are a means to renew the link between the living and the dead and also serve as a sign of solidarity among the living. The physical absence of the dead simply means that they are on a journey. In the case where the family of the deceased does not desire their return, certain rites are performed to this effect (Dickson 1997:80).

African communal life also goes beyond kinship structures in order to include other relations such as friends and even the environment. Generally speaking, life in Africa is that of dependency, expressed vertically through fellowship with the living, the dead and the yet to be born and horizontally through fellowship with kinship and other neighbours, including the environment (Mbiti 1994:36). People and relationships in Africa are much more important than any other thing because people depend on the community as a form of security.

In the African context, children do not only belong to their family of birth, but also to the community at large. The fact that Jesus’ birth was propagated and celebrated even by shepherds in the field (Lk 2:15-20) is not strange to an African. What may sound strange is his rejection in Nazareth by his peers. In principle, they were supposed to project and encourage Jesus in his ministry as “a son of the soil”. The fact that Jesus also went about doing works of charity (healing, teaching and preaching) is seen by the African as honourable, because it is the responsibility of children to be a blessing to their community and to outsiders. What remains a paradox for the African is that, in spite of his benevolent services, he suffered from the rejection and humiliation of the Jewish elite (and the Jewish peasantry) and was finally killed as a criminal. It is a paradox that constitutes one of the difficulties in explaining Jesus’ identity within the African context. Fortunately, his resurrection after three days offers a clue to this problem. Besides, Jesus’ attitude also adds meaning to the African notion of a dyadic community. His death and resurrection meant that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be

preached to all nations (Lk 24:47). In Jesus therefore, the world has become a dyadic community of love and compassionate individuals, who do not live for themselves, but who live for the sake of one another.

### 7.2.2.3 Patronage and clientism

The relationship of patronage and clientism is exercised at several levels of the African society. African communities live in a sort of feudal system of land tenure controlled by local chiefs and some rich elite who own vast pieces of land. Access to this land for the purpose of exploitation is either dependent on the payment of some tribute or on the basis of patron-client relationship. Conditioned by the situation of misery, most families are obliged to subscribe to the latter option for the purpose of subsistence. The second level of patron-client relationship coincides with the advent of slavery and slave trade. In the later part of the nineteenth century there was a surge of interest in Africa among Europeans and Americans, caused by the industrialisation and urbanisation in Europe, Britain, and France, and later in America. This was known as the period of “the scramble for Africa” (Hyden 2006:14), which went along with oppression and dehumanisation acts of slave trade. During this period strong and energetic men were used in European and American plantations as clients to their respective European and American masters. In like manner, traditional leaders either used war captives from neighbouring tribes or their proper indigenes as clients in their palaces where they served as clients. The third form of patronage and clientism relates to the African sense of solidarity and community life. This form could be termed as “patronage in solidarity”. It is a practice where people offer mutual assistance to each other. This is recurrent during periods of harvesting, clearing, funerals and other activities such as monetary transactions called “njangi”.<sup>209</sup> It is patronage and clientism characterised by acts of charity, generosity, mutual concern and benevolent services to each other. This practice enhances the life of individuals, as well as the reputation of the whole community. This is identical with Jesus’ call for generalised reciprocity (Lk 14:12-14).

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<sup>209</sup> “Njangi” is a form of financial mutual assistance where friends contribute an equal amount of money at specific intervals. At each sitting the amount raised is given to members in their turns, without interest. In the short-term this mutual assistance enables people to easily get access to what they might not have been able to get, if they had depended on their personal resources. The only binding rule in such gatherings is the faithfulness of each member to contribute to all other members, right to the end. This method of mutual assistance has fostered economic development and social cohesion in most regions of Cameroon

Two new forms of patronage and clientism have emerged in Africa after the independence of African states. Rich and influential elite in public and private firms have become very instrumental in the developmental process of their localities by simply becoming benefactors to these communities. They sponsor important projects such as schools, health and road infrastructure and provide their respective communities with other social amenities of great importance. In some cases, individuals also opt to build churches for their communities. The natives play the role of clients by offering gratitude and praises of goodwill to the elite in their respective professions. In order to alleviate the situation of misery and poverty within their respective communities, many African nations play the role of patrons as they provide social services such as housing and other aspects of service delivery to the population. They also offer financial support to the socially impaired persons. Their attitude *vis-à-vis* their communities does not deter most of them from still serving as clients to their former colonial masters and other world economic giants, and at times, for personal gain and interest.

Apart from the third form of patronage and clientism in Africa and to an extent, the fourth form, all the other practices serve individuals rather than the community. Whatever the case, the human practice of patron-client relationship in Africa is that of exploitation and dependency. In Luke's gospel, Jesus offers himself as God's broker, who empowers all individuals to become unconditional brokers (patrons and clients) to each other. In the story of the Good Samaritan, he challenges the attitude of the lawyer (Lk 10:25-37). During the Last Supper, he offers the real meaning of patronage; patronage in mutual service (Lk 22:14-23; see also Lk 22:27). His self-giving ministry is an example of sacerdotal service that is expected from members of his new household (Lk 22:22; 24:26). His relationship of tolerance, perseverance and forgiveness towards the disciples is an indication that he reforms all traditional and cultural practices and places community interest at the centre of his mission.

### **7.2.3 Social dynamics of African societies**

For the sake of brevity the description of the social dynamics of African societies will essentially be reduced to definitions of the basic concepts of



respect and integrity, African moral values and the effect of ethnicity and cultural diversity on African development.

### **7.2.3.1 Respect and integrity**

In comparative terms, respect and integrity is to Africa as honour and shame is to first-century Mediterranean society.<sup>210</sup> Respect and integrity form the basis of African identity. Hierarchy and respect are based on age (seniority), titles and the social status of an individual. Elderly people and people of high social status are considered as points of reference in the society. Since the respect accorded to an individual constitutes one's integrity, the values of respect and integrity go hand-in-hand. Adults are due respect from juniors because they are considered to have a higher status. While adults have the duty of protection and providence, younger ones have the duty to respect, care and obey the elderly and to remain humble in their presence. They are expected to tell the truth in all circumstances. Respect for the elderly in Africa is the equivalent of respect for the educated in the West and North America (O'Donovan 2000:21).

Titles in the African context are either ascribed or acquired. Ascribed titles are inherited from dignified families and title holders, while acquired titles are awarded through meritorious services.<sup>211</sup> For instance, good deeds earn its benefactors a title which elevates their status and dignity above ordinary community members. In effect, Africans attach a lot of importance to titles and work relentlessly for them. They feel more dignified when they are addressed by such titles. They are an important value, because they bring along social recognition, honour and respect and dignity.

In the African context Jesus would be a title holder because of his benevolent services. Ironically, in Luke's gospel, he refused to be addressed

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<sup>210</sup> This assertion does not imply that these values are absent in either contexts. The difference is to be found at the level of the importance that African people attach to "respect and integrity" as a socio-cultural value and that which the Mediterranean society attached to honour and shame as core values of their context.

<sup>211</sup> Titles are so important in Cameroon. As such, many people decide to become benefactors in carrying out developmental projects within their communities so as to earn traditional titles as recompense. These titles are usually accompanied with special attire that confers authority and power on the recipients. In the Nweh-tradition in the South West region of Cameroon, royal titles such as "Mbe", "Nkem", Nkwetta and "Mafua" are prominent. One of such examples is the name "Mbe-ngu".

by any of these titles such as 'Lord' (Lk 5:8; 9:54; 11:1); 'Master' (Lk 8:24; 9:33, 49) or 'Son of David' (Lk 18:38, 39) because he considered them as misleading. Likewise, he did not earn respect from the religious leaders of Luke's gospel, who instead despised him and challenged his activities (Lk 20:1-3). Curiously, his Nazarene peers did not even recognise the dual honourship that had been bestowed on him at baptism (Lk 3:21-23). Even though the disciples sometimes showed signs of honour, they disrespected him by discussing issues relating to his eventual successorship in his presence (Lk 9:46; 22:24). Jesus' reaction testifies his disapproval of their attitude as a sign of arrogance and disrespect (Lk 9:48; 22:25-27). Conversely, Jesus did not show respect to the Jewish elite, who were the official custodians of the Jewish customs in the traditional way of compliance, acceptance and complicity. Also, he refused to show blind respect towards the Roman elite as society would have recommended. He challenged beliefs and practices that were in dissonance with his goal; such as exploitation, oppression and the excessive love of money (Lk 12:1; 16:14; 19:45-48; 20:20-26, 46-47).

From a hermeneutical point of view, Jesus' stance does not disagree with the African value of respect for the elderly nor does he despise the recognition of social status and titles. Instead, through his teachings and his attitude, he reforms the African notion of respect and titleship. Henceforth, respect as a value is useful, but not in terms of what society defines. Rather it is observed in accordance with God's purpose for the world; his kingdom principles of mutual love and compassion and the respect of human dignity. On the other hand, by avoiding to be identified with the messiahship title and other human titles, Jesus equally defined the understanding of titles in a new way. The effectiveness and the importance of titles lie in their usefulness for the service of mankind, and not for self-aggrandisement. Relevant titles are those that are used to bring people together, rather than exploit and scare them. In this sense, Jesus' approach to identification challenges the African use of titles and the values of respect and integrity.

### 7.2.3.2 Moral values

The African society puts great emphasis on strong ethical living, calling on individuals to be self-disciplined. People are expected to be self-conscious of their attitude in their daily practice and living; by such an attitude they contribute in maintaining the cohesion and identity of their communities. Consequently, life is an on-going struggle to be and remain a good citizen and thus become an example to others. Moral values are therefore concepts that safeguard African community life and maintain its social identity intact. These values mostly deal with relationships. Concretely, moral values in Africa are those that deal with issues of justice, mutual assistance, truth, decency, respect for the elderly, love, a sense of holiness, compassion, right and wrong, good and bad, faithfulness in keeping to agreements, friendship, honesty, self-control, generosity; protecting the poor, and the avoidance of stealing (Mbiti 1996:12). These are qualities that refer to “good character” because they contribute to societal happiness.<sup>212</sup> It is believed that these values reflect the nature of God and his expectations of human beings. For this reason, every individual is obliged to respect them; if not, God will react negatively.

As moral values, they go beyond the clan and ethnic consideration and become applicable to every African citizen. They serve the same purpose as the moral prescriptions in the Torah because they deal with life and relationship within the society at large. They are like boundary marks that qualify and define an individual’s attitude as a dignified member of the African community. As such, life becomes a perpetual challenge towards perfection. The punishment administered to defaulters of these values varies according to tribes. In some cases innocent people are sometimes victimised by their enemies and accused of crimes they did not commit. This has often caused families and tribes to retaliate and nurse conflicts. To an extent, Africans have lived in respect of these values. Unfortunately, things have changed drastically because of external (e.g., civilisation and democracy) and internal factors (e.g., imitation and competition). Notwithstanding, Luke’s Jesus is the

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<sup>212</sup> In the African society human beings are not inherently considered as evil in essence. Instead, it is what they do that is qualified as “good” or “evil”. They are simple instruments through which “good” and “evil” are perceived. People are therefore qualified evil or good, in terms of what they do, and not the reverse.

Christ who upholds and encourages a society of ethical living. It would therefore be an easier task, if the question of Jesus' identity in the African context were to be approached from the perspective of African moral values.<sup>213</sup>

### **7.2.3.3 Ethnicity and cultural diversity<sup>214</sup>**

Before the advent of colonisation, African societies already lived in clusters distinct from each other by the various languages that they spoke. At a later age, colonialism became instrumental in fostering and strengthening ethnic composition through the colonial policy of divide-and-rule. This era marks the beginning of ethnicity and its consequences, when ethno-cultural diversity became part of the continent's character (Ike 2001:285). Out of a search for security and insurance, ethnicity was the obvious basis for collective action (Collier 2009:52). As a consequence, an average child in Africa is socialised in ethnic division from birth (Mompoti & Prinsen 2000:626). Rather than foster the development of Africa, this rich variety in terms of ethnic groups and cultures instead became a breeding ground for hatred, xenophobia and conflict. People thought of themselves first as members of ethnic groups before thinking about the welfare of their nation (Obeng 1999:15; Collier 2009:51). As a riposte to this situation of misery imposed by history (colonisation, apartheid and exploitation), and as a result of their skilful arts in hunting, most African societies simply developed an attitude of war and violence. In this vein, Africa could be characterised as an agonistic society, in the light of first-century Palestine.

Ethnicity and violence (as synonyms) have thus become a threat to national and continental unity in Africa. Osaghae (2005:84) has rightly observed that "of all the claims that rival those of the state – to autonomy, self-determination, and loyalty of citizens – none, it can be argued, threatens

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<sup>213</sup> This approach proved successful in Athens with Paul (Ac 17:22-34). Paul simply moved from the "known to the unknown" by validating and reshaping the worship system in Athens.

<sup>214</sup> Briefly defined, ethnicity as a social phenomenon which is concerned with negative interaction between ethnic groups develops when these groups compete for rights, privileges, and available resources. It is characterised by strong feelings of pride, self-esteem and exclusion. It manifests itself through cultural stereotyping, prejudice and socio-economic and political discrimination (Mompoti & Prinsen 2000:626). In Africa ethnicity is a strong source of conflict.

its existence as much as those made by ethnic groups” (Osaghae 2005:84). Sometimes the conflicts and their ethnic representations are further exacerbated by spilt over from neighbouring countries where ethnic groups have their tentacles. This is the example of Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Vlassenroot 2000:60). At other times, these conflicts are also encouraged by the involvement of external factors such as former colonial powers, or foreign companies that transcend ethnic and country boundaries and interfere, at times quite blatantly, in favour of one group against another.

The intricacies caused by ethnic groupings in Africa have made ethnic conflicts a difficult task to manage because they have long term consequences. For instance, the situation of political instability in Africa is partly due to the problems posed by ethnicity. Bloodshed and recurrent retaliations from neighbouring tribes continue to be a threat to peace. In Africa, democracy is wrongly understood to mean exclusively multiparty politics. Hence, most political parties are formed on the basis of ethnicity; a situation which incidentally increases the risk of *coups d'état*. The fact that power rests in the hands of one group for too long at the expense of the other also becomes a source of strife and unhappiness.

Indeed, it was within a similar context of ethnicity in Palestine that Jesus ministered. Just as he reacted in the case of first-century Palestine, Jesus by implication condemns any society that is built on ethnic principles. His approach of de-categorisation and his application of the theory of “similarity-attraction” are relevant and apt for Africa, as solutions to conflicts caused as a result of ethnicity. Jesus is therefore the Christ who destroys boundaries of exclusion imposed by all forms of ethnicity, and builds a new community of mutual and compassionate love. Through his politics of inclusion, he builds an ethnic free society, where South Africans and Cameroonians do not need to address each other as brother/sister only when they are in Europe. It is a society of those who hear God’s word and do it, irrespective of their tribe, nation or colour of the skin.

## **7.2.4 Cultural values of African societies**

Africa is a rich continent in terms of cultural values, as mentioned above. For the sake of precision and relevance, only two of these values, namely rituals and ceremonies, as well as the notion of “evil” and “bad” people, will be examined.

### **7.2.4.1 Rituals and ceremonies**

A ritual in the African context is a set form of carrying out a religious action, with the aim of communicating a message of religious significance to the public (Mbiti 1996:131). In Africa, there are a variety of rituals, depending on the circumstances. For instance, individuals perform rituals for the purpose of the transformation of status (e.g., birth rite, marriage, coronation and enthronement) and acceptance within the community (Appiah-Kubi 1997:66). For the community, they take the form of ceremonies and are thus considered as an expression of gratitude (e.g., good harvest), a request (e.g., fertility) and a sign of protection against calamities such as wars and raids. Rituals and ceremonies are avenues for the African people to celebrate life, as a corporate group. Just like it was the case in the first-century Mediterranean context (see § 6.2.5.2), rituals and ceremonies in Africa have a purely religious connotation. They serve the purpose of group cohesion, strengthen its identity and security and ensure continuity between generations. They are carried out only within specific families, clans or tribes, because each African community has its regulations and procedures governing ceremonies and rituals. In whatever community, these are sealed by meals which occupy a central place because they symbolise fellowship with both the living and the dead.

In view of the above description, neither Jesus’ attitude towards rituals and ceremonies, nor that of the scribes and the Pharisees in Luke’s gospel is a surprise to the African people. Even though meals are shared during these events as a symbol of solidarity, such solidarity is not transferable to neighbouring communities. Each family, clan or tribe has its ritual priests (male or female), who perform on specific days prescribed by that community. In other words, rituals and ceremonies are still avenues of segregation and exclusion in Africa. Jesus disagrees and condemns such attitude of



exclusivism, thereby transforming the meaning of rituals and ceremonies (see § 6.2.5.2).

#### 7.2.4.2 “Evil” people and “good” people

The concepts of “evil” and “good” people in the African context are more or less the equivalent of the terms “clean” and “unclean” in first-century Mediterranean context. Evil people are those who are considered as the enemies of the society and are consequently not supposed to mingle with its members. Good people on the contrary may be those who live a worthy life. They live in respect of moral ethics prescribed by the society and are therefore accepted as worthy community members.

Africans are always animated by the quest to preserve life and have control over all that which can impede on community solidarity. In this wise, the term “enemies of the society” refers to those who, by their nature or attitude, are liable to destroy group cohesion.<sup>215</sup> They are a category of people who cause fear, misfortune, suffering and panic in the society. To a larger extent, they cause death, which for Mbiti (1999:165) is a devastating incident in Africa, in spite of the advent of Christianity. As enemies, they are considered as bearers of evil, because according to most African belief systems, God is not the origin of evil (Mbiti 1990:199). Those who constitute this category are adulterers, robbers, liars, thieves, murderers, rapists and those accused of disrespect, disobedience, sorcery, magic and witchcraft. People infected with contagious diseases such as HIV/AIDS are considered evil; they suffer from stigmatisation in the likeness of lepers. It is also the case with outsiders to a specific clan or tribe. These two classes of people are also considered in the same category as evil people.

Evil persons are polluted and thus considered as deviants. Such persons are also liable to pollute the rest of society, if sufficient care is not taken. As a dyadic community, the pollution of an individual implies that of the family, the clan and the tribe. In this case, the family or clan becomes labelled and identified with the crime committed. In order to purge itself of “corruption” and maintain its sacredness, enemies of the society who have been identified

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<sup>215</sup> Apart from human enemies, there also exist natural enemies such as drought, earthquakes, famines, epidemics, illnesses, devastating insects, floods and landslides.

in the case of witchcraft and sorcery are simply ostracised from the community and cursed. When the crime is judged grievous (e.g., murder and robbery), its culprits are simply killed. This is a measure to ensure the survival of the rest of the clan. Victims of this social class are ostracised and cursed or killed because the crime committed is considered as a means to destroy the sacrosanct nature of community life. Any breach of social order is evil, sacrilegious and unacceptable. For the situation of a mild crime such as theft, disrespect and disobedience, the victim is caused to pay a penalty. Either ostracised or caused to pay a fine, the rehabilitation and integration of such persons passes through the ritual of purification. It is assumed that during this rite the offence and the victim are cleansed by a traditional priest. These rituals vary from one community to another.

Social order and peace are looked upon as sacred components of life. Consequently, wherever social order is jeopardised, the African response is aggressive and immediate, with the intention to safeguard the serenity of community living. Unfortunately, evil and good are subjective values because something is evil and punishable only in accordance with the society's prescription. Evil persons are those who have been caught in the very act; if not, they remain free citizens in the likeness of good people. In a nutshell, the description of someone as "evil" or "bad" is a human appreciation and a cultural means of drawing boundaries between "insiders" and "outsiders". Jesus' approach to cultural maps of division is uncompromising. The importance attached to the respect of African cultural maps of identification make the custodians of the African culture hypocrites in the likeness of the Pharisees. They demand respect of moral values, but afflict a judgmental attitude towards others. In this context, Jesus' teachings on repentance and forgiveness become necessary.

### **7.2.5 Conclusion**

From the analyses above it stands clear that there is a correlation between socio-cultural values of the African context and those of the Jewish context. Hence, conclusions from the etic reading applied to the socio-cultural context of the Jews in § 6.2 remain relevant and adequate for the African context. For instance, Jesus recognises the African notion of kinship because he was born

within the context of a family and grew up with his followers as members of the new extended (fictive) family. However, just as he did within the context of Luke's gospel, he reforms kinship and a dyadic community in Africa and defines these concepts in terms of those who effectively "hear the word of God and do it" (Lk 8:21; 10:37). It is a definition of a new community of life lived in relationship with one another. His application of kinship goes beyond ethnicity and religious consideration to include all Africans, who are also considered as sons and daughters of Abraham (cf. Lk 13:16; 19:9). His success in defiling the *status quo* through his Sabbath activities (6:1-5, 6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6); his teachings on repentance and the forgiveness of sins (Lk 15:1-7, 8-10, 11-32; see also Lk 5:23; 7:48); his reforming, transforming and challenging rhetorical responses (Lk 6:3-5, 9; 13:14-16; 14:5; 20:4; 20:21; 22:67b-69; 23:3b) and his struggle to destroy cultural maps of division and hatred, influenced by the myth of social control, are testimonies of his willingness to expand his mission of freedom to all nations, including Africa (cf. Lk 24:47).

As a (fictive) family person, Jesus shares in Africa's community problems as a corporate member; and not as a "stranger". As an insider, he remains conscious of the realities of human context. However, he corrects, reforms and complements the traditional conception of community life in Africa. Solidarity concerns are no longer limited to family, clan and tribe; they must be extended to include the whole human race. A reinterpretation of the meaning of rituals and ceremonies in the African context attest that the confirmation of Jesus' dual honourship (identity) at his baptism (Lk 3:21-23), identifies him with the rest of humanity. His baptism thus became a ceremony of solidarity that identified him with the Jewish community and the universal community of God's people. Through his baptism, he began a new community of like-minded people, who are united by the baptismal water of the forgiveness of sins. Tribalism and ethnicity are therefore exposed as enemies of development because they breed hatred, prejudice and ethnocentrism. In summary, Jesus would definitely face the same opposition that he faced with the Roman authorities and his Jewish counterparts, if he was born in Africa. In this light, Luke's gospel remains relevant and adequate for the African society.

## **7.3 THE SOCIO-POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS AND ECONOMIC REALITIES OF THE AFRICAN CONTEXT**

### **7.3.1 Introduction**

In comparative terms, it has been concluded from a socio-cultural perspective that Jesus would face the same problems of conflict and identity if he were to exercise his leadership within the context of the socio-cultural values of Africa. With this remark, it becomes necessary once more, to study the perennial problems of the African context, in order to see if this conclusion remains applicable. There is no doubt that the realities of the context of Luke's gospel conditioned the nature of the conflicts that Jesus faced as a result of his identity, as well as the various leadership approaches that he adopted. In the same way, the realities of the African context surely have an impact on the African search for a response to the question of Jesus' identity. They equally have a bearing on the approach Jesus would use, in order to carry out a universal liberation that constituted part of his mission and ministry.

Since reading the Bible is a trans-cultural activity, it is always an ordeal task of trying to apply the findings of one context into another context, because of the risk of ethnocentrism and/or anachronism. Fortunately, this worry has been taken care of in the etic reading, where models have been applied in the reading and understanding of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke's gospel. It is in this light that the understanding of the socio-political, religious and economic realities of Africa is a prerequisite for the application of the etic reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke's gospel into its context. The difficulty in reading and applying the gospel in the African context is further compounded by the fact that life in Africa has so far been influenced by two worlds: a typical African worldview and a "foreign" worldview imposed as the result of colonisation. For this reason, the realities of the African context will be examined in all its spheres; social, political, religious and economic. These are the realities that affect the gospel message and life in Africa, in its entirety. Mindful of the impossibility to discuss the realities of the African context in the space available, the issues that will be mentioned are those that are really relevant to this study!

### 7.3.2 The social realities

The social problems of the African context will be summarised in four main areas, namely exploitation, tribal wars, moral decadence and poverty. These are some of the most important areas which generate the problems that make social life in Africa unbearable. Although Africa suffers exploitation from the outside world, emphasis will be laid on exploitation which comes from within; that is, exploitation meted by some Africans on others. Social life in the African continent is already so deplorable that instead of looking for possible solutions to liberate its inhabitants from this impasse, a few “powerful” elite still use the present context in order to exploit and render fellow Africans more vulnerable. An example of this is traditional rulers, known as “Chiefs” or “Fons”, who serve as the custodians of the society. They serve as intermediaries between the administration and their various localities. In other words, they are a political arm of the administration. Instead of working for the interest of the people, they sometimes connive with government authorities in order to exploit their subjects. This is done through oppressive and exploitative policies which favour them and give assurance to their offices. Their success is also due to the fact that in their capacity as “elders”, they command respect and obedience from the population. The hierarchical nature of African societies favours such attitude, where exploitation is found at all levels of the society with elders demanding respect and obedience from the young. In most cases, this becomes a relationship of exploitation imbued with anger, tension, agitation and conflict.

The ethnic and cultural diversity of Africa has caused a growing number of refugees as a result of tribal confrontations between tribes that sometimes cut across nations. The balkanisation of Africa went along with the institution of arbitrary geographical boundaries which are still contested in some areas of Africa.<sup>216</sup> An example is the boundary negotiations (at the time) between

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<sup>216</sup> In this new arrangement, some people without a common historical experience or linguistic affinity were forced by such artificial boundaries to become united. Others who shared the same heritage were instead caused to separate (Winchester 1995:347). It is a situation which constituted a breeding ground for further and elastic conflicts within African states as a result of political discontentment.

Nigeria and Cameroon as to who owned the Bakassi Peninsular.<sup>217</sup> The African attachment to the notion of kinship has also created a climate of suspicion between in-group members and out-group members. Hence, within nations, tribes clash with each other as a struggle for the maintenance of social identity and social pride. For example, there is the case with the Yoruba and the Igbos in Nigeria; the Hutu and the Tutsi or the Bantus and the Nilotes in Rwanda and Burundi; the Bafumbira and the Banyarwanda in Uganda; and the Bali and the Bawock, as well as the Bafanji and the Balikumbat in Cameroon.<sup>218</sup> These conflicts are quite often fanned by unscrupulous leaders for selfish aims (Obeng 1999:15; Gorus 2000:105). Such power strife has generated enmity between nations, provoked bloodshed, homelessness and sexual abuse that have traumatised many families. Ethnocentrism on its part has thus become an important factor in determining employment patterns and the distribution of developmental projects. In fact, tribal wars are one of the main sources of insecurity and political instability in Africa for which liberation is yearned.

Today, African societies seem to suffer from a problem of moral crisis championed by mismanagement, embezzlement, the misappropriation of public funds and worst of all, the eternal evil of bribery and corruption. These are vices that have eaten deep into the very fabrics of African societies because they have affected every department and almost every individual, be it religious or secular (Obeng 1999:16; O'Donovan 2000:168). Obeng (1999:16) even mentions the disgusting attitude of mortuary attendants who request bribe in order to secure a place for a corpse, pending burial. Community property and communal interest in Africa are paradoxically losing their essence in favour of private property and selfish interest. As a consequence of such lost of moral values some corrupt and insensible political leaders even connive with foreign powers in order to devastate and drain African resources, as well as transform African soil into a dumping place of nuclear waste!

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<sup>217</sup> It is only of recent that the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon over Bakassi has been resolved. Yet several of these kinds of problems still exist among many African states.

<sup>218</sup> For more on ethnic conflicts and their consequences on Africa, see Goyvaerts (2000). He has edited a series of essays written by many scholars.



Most African societies have further been crippled by poverty, which has become a real threat to life. At the origin of massive accrued poverty are rich patrons, who do not cease to use their power and their position to impoverish feeble peasants. Drawing inspiration from the G8 research group report, Shu (2004:7) remarked five years ago that, Africa was the only continent that had not made considerable efforts in eradicating poverty in the past 25 years. This situation of poverty has also been aggravated by that of starvation, sicknesses and deaths. Today, the death rate in Africa is on a constant rise because of the peasants' inability to afford for the facilities that can enable them to withstand threats caused by epidemics and other illnesses such as malaria and HIV/AIDS. In fact, the situation has been rendered worse by the fact that Africa has often been identified with HIV/AIDS. Poverty has also encouraged the rise in crime wave, because those who are hungry and unemployed are liable to become thieves. In view of the present trend of events, it is obvious that if solutions to the problems of poverty and unemployment are not quickly sought, then crime wave, suffering and poor health will escalate in an alarming rate in a few years to come (O'Donovan 2000:143).

It is within the context of such misery, despair and want, coupled with the passive and complaisant attitude of the powers-that-be, that Jesus' attack on the Pharisees and the scribes is pertinent. African elite need to understand that for Jesus, service to humanity is the core drive for leadership. Still within this context Jesus' words that "those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (Lk 5:31) are relevant. They challenge the *status quo* and appeal to the African suffering masses.

### **7.3.3 The political realities**

The political situation of Africa is contained in the description of its leaders (big man) in the following remarks by Harden:

A big Man who looks like this: His face is on the money. His photograph hangs in every office (and every street) in his realm.... He names streets, football stadiums, hospitals and universities after himself (and his wife). He insists on being called doctor or ... "the big elephant" (or "lion man") or... "the wise old man" or "the national miracle". His every pronouncement is reported on the front page (and

retorted by his supporters as a means to show loyalty and to safeguard their positions). He sleeps with the wives and daughters of powerful men in his government.... He scapegoats minorities to shore up support. He rigs elections. He emasculates the courts. He cows the press. He stifles academia. He goes to church.... He blesses his home region with highways, schools, hospitals, housing, projects, irrigation schemes and a Presidential mansion.... His enemies (and political rivals) are detained or exiled, humiliated or bankrupted, tortured or killed. He uses the resources of the state to feed a cult of personality that defines him as incorruptible, (immune), all knowing... and kind of children. His cult equates his personal well-being with the well-being of the state.

(Harden, in O'Donovan 2000:169; my emphasis in brackets)

These remarks portray a bleak picture of the political situation of Africa, headed by corrupt, fearless, proud, selfish and tribalistic leaders, who rule with impunity and the lack of Christian love and concern.<sup>219</sup> For the sake of power and authority, they rig elections and indulge in occult practices in order to protect their offices. Prior to election sessions, they formulate slogans and make empty and false promises of prosperity that pamper the electorate and sometimes alienate the opposition (Chepkwony 1999:245). The aftermath of elections is a period that is most dreaded in Africa because it goes with violence and protests, resulting in conflicts and killing. In this context, the legitimization of power is more of a farce than a matter of credibility. For the sake of security and assurance, the incumbent generally put their political opponents in jail for an indefinite period of time and/or quite often, they are simply eliminated physically.

At the bottom line of such a desperate political picture lie two fundamental issues. The first is centred on the question of how people become leaders in Africa; the normal democratic way of choosing and legitimating leadership by way of election having proven to be a failure. The second revolves around the wrong definition of leadership to mean authority, power, self-enrichment and self-aggrandisement. Once in leadership, most people think of what they can derive from their position, rather than what they

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<sup>219</sup> Collier (2009:2) has ironically observed from empirical knowledge that in mature democracies in the West and America, political leaders put on smiling faces. Conversely, in Africa where democracy is a farce, official portraits of political leaders stare down on every corner of the country with "a menacing grimace". Each of these effigies speaks on its own; they indicate the leaders' state of mind as to whether they intend to serve or they intend to be served.

can give in, by way of service. Out of fear, those who become leaders surround themselves with ethnic relations and other stooges who are willing and ready to serve their interest. These two issues are even compounded by the advent of democracy and its adverse effect on African societies. In the early 1990s, democracy was erroneously presented as a key to the solution to African problems (Chepkwony 1999:243). Unfortunately, this came with its consequences fostered by multiparty politics and its associates such as dictatorship, anarchy and enmity.<sup>220</sup> In the name of democracy, public demonstration, boycotts, strikes and even elections have turned African societies into conflict zones between the forces of law and order and the demonstrators.

Most African countries ensured their political independence as early as 1960. Regrettably, some leaders still owe allegiance to their former colonial masters as they continue to impose inadequate policies from “outside”. The latter are sometimes at the origin of the political instability in Africa, because their opinion is still important when it comes to making the choice of who to be the head of state. Although African states have become independent, they still depend much on foreign powers to dictate the pace of political activities within the nations. In short, it will not be an exaggeration to affirm that to an extent, Africa is still politically dependent. It is in such a stalemate that Africa, just as it was the case with first-century Palestine, looks forward to a day of total liberation and effective independence when Africa would be able to stand on its own feet. In this respect, Jesus’ credentials as the Messiah become very relevant for the African people. His teaching and his idea about leadership remain a threat to African leaders (see § 6.4.3.2 above).

#### **7.3.4 The religious realities**

The religious situation of African societies can be located in the missionary approach of Christianity in the early days. Parratt is certainly right that “Western missionary Christianity had some serious shortcomings. While Christianity itself was deeply important, it was felt that the form in which it had

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<sup>220</sup> Multiparty politics in Africa is still a farce because every effort is still done by political leaders to extinguish their opponents. In this vein, Chepkwony (1999:244) is right to observe that democracy in Africa is full of contradictions (Collier 2009:11).

been presented had failed to penetrate the heart of African personality” (Parratt 1997:3). The reality of this thought can be expressed at three levels. Firstly, Africans were trained to accept that to adopt the Western way of life was an outward manifestation of Christian conversion (Obeng 1999:23). In this case, Christianity was a matter of cultural conversion, rather than that of Christian or religious conversion (Kirby 1994:69). Hence, there was a cultural degradation, which made the indigenes to feel neither as Africans nor as Europeans or as North Americans. This situation is partly the cause of some religious resurgence in many African countries today, where the search for an authentic Christianity has become prominent. Kirby (1994:57) strongly upholds that the defections in the mission founded churches are the cause of an increase in the number of African independent churches. Their eagerness is the search for cultural and Christian authenticity.

Secondly, there is an inadequacy in the area of leadership training where most African theologians receive training in the West and the USA and then return to Africa for its implementation where the context of training has changed. Consequently, in spite of their teachings about Jesus, the church in Africa still seems to hardly meet the needs of the African converts. Thirdly, there is no doubt that messianic expectations were essentially Jewish in nature. The question now is to know how the missionaries interpreted Jesus as the Christ who could solve problems posed as a result of African realities. If at the time of Jesus his contemporaries found it difficult to identify him with the Christ, how much more would it be today, when he is expected to be interpreted in a different context, and in concrete terms? All of these problems cited above have pushed most Africans to sit on two seats of syncretism.<sup>221</sup>

It is just obvious that “whenever the church grows so rapidly that the converts are not properly taught the Scripture, and the meaning of Jesus and

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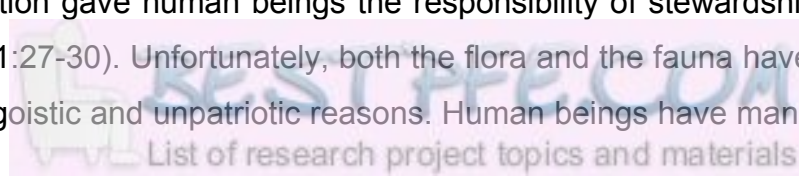
<sup>221</sup> Syncretism is a type of compromise wherein two incompatible and irreconcilable aspects from one culture or religion are incorporated into another religion without scrutiny. In this light, Gehman (2000:272-273) defines two types of syncretism: deliberate syncretism and spontaneous syncretism. From the context of the church, he defines deliberate syncretism as that coming from the leadership of the church in their conscious struggle to accommodate the gospel to other religious practices and cultures. As for spontaneous syncretism, this concerns the ordinary Christians who “mix things which do not mix”, because they seem frustrated. An example is that of Christians who attend church service in the day, and when trouble strikes, they secretly move to the traditionalists. It is curious to note that ordinary Christians are not the only ones who go to the traditionalists by night; some leaders have also done same, especially when they feel that their “power” and/or leadership role is threatened.

its effects on the life on the converts, there is bound to be a relapse into syncretism” (Gehman 2000:281). This is a reflection of the present African situation, where most people who believe in Jesus still sneak out by night in order to consult a soothsayer when faced with inexplicable happenings. The situation even seems worse when they prostitute from one church gathering to another throughout the week in search for spiritual satisfaction. While ordinary believers seek for spiritual alternatives, theologians delve into a search of identifying Christ within the context of African realities. Unfortunately, by doing so, they have plunged him into a sort of identity crisis where the models with which he is identified conflict with each other. At the origin of this search is African misery in an age where Jesus does not seem to offer an answer as the Christ. This is the context where Jesus needs to be preached as the universal Christ, who attends to peoples’ crisis and offers adequate responses commensurate to the realities of their daily life.

### **7.3.5 The economic realities**

Patron-client relationships in Africa have created a situation of dependency where poor citizens rely on the rich elite due to the scarcity of land, poverty, the high rate of unemployment and the lack of other social amenities such as health facilities. It becomes more disheartening when the prices of goods produced by these farmers at the local level are determined overseas, without taking into consideration the constraints faced by their producers. On the other hand, foreign nations in their capacity as patrons treat their African clients with impunity. They sometimes provide loans, which at a long run further push these countries into a serious situation of eternal indebtedness. It is a regrettable attitude which causes indebted countries to remain poor and dependent, while donor countries continue to function as dictating patrons.

Recently, Africa has become a continent of raw material for the industrialised nations in Europe, America and Asia (especially China). Hence, deforestation and the abusive exploitation of its mineral resources have left its economy fragile and even less competitive. According to Biblical testimonies, God from creation gave human beings the responsibility of stewardship over creation (Gen 1:27-30). Unfortunately, both the flora and the fauna have been exploited for egoistic and unpatriotic reasons. Human beings have manifested



a careless and exploitative attitude towards the environment, depleting earth's resources that were meant for the good and welfare of human beings (Obeng 1999:10). Other factors that affect African economy are those of pollution, degradation, the deterioration of the ecosystem as the effects of global warming and the destruction of the environment. All these have resulted in the present ecological crisis to which Africa has become a victim. This situation has created another vicious circle in Africa, where poverty having become the source of deforestation, the deterioration of the ecosystem and the effects of global warming on their part are liable to cause more families and nations to become poorer and indebted.

In general terms, Africa is a continent of economic dependency, encouraged by wrong political motivations. The system of taxation is that from which governments derive part of their funds for public projects. Unfortunately, this sector has rather become oppressive mechanism on local traders. The heavy taxes that are levied by these structures rather deter than encourage and foster commercial activities. Luke's Jesus is the Christ who stands against economic exploitation, as well as for the wellbeing of all individuals.

### **7.3.6 Conclusion**

In a nutshell, the realities of African societies seem identical with those of first-century Palestine where peasant Jews suffered under the leadership of the Jewish elite, as well as the oppression of the Roman colonial leadership. As a counter effect, the contact between Africa and the external world has instead strengthened African solidarity in the form of tribalism and ethnocentrism with all their consequences. Rather than helping Africans, exposure to the external world has pushed them to go for the search of the "modern" and the "civilised" at the detriment of the natural life style to which they were accustomed to.<sup>222</sup> This contact has brought more sorrow than happiness, as depicted by Desmond Tutu:

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<sup>222</sup> This is not a discredit to modernism and civilisation. The fact is that, so far, Africans have been groomed to think that what they are and what they have is not yet the best, because the best is found only in North America and in Europe. It is sometimes a wrong approach when a specific lifestyle is imposed on people, rather than encourage them to develop their personal God-given talents.



The worst crime that can be laid at the door of the white man ... is not our economic, social and political exploitation, however reprehensible that might be, no, it is that his policy succeeded in filling most of us with self-disgust and self-hatred.

(Tutu, in Ndung'u 1999:261)

At this juncture, only a true presentation of Jesus' identity as the Christ seems the right solution for African problems. An analysis of the socio-political, religious and economic realities of Africa transmits African's feelings of the messianic expectation in the likeness of that of the Jews. These feelings indicate the urgency for the presentation of Jesus as the expected Messiah, whose activities and impact were not limited to the surrounding of the Mediterranean context. Jesus' identity as the Christ and the way he tackled conflicts by his leadership approach within the socio-political, religious and economic context of first-century Palestine remain active and applicable in all situations, at all times and in all places. The only requisite is that his real identity should be presented, and his teachings should adequately be interpreted and applied as solutions to perennial existential problems of every human society. In other words, it is time for Africans to discover that the solutions to African problems are located in the knowledge of who Jesus is and its concrete application in all spheres of individual lives.

## **7.4 WHO IS THE CHRIST? AFRICAN MODELS FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF JESUS AS THE CHRIST**

### **7.4.1 Introduction**

The question surrounding Jesus' identity is not quite new in African theological reflections. Many attempts have already been made by theologians since the 1960s in order to offer an African response with respect to the question "who is the Christ?" Unfortunately, this debate has so far been so academic that the common believer still finds it difficult to see how Jesus is the Christ who is actively participating with Africans in order to liberate them from social, economic and political alienation that haunts its population and puts the whole continent on its knees.

As a solution to this difficulty, Fochang (2006:1) has proposed a study on African Christology.<sup>223</sup> In his opinion this is an approach that bridges the gap between academic theology and grassroots theology. Whatever the case, the analyses in this thesis are not so much interested in the parody responses from the crowd (Lk 9:19). Rather, they are more interested in Peter's response and the implication of these responses according to Jesus (Lk 9:20b-22). In this vein, Fochang (2006:2) is certainly right that Peter's response to Jesus' question was culturally oriented, within the context where the concept of the messiah was known and understood. At this stage, the difficulty of the African theologian lies at two levels. Firstly, it is a search to interpret and explain Peter's response from the Jewish to the African context. Secondly, it is the issue of retranslating and re-explicating Jesus' implication of his identity and leadership, implied in his response to his disciples, in such a way that Africans find themselves not only as part of the problems to which Jesus faced, but also as part of the solution to the present crisis that plagues the African continent.

Just as the Jewish expectations of a Messiah were contained in their past heritage, African response to the question of Jesus' identity passes obligatorily through a search into the sources of African theological reflections. These reflections have coincidentally been at the origin of the current models used by some African theologians in order to understand and explain the relevance of Jesus as the Christ in the African context. A re-examination of these areas will illuminate this research, in an attempt to offer a sketch, from a New Testament perspective, of an African response to the perennial question of "who is the Christ?" This sketch will be offered through the lens of an African hermeneutical approach.

#### **7.4.2 Sources for African theological reflection**

Mbiti prescribes the following aspects as the pillars or the sources for theological reflection in Africa: the Bible, the Christian heritage, the traditional African heritage and the living experience of the church in Africa (see also

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<sup>223</sup> In this study Christology will be understood to mean issues evolving around the identity of Jesus, what he said and did, and the significance of his person and work for humanity (see Cullmann 1959:1; Keck 1986:362).

Küster 2001:58; Stinton 2006:22).<sup>224</sup> As an important primary witness of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, the Bible remains the basis of any Christian reflection. It is also a source of inspiration for personal perceptions about God, and a reference to what he already accomplished in the life of his people through the activities of Jesus Christ. Besides, it is a reservoir of testimonies of the early believers on how they lived their Christianity, professing Jesus as the Christ and how it affected their lives.

The Christian heritage of Africa is about the theology of the earlier church as it was taught to the African in the era of colonisation and missionary activities. This refers to the manner in which the missionaries understood the early believers in their interpretation of God's intention through Jesus and how they themselves interpreted Biblical texts and applied them to the existential realities of Africa. In another dimension, a reflection on the Christian heritage of Africa concerns African apprehension of the Christian tradition. For example, for both the Jews and the Christians of the early church, the confession that *Jesus is the "Christos"* was very fundamental in their belief system because it constituted the core of salvation history. Although the early believers encountered difficulties in trying to reconcile Jesus' suffering with his messiahship, they were nevertheless convinced that Jesus was the Christ (Longenecker 1970:62). The main issue in Africa has been centred on how this reality can be transmitted within a context that knew little or nothing about Jesus and the Christ.

A study on African traditional heritage is a reflection on the past that Africa had lived and experienced. This concerns its history, its culture and its primal religions. It is a history of misery, polished by slavery and slave trade, apartheid, colonisation, the loss of human and economic potentials and the dilapidation of its natural resources. It is a history of bitterness, pregnant with sentiments of anger, violence and retaliation. From a cultural perspective, Africans are inclined towards traditional values such as titles (see § 7.2.3.1). This attitude has probably motivated the choice of the models used by African theologians in an effort to define Jesus' identity (see § 7.4.3 below). It is

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<sup>224</sup> According to Stinton (2006:23), Mbiti equally opines that further investigations could be gathered from the African Independent Churches. This prescription is backed by the fact that these churches seem to possess "an authentic expression of African Christianity". Whatever the level of authenticity, such investigations need to be done with caution.

therefore very important, from an African perspective, that Jesus was addressed in honorific titles such as “Lord” (Lk 5:8; 9:54; 11:1); “Master” (Lk 8:24; 9:33, 49); ‘son of David” (Lk 18:38, 39) and “the Son of man” (Lk 9:22).

In addition, some basic cultural beliefs and practices still have a strong hold on the African people. This is the case with the respect for the elderly, solidarity and responsibility towards one another, as well as hospitality and sharing. In fact, it is believed that through sharing, one shares with God. Lastly, religion constitutes the richest part of African heritage since it shapes all spheres of its life and activities (Mbiti 1996:10). Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that Africans may be very religious (Mbiti 1990:1), their religion – as opposed to Christianity – is in most cases oral (Bediako 2000:17), and has no historical founder or a sacred history (Parratt 1995:78; Mbiti 1996:16-17).

The living experience of the church in Africa is an important aspect of theological reflection since it contains facts that describe the realities of the African context. These realities are mostly about the contemporary socio-economic and political context of Africa. As a matter of fact, reliance on the African past is a theological assertion, because it enhances the understanding of the foundation on which to build a new theological thought, with respect to African realities. The study of these four pillars must therefore be taken seriously for any relevant theological reflection in Africa. They are not only a source of information for theological reflection in Africa, but also, they guard against ethnocentrism and anachronism.

#### **7.4.3 Some African models for identifying Jesus as the Christ**

Just as some Greek titles such as “Lord” were transferred to Jesus in order to identify his person with his works; African theologians have rightly or wrongly applied some models which have facilitated their understanding of the question of Jesus’ identity. Thus far, models for the identification of Jesus in Africa have either been drawn from inculturation theology or from liberation theology. These are the two main streams that have guided contemporary

studies on African Christology in particular and African theology in general (Nyamity 1994:64; Küster 2001:59; Fochang 2006:3; Stinton 2006:49).<sup>225</sup>

#### 7.4.3.1 Inculturation models

The three inculturation models that are common in African theology each has its own approach with regards to the Bible as point of departure. In the first approach the Bible directly confronts the African realities. The second option is thematic and focuses on the study of particular themes from the perspective of the African cultural worldview. In the third approach a comparison is made between Biblical Christological themes and African traditional and cultural values. The starting point of this approach is Jesus' teaching. In this approach three models are commonly used by African theologians with as point of departure, the perspective of the African worldview of dyadic community.<sup>226</sup> These models are Jesus Christ as ancestor,<sup>227</sup> Jesus Christ as the medicine-man and Jesus Christ as chief.

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<sup>225</sup> Many theologians have criticised this division that was championed by Nyamity. Mugambi (1995:9-10) for example, describes it as being "too sharp", while for Küster (2001:208) it is arbitrary. Küster rather prefers a dialectical process, which is a discussion between the Bible and African worldview. Either plausible or not, these classifications are not mutually exclusive. Rather, their synthesis helps in distinguishing the various contexts that elicit the search for African Christologies as well as the methods employed in their construction. Secondly, they have remained a guide and a springboard for the discussion on African Christological models. Consequently, the debate on the two streams could simply be termed as that of a "false dilemma" (Martey 1993:30). However, a more synthesised approach is recommended for a concrete study on theological investigation in African, especially in the light of contextual theology. One of such approaches would be the use of models as earlier suggested in § 4.4.6 (Stinton 2006:51).

<sup>226</sup> Stinton (2006:146-218) has done an elaborate study on other models such as Jesus Christ as Brother, Mother, Lover, Leader, Chief-diviner and Ancestor spirit.

<sup>227</sup> The fact that Pobee (Pobee, in Fochang 2006:4) considers Jesus as the "Great ancestor" (Küster 2001:63) implies that African ancestors are to be categorised. In this regard, African theologians are not unanimous on where to situate Jesus with reference to the ancestral Christological model. This view is further bolstered by the fact that not all the dead are considered as ancestors in Africa (Stinton 2006:113). Ancestors are sometimes called the "living-dead" (Mbiti 1990:81-89). This means that even though they have died, they are considered alive. This description of dead-living qualifies them to be equated with Jesus in his live protecting role.

#### 7.4.3.1.1 Jesus Christ, the ancestor

To identify Jesus as the African ancestor is to compare him with the ancestral functions of a mediator.<sup>228</sup> In Africa, ancestors are called the source of life and an obligatory route to the Supreme Being (Küster 2001:63). They are present among the living in their role as mediators between God and human beings. The relationship between the African notion of ancestor and that of Jesus is that they both watch over lives in their respective roles as mediator. It is assumed by Africans that just like ancestors; Jesus plays the role of mediator between the living and the dead (Bujo 1992:25-26; Appiah-Kubi 1997:65; Kabasélé, in Stinton 2006:136). It is thus believed that it is this mediating role that makes Jesus the Christ. Consequently, from the African point of view, his messiahship title is equated with that of the African ancestor.

The description of Jesus as mediator draws its inspiration from Biblical sources. In spite of Bujo's (1992:81) idea of referring to Jesus as the proto-ancestor to make the ancestor-model sounds more plausible, the African model of ancestor to understand Jesus remains inappropriate. The aspects of humiliation, suffering, rejection and death and the forgiveness of sins, which make Jesus' messiahship function meaningful, seem absent from the African concept of ancestor. From an African perspective, ancestors are constantly re-enacted and legitimated through rituals. For Jesus, there is no greater legitimation of honour and identity other than the one that he had at his baptism (Lk 3:22); from the crowds and the disciples (Lk 9:19-20); at the transfiguration experience (Lk 9:35) and by the centurion (Lk 23:47). Any attempt to legitimate Jesus' identity which is non-Biblical is a distortion of his leadership functions, and hence misleading.

Unlike African ancestors there is no human descendants' blood relationship between Jesus and the living because he transcends kinship

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<sup>228</sup> In an African context, a mediator functions when people of higher status require to be approached indirectly through a third party. The idea of intermediary fits well with the African view of the universe where it is believed that God cannot be approached directly. Access to him is possible only through some special personalities or some spiritual beings that are considered "higher" than ordinary human beings and closer to God (Mbiti 1975:63-64). Although this may be applicable in Christianity, direct accessibility to God has been made possible through Jesus' death. Although he stands as a mediator, all believers have free access to God through his death.



relationship. Fourthly, still from the African definition of ancestor, Jesus was born as a Jew and cannot automatically become an African for the purpose of theologising.<sup>229</sup> Fifthly, each African household, family, clan or tribe has their particular ancestors. Unfortunately, Africans do not have a universal ancestor; because kinship is not transferable. By becoming an ancestor, Jesus is assimilated to a household Christ or even an ethnic Christ, which is contrary to Jesus' stance on inclusivity and universalism. Lastly, even though he died a violent and shameful death, he was resurrected and remains eternally alive; he is not dead-living; he has both human and divine qualities. It is therefore erroneous to affirm that through death Jesus merited ancestorship (Fochang 2006:4).

#### **7.4.3.1.2 Jesus Christ, the medicine-man<sup>230</sup>**

Illness, at many times as a result of poverty, unemployment and sometimes malnutrition, is an important factor that has increased misery and frustration in Africa. Illness in Africa has a social dimension because quite often it separates its victims from family and society. At times disease and misfortune are seen as having a mystical cause which must be sought and uprooted (Appiah-Kubi 1997:72). For this purpose, the assistance of a medicine-man is usually solicited because he is considered as a life-giver. The functions of medicine-people are so intricate that they are often associated with prophetic functions, as well as those of diviner and herbalist. Since healing was one of the central elements of Jesus' activities, it is believed that through his own suffering he participated in human healing. The comparison between the role of the African medicine-man and that of Jesus in its holistic dimension derives from the notion that Jesus simply revitalised the healing techniques of the Galileans. This model of Jesus' function as an African medicine-man is very popular in Africa, because it is one of the rare models that seem to cut across the whole continent (Fochang 2006:5). Just as medicine-people in Africa fight

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<sup>229</sup> This idea is also bolstered by the fact that in Africa, ancestorship is non-transferable. Consequently, even if personally, I were to believe in the concept of African ancestry, I will not accept Jesus as my ancestor because we do not share the same African family blood.

<sup>230</sup> The name "medicine-man" does not imply that only men are involved in this exercise. It is a generic name used in Africa as a patriarchal society, referring to both women and men who contribute to the restoration of life in Africa.

mystically in order to rescue life, Jesus is conceived as victor over worldly forces.

The fact that Jesus himself testified that his suffering as the Christ was a necessity for humanity (Lk 24:27, 46) justified his life-giving function. The bread which he broke with the disciples brought them life and recognition because it symbolised his body (Lk 24:30). He resuscitated broken memories and revived lost hope within the community of his followers through his resurrection (Lk 24:8-10). Notwithstanding, the life that he offers is different from that which any other human being can provide. Fochang opines that healers such as “soothsayers, herbalists and all kinds of medicine men are pillars of social life” in Africa (Fochang 2006:6). Jesus was a healer; but not in the likeness of a soothsayer. He was not just a “medicine man of all kinds”.<sup>231</sup> The African model of Christ as a healer in the light of a medicine-man only helps to enhance the understanding of Christ in his healing role; it does not offer a definite response to the question of his identity. As the Christ, he overlaps the African model of a typical African healer (the medicine-man) with all its implications. Jesus’ identity as life-giver is more adequate than that of medicine-man in all respects.

It therefore seems very daring to associate Jesus with healers in Africa in general terms simply because he offers holistic healing. Not all healing in Africa is Biblically acceptable. In some cases traditional healing goes hand-in-hand with mystics, incantations, invocations, the burning of candles and incense. Jesus’ healing functions were wholesome, spontaneous and public. In its wholesome dimension, Jesus offers salvation which no one else can provide (Ac 4:12).

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<sup>231</sup> According to Fochang (2006:6), the medicine man is also called “nganga’ in the Bantu language. Consequently, it is also appropriate in some African localities to identify Jesus as “nganga’ (Parratt 1995:85). “Nganga” could also mean magician or a sorcerer, as is the case in the Nweh language in the Lebialem Division, the South West region of Cameroon. Jesus was not a magician, fortune teller or sorcerer. Even though his healings were identified as miracles, they were different from magic. Those who address Jesus as “nganga’ are those who do not understand that in Jesus’ mission miracles played the role of a pointer to God’s glory and greatness.

#### 7.4.3.1.3 Jesus Christ, the chief

The model of Jesus Christ as an African chief is based on the translation of the Greek *ku&riov* (“lord”), which is taken for an African chief (Stinton 2006:191). In terms of leadership functions, chiefs in Africa combine social, political and religious roles within their respective communities. As social leaders, they assure social cohesion and act as legislators or custodians of land and culture. Politically, they have power and authority over their subjects; assure their protection and have the power to deliver the community from unpleasant expectations. Their religious functions compel them to offer sacrifices to ancestors on behalf of the community. From the Cameroonian perspective, the chief is an equivalent of a king. Jesus was addressed as Lord; a title which depicted his kingship functions. Küster (2001:59) remarks that the identification of Christ as chief is in perfect conformity with the very essence of Bantu power, where Jesus as the Christ is considered to have realised all the prerogatives of a Bantu chief. According to Biblical testimonies, Jesus was strong, generous and wise. Through his death, he demonstrated the willingness to defend and sacrifice for his community.

Jesus Christ as Lord loved his community and defended his followers against all forms of oppression and exploitation. By giving up his life as a necessity (Lk 9:22; 24:27, 46), he confirmed the messiahship title of leadership, where he reigns as king forever. In his lordship, he exercised power and authority as a servant (Lk 22:14-22, 27). On the contrary, African chiefs have a lot of power, surrounded by wealth, prestige and self-aggrandisement. They still have followers who serve in their palaces as slaves. Their rites of initiation are still full of mysticism and include a lot of traditional practices such as incantations and invocations, which are in dissonance with Biblical principles. In many African societies, the chiefs are also not easily accessible unless through the courtesy of an intermediary. Jesus’ understanding and application of lordship opposes the African conception of chiefs. It is also a challenge for chiefs to use their powers for the service of the entire community.

#### 7.4.3.2 Liberation models

The Bible and the contemporary African context form the point of departure of the liberation stream. In these models, there is an effort to interpret all present forms of emancipation witnessed in Africa and other vices that engulf the African continent such as oppression, exploitation, disease, poverty and misery, with the lenses of Scripture. The emancipation model focuses especially on the empowerment of the African woman. It is an approach that rehabilitates the women folk as contributors in Jesus' mission to establish his kingdom on earth. In this respect, highlights of women's contribution to Jesus' ministry in the Bible are brought to the fore as an encouragement to contemporary women. For instance, Jesus had female disciples (Lk 8:2; 23:27, 55; 24:22; cf. Lk 24:6) and was interested in their wellbeing (Lk 23:28-29). In Africa, theology that recognises and rehabilitates women as partners in Jesus' mission has been done as a form of feminist theology. Unfortunately, this approach has often degenerated into a discussion on Jesus' gender and sex. Such discussion seems of little importance in an era where suffering and oppression do not discriminate between sexes. To insist on Jesus' gender or sex, as a means of defining his identity, is just another way of deforming it to one's taste (Schüssler Fiorenza 2001:33). Schüssler Fiorenza is correct to suggest that relevant feminist emancipation theology is that which presents Jesus as one who is involved in the liberation of wo/men,<sup>232</sup> that is, a theology that takes the plight of the whole mankind into consideration.

There is also an on-going striving in emancipation theology in the area of HIV/AIDS, where stigmatisation is doing more harm than good with regards to infected and affected families and individuals. Current victims of HIV/AIDS can be compared to the marginalised in the Jewish context that lost their identity as a result of some bodily defect. Luke's Jesus embraces, rehabilitates, liberates and empowers lepers and people who suffered from all types of diseases (Lk 4:38-41; 5:12-14, 17-26; 6:6-11; 7:1-10; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 17:11-19). These examples of Jesus' activities identify him as the Christ of social liberation who reforms, transforms and rehabilitates.

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<sup>232</sup> For Schüssler Fiorenza, the term "wo/men" is beyond sex. It refers to both women and men who are marginalised, exploited and oppressed.

African societies have suffered from the bondage of several social, economic, political and ecological ills fostered by poverty, misery, hunger, marginalisation, ignorance, tribal wars, misplaced priorities, bad policies and exploitation from within and from without (see § 7.3 above). This situation of bondage has kept these societies in a constant situation of urge for liberation. It is a situation of dependency that has put African societies in the same context as that of Luke's gospel. The liberating attitude of Jesus thus serves as a guide to define meaningful African Christologies. The liberation models of defining Jesus' identity are therefore an attempt to develop theological reflections which explain how Jesus as the Christ responds to the problems posed by the African context, which is by nature that of misery. In other words, the liberation stream is an approach that aims at presenting Jesus in terms of his intention to set humanity free from all forms of oppression.

#### **7.4.3.3 Concluding remarks on African models of Christology**

From recent research it is clear that African theologians are focusing more and more on exploring the meaning of Christ for African society and its realities, as well as the significance of this identity for the lives of Africans who continue to shuttle between Christianity and alternative religions in search of a solution for their daily crisis. All the inculturation models used for the identification of Jesus as the Christ in Africa, as indicated above, follow an analogical approach. In spite of the fact that this approach has some inspiring conclusions, African theologians must be conscious of the dangers of pitfalls which are inherent to this approach. There is no doubt that African models for the understanding of Jesus' identity are buried in their own social experiences wherein concepts such as family relationship and the myths surrounding leadership are fundamental. In an attempt to use African models to elucidate the significance of Jesus' identity as the Christ, theologians have read African categories into Scripture, whereas adequate Christological models must remain faithful to Biblical teachings as the source of all Christian theologies. For these models to remain sustainable they must also be open to challenges and criticisms from other cultural settings.

In like manner, the models of Christ derived from the liberation stream are proper to the African situation of suffering, misery, envy, evil eye,

sickness, exploitation, poverty, wars, stigmatisation and the dependent character of Africa. Yet, the fundamental question asked by most African traditionalists today is whether Jesus, as a liberator, had Africa in his agenda? If the answer is yes, then why is Africa still in a perpetual situation of dependency and need? Even though this is a legitimate question in view of the present stalemate of Africa, Jesus' liberating activities did not end in history. Secondly, the liberation offered to Israel at the time did not exonerate its context from further crisis. What remains certain is that the liberation offered by Jesus is for all humanity and remains on-going. Relevant African Christologies must therefore explain Jesus as the Christ, who eats with African sinners, identifies them as "sons and daughters of Abraham", destroys boundaries of ethnicity and superiority, and introduces its peoples to a form of living that is commensurate with the precepts of the kingdom. Adequate liberation models are those that place the three dimensions of Jesus' missionary vision of preaching, teaching and healing (cf. Lk 9:1-2) on the scale of equal balance. The failure to give equal weight to these activities has sometimes been at the origin of the growing fanaticism in some churches today.<sup>233</sup> Viable African models for the identification of Christ need to be based on his person, his activities and his attitude as he broke through the huddles of first-century Palestine.

The fundamental truth is that Christianity is a religion with foreign concepts which should be presented faithfully without distortion in other contexts. A search for similar components of Christianity within traditional religions has sometimes been the cause of syncretism among African Christians. There is no other adequate identity that can be offered than that which was offered by Peter and reinterpreted by Jesus himself (Lk 9:20-22).

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<sup>233</sup> Many religious groups have accentuated on the meaning of Jesus as the Christ in his healing performances and as a result, they have substituted the preaching and the teaching ministry with the healing ministry. Worship services have become scenarios for healing, sometimes heralded with publicised posters. The emphasis on this aspect of ministry has further been spurred by the glorious call for the use of "faith extenders" such as the cross, consecrated water, olive oil, prayers, the laying on of hands, singing, dancing, playing of drums; testimonies from dreams and visions; the incessant shouting of "Amen", "Hallelujah", and "in the name of Jesus". Mbiti (1994:34) lauds this approach because, for him, it enables its participants to relive Biblical events in the life of Jesus and in the early church. This seems to be a misinterpretation of Jesus' missionary approach. In the time of Jesus there was no clear calendar of activities for these ministries. The three were sometimes carried out simultaneously and spontaneously.



Further attributes that characterise Jesus are those that are found in his preaching and ministry. There is a danger in trying to co-opt traditional models in a bid to explain who Christ is. Even though it may seem difficult to transmit the meaning of Jesus as “the Christ,” because it is also contained in personal experiences of Jesus’ self-disclosure as it was the case with the crowds (Lk 9:19), relevant Christology is that which can face challenges from other contexts, as stated above. As a clue therefore, some explanation of who the Christ is, could be developed by emphasising his attributes such as Lord, Provider, Protector, Enabler, Supporter, and Guardian. These are Christian metaphors that remain true irrespective of continent, colour, status, gender or age. Besides, the best way of dealing with Jesus’ identity is probably by offering an interpretation of what it entails to say “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (Lk 9:22).

In conclusion, although research in the area of African Christology has become the centre-piece of African theology today, it is time for African theologians to make a halt in order to evaluate the various models that have been used so far (Mugambi, in Stinton 2006:44). This evaluation appears urgent, especially in an era when African Christianity is becoming a reference to the rest of the Christian world.<sup>234</sup> For this task, African liturgies must insist on celebrating Jesus as the Christ of justice and liberation (Otieno & McCullum 2005:71; Nyiawung 2009:26).

#### **7.4.4 Who is the Christ? An African hermeneutic response**

An African hermeneutic response to the question of Jesus’ identity is very intricate in view of the difficulties involved in explicating his person and the meaning of “the Christ” in the African context. However, an exploration of

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<sup>234</sup> Stinton’s (2006) efforts are to be lauded for its credibility. However, there is still need for African theologians of African origin to emulate in his footsteps by making an autopsy of the various methodologies so far employed in defining Jesus’ identity in African theology. Such an evaluation will also have to attend to pertinent issues such as the contradiction at the level of the appreciation of the models that have so far been used. For example, while it is almost unanimous within most African communities that Christ can be likened to an African ancestor, some theologians (like Abraham Akrong from Ghana) still see God as another ancestor (Akrong, in Stinton 2006:191). This affirmation lacks an explanation on the relationship between God and Jesus in this context, as well as some clarity on the African understanding of the Trinity.

Luke's gospel offers us an idea as to how these difficulties could be curbed. It also offers a shape of how Christologies from all contexts (including the African context) can be approached.

#### **7.4.4.1 Problems involved in the African understanding of Jesus' identity**

The problems involved in the African understanding of Jesus' identity are situated at the levels of 1) dissonance between missionary teaching and African realities, 2) the problem of theological training, 3) the differences in theological approaches and 4) the African strong belief in the concrete rather than the abstract.

The dissonance caused by the Christian message carried by missionaries to Africa frustrated what would have served as a preparatory ground for the presentation of Jesus as the Christ who identifies with Africa. It was an inadequate message because it did not take African realities into consideration. The presentation of Christianity in Africa gave the impression that God hated Africa. Instead of the Christ of liberation, a colonial Christ was presented as a gift. He seemed to have been the Christ of apartheid who condoned with ethnicity, hatred and killing. He was not presented as one who was ready to lead Africans from their situation of a "dark continent" to that of a "continent of light" in the likeness of Europe and America. Their teachings were in sharp contrast with those of the Christ who, in Luke's gospel, is involved in social transformation. Jesus was presented as if he came to replace the existing African knowledge of God (Stinton 2000:32). There was no apparent difference between the Christ of compassion and their practice of hatred. This wrong presentation made Africans to see Jesus as a stranger; an outsider; a racist and a discriminatory Christ.

Missionary teaching equally failed to take the realities of the African context into serious consideration. The African situation was sometimes misinterpreted and applied against its beliefs (Oduyoye 1986:9). For instance, the use of drums was forbidden; African languages were considered barbarous and replaced with colonial substitutes as a means of redemption. It was a teaching that uprooted the Africans from their contextual realities and caused an identity crisis within its setting. That is why, in spite of the many

moral teachings that were offered, crime wave and other vices such as hatred, corruption, tribalism, favouritism and tribal wars and other forms of violence continued to sprout. Instead of insisting on the wholesomeness of salvation which Jesus offered (Lk 7:50; 17:19; 18:42), missionary teaching inclined to focus on the hereafter. They failed to arm people with the necessary tools that could enable them to confront the present realities of health, poverty, misery and hunger which haunted them on a daily basis (Stinton 2006:63). Even when salvation was preached, it was about the concerns of individuals, rather than those of the community in particular and humanity in general.

In fact, “most missionaries insisted that an African must become an ‘honorary white’, as a precondition for becoming a Christian” (Mugambi 1989:56). This preaching was inappropriate because it delineated African people from their identity. In order to produce pious believers the missionaries preached prosperity and a cajoling gospel which left Africans more passive than active. It was a missionary approach that gave the impression that the church as an institution was a business enterprise with little or no concern for the human condition. This was a distortion of Jesus’ identity. Rather than presenting a Christ who challenged cultural practices, a Christ who stood against African tradition and culture was offered. Consequently, while the African skin looked Christian, deep inside they remained typical traditional Africans.

The problem of theological training continues to be a serious threat to a better understanding and consequent interpretation of Jesus’ identity in Africa. Theology elaborated from the West and North America has so far been considered as the “official” theology of the entire church (Ela 1994:18). The curriculum of theological studies in most African seminaries still remains Western or American, just the same as Western philosophy is still taught in African universities with Western realities. The present context of African theological education must reflect the fight for global justice, the fight against the destruction of the environment and its consequences of global warming and other related issues that affect the general wellbeing of peoples everywhere (Kinsler 2008:7). Fortunately, of recent, there have been great developments in the area of social-scientific criticism, the introduction of

public theology and the theology of development in South African universities and seminaries. There has also been some resurgence at the level of the WCC with the introduction of *Theological Education by Extension* (TEE).<sup>235</sup>

Unfortunately, the idea to build a strong theological training system in Africa is still jeopardised by disagreements in theological approaches. Churches do not yet agree on how to arrive at an appropriate African response to the perennial question of “who is the Christ?” Even where they seem to agree the focus is still not the same. For example, while the Roman Catholic Church proposes inculturation as the right approach, the Protestants prefer contextualisation; yet, African Independent Churches simply prone a return to African identity and culture. Interdenominational tensions, quarrels and competition, which Oduyoye (1986:9) describes as “Christian tribes’, still render Africans’ quest to speak in the same tone fragile. In the face of this, Pobee wonders: “Are we preaching the same Christ? – Anglicans, Methodists, Roman Catholics? If so, why are we at each other’s throat?” (Pobee, in Stinton 2006:36). For Africans to have a unanimous voice, they must strive to avoid further internal divisions and rivalry and instead use the diversity of its context as a bolster to its theological enrichment. They must jointly face the problems of leadership crises, political instability, misery, poverty, illnesses, hunger, exploitation, the present context of global warming, and the effects of democracy. African religious diversity needs to become an encouragement that grants full liberty for its inhabitants to perceive and respond to Jesus’ identity in ways that are meaningful and relevant to their own mentality and experience (Stinton 2006:4).

Lastly, there is a religious revolution in Africa today with a strong quest for the concrete at the detriment of the abstract. Faith in Jesus deals with the abstract which the African ignores. The worship life of African spirituality is based more on the concrete. That is why there is a growing yearning for supernatural manifestations in the form of signs and wonders instead of a strike on holy living (O’Donovan 2000:226). This outcry dismisses the fact that holy life includes love, compassion, solidarity, generosity and the search for a

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<sup>235</sup> It has been the quest of the WCC since the 1960s to make theology available to all peoples in all places. However, such programmes can be relevant only if they address relevant issues of economic injustice and the general ecological crisis in the world, taking individual contexts into consideration. For more on this topic, see Kinsler (2008).

peaceful living. It seems abstract and absurd to speak of a Jesus who participates in solving African problems when people continue to die of starvation daily. Consequently, it rather seems easier for Africans to believe in “faith-extendors” that are palpable and seem closer than believe in Jesus, who is not physically visible.

These are new problems that African theologians need to tackle with extreme urgency; if not, most of its believers will continue to live a life of syncretism. Besides, Africans more easily relate with members of their family, clan, tribe or nation than they would with an “outsider”. In the case of Jesus, he was born a Jew. This aspect is a hindrance to the inclusion of Jesus within the African worldview.

#### **7.4.4.2 An African hermeneutical reading of Jesus’ identity in Luke’s gospel**

Most of the African models used in order to identify Jesus as the Christ are either family or ethnic inclined. This is a situation that brings Jesus back to the same problems that he tackled in Luke’s gospel. His solution through the method of de-categorisation and the theory of “similarity-attraction” was a revolt against ethnic perceptions of his identity (see § 6.3.4.2 and 6.3.4.3 above). From an African perspective one of the ways through which Jesus could be identified as the Christ is through a hermeneutical reading of the healing nature of his ministry. It is a model that summarises the meaning of his person and work as God’s broker. It also portrays the shortcomings of African models for the identification of Christ.

Among all the struggles in which human beings are involved the struggle to preserve, keep and enhance life remains primordial. Because of this, it sounds more appropriate to highlight Jesus’ attribute as the source of life.<sup>236</sup> The life that Jesus offers is life to be protected and not to be destroyed. He is the manifestation of the life which God wills that all individuals should share. His healing activities inaugurate a new age which is the fulfilment of the messianic hope manifested by the presence of God’s kingdom in the midst of

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<sup>236</sup> In this context, life goes beyond the biological in order to embrace the whole of human existence; it is life understood “as the totality of the dimensions which constitutes the human as a person” (Bujo 1992:21).

his people (Lk 17:21). Through healing, he provides life in its fullness. He does not only restore life through healing and exorcism (Lk 4:38-39, 40-41; 5:17-26; 6:6-11; 7:1-10; 8:26-39, 43-48; 9:42; 11:14; 13:10-13; 14:1-6; 17:11-19; 18:35-43) but also, he provides life by raising the dead (Lk 7:11-15; 8:49-56). In view of its holistic character, Jesus could be identified in Africa as the Christ of salvation; the Christ of liberation and the Christ of rehabilitation.

To identify Jesus with salvation means to explain how he saves the world, including Africa, as Saviour. Jesus destroyed the Jewish elite's myth of social control (see § 6.3.4.1 above) by offering salvation to the "sinful" woman (Lk 7:37-50); the leper (Lk 17:11-19); the blind beggar (Lk 18:36-42) and Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10). He also offered spiritual healing to the disciples by removing the veil that obstructed them from hearing and understanding (Lk 24:31, 45-49; cf. Lk 8:24-25b; 9:12-13, 40, 54; 18:15-17; 21:7; 22:49). The presentation of Christ as Healer is an alternative way of describing his salvific work. In his healing activities, Jesus cannot be compared to the African medicine-man, because he is the bringer of salvation. In fact, he heals attitudes, cultures and relationships. By offering salvation to the lepers (Lk 5:12-16; 17:11-19), Jesus healed prejudice, stereotypes, rejection and the stigmatisation from which they suffered. The healing that he offers is holistic; it depicts his nature, his saving power and his saving grace. In this aspect, he alone is capable of offering such healing.

Jesus as the Christ of salvation does not only have concern for the soul (the hereafter), but he shows concern for the physical body and the here and now (Lk 9:13). Since the concept of saving is recurrent in African thought, where people live in a perpetual situation of fear and desperate need (Appiah-Kubi 1997:68), Jesus' identity as the Christ of salvation seems fitting. As a herald of African and the world's salvation he plays the role of God's broker in the sense of a mediator. In this role he can not only be equated to an ancestor. Instead, as mediator, he plays the role of God's broker. And as broker, his healing is an extension of the saving benefits of God (Stinton 2006:106) to the whole Africa and the world.

The description of Jesus Christ as liberator ties with the redeeming nature of his ministry. The liberation offered to the Jews in general and the lawyer in particular (Lk 10:25-37) freed them from their parochial



understanding of God's holiness to mean exclusivism. As a liberated and changed Jew, the lawyer was urged to emulate good examples of liberation through his services and concern to others (Lk 10:37). Once called and liberated, the disciples and the seventy two were henceforth charged with the responsibility of saving, transforming and liberating other's lives (Lk 9:4; 10:6-9). The liberation which Jesus offered was beyond human understanding; that is why he refuses to be identified with titles that had political and human overtones. As liberator he de-categorised and reformed the Jewish society in order to build a society of free citizens with healed relationships. He impacted liberation on the Jewish society through preaching, teaching and admonition; all of which remain relevant today, and in all contexts.

Liberation has become a serious preoccupation to the African people and the world at large in the twenty-first century. It expresses the hope for a divine intervention to the human crises that plague the society and disrupt social harmony. In these circumstances, the liberation which Jesus offers to Africa and the world is social, economic, political and ecological in nature. It is his liberating vision that adds meaning to the content of his ministry. The idea of deliverance is contained in the African's daily aspiration. In this case, the liberating power of Jesus becomes the hope of Africa and the world at large. It is liberation from uncertainties, fears, evil powers, death, witchcraft, sickness and other forms of epidemic, poverty, misery, oppression, exploitation, corruption, injustice, natural disasters, tribal conflicts, as well as refugee and HIV/AIDS stigmatised status. These are issues which have placed Africa in the state of emergency, and deprived its citizens of the joy that came with Jesus as the Christ (Lk 2:10; 24:52). Jesus as the Christ is the liberator of all that which keeps Africa and humanity in bondage and less than what God had intended human nature to be (Appiah-Kubi 1997:70). Just like Christ was crucified, Africa seems to carry within itself the "hidden Christ" (Ela 1994:99), who has been crucified alongside Africa's social, economic and political crisis. His resurrection, as a sign of victory over oppressive forces, is the assurance of a new beginning for Africa and the world.

Jesus as the Christ was engaged in works of restoration and rehabilitation. By destroying the fences of hatred and segregation he built a new household (fictive family) with a new status. In this new dispensation the

reciprocity of services is requested and guided by the spirit of compassion. Henceforth, members of this new household will be inspired with the principle of compassion: “be compassionate even as your Father in heaven is compassionate” (Lk 6:36). Through the forgiveness of sins Jesus seeks, saves, restores and rehabilitates the lost of the world (Lk 19:10). Through the rehabilitation of the non-Jews all human beings are rehabilitated as daughters and sons of Abraham with equal status (Lk 13:16; 19:9). Through his saving grace, his redemptive prowess and restorative activities, Jesus as the Christ stands as an answer to every human need as echoed in this Cameroonian song:

Christ is the answer to every human need;  
Christ is the answer to every human need;  
Christ is the answer to every human need;  
Christ is the a-an-swer.

#### **7.4.4.3 An African approach to the question of Jesus’ identity**

The approach to the question of Jesus’ identity in this section is not only African *per se*. In principle, it is a Biblical approach derived from the conversation between Jesus and the disciples in Luke 9:18-22. The first approach stems from the crowds’ spontaneous speculations, while the second approach comes from Jesus’ participatory leadership approach of leadership (§ 6.5.2.2 above).

##### **7.4.4.3.1 Spontaneous theology**

Although it was concluded from an etic point of view that the answer to Jesus’ identity would hardly draw unanimity (§ 6.6), the place of personal perception and individual experiences still remain important. These are responses that come as a result of a personal encounter with Jesus. In view of his life-sustaining role, the way through which he communicates his love and compassion to various individuals can never be identical because it is dependent upon individual contexts, perceptions and interpretations. For instance, when Jesus decided to stay focussed on the Jerusalem journey, he found it imperative to inquire first, whether those who followed him had understood who he was; and if they were conscious of the consequences of

their decisions (cf. Lk 14:28-33). The conjectures echoed by the disciples portrayed the spontaneous character of their feelings: “And they answered, John the Baptist; but others say Elijah; and others, that one of the old prophets has risen” (Lk 9:19); as well as those of Peter: “the Christ of God” (Lk 9:20). The crowds’ responses were spontaneous because they came from their personal experiences of what they had seen Jesus doing. Peter’s response was another spontaneous confession of faith which depicted his perception of what Jesus was doing. These spontaneous responses became an effective source of inspiration for Jesus. Through them, he became aware of the limitations involved in their knowledge of his identity. As a result, he offered an enriching Christology which was a complement to the crowds’ and the disciples’ speculations. It was a Christology which associated Jesus’ person with the events that will eventually befall him: suffering, humiliation, rejection, death and resurrection. By not dismissing either the responses from the crowds’ or from the disciples, Jesus seems to validate personal experiences as an important source of theological discussion.

By validating personal experiences as a source of doing theology, Jesus posed a fundamental problem of how to translate such individual experiences into acceptable truths. It is in this vein that “spontaneous theology” seems to offer a clue. As an enigmatic figure, Jesus continues to reveal his identity to individuals, on a daily basis (§ 5.8 above). The response of such revelation is often translated into songs and other declarations that offer Jesus a variety of models (identities) that remain contestable because they are not easily communicable. Spontaneous theology is therefore an attempt to rehabilitate personal experiences and perceptions in the process of theologising. It aims at transforming individual experiences and perceptions into universal and acceptable knowledge. Personal experience is very important in the development of theology. Unfortunately, there are as many human experiences as there are human beings from different cultures and different contexts. For instance, African understanding of Jesus fashions him in terms of human need, and this is not absolutely wrong. He is Christ the healer for the sick whose health has been restored; he is the provider for the hungry who finds food and the liberator to the oppressed who finds solace. Regrettably, these are personal perceptions that are not transferable; yet,

they offer a clue to Jesus' identity. However, for viable experiences to survive, they must be tested by Biblical teachings. In this respect, spontaneous theology has the dual task of exposing empirical knowledge about Jesus' identity to open challenges offered by contemporary realities and thereafter seeking to authenticate its result with Biblical testimonies.

The African worldview presents a rich variety of Christology. The models used in order to identify Jesus as the Christ reflect African spontaneous perceptions of what these models mean in the African context. They also depict the African sense of spontaneity involved in their worship life. Such spontaneity is often translated into songs, wishes, proverbs and prayers. The spontaneity involved in the African response to religion has so far been an important foundation for the development of African Christology. Such spontaneous spirit is a factor that can further be helpful in developing lasting Christian theological concepts by way of constituting a sought of reflective theology (Bediako 2000:9). In this venture, the role of academic theologians resides in their ability to transform such spontaneity into acceptable universal principles of faith that can further enrich the community's commitment towards God and towards one another.<sup>237</sup> In other words, adequate African Christology must take its roots from spontaneous theology.

#### **7.4.4.3.2 Community participatory theology**

Twice, and within the context of a dialogue, Jesus inquired to know if his followers knew his identity (Lk 9:18 and Lk 9:20). The responses to these questions, as well as Jesus' concluding remarks, give weight and credence to a participatory approach in doing theology. The fact that Jesus did not reject nor comment on the responses from the crowds and the disciples is an invitation for theology in the light of humility. It is theology which shows respect to individual responses to the question of Jesus' identity. It is in this vein that African models for the identification of Christ within the African

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<sup>237</sup> It is necessary at this juncture to make a distinction between the "academic" theologian, who wishes to study and develop theology critically as an academic exercise, and the "ordinary theologian", who spontaneously expresses an understanding of how God manifests himself through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. For the latter, these thoughts are spontaneous and most often oral; whereas for the former they eventually become scrutinised, developed, assessed and written down.

context must be treated with respect, in spite of its shortcomings. With respect to participatory theology, there is need to understand each model from its context. It is therefore a combination of all these models that gives a glimpse of Jesus' identity.<sup>238</sup> Participatory theology on its part is a theological approach that gives ear to the various perceptions of Jesus' identity and thereafter exploits the various contributions in order to provide a theology that empowers, reforms and equips individuals to take part in developmental issues that affect their context.

The emic and etic reading of Luke's gospel attest to the fact that Jesus fulfilled his obligation as a member of a dyadic community by fully participating in all human experiences (Parratt 1995:82). For example, by mingling with "sinners" (Lk 5:30; 7:39; 15:2); tax collectors (Lk 5:27-32; 19:1-10); lepers (Lk 5:12-16; 17:11-19); the sick (Lk 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 18:35-48), the poor (Lk 12:13) and the rich (Lk 14:1; 18:18), he inaugurated and proved the efficacy of participatory theology. Through the limitations that he witnessed he was able to perceive community needs and their expectations. Consequently, the place of the community, in building transformative theology, is also important in delivering Africa and the rest of the world from the present economic, political, social and ecological impasse. In this connection, community participatory theology is about participatory decision-making and consensus-building that can inspire human beings and enable them to reflect on theological solutions to the problems that they face on a daily basis (Otieno & McCullum 2005:73). Participatory theology enables individuals to identify themselves as worthy citizens endowed with potentials that can assist them in their efforts to self-empowerment.

From empirical thoughts, one of the ideal ways of building communities today is by empowering its citizens to be productive and spiritually alert and assertive. This is especially important for the case of Africa, with its multiplicity of ethnic groups (Mompoti & Prinsen 2000:625). This refers to the recognition of individuals as important and necessary contributors in community development. The present economic, social, political and ecological impasse calls for participatory theology wherein all the

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<sup>238</sup> It is simply a glimpse because Jesus' self-disclosure is on-going and dynamic.

stakeholders involved in the transformation of humanity are each accorded a place of choice in the search for long lasting solutions. On the table of such dialogue both scientists, ecologists, politicians, sociologists and economists can, on an equal basis, confidently engage in a search for an answer to the question: “Who is the Christ?” with focus on the development of Africa and the world. Such discussion could give birth to an interdisciplinary theology that has human beings and their environment at the centre of discussion. It is within the context of such discussion that people need to be reminded about the fact that the world is God’s and everything in it (Ps 24:1).

Spontaneous theology and community participatory theology have the same objectives. They are a result of the combination of Jesus’ dialogue approach and investigatory approach. Through dialogue and investigation, the audience is encouraged to unveil their understanding of Christ and his relevance to their various needs. The aim of both theologies is the society and the welfare of God’s people. In other words, spontaneous theology leads to investigatory and participatory theology, the end of which is the theology of community development or community participatory theology. The theology derived thereof is theology from the people, by the people, and for the people in response to their contextual realities. These approaches to theology could be a solution to the problems of inadequacy in missionary teachings about Jesus. These teachings instead seemed to have created dissonance in African believers. That is why most of them are not yet convinced about the presentation of Jesus as a remedy to the African problems. However, through the approach of spontaneous theology and community participatory theology, Africans could be empowered to understand Jesus and confidently confess him in their expression of faith as “the Christ of God”.

#### **7.4.5 Conclusion**

African responses to the question of Jesus’ identity are similar to the crowds’ speculation in Luke 9:18-22. A paraphrase of the dialogue between Jesus and the disciples presents another dialogue between Jesus and African Christian theologians as follows.

Now, it happened that while Jesus was praying alone, African theologians were with him. After having heard from them who they and



other Africans considered him to be, he remarked: Even though for the Africans I could either be an ancestor, or a medicine-man or a chief or one of the African images of high repute, for you African theologians, and especially for you Mbengu<sup>239</sup>, I am the Messiah of God. In spite of the above responses, I am the Son of man. It was because of these same (mis)interpretations of my identity by your Jewish counterparts that I suffered humiliation, rejection and was killed. This, however, was temporary because I was vindicated and my true identity was revealed when I was raised after three days; and henceforth, I will reign forever.

A few remarks can be sought from this dialogue. The responses from Africans and their theologians are spontaneous and they reflect the religious understanding and experiences of African reality. Secondly, even though Mbengu's response is similar to that of Peter (Lk 9:20), their contexts are different. Thirdly, these responses also expose a certain level of expectation on the part of the Africans with respect to their contextual realities. Fourthly, just as it was the case with Jesus' followers (Jewish), African responses to Jesus' question do not associate his identity with the leadership crises that he faced and which eventually resulted in his suffering, rejection, humiliation, death and his vindication by God. Fifthly, Jesus' identity as "the Christ of God" is non translatable. Lastly, although Jesus' response is in the past, it indicates that his identity is being distorted, even by Africans today. By implication the wrong application of leadership in Africa is an indirect contribution to the crisis for which Jesus suffered and was humiliated and killed. Whatever the case, the important element in this dialogue is that it grants a clue to African existential realities and apprehensions, and constitutes a starting point for the development of a strong African Christology.

Jesus' situation of suffering, rejection and humiliation identifies him with the African context. Just as he suffered humiliation and rejection in the hands of worldly authorities, the African people have become victims of the problems posed by the effects of colonisation and democracy. Like Jesus, Africa and her people continue to suffer; they are humiliated, rejected and asphyxiated by colonial and insensitive authorities. The Christ who was raised by God is the One who stands to resurrect the African people and the rest of suffering humanity from all forms of socio-political, economic and ecological

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<sup>239</sup> Mbengu is an arbitrary name, representing a response from a convinced African Biblical reader, who, in spite of his knowledge of African realities, believes that a name cannot be translated from one culture into another else he runs the risk of anachronism.

impasse. He stands as an embodiment of African crisis. In this picture, Africa symbolises suffering humanity. Consequently, Jesus' victory is that which the African can legitimately appropriate, because while he reigns as the Christ, he has offered the forgiveness of sins to oppressive authorities (Lk 24:47).

In view of the rich variety in the African responses to the question of Jesus' identity, it stands out clear that it is the believer's relationship with Jesus that actually defines Jesus' identity, not only in eschatological terms; but also as a present reality. Jesus declares that he will acknowledge before God's angels whoever acknowledges him presently, before men. Conversely, he will disown before God's angels those who now disown him publicly (Lk 12: 8-9). The most appropriate titles that seem to give a glimpse of Jesus' identity are those which are attributed in terms of relational images because they are less controversial and universal in scope. They also depict a personal relationship that Jesus establishes with individual persons. Consequently, all answers to the question of Jesus' identity are relevant insofar as they reflect the feelings and perceptions of an individual. Yet, there is absolute need for such knowledge to be shared and transmitted universally. It is in this respect that spontaneous theology finds its place within the market place of theological reflections in Africa. Besides, democracy had so far been presented as a solution to the present world crisis. Unfortunately, according to an unknown author in Otieno and McCullum (2005:73), "What is important is *not* that a state be democratic, but that it provides justice, equality and dignity for its citizens. Democracy, after all, is *not* a solution, *only* a method". In this vein, community participatory theology also finds its place as a means of empowering individuals to develop viable Christologies that respond to social realities of each context.

## **7.5 A CONTEXTUAL READING OF LEADERSHIP AND CONFLICT IN LUKE: POWER-SYNDROME LEADERSHIP THEORY (PSLT)**

### **7.5.1 Introduction**

Leadership in Africa (both secular and ecclesiastical) is a very complex issue because of the complicated nature of the historical heritage and the cultural context of Africa. A contextual reading of leadership and conflict in Luke is about the examination of leadership as it is practised in Africa, vis-à-vis

Jesus' prescription in Luke. It is also about the exposure of conflicts that are inherent in the practice of leadership in Africa. Thirdly, it is about the impact of leadership by African leaders on the life of its people. For this purpose, the use of "power-syndrome leadership theory" seems appropriate as a means of analysing leadership in Africa in all its dimensions. It is a theory that explains why conflict inherent in leadership is always viewed negatively by African leaders.

### **7.5.2 Power-syndrome leadership theory (PSLT): Principles and functioning**

According to leadership principles, the simple fact that one is in a position of leadership implies that one has authority. However, in addition, leaders need "power" in order to execute such leadership authority through the functions which they perform. Such "power" is offered by followers through the legitimation of their leadership. Hence, they are referred to as having been empowered (see § 4.2.3 above). In other words, authority is inherent in leadership, while power is conferred. Once at the disposal of the leaders, such power is often either used for the benefit of the followers or misused for the interest of the leaders. Power-syndrome leadership is a situation where leaders grab power and refuse to let it go when their tenure of office is over, or when such power has been delegitimated by their followers.

In Africa, power and leadership have become syndromes because they are either considered as an inseparable pair, with one unconditionally leading to the other, or simply because they are understood as synonyms. Secondly, the myth surrounding leadership in Africa is that of "once a leader, one remains a leader; and for life". This has probably been influenced by traditional leadership wherein access to leadership is hereditary. Hence, once chosen (and not voted), traditional leaders rule till death. This way of acceding to leadership is different in political circles and at the level of local churches, where people hold elective posts. Thirdly, when the theory of "leader for life" does not seem to succeed, the incumbent naturally decides on whom to take over. The new trend in Africa today is that heads of states are gradually building dynasties instead of lasting democracies. In this new setting power and authority are transferred from father to son, or to some very

close relations (spouse and sycophants).<sup>240</sup> Fourthly, leadership in Africa is not based on skills or merits; rather, it is judged by ethnic sentiments and by the number of sycophants who surround the leaders. It is in this case that the old adage of “power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely” remains very applicable in PSLT.

Three relevant observations to the practice of PSLT were made in § 3.3.2.3 with reference to the relationship between itinerant/resident leaders. It was observed that in the early church the transfer of leadership from the itinerant leaders in the early Christian communities to resident leaders implied social transformation and change, which went along with conflict and opposition (Horrell 1999:320). Secondly, resident leaders misused their powers in order to write letters, which they later ascribed to Paul and also enacted other laws that sustained their authority (Horrell 1999:334). Thirdly, the transition between itinerary and resident leaders was not very smooth because quite often the former left office without departing with the functions (power) that they had hitherto exercised. In contemporary African society the situation is similar, and sometimes worse. For example, some followers often decide to remain loyal to out-going leaders in order to prove the inefficacy of in-coming leaders. In addition, most people who aspire to, or who are already in leadership positions, are at times torn between the struggle to gain (more) power; the struggle to protect power and the struggle to keep power (§ 4.2.3). In PSLT, the above description depicts the ugly side of leadership because it paints the picture of how leaders become unpopular.

Leadership in Africa becomes unpopular in several ways. The first is through the manipulation or mutilation of texts. Leaders, who wish to stay in power for some time, extend their mandates through extra-constitutional amendments (Winchester 1995:349). As such, constitutional amendments are regular in most African countries; always at the taste of those in leadership. The second point concerns the accumulation of wealth. Most African leaders are wealthy; and because almost everybody is corrupt, leaders sometimes find it difficult to accuse their followers of the same crime in which they are

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<sup>240</sup> It is disheartening that Africa holds the trophy of longest serving heads of states in the world. These are leaders who prefer to die in office rather than opt to resign, even when their health situation is at risk. In fact, the language of resignation is still farfetched in the African leadership pattern.

personally involved.<sup>241</sup> Thirdly, leaders quickly seek for occult support, through the practice of witchcraft and sorcery, in order to secure their leadership positions. It is generally believed in Africa that without “extra power”, leadership cannot function effectively (Geschiere 2000:132). As an alternative, other leaders surround themselves with sycophants who become accomplices because they only tell their patrons what they desire to hear. Together, they build devilish mechanisms to sustain themselves in power for as long as possible. The fourth, and most unpopular leadership medium in Africa, is election. It is clear that the democratic way of becoming a leader is through elections because they have the potential of making governments accountable and legitimate. Accountability plays an important function in this medium; it limits the power of a leader in terms of checks and balances and mandate. Unfortunately, African leaders have wilfully ignored the role of legitimation which helps to improve on leadership performances. Democracies have relegated public participation in the managing and directing of national life to occasional competitions that elect stooges who dance according to government tone (Cochrane 1991:67). Below is a brief picture of an electoral period in most African countries.

A year or so before election, the incumbent usually becomes unnecessarily good and generous; especially within their ethnic regions or within regions that had hitherto been neglected in terms of developmental projects. The incumbents suddenly become popular as they make new and unrealistic promises. It is a sort of patronage that requires ethnic loyalty, as well as sympathy from the electorate.<sup>242</sup> In most cases, political parties are formed on the basis of ethnic affinity. Consequently, elections are by ethnic affiliation because leadership is considered as a myth where some clans and

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<sup>241</sup> Presently there is a vast campaign in Cameroon against government leaders who are involved in cases of corruption and the misappropriation of public funds. This campaign is carried out in the name of “operation sparrow hawk”. The main issue is not even about the arrest of leaders who have been involved in corrupt practices. It is about the amount of money that has so far been recuperated from such operations, and the amount that has been effectively ploughed into state’s coffers, without having passed through other obscure sources.

<sup>242</sup> In Cameroon it is common for ethnic groups to express loyalty to the incumbent by addressing motions of support which are generally read and publicised on the public media, over and over. This is often done quite early, before the year of election. It is believed that this attitude assures the latter of the support from the former, and thereafter spurs the latter to engage in developmental projects within these regions.

ethnic groups believe that they hold the sole monopoly.<sup>243</sup> In another instance, the incumbent tries to win the sympathy of the public by searching for a foreign or national scapegoat. This is usually the situation where foreign countries are often accused by the incumbent for mingling with the internal affairs of the nation and for sponsoring opposition candidates. Also, in order to ensure absolute success, candidates involved in the election sometimes dive into the ordeal practice of bribing the electorate.<sup>244</sup> In this process people are either lured to cast their votes for a particular person, or they are advised to cast their votes more than once. Another issue is that of intimidation and the use of violence in order to scare the opponent's sympathisers so as to fill ballot boxes with winning votes. Quite often incumbents cause their opponents to be disqualified on the basis of their ethnic roots or they are simply accused on charges of corruption and/or other vices. These mechanisms are aimed at purging competent contenders out of the race.<sup>245</sup> In this regard there is also the issue of the miscount of votes, which is an attempt to favour a particular candidate. In this case, ghost voters are occasionally carried from "outside" in order to influence the results through these "votes". Worst of all, the electoral calendar is at times kept secret and announced only when all the contenders are not ready. To further frustrate opposition candidates, money allocated for election campaigns is often disbursed very late, especially at a time when it cannot be used effectively for the purpose assigned.

The above description is an image of leadership in Africa, with its obvious consequences of bad government. They further explain why the aftermath of election is usually dreaded in Africa. When it is not well prepared and managed, it frequently results to a period of tension and agitation,

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<sup>243</sup> One can quickly imagine what generally happens when a leader from a particular ethnic group does not win election. It is in this particular case that African states define a variety of democracies, different from that which is practised in the West or in the United States. In Cameroon; it is known as "advance democracy", while in Nigeria, it is "participatory democracy".

<sup>244</sup> Collier (2009:31) observes that within the context of elections, there are usually two types of bribery; it is either retail or wholesale. It is retail when individual persons are bribed to vote for a particular person. It is wholesale when election officers are bribed to change election results at the end of the exercise to favour a particular person.

<sup>245</sup> This topic will be discussed in detail later (see § 7.5.3 below).



rancour and grievances, dissatisfaction and grumbling, a period of civil disobedience and confrontation. In most cases, the losers become “rebels”, freedom fighters, or even terrorists. In fact, election has become an important source of conflict in Africa. Rather than enhance democratic principles it has brought political instability and hatred among its citizens (Collier 2009:41). Rather than being the most appropriate way of legitimating leadership, elections in Africa have become an important source for the delegitimation of leadership. One of the direct outcomes of a delegitimated leadership is bad governance. In such cases people show their disloyalty through a vote of no confidence addressed to leaders. The most popular method is through *coups d'état*, where bullets instead of ballots have often helped other opportunists and power hungry individuals to pave their way to power. Statistically, Collier (2009:8) has observed that, since 1945, there have been about 82 coups in Africa, with 109 attempted coups that failed and 145 coup plots that got nipped in the bud.

In Africa, leadership is often delegitimated for a variety of reasons. When leaders fail to deliver the expected goods they are usually rejected by objective citizens. When the society is witnessing some crisis and is in search for innovative and creative prospects, an appointing finger is generally directed towards leaders. It is within this context that charismatic leaders often emerge as “bringers of solutions”. Leaders also suffer from delegitimation from their followers when their mandate is overdue. This becomes an opportunity for other inspired and talented persons to aspire to leadership functions in order to prove their worth. In addition, ethnic and tribal influence has a strong effect on the delegitimation of leadership. Some leaders are disliked simply because of their ethnic origin. In short, the leaders' worth, as well as the results from their leadership ought to be a measuring rod for the legitimation of leadership. Unfortunately, the input from human sentiments, coupled with the dissonance caused by internal forces (depression, fear, distrust) and external forces (demands from the hierarchy), cannot be neglected. The fear of being delegitimated often forces leaders into more and uncontrollable errors. In the face of all these, it remains the leaders' responsibility to persuade their followers of the reasons why they ought to remain loyal and supportive. It is also the responsibility of the leaders to keep

in mind the ethics of the profession, as well as the target of their mission and to convince their followers to understand the direction of their decisions. This is done through investigation, dialogue and the delegation of power. Through this approach, leaders iron out their differences and their misunderstanding with their followers.

At the basis of all these shortcomings lies the fundamental question: Why do people “hang” on to power, even at their own detriment? Within the context of PSLT, most African leaders would wish to die in power because they fear to be prosecuted when power must have been stripped from them. This is due to the poor records of events that they might have left while they were still in office. For instance, they might have misunderstood leadership to mean corruption, embezzlement and the misappropriation of public funds and property; an opportunity to rule and command; an occasion to exploit, extort and trample on people’s rights and finally as a stepping stone to retaliate and manifest tribalism and ethnic injustice. When leadership is misunderstood to mean self-projection and personal aggrandisement, leaders hang onto power because they fear to lose honour, fame, status and the dignity attached to the offices they are holding. Thirdly, some people may dread to leave office because they still wish to hang onto the material benefits that are attached to their office. At times, they also boast of the support they gain from foreign bodies in order to further cement their positions as leaders. Fourthly, some leaders feel that, apart from them, no other person is capable to sustain the community as they did. This is a conception that kills initiative and the nurturing of new leaders. Fifthly, leaders about to leave office, dread that their loopholes might be exposed by their former collaborators. This is the situation with those who have committed uncountable atrocities. Above all, the most dreaded horror for some leaders is what could be termed “retirement fever”.<sup>246</sup> The summary of these responses is that leaders hang on leadership because of FEAR.

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<sup>246</sup> Quite often, those who might have failed to prepare for an adequate retirement period feel threatened when they are about to face the reality of nature. Hence, at its approach, they become miserable and even sick. To ‘combat’ retirement, they either cut down on their official ages, or they lobby to maintain their positions. This is ridiculous! In normal circumstances, the period for retirement ought to be that of joy; the joy for having served with humility, sacrifice and satisfaction. Unfortunately, for some, it is a period of wretchedness and misery.

Having worked honourably, it is always a worthy gift when leaders leave leadership in the most respectable and cheerful manner. The best and memorable leaders are those who leave office just at the time when they were still expected to stay on! Conscious leaders are those who retire with dignity; they are those who understand leadership to mean service. They recognise that they had been on the right track during their tenure of office. These are those who might have prepared for the survival of the institution after when they must have left. Above being shrewd (Lk 16:1-9), their leadership must have been legitimated in the most honest way. From the study of PSLT, it stands clear that leaders are in the best position to define the nature of their leadership; they have the possibility to either make or mar it. Above all, the most effective leadership is that which is mandated by the hierarchy and by those for whom it is performed.

### **7.5.3 The effects of labelling and deviance in PSLT**

As discussed in § 3.4.2.3.2, labelling and deviance has an adverse effect because it contributes in building a society of division, exclusion and hatred. People are labelled and ostracised as deviants out of the labeller's intention and interest. By deciding who is a deviant, the labeller attracts sympathy from the public and thereafter lures the latter to legitimate the deviant attitude of the victim. This approach has been very common within the political setting in Africa. Unfortunately, the church is gradually taking the cue in this practice as a result of secularisation. For the case of power-syndrome leadership theory, power drunk leaders use the strategy of labelling in order to blackmail, discredit and purge their opponents. The aim of this practice is to consolidate the incumbent's leadership, whether it has been legitimated or not. Some leaders also acquire labels such as *L'Homme lion*, which portray their leadership capabilities.<sup>247</sup>

Quite often, victims of deviance are known as opponents or aspirants to the leadership position which has hitherto been occupied by the incumbent. They are thus described as enemies of development and continuity; power

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<sup>247</sup> *L'Homme lion* is the label of the Cameroonian Head of State. It depicts his ideology to act powerfully in the likeness of a lion. Also, considering that the lion is often referred to, as the king of the forest, the label stands as a symbol of power and authority to rule. As a reminder, the lion does not serve; rather, it rules, commands authority and expects others to tremble.

hungry citizens, impostors, weak, illiterate, unpatriotic, inexperienced and “outsiders”. These negative labels are aimed at portraying the opponent’s incapability to function in such offices. At the same time, they project the incumbent as a natural leader. Sycophants boost up their machinery through slogans such as “a winning team is never changed” and “it seems best to deal with a known devil; rather than applaud an unknown angel”. In Africa, the relationship between incumbents and other aspirants is generally that of mutual suspicion, tension, hate, malice, pretence and mutual rejection. Out of ignorance, opposition is dreaded in African leadership because of the false impression that has so far been developed vis-à-vis conflict. On the contrary, opposition plays very vital functions within democratic systems. They serve the purpose of controlling and checking of leadership excesses, as well as provoking innovation and creativity through the challenges from opponents. The critique from other leadership aspirants makes the incumbent more alert and assertive; and causes them to self-criticise their leadership. It is therefore irrational when members of the opposition are labelled and ostracised as deviants; rather than being embraced as partners in societal development.

The failure to recognise the worth of opposing voices within a system and the fact that conflict is always considered from a negative perspective are some marks of Africa’s underdeveloped status. These marks have adverse effects on both individual leaders and the society at large. The most important adverse effect on individual leaders is fear, with its related consequences. For instance, it is the fear to be criticised, to innovate, to perform poorly, to take risk or to be delegitimated that sometimes pushes leaders to commit more errors. Such leaders frequently suffer from stress and other cardiac related problems; they panic and even become aggressive. As a result, they use forceful and violent means to restore confidence within the society, rather than use Jesus’ dialogue and investigative approaches. The fear nursed by leaders normally spills over on their leadership functions.

At the level of the economy, there is a massive increase in the area of the transfer of technology and brain drain. Today, most African men of valour prefer to work outside their respective countries because of poor economic policies reflected in excessive taxes and poor financial motivation. According to Mwakikagile (2004:82) between 1985 and 1990, Africa had lost 60.000

scientists, doctors, engineers, technicians and other experts to Western Europe and North America. In the political domain, there is instability and mistrust. This atmosphere justifies the number of *coups d'état* registered in Africa in the past years, as mentioned above.

In the social domain the population continues to live in excessive fear and distrust. The fear to innovate increases the chances of bad and inappropriate policies, which in turn make poor citizens to remain poor and indebted, while the rich continue to tap from the have-nots. It is a situation that renders Africa and its peoples as “Heavily Indebted Poor Citizens” (HIPC). The heavy rate of indebtedness also implies Africa’s dependent position, depicting the level of recurrent suffering and misery.

In the religious sphere, dishonesty, embezzlement, mismanagement, dictatorship, anarchy and the loss of confidence in its leadership is at the origin of the empty pews that are witnessed today in some churches. In short, labelling and deviance does more harm on leadership than it does well or repairs. The perfect solution to the problems posed by power-syndrome leadership theory is found in an adequate knowledge of Jesus as the Christ. Even though he was aware of his divine origin, he never hung on leadership, nor did he dread his opponents. Instead, he challenged them to perfect in their leadership skills. For those who had limitations that could impede on their understanding of his leadership, he filled them up. Through this, he left a perfect example of leadership to emulate: “Go and do likewise” (Lk 10:37).

#### **7.5.4 Jesus’ concept of leadership *vis-à-vis* PSLT**

Jesus’ understanding of leadership was already discussed in detail in § 6.4.3.2. The main issue in this section is to examine how these leadership precepts outlined by Jesus are a challenge to the African understanding and application of leadership. Essentially, it is about how Jesus, as a leader, dealt with opposition and conflict. As mentioned previously in § 5.1, Jesus established several relationships in Luke’s gospel that characterise the nature of the conflicts that he faced with his contemporaries. Two of these relationships – the relationship with the Jewish elite and the relationship with the Roman elite – are relevant for this study because they are concerned with the character groups that opposed Jesus on the subject matter of his

leadership. Contrary to the spirit of fear and rejection that haunts most African leaders, Jesus was animated with the spirit of zeal, enthusiasm and acceptance, vis-à-vis his opponents. Fear is an indication of doubt and defeat, while enthusiasm is an indication of confidence and success. Jesus' strength stemmed from the fact that he had the legitimation of his Father and of those he served. Secondly, the strong conviction that he developed for his mission, coupled with his constant reliance on God, enabled him to remain focused, purposeful and unperturbed. Lastly, he recognised the worth of his followers in leadership and therefore included them in his leadership by way of dialogue, investigation, training and sharing through the delegation of power.

The tension between Jesus and his opponents manifested itself in several ways. Firstly, he labelled the Pharisees as pompous leaders (Lk 11:42-44), hypocrites (Lk 12:1) and lovers of money (Lk 16:14). Scribes were described as pretenders (Lk 11:46-48) and criticised as ostentatious leaders, extortionists and exploiters (Lk 21: 46-47). Herod was identified as a "fox" (Lk 13:32).<sup>248</sup> Caesar on his part was ironically described as a usurper, because

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<sup>248</sup> According to Oakman (Oakman 2008:265), Sepphoris as a derivation from the Hebrew word, "bird", was the capital of Herod "the fox" (Lk 13:31-33). In later years, this capital was moved to Tiberias (Keck 2000:56). This is the background of Luke 9:57-58, which is often judged as the only Son of Man saying that goes back to Jesus. In the context of this pericope, the birds of the air are the Sepphoreans, and the fox is Herod. Thus, the elite in Sepphoris have everything they need, but the peasants have nothing (cf. Plutarch, *The Life of Tiberius Gracchus*, 8.1). Of the land which the Romans gained by conquest from their neighbors, part they sold publicly, and turned the remainder into common land. This common land, they assigned to such of the citizens as were poor and indigent, for which they were to pay only a small acknowledgment into the public treasury. But when the wealthy men began to offer larger rents, and drive the poorer people out, it was enacted by law, that no person whatever should enjoy more than five hundred acres of ground. This act for some time checked the avarice of the richer, and was of great assistance to the poorer people, who retained under it their respective proportions of ground, as they had been formerly rented by them. Afterwards the rich men of the neighborhood contrived to get these lands again into their possession, under other people's names, and at last would not stick to claim most of them publicly in their own. The poor, who were thus deprived of their farms, were no longer either ready, as they had formerly been, to serve in war, neither were they careful in the education of their children. Thus, in a short time there were comparatively few freemen remaining in all Italy, which swarmed with workhouses full of foreign-born slaves. These the rich men employed in cultivating their ground, of which they dispossessed the citizens. Caius Laelius, the intimate friend of Scipio, undertook to reform this abuse; but meeting with opposition from men of authority, and fearing a disturbance, he soon desisted, and received the name of the Wise or the Prudent, both which meanings belong to the Latin word *Sapiens*. When elected as tribune of the people, Tiberius took the matter into his hands. He was probably inspired by Diophanes the rhetorician and Blossius the philosopher, who was an Italian from Cumae and a friend to Antipater of Tarsus. He might have also been incited by Cornelia, his mother, or by Spurius Postumius, who was a rival of Tiberius. When the latter returned from his campaign



he did not own anything (Lk 20:20-26). These labels in contemporary Africa would imply rejection and expulsion. Jesus instead used them as teaching aids and as a method to provoke its victims to a change of attitude in their understanding of leadership. Analysing the language that Jesus used *vis-à-vis* his opponents, France (1990:22) and Desjardins (1997:75) conclude that he was the cause of the events that befell him. This may be a misinterpretation of Jesus' intention because Jesus' arrogant language was such that it instead appealed to consciences. He mostly used rhetorical answers, as well as an aggressive tone, in order to incriminate his opponents and prove them defeated (see Lk 20:1-8, 20-26, 27-40; 22:66-71). Although these opponents constantly sought to eliminate him, his approach was that of reformation, transformation and acceptance. He did not develop hatred for political and religious leadership in first-century Palestine; rather, he was against their use of institutions for selfish aims (Lk 19:45-48).

Jesus did not stand against the religion and the practices of the faith in which he grew, as suggested by Desjardins (see § 2.5.3 above). He disagreed with the misinterpretation and the misuse of religious and political institutions. For instance, he criticised the manipulation of texts for egoistic aims. In his opinion, the Jewish regulations must be respected as long as they take the interest of humans into consideration (Lk 13:15-16). He opposed the misinterpretation of God by human structures which gave a false impression of what God required of leadership. Jesus' teachings were contrary to leadership imbued with ethnic colouration of favouritism and exclusion. For him, leadership rests on reciprocal legitimation. While leaders

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and found that his hegemony was at stake because of the prowess of his rival, he engaged in a bold political measure, capable of arousing the people's expectations. Unfortunately, his brother Caius had published in a pamphlet that while Tiberius passed through Tuscany on his way to Numantia, he observed that his compatriots were in a situation of want and the country was full of barbarian slaves. Many other posters were pasted on porticoes, house-walls, and monuments, requesting Tiberius to recover the land for the interest of the poor. Foxes were also seen as being impure. A decree of Antiochus concerning Jerusalem and its temple stated that: "It is unlawful for any foreigner to enter the enclosure of the temple which is forbidden to the Jews, except to those of them who are accustomed to enter after purifying themselves in accordance with the law of the country. Nor shall anyone bring into the city the flesh of horses or of mules or of wild or tame asses, or of leopards, foxes or hares or, in general, of any animals forbidden to the Jews..." (Josephus, Ant. 12.146). Summarily, when Jesus spoke of "foxes" and "birds" (Lk 9:57), he referred to the atmosphere that surrounded Herod's leadership. It was a reign of social segregation, misery, cruelty and turmoil. For more on the sociological meaning of "fox" in the context of Jesus, read Oakman (2008:261-272).

need legitimation and empowerment from their followers, followers expect the legitimation of their support from leaders through their encouragements and openness. Jesus showed this example by exposing his ministry plan to his disciples and by explaining to them the various intricacies involved in leadership (Lk 9:18-22).

Jesus' approach to leadership was participatory and educative; based on respect for the "other". Even though he sometimes listened to his followers, he never took them for sycophants. He rebuked them when their faith was shaken (Lk 8:25; 9:41) and when they nursed false leadership ambitions (Lk 9:48; 22:24-27). He drew their attention to the abuse of power and the dangers of boasting (Lk 10:19-20). His teachings set the tone for true moral behaviour (Lk 6:27-42), the correct attitude towards wealth (Lk 12:13-21; 18:18-30), and guarded against dishonest leadership (Lk 12:35-48; 16:1-13). Jesus' leadership style of training and empowering his followers was an indication that leaders did not need to fear their post. It was a strategy that rather agrees with Meyer (2002:16), namely that effective leadership means that leaders should know their limits and consequently surround themselves with those who can do well what they cannot do at all.

Jesus did not fear opposition and criticism. Even though the orientation of his mission towards non-Jews brought hostility upon his leadership (Duling 2003:385), he never halted nor withdrew. Rather, he avoided falling into the devil's temptation (Lk 4:1-13; cf. Lk 17:1-4). Also, conflicts helped him to shape and define his mission. They were equally an aid for the understanding of the limitations of those who surrounded him. They enabled him to better communicate with his disciples. Summarily leadership, according to Jesus, must not be in the likeness of the Pharisees, the scribes, Caesar, Herod and Pilate. These are not good examples to be emulated in Africa, because they function as kings of the Gentiles, whose aim is authority, power and lordship. Conversely, Jesus recommended leadership in the portrait of the "Good Samaritan": Go and do likewise (Lk 10:37). It is servant leadership, which entails self-sacrifice. It is purposeful leadership because it focuses on the needs of those for whom leadership is meant.

### 7.5.5 Leadership and empowerment

Empowerment occupies an important position within the context of leadership. Whereas leaders are empowered by their followers to perform leadership responsibilities, followers expect empowerment from their leaders in order to contribute to leadership with confidence and assurance. In like manner, while it is necessary for followers to legitimate the leadership of their leaders, they themselves are well motivated when they know that the latter accept them as collaborators. Empowerment therefore grants confidence to both leaders and followers in the exercise of their respective functions. It is a means to ensure that mission continues after when leaders must have left office.

In Africa, social status is often measured in terms of a person's popularity and by the number of followers. It is the same with leadership. The strength of one's leadership is dependent upon the amount of reciprocal legitimation from leaders and followers, as well as the empowerment derived thereof. Contingent-transactional leadership theory agrees that leadership empowerment means the empowerment of the leaders by their followers and *vice-versa* (see § 6.4.3). In the African context, leaders are empowered through election, appointment or on the basis of hereditary consideration. On the other hand, followers gain their empowerment through leadership training, shared leadership, their engagement as partners and the availability of a fertile and supportive environment for creative thinking (Gill 2006:211, see also Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe 2002:32-34).

At his baptism (Lk 3:21-23) Jesus received empowerment from the Holy Spirit as a sign of acceptance from God (hierarchy). This was also an occasion for the public presentation and confirmation of his dual honourship (§ 6.3.2.1). During his ministry Jesus also received empowerment from his followers by means of the legitimation of his person and work (Lk 9:18-20; 23:47). In order to demonstrate his support for their ministry, he empowered the disciples by assigning them for important tasks (Lk 9:1-6, 52; 10:1-12; 19:29-35; 22:8-13), and through his practical teachings (Lk 22:14-22; cf. Lk 22:27). By engaging the disciples into an amicable dialogue, Jesus considered them as collaborators. The confidence that they derived from such relationship empowered them to be open to dialogue and to consult him when

they felt threatened (Lk 8:24), when they seemed not to understand (Lk 9:12-13), when they felt deficient (Lk 11:1) and when they were embarrassed by his death (Lk 24:12-27). Because of their cordial relationship the women were enticed to follow him to the cross (Lk 23:49) and thereafter to the tomb (Lk 23:54-24:3). Jesus also sought personal empowerment by constantly committing himself to his Father through prayer (Lk 3:21; 5:16; 9:29; 22:41).

Jesus' application of leadership empowerment is a challenge to African leaders, who rather than seek the empowerment of the electorate, find solace in occult societies and the military prowess of their respective countries. Jesus' example testifies to the importance of empowered followers. For instance, his arrest was delayed by the religious authorities because those who followed him became a natural hindrance (Lk 19:48; 20:6, 19, 26; 22:2). Secondly, the baton of mission was handed over to the disciples because they had hitherto been schooled in leadership principles (§ 6.4.3.2). Jesus knew the importance of leadership empowerment. By empowering his disciples, he ensured continuity and the success of future ministry. Consequently, he could tell them with confidence:

Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of all these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high.

(Lk 24:46-49)

### **7.5.6 Conclusion**

A contextual reading of leadership and conflict in Luke's gospel provides a wholesome definition of effective leadership, relevant for the African context. For Jesus, effective leadership means influencing the lives of people through self-spiritual empowerment for social development, economic improvement, political innovation, ecological awareness, as well as total moral transformation. In this respect, leadership can be described as an intricate activity because it influences human activities in all spheres of life. There is therefore no doubt that the present state of underdevelopment in Africa is principally caused by two issues relating to leadership. The first is related to

the problem of the poor understanding and wrong application of leadership (Shu 2004:8). Once people become leaders they either play the role of patrons towards citizens, or they play the role of clients vis-à-vis former colonial masters, their respective appointees or the hierarchy, as the case may be. Second, is about the wrong choice of leaders, coupled with the manner in which people become leaders. Leadership on the basis of friendship and ethnic connection cannot always be adequate, especially when the right people are expected to be put at the right places.

The practice of leadership in Africa indicates a sharp contrast with leadership according to Jesus. His leadership prescriptions challenge leadership practised by African leaders in all its aspects. For instance, there is need for African leaders to consider opposition and conflict as inherent to leadership and as important catalysts for leadership improvement. True and genuine leadership that will free Africa from its stalemate is selfless and patriotic leadership which is carried out in the fear of God alone and for the service of man. It is leadership that is full of vision and innovation; leadership built on sharing and the delegation power; leadership that substitutes fear with confidence; and leadership that is void of ethnic sentiments. In fact, it is leadership that is conditioned by real democratic principles.

## **7.6 AN AFRICAN HERMENEUTICAL READING OF LUKE 9:18-22 IN RELATION TO LEADERSHIP, CONFLICT AND IDENTITY**

### **7.6.1 Introduction**

As it has been observed in § 5.7 and § 6.5, Luke 9:18-22 occupies an important place within Luke's gospel with regard to Jesus' leadership and the conflict he faced as a result of his identity. When read with the lenses of the relationships that Jesus established in the gospel, it challenges contemporary understanding and application of leadership, as well as reflects on the way in which people respond to the question of Jesus' identity. An African hermeneutical reading of Luke 9:18-22 is a reflection on how Jesus' leadership approach challenges the clergy in their day-to-day activities, as witnesses to what Jesus said and did (Lk 24:46-49). Some of the conflicts that church leaders face today are similar to those that Jesus faced in the course of the relationships in which he was engaged in Luke's gospel (as announced

in Luke 9:18-22). Within the context of this study, the crowds in Luke's gospel will be likened in general to those being led by the clergy and in particular to congregational members. The disciples will be understood to mean church or congregational elders. Lastly, the Jewish elite referred to in Luke 9:22 will be compared both to the political authorities of Cameroon and its religious authorities. The clergy play the centre role in this hermeneutic reading of Luke 9:18-22, because they have assumed the legacy left by Jesus.

It is therefore a study from the perspective of the clergy's relationship with the congregation, the elders and all those who are stakeholders in ruling the society: the executive, the legislative, the judiciary and the religious.<sup>249</sup> Inspiration is drawn from the Cameroonian context, as well as the practice of the pastoral ministry within the context of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC).<sup>250</sup> The clergy's role, like that of Jesus, is that of social reformation through information, education and transformation. It is a kind of reformation that begins with the empowerment of individual members of the society. This is an endeavour to continue with the liberation process begun by Jesus. This means the commitment of those who have been liberated to take part in the liberation of others. In this way, a new community can be formed of people who have been saved to serve (Lk 10:6-9). Through education, the clergy provoke political, economic and social change within the society, enabling all peoples to put things right by correcting their past mistakes (see Lk 19:1-10). They equally define Jesus as the Christ who causes revolution within families and tribes, as well as the appeal to consciences. In fact, the church's mission is that of making the world to become an extended clan; that is, a new community of Jesus' fictive family.

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<sup>249</sup> Working from the background of a Protestant theologian, the word clergy is sometimes interchanged with the word "pastor". Pastor, in this case, is used as a generic term, referring to someone who takes care of God's sheep; be it in the Protestant tradition or in the Catholic tradition.

<sup>250</sup> The hermeneutic reading of Luke 9:18-22 is not exclusively about church leadership. Rather, church leadership has been chosen as a case study so as to elucidate the types of relationships that leaders can engage in, with those who surround and influence their leadership. Leaders always have a variety of collaborators who influence their leadership in one way or another. Consequently, all that is said of church leadership is applicable to secular leadership as well.



### **7.6.2 Luke 9:18-22 and the clergy's relationship with the congregation ('the crowds')**

The conversation between Jesus and his disciples in Caesarea Philippi opened with a question which explained his relationship with those who thronged him: "Who do the crowds say that I am" (Lk 9:18b). So far, Jesus had gained much fame through teaching and preaching ("I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose"; Lk 4:43); through his miracles of healing (Lk 4:38-41), raising the dead (Lk 7:14-15; 8:53-55); exorcism (Lk 8:26-39; 9:37-43; 11:14-23) and providence (Lk 9:10-17). These activities seemed to have created a false impression in the crowds. They might have made them to construct an image of Jesus that fitted with their personal expectations. Jesus certainly understood that his fame was understood and interpreted in terms of the social needs of the crowds, rather than in terms of who he was and what the focus of his mission was. Their speculations, as echoed by the disciples, effectively agreed with Jesus' suspicion of false loyalty. Even though the crowds had a glimpse of Jesus' identity, they rightly awarded legitimate praises with wrong intentions to the right person. This picture depicts the image of the clergy within the congregational setting today, where people are cramped with social, economic and political crisis.

The impact of the clergy within the congregation is contained in Jesus' assigned mission to the apostles: preaching, teaching and healing (Lk 9:1-6). Just as the crowds had an influence on Jesus' mission, congregational members and the public at large play a vital role in the clergy's activities. Inasmuch as they are a source of encouragement, they can flatter or derail the clergy through a variety of ways. Through the attribution of gorgeous titles, such as prophet and saviour, they cause the clergy to assume the position that does not belong to them. This becomes an occasion for self-aggrandisement and the acquisition of human pride, which Jesus condemns (Lk 11:43; 12:1; 20:46). Even though Jesus respected the speculations from the crowds, he did not fall into the temptation of claiming to be Elijah, John the Baptist or one of the prophets of old.

The second method of false and suspicious loyalty is by way of granting gifts to the clergy. During his ministry, Jesus gained from the hospitality of

Martha (Lk 10:38-42). Some of those who received healing either opted to serve him (Lk 4:39 9:38) or to follow him (Lk 8:2). He also agreed that “the labourer deserves his wages” (Lk 10:7). This is an indication that he recognised the award of gifts to the clergy as a sign of solidarity, hospitality, sharing and gratitude (Lk 9:3-6; Lk 10:8-10). In the early church, Jesus’ understanding of the award of gifts to the clergy was misinterpreted and misused by itinerant leaders as a means to exploit local congregations (Horrell 1999a:311). This attitude was a fundamental source of conflict between itinerant and resident leaders. Today it has many adverse effects. To start with, it is an attitude that makes the clergy mean. Secondly, it gives a wrong representation of Jesus as the Christ. Jesus does not only disagree with leaders who are lovers of money (Lk 16:14); he opposes those who use his name in order to exploit and extort from people who already look vulnerable and needy (Lk 20:46-47). He equally castigates those who use the church as a means for personal enrichment (Lk 19:45-48).

Today there is a new trend in the PCC, where congregational members applaud the clergy after they had delivered a sermon. There is nothing wrong in showing approval of what the clergy do. However, this is a false method of leadership legitimation because it serves as a double edge sword. It either implies acceptance or rejection, depending on the intentions of the clappers. Lastly, some congregational members are often overwhelmed when a clergy from their ethnic origin is either transferred or posted to their congregation. As an underlying intention, they expect to benefit some special favour from the clergy because of their shared human identity. They become friendly and exhibit false love, solidarity and sharing. Jesus was conscious of the composition of the crowds that followed him; they were both Jewish and non-Jewish. His praise for the Good Samaritan’s indiscriminate compassion designates his stance against ethnicity (Lk 10:37).

The clergy therefore need to be observant and assertive in order to detect the intentions of “the crowds”, who curiously sometimes pretend to know the clergy’s functions more than they themselves. Suspicious and unflinching loyalty from congregational members must call for self evaluation and investigation from the clergy: “Who do you say Jesus is?” The crowds that followed Jesus were a force to reckon with (Lk 19:47-48; 20:6, 19). In

Jerusalem they acclaimed him as King (Lk 19:37-38). Unfortunately, these were false impressions, because they had not grabbed the knot of Jesus' identity and his mission. For instance, in Nazareth his peers had shown an ambivalent attitude: "Is not this Joseph's son?" (Lk 4:22). Their attempt to derail Jesus failed because he knew his mission and so remained focus and unperturbed. This is an invitation to the clergy to know and strive towards accomplishing the legacy that had been handed over to the church by Jesus.

The pews have become passionate and demanding, in view of the present situation of misery (hunger, sicknesses, poverty) and the on-going spiritual search. It is a situation that has caused them to develop esteem and, at the same time, a lot of expectations from the clergy. As a result, most people have developed many experiences concerning the question of Jesus' identity; some of which could be misleading. For example, those facing the situation of violence, rape and homelessness are liable to identify Jesus as the Christ of violence. In such circumstances, the clergy is called upon to canalise and reshape such spontaneous conceptions into acceptable confessions of faith that enhance the faith of the believer, rather than draw boundaries of hatred and rejection. It is also their responsibility to assist believers to grow from their perceptions of who Jesus is to a concrete knowledge of what he does in human life. They need to assist people to rise from mere conceptions to concrete convictions about Jesus. Half-baked and prosperity teaching have continuously formed "skin Christians" who quickly fall victims of dissonance between what they are taught and the reality in which they live. That is why they sometimes easily return to their traditional beliefs whenever they are faced with unexplained difficulties. Believers who are not adequately empowered with the meaning of Jesus' identity become as distorted as the crowds that betrayed Jesus (Lk 22:47; 23:4). When all things seem to fail, they waver from their faith with the conception that they had been lured to follow the wrong person.

Jesus' dialogue approach, as well as his response to the question surrounding his identity, reflects the manner in which Christian teaching has to be carried out by the clergy. They are an indication that no one holds the monopoly of the response to Jesus' question: "Who do the crowds say that I am?" (Lk 9:18). It challenges the way of teaching catechetical classes and Bible

studies in congregations. In the twenty-first century Africa, the clergy can no longer only assist neophytes to parrot Peter's response: "Jesus is the Christ of God" (cf. Lk 9:20), without knowing the implications of such response. They must also be enabled to discover who Jesus is; and not only to retain and repeat responses from other people's experiences. To involve Christians in the reading and understanding of Scripture is what has been referred to as spiritual empowerment. People must be taught and empowered to interpret the signs of time by themselves and to grow out of ignorance (Artherton 1994:14), because the "evil generation" seems to persist. Each person has an experience to share; and a contribution to make with reference to the question of Jesus' identity. People know the truth of the gospel when they have been given the possibility to wrestle with it. In this context, the clergy is called upon to serve as facilitators or discussion leaders; and not as commanders or bosses (Taylor 1994:1).

### **7.6.3 Luke 9:18-22 and the clergy's relationship with congregational elders ("the disciples")**

From the dialogue in Luke 9:18-22 it is clear that Jesus did not rally the crowds to find out what they thought of his identity; rather, he enquired from his very close collaborators, the disciples. However, from the crowds' response, he seemed to have been motivated to ask the disciples: "But who do you say that I am" (Lk 9:20). This is a discussion that came at a very crucial moment of Jesus' ministry. First, it concerned his growing fame, fostered by his activities of preaching, teaching and healing. Second, it was due to the misconception inherent in this fame as already exhibited in Nazareth (Lk 4:22-30). Thirdly, it was about the wayward attitude of the disciples, since from when they were called. Fourthly, it concerned the antagonism that he already faced with the religious elite. Fifthly, it was a dialogue which served as a check of information. Jesus was about to conclude with his Galilean ministry; he still had the Jerusalem ministry ahead of him. Most importantly, Jesus wished to communicate his identity, as well as its implications, to his followers so that they do not remain unaware of the events that will befall him. Of course, this moment of sharing was necessary

because the disciples were to become legal representatives of his missionary vision.

Within the context of the congregation, this dialogue is similar to the dialogue between the pastor and his close collaborators, those who are congregational elders. Just like the disciples who followed Jesus, church elders are described by the Constitution of the PCC (1998:17) as helpers of the pastor. The variety of their respective professional backgrounds accounts for the rich experiences that they possess. In fact, they are a booster to their new ecclesiastical functions. Coming from within the congregations, they are more in contact with the grassroots than the pastor. In their daily routine the clergy are engaged in more or less four areas of responsibilities. They have sacramental, administrative, evangelistic and pastoral functions; all of which they cannot do alone (Taylor 1994:2). It is in this case that the contribution of congregational elders becomes imperative. It is therefore relevant for the clergy, once in a while, to enquire from the elders: “Who does the crowds and your selves say Jesus is?” (Lk 9:18, 19). For the clergy, this approach is a way of evaluating the content of their messages, as well as the effectiveness of their activities. It is also a methodology that assures the elders of their worth as the clergy’s daily companions.<sup>251</sup>

Jesus’ leadership style derived from this dialogue (as developed in § 6.5, above) is an inspiration to the clergy’s relationship with congregational elders in many respects. For instance, Jesus challenges the clergy to become more effective in leadership training. It is a process that requires courage, patience, endurance and understanding. In spite of the wayward attitude of the disciples, Jesus did not reject nor despise them. Rather, he kept moulding and admonishing them so that they become efficient for the future ministry. Leadership training equips elders and further empowers them to function well in the absence of the clergy (Krass 1992:104). As compared to the elders, the clergy know their mission better because they have been called and trained for that purpose. It is therefore incumbent upon them to constantly transmit the content of their ministry to the elders through training sessions. Through this approach, the clergy enable the elders to “know and understand” (see Lk

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<sup>251</sup> This approach is different from the normal administrative session meetings that the clergy often convene within the congregation.

9:13; 9:45, 49); if not, they will guess, doubt, misunderstand and misinterpret (see Lk 8:25b). Jesus is correct that a blind cannot lead the blind; else, both will fall into a pit (Lk 6:39). Ignorance kills leadership because it generates conflicts, doubts, suspicion and mistrust. Although Jesus' betrayal was purposeful, the training of elders is imperative; if not, they risk becoming distorted, even to the extent where Judas Iscariot found himself. One of the best methods of leadership training is the empowerment of the elders through Bible studies.

The Bible is an essential source of authority and power for an effective Christian leadership like that of the clergy/elders. In the Bible studies class the clergy enables the elders to understand Jesus' identity, as well as what it means for him to be the Christ. Failure to drill elders with the understanding of leadership from a Biblical perspective contributes in encouraging them to live a life of syncretism, just like some Christians do. This approach agrees with the dialogue approach through education. The fourth method of leadership empowerment is through the delegation of power. The delegation of power by the leader signifies confidence, love and trust. By assigning the disciples, Jesus enabled them to be creative and visionary, as well as be confident in their personal abilities and potentials: "You give them something to eat" (Lk 9:13). The best way to become an effective leader is by executing leadership tasks. The clergy therefore needs to create an appropriate leadership atmosphere with their collaborators so as to prepare them for future tasks. Leadership empowerment also means that the clergy shows proof of the fact that they understand and know their mission. Leaders who are easily swayed by the caprices of their followers would hardly accomplish their expected mission. Jesus never gave in to the pressure from his disciples to perform as an earthly king. Rather, he constantly persuaded them to understand that his leadership was different from that of "the kings of the Gentiles" (Lk 22:25). According to Jesus, leadership in the church must be void of following: violence and retaliation (Lk 9:55; 22:51); hatred and ethnic segregation (Lk 8:21); lordship and power (Lk 22:24-26); hypocrisy, pretence, exploitation, extortion and pride (Lk 11:37-52; 12:1; 20:45-47); material and monetary concerns (Lk 9:3; 10:4); fear (Lk 12:4-7, 32-34); hesitation (Lk 14:27-32) and anxiety (Lk 12:22-31). The presence of these vices rather signifies that church



leaders have not mastered the meaning of their leadership in the light of Jesus. Leadership in the likeness of Jesus is compassionate leadership: “Be compassionate, even as your Father is compassionate” (Lk 6:36; see also Lk 10: 25-37). Such leadership is that which overcomes all vices.

Above all, the clergy should be exemplarily prayerful, especially when the elders are spiritually weak (Lk 5:33; 9:18; 22:45-46). Jesus’ use of prayer was a catalyst to his mission and a preparation for the future ministry. It was his use of prayer that influenced the choice of future leaders (Lk 6:12-16), as well as the discussion on the question of his identity (Lk 9:18-22). It led the devil to be defeated (Lk 4:1-13) and at the same time inspired the dialogue with Elijah and Moses (Lk 9:28-36). Finally, it prepared him for his arrest, suffering, rejection and death, as well as his subsequent resurrection (Lk 22:39-42). In fact, prayer spiced Jesus’ leadership throughout his ministry.

In a nutshell, leadership success between the clergy and the elders depends on the level of empowerment that they accord to each other. It is such mutual empowerment which enables both to become effective leaders. It ensures sustainability, continuity and personal nourishment.

#### **7.6.4 Luke 9:18-22 and the clergy’s relationship with the “ruling elite”**

Principally, two other authorities constantly influence the clergy in their daily mission. The clergy are often influenced by the challenges from the political elite and those from the church’s hierarchy, respectively.

##### **7.6.4.1 Luke 9:18-22 and the clergy’s relationship with the “political elite”**

In Luke 9: 22 Jesus explained his identity with reference to the outcome of his relationship with the Jewish elite, who were the custodians of Jewish society. This account incriminated the elders, chief priests and the scribes as those who would suffer, humiliate, reject and kill him. It is a description which gave a false impression that Jesus’ report exonerated the Roman political elite, who paradoxically played a key role in the passion narrative. It is a false impression because the Jewish elite did not have the right of killing, unless this was legitimated by the Roman political authorities. By releasing Jesus to be killed, according to Luke’s story (Lk 23:25), Pilate and Herod simply joined

the Jewish religious elite as opponents to Jesus' person, as well as the ministry which he incarnated.

In effect, although the discussion between Jesus and the disciples concerned the events that already happened in Galilee, it was essentially focused on what will befall him in Jerusalem, the centre of political and religious power. It is in Jerusalem that the Jewish religious elite manipulated the legislature and connived with the executive and the judiciary in order to kill Jesus. The announcement of the resurrection contained in this declaration is a rejection of human ruling, their authority (the executive, the legislative and the judiciary), as well as the vindication of Jesus and the validation of his ministry. It is a projection of his heavenly reign and the recognition of his person and works. This confirmed the fact that leadership in the likeness of Jesus needs to grow beyond fear and anxiety (Lk 12:11-12; 21:12). Jesus' predictions also depicts the clergy's responsibility *vis-à-vis* the governing arm of the society, controlled by the executive, the legislative and the judiciary.

Within the context of the society, the clergy is the custodian of God's kingdom principles, manifested in the process of governance carried out by the political elite. Because of this active involvement, they cannot escape from "doing politics". However, this is not about partisan politics; rather, it is about the clergy's participation in ensuring the welfare of human beings. They are requested to abstain from partisan politics as representatives of the values, principles and presence of the reign of God (Botman 1997:74; *Cry justice* 1993:16)<sup>252</sup>. However, those who are interested in partisan politics are often advised to resign from their pastoral functions. Unfortunately, the clergy often face opposition from political authorities who consider them as intruders. In fact, the clergy cannot remain passive in view of the situation of chaos and misery that plague human society and only wait in order to criticise from the pulpits:

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<sup>252</sup> *Cry justice* is a collection of declarations made by the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon at the dawn of democracy in Cameroon in the early 1990s. It is a prophetic document that denounced both government and individual inhuman attitudes and predicted their outcome. Although this document created sensation within the ranks of the government, some of its predictions, such as the ecological crisis and the increasing rate of poverty and misery, have become real.

Let us not try to sever, for they are inseparable, those principles which affect the problems of earth from those which affect the kingdom of heaven. All unrighteous government whatever, all that sets itself against the order and freedom of man, is hostile to Christ's government, is rebellion against Him, in whatever name and by whatsoever instruments it is administered.

(Maurice, in Atherton 1994:12)

Ela (1986:79) empowers the clergy in their task to the society in the following words:

As all else is organized to strangle the last hope of justice by torture and repression so as to guarantee the multinationals, the banks, the industries, the mines, and the super-farms the most efficient possible exploitation of the country and the people, the Church should once more, by the voice of the bishops (clergy) of Africa, become the voice of the great, silenced masses.

(Ela 1986:79, my addition in brackets)

It is the responsibility of the clergy to remind the political elite of the various mechanisms which they still deploy as a contribution to suffer, humiliate, reject and kill Jesus. Inasmuch as the events that befell Jesus are located in history, they are still enacted today in various forms. For instance, today, the political elite still contribute to humiliate and kill Jesus through the practice of bad policies, misappropriation, extortion, exploitation and corruption. Jesus' response to the Roman political elite remains an inspiration for the clergy. Although he disagreed with the ruling elite, he did not dismiss the need for rule and leadership. He reformed their way of ruling through practical teachings. When he was questioned on the issue of the paying of taxes, his answer was rhetorical (Lk 20:20-26). When he was questioned by Pilate whether he was the King of the Jews, his response was not explicit: "You have said so" (Lk 23:3). Before Herod, he offered quiet-thinking responses (Lk 23:9). This is an attitude that could have caused reformation and transformation within Pilate and Herod. Regrettably, they reacted with indifference. Their reaction implied that they still did not understand Jesus' identity and leadership. It is in this vein that the clergy have the mandate to continue Jesus' mission towards political leaders. In the execution of these functions, church leaders need not fear martyrdom because those who seek to embody the principles of the kingdom in public life are liable to become

vulnerable to attacks from all spheres of society (Moltmann 1993:130; Paeth 2008:165).

#### **7.6.4.2 Luke 9:18-22 and the clergy's relationship with the "religious elite"**

Within the context of this study, church hierarchy constitutes the religious elite because they are the custodians of the church's tradition. For example, in the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC), Scripture inspires its hierarchy to define the goal and the mission of the entire church. In this case, the clergy are the direct representatives of the Church within their parishes. As a matter of principle, the clergy owe respect, honour and loyalty to the hierarchy. In return, they expect support and empowerment from the hierarchy. In Luke 9:18-22, the Jewish religious elite were reported as Jesus' principal opponents. Although they all stood for the same cause of interpreting God's holiness, they differed both in their respective approaches and in their understanding. Consequently, they refused to legitimate Jesus' identity because he did not operate according to their expectations.

The above description is a bit different from the present day context. Although the Jewish religious elite and Jesus both had a focus on the understanding and interpretation of God's holiness, it was essentially about the reformation of the old religion (Judaism). This justifies why they disagreed at the level of the *status quo*. Secondly, although the religious elite were the custodians of religion, they were not Jesus' direct hierarchy. Jesus did not depend on them; instead, they expected him to validate their leadership. And because the contrary happened, they took him for an enemy and caused his death. From an emic perspective, this is an issue that strikes the reader of Luke's gospel; that the Jewish religious elite antagonised Jesus rather than protect him. The issue at stake in this study is that of the enmity, the antagonism and the misunderstanding that often exist between the clergy and their highest authorities in the context of applying what God requires of the church today. Such enmity is often translated through open confrontation, suspensions, dismissals, accusations and counter accusations and cessations. Jesus did not form a break-away religion; rather, he reformed Judaism from within. He did not dismiss nor sanction religious leaders.

Rather, he accepted them but condemned their practices. One of the errors in the church hierarchy today is that of evaluating the clergy operating from the wrong premise. Their worth is considered in terms of the numerical growth, as well as the financial increase that they provoke within their parishes. It is an evaluation that lays little or no emphasis on spiritual growth. This was probably the error of John the Baptist when he wished to acknowledge Jesus' presence by evaluating him the wrong way: "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another" (Lk 7:19). Jesus' response implies that success in mission is to be evaluated in terms of its effects, and not in terms of preconceived expectations.

The tension between Jesus and the Jewish religious elite, implied in Luke 9:22, depicts the deviant attitude from the religious elite of contemporary society. Firstly, it is about the clergy's attempt to mutilate texts in order to suit their egos. Secondly, it is a pointer to the misuse of the church as an institution for personal enrichment. Today there is an increasing interest in money making rather than spirituality. Thirdly, it is a warning against power tussles among the clergy working within the same system. The untidy relationship between the clergy and the hierarchy is often translated into a fight of personal interest. For instance, the hierarchy sometimes have their demands that clash with the realities of the terrain. As a result, the clergy become torn between what the Bible requires, the realities of the context, their personal convictions and the demands of the hierarchy. Lastly, it is about the contribution of present day's clergy in humiliating, rejecting and killing Jesus. In fact, Jesus' reaction would not be different if he were to come back to physical life. Fortunately, he left a legacy to be emulated by the clergy. By alluding to his resurrection, he encouraged the clergy to remain hopeful and perseverant when threatened with opposition, ridicule, rejection and death from the political elite and other colleagues. After all, suffering, humiliation and rejection may be temporary (three days); life lasts forever, with Jesus being carried up into heaven from where he reigns (Lk 24:51).

#### **7.6.5 Conclusion: Luke 9:18-22 and the pastoral ministry**

The conversation between Jesus and his disciples in Luke 9:18-22 is essentially about the intricacy of the pastoral ministry. For example, most

leaders often count more on their legitimation by the hierarchy while minimising the input from their followers. Jesus benefited the legitimation of his Father (Lk 3:21-23; 9:35), that of his followers (Lk 9:19-20), as well as that of those who were hitherto considered as “outsiders” (such as the centurion; Lk 23:47). The configuration of the disciples mentioned in Galilee (Lk 9:18-22), was enlarged to include all of his followers (see § 5.2, above), including, for example, women (Lk 24:6-8). By inference, leaders have the responsibility of exercising servant leadership to God (hierarchy), to their followers, and to the world at large. As servants, church leaders have a responsibility towards one another; towards the church; and towards the world. Their task is that of explaining the meaning of Jesus’ identity as the Christ (Krass 1992:24). It is a legacy of service, left by Jesus.

The pastoral ministry is that of risk bearing, suffering and rejection. The clergy are the target of political authorities and their own hierarchy when they do not seem to comply with their expectations. Jesus gave his life as a price of leadership. It is therefore strange when leaders shun conflict instead of embracing it and striving to make use of it. False accusation, demagoguery, malice and contempt seem to be some natural traps to which the clergy must be ready to confront. Besides, for effective ministry, the clergy of the twenty-first century need to beware of secularism and the misuse of pastoral titles. They need to let their presentation of Jesus as the Christ march with their own attitude. Their appearance in public must push people to perform acts of repentance in the likeness of Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10).

From the above hermeneutic reading of leadership and conflict in Luke’s gospel, there are several ways by which leaders approach conflict from a wrong direction. Opposition and conflicts grow increasingly when leaders rather struggle to attract public sympathy or when they look for scapegoats. It is an approach that encourages the creation of factions and dissenting camps. When leaders fight opposition by seceding from the main structure or by dismissing, transferring and rejecting opposing factions, they equally postpone conflict rather facing it up front. Leaders further face the worse situation when they function on the basis of a divide-and-rule system. This is a system of leadership that plants seeds of discord rather than uproot them. Leaders face conflict from the wrong side when they seek the support of the



secular judiciary without having exhausted Biblical prescriptions (Lk 6:37). Jesus' advise is emphatic: "As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drags you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison" (Lk 12:58). It is indeed an error to fight conflict and opposition with falsehood, flattery and unrealistic promises or to fall prey to ethnic sentiments. Leadership, opposition and conflicts are inseparable. Consequently, they need to be managed with a lot of care and tact.

Most often, conflict within the context of leadership arises as a result of factors such as envy, the evil eye, suspicion, mistrust, misunderstanding, ignorance and misinterpretation. Effective leaders revoke these shortcomings through a variety of mechanisms. One of the best ways to face conflict is by adopting a compassionate attitude. This refers to compassion for mission, as well as compassion for all the stakeholders involved in the leadership process. Inspired by compassion, leaders build viable relationships of understanding through dialogue. The dialogue approach enables leaders to respect their collaborators, as well as acknowledge that their opinion is not always final. Each individual within the community has a role to play; no matter how minimal it could be (Taylor 1994:1). Dialogue also enhances trust, confidence and assurance in leadership. In this approach, leaders and followers seek mutual legitimation by investigating and evaluating each other. Through evaluation they are both educated on their deficiencies. Leaders evade or manage conflicts adequately when they treat everyone without bias and when they show knowledge of their mission by being assertive, alert, focus, purposeful and committed. Such leaders do not build on falsehood nor do they surround themselves with stooges and sycophants. Above all, in servant leadership, the leaders resort to work and manage opposition and conflict as part of leadership.

## **7.7 CONCLUSION**

From a socio-cultural, political and economic context, Africa is closer to the context of Luke's gospel than any context from the West or America. Just as it was the case with Lukan context, the African response to the question: "Who is the Christ?" can only be discovered in terms of who he is and how he

intervenes in responding to the social, political and economic realities of the African context. This is, however, a difficult task because in Biblical interpretation it is sometimes difficult to translate concepts that are not part and parcel of a traditional worldview into its system of beliefs (Mbiti 1994:28). Taylor agrees with this difficulty when he argues that:

Christ has been presented as the answer to the questions a white man would ask, the solution to the needs that Western man would feel, the Saviour of the world of the European world-view, the object of adoration and prayer of historic Christendom. But if Christ were to appear as the answer to the questions that Africans are asking, what would he look like? If he came into the world of African cosmology to redeem Man as Africans understand him, would he be recognizable to the rest of the Church Universal? And if Africa offered him the praises and petitions of her total, uninhibited humanity, would they be accepted?

(Taylor 1963:16)

This assertion implies that Christianity is essentially a “white man” religion, which is not true. In which case, Christ would be a “white man” God. The fact that Christ’s mission was championed by the “white man” does not mean that he owns the monopoly of the Biblical interpretation of Jesus’ identity and its implications in the life of the believer. Rather, it simply places the “white man” as accomplishing Jesus’ commission to the disciples (Lk 24:47-48).

A hermeneutic reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke, indicates that life in Africa has been influenced by two worldviews: the African worldview and an external worldview characterised by its contact with Europe and North America as a result of colonisation. This situation is partly responsible for the African attitude of revolt, agitation and conflicts encouraged by tribalism and ethnicity. Exposure to the outside world has also introduced the African to foreign ideologies such as individualism, civilisation and democracy. These in their turn, have resulted into vices such as corruption, pollution, unemployment, ecological crises, drug abuse, injustice, moral collapse, homelessness and epidemics such as HIV/AIDS. It is in this context that the response to Jesus’ question: “Who do the crowds say that I am” (Lk 9:18) is sought by way of contextualisation.

From the above analyses an African contextualised reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke’s gospel has illumined the Lukan text

to appear in a new light because it has been interpreted from within a new context. This reading has also facilitated the discovery of new responses as a result of new questions emanating from the texts' contact with new realities. It is a reading that permits the new African reader to identify with the text in a more convincing manner. It has also been an approach that has opened up new perspectives on the text, as well as broken up the myth of established readings resulting from traditional exegetical approaches.

One of the reasons for a contextual reading of the Lukan text is an attempt to associate theology with the immense wretchedness and misery which surrounds the African continent (Stinton 2006:50). Such reading is aimed at fitting Jesus' identity within the context of African worldview. This struggle has been the wish of African theologians who have sought to identify Jesus at home with the Africans as the Christ. Unfortunately, their attempt has been faulty in a sense because the models that have been used in this process have rather projected Jesus' human character at the detriment of the divine reality that he incarnated. Even though, Jesus suffered rejection and humiliation and was killed as the Son of man, he remained "the Christ of God" (Lk 9:22). This is the true picture of the Christ that needs to be presented faithfully in all contexts.

Notwithstanding, the African context offers a rich background for the understanding of Jesus' identity. The various models of African Christologies agree with the role of Jesus within the context of suffering Africans. There is no doubt that misery has contributed to a rereading of the Bible in order to discover how the Christ of God attends to human condition. Yet, some basic precautions need to be taken into consideration. For example, even though the historical Jesus was a Jew, the Christ who was anointed and raised from the dead transcends the particularities of human ethnicity in order to become present in all human experiences and contexts. In this way, the name "Christ" becomes the function that Jesus occupies in individual lives, responding to individual situations and creating an indelible impact of hope in the restoration process of Africa.

Hence, for the African, the question "who is the Christ?" could become more specific to address individual punctual situations: "Who is the Christ in my circumstances?" This reformulation leads to several models of

identification because Christ is identified as a result of personal encounter and personal conviction. The Jesus who never fades is the Christ who intervenes in all life's situation. Secondly, lasting Christology is that which derives from the thought expression of the community and is transformed into valuable theological thinking. In this case, spontaneous theology stands as an adequate alternative form of theology liable to solve African problems. It is theology that is born out of the worries of the African community. In like manner, community participatory theology intervenes as a means to empower Africans to face African problems themselves. In other words, African Christology must result in the development of a self-sustainable theology in order to curb the problem of tribalism, abortion, corruption, injustice, poverty, the problems of unemployment and homelessness and the responsible use of money. However, it would be a utopia to think that the study on Jesus' identity can lead to the discovery of an ideal Christianity (Lumbala 1994:78).

In this venture, contemporary study on the question of Jesus' identity must guard against the definition of a Christ who instead becomes a barrier of separation between individuals of the new context and people from other cultural contexts. Conversely, there is need for other contexts to recognise that no context can claim the monopoly of a universal understanding of Jesus' identity and the conflicts that he faced in the course of his leadership as the Christ. Christ can only be discovered in the fullness of the diversity of the various convictions that individuals have, with respect to their contextual realities.

## Chapter 8

### The “gospel of conflict” according to Luke

*The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For which is the greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at table? But I am among you as one who serves.*

(Luke 22:25-27)

#### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in § 4.4.1, this Chapter is the final phase of the research on the question of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke’s gospel. It is a review of the gospel in terms of the conflicts that Jesus faced during his leadership as a result of his identity. From an empirical perspective, there seems to have been growing interest in the study of leadership in recent years. This quest may be influenced by the fact that many more people are developing an ambition to become effective leaders.<sup>253</sup>

Jesus’ leadership in Luke’s gospel, as well as the conflicts in which he was engaged because of his identity, has been dealt with in Chapter 2. Five research gaps emerged from this study. It was observed that:

- So far, no serious studies had been carried out on Luke 9:18-22 as an independent sub-unit within Luke’s gospel in general. Even when this was done, the approach had been that of the traditional historical-critical approach.
- Peter’s response to the question of Jesus’ identity has always been considered as the climax of Luke 9:18-22, at the detriment of the responses from the crowds.
- Sociological (even historical and literary) studies of Luke’s gospel have not often related Jesus’ identity with the various conflicts that he faced in Luke’s gospel. In this vein, Christians have often been trained to parrot Peter’s response in Luke 9:20, without understanding its consequences and without being given the chance to reflect on personal experiences.

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<sup>253</sup> Meyer (2002:25) is correct that “God has put the same potentials in us that he has put in anybody else”. This implies that everyone is born a potential leader. Consequently, innate potentials within individuals simply need to be stimulated through education, interaction, sharing; delegation of power and by grooming others for effective leadership.

- There is need for relevant theology that enables people to be conversant with the faith that they profess, as they participate in finding solutions to present day crisis.
- The last research gap was the lack of an African hermeneutical reading of leadership, conflict and identity in Luke by way of contextualisation.

The first research gap has been attended to in Chapters 3 and 4. In Chapter 3 emphasis was laid on the narrative function of Luke 9:18-22 within the macro-context of Luke's narrative (§ 3.2.4). From the studies discussed it is clear that this passage remains crucial for the understanding of Jesus' identity, his leadership, the mission that he pursued, as well as the controversies he faced. In view of its positioning, it constitutes a point of reference for the rest of the narrative because it summarises the Galilean ministry and sets the tone for the Jerusalem ministry. In Chapter 4 the question of methodology was put under the magnifying glass. The association between a narratological and a social scientific analysis was discussed as complementary approaches to historical-critical analysis. This combination has rendered the study of historical events in this thesis, as well as its socio-cultural context an interpretive and interesting activity. In this vein, the importance of models and theories in studying leadership and conflicts in Luke was highlighted in § 3.5.2.2 and reemphasised in § 4.2 & 4.3. These models illuminate the past and enhance the understanding of the conflicts that surrounded Jesus' identity and leadership in Luke's gospel.

The results of the emic reading done in Chapter 5 indicate that Jesus gave credence both to the speculations from the crowds and Peter's testimony. From this perspective, the place of Luke 9:18-22 within the macro-context of Luke's gospel has been revisited, with reference to the relationship between Jesus' identity and the conflict in which he was engaged. An emic reading of this passage has explained the relationship between Jesus and his contemporaries in terms of their misinterpretation of his identity. Without dismissing the personifications from the crowds, Jesus explained their limitations and indicated the implication of Peter's testimony by offering a complementary response. In this light, he validated the crowd's conjectures



and Peter's response as an emanation from what they observed. Consequently, the strength of the pericope lies in Jesus' complementary remarks, with the crowds' conjectures and Peter's declaration bearing an equal weight. This is the point where the second research gap has been addressed. Besides, with reference to the popular assumption that "the crowd that sang hosanna in the highest to Jesus was the same crowd that shouted 'crucify him,'" the emic reading has proven the contrary. The two events (Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem and the crucifixion) are very distinct, with two different character groups that should not be understood mistakenly.

The third research gap has been addressed within the context of the etic reading in Chapter 6. This etic reading concluded that conflict is inherent to leadership; and leadership implies an individual who embodies an identity.<sup>254</sup> In this vein, there is a clear relationship between Jesus' identity and the antagonism which he faced with his adversaries. The findings from both the emic reading and the etic reading of Luke 9:18-22 agree that all through Galilee, Jesus' ministry was animated by the question: "Who is this?" This question x-rayed the tension that was developed inwardly by Jesus' adversaries. This idea has further been buttressed by the fact that Luke's gospel was written within the context of an agonistic society (Malina 1996a:64). Consequently, Jesus' approaches in curbing conflict were analysed and prescribed as adequate ways of dealing with conflict that erupt within the context of leadership. By destroying the myth of social control, Jesus proved that no one is indispensable in leadership. Therefore the idea that leadership will collapse if certain persons were no longer leaders, is false (§ 6.3.4.1). Through the method of de-categorisation Jesus dismantled bridges of division, hatred, and exclusion and rebuilt a category-free-society (§ 6.3.4.2). He equally challenged the old structure of society, based on

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<sup>254</sup> Each individual embodies three possible selves or identities: the private, the public and the collective. Each of these identities depends on the goals that people set for themselves and/or the community to which they belong (Abrams 1996:146). In their private selves, individuals know their own traits, attitudes, feelings and behaviour. The collective self is when people acknowledge that life is relevant in terms of the relationships that one establishes with one another. This is common within the context of a dyadic community. The public self is when people are called upon to exercise public responsibilities. Hence, they need public appraisal, which either comes in the form of legitimation or delegitimation.

ethnicity and established an inclusive society – the kingdom of God, whose credentials are dependent on faith in Jesus.

Thirdly, his approach in the light of the theory of “similarity-attraction”, is a method which enables conflicting parties to focus more on aspects that unite; rather than speculating on those that divide (§ 6.3.4.2). A recapitulation of leadership as understood by Jesus has been offered in § 6.4.3.2. In the place of authoritative leadership, leadership by covetousness and corruption and leadership by coercion and power (§ 6.4.2.1), Jesus prescribes compassionate, servanthood, participatory and purposeful leadership. The use of conflict and leadership theories also made it clear that in leadership the decision to innovate must be accompanied with the readiness to bear opposition. Finally, opposition in Luke’s gospel led to the crucifixion of Jesus as he had predicted. From an etic point of view Luke seems to discourage the speculation around the question: who killed Jesus? Neither the Jewish elite nor the Roman elite are to be held as sole responsible. Even though it occurred as a necessity (Lk 9:22; 24:26, 46), the gospel seems to incriminate people of all generations. It is in this way that Jesus’ death for every individual becomes a commitment and a responsibility for stewardship towards one another and towards creation.<sup>255</sup>

The problem of relevant theology was treated in Chapter 7. From a contextual point of view, Jesus valorises personal experience in the process of doing theology. However, his compliments in Luke 9:22 are a warning against the dangers and limitations of such an approach. In this regard, Migliore (1980:45) is correct that Peter’s attitude in Luke 9:20 implies that all Christological titles are both an aid and an obstacle to an understanding of who Jesus is, as well as the meaning of salvation.

From a hermeneutical point of view, three issues have been dealt with, in Chapter 7. First, some African socio-cultural values that breed conflict were examined (§ 7.2); followed by an evaluation of some African models aim to identify Jesus as the Christ (§ 7.4.3). Finally, an attempt was made to offer an African response to the question: “Who is the Christ” (§ 7.4.4)? In this regard

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<sup>255</sup> While for Borg (2006:271) the Romans are to be blamed for Jesus’ death, Schmidt (1983; Carter 2006:x) and Cassidy (1983) accuse the Jews. In New Testament scholarship this debate seems obsolete because it shows a lack of focus on human responsibility and human participation to contemporary world crises.

two sketches have been proposed: spontaneous theology (§ 7.4.4.3.1) and community participatory theology (§ 7.4.4.3.2). These approaches agree that it does not suffice only to testify that Jesus is the Christ. Such a response must be accompanied with a strategy which empowers and equips every individual for the mission that was handed over to the apostles; and which has been passed on to the church and to its individual members today.

As stated in Chapter 2, one of the objectives of this study has been to diagnose, explain, interpret and narrow the chasm between leadership and conflict within the African society (and elsewhere). This study has shown that leaders should not dread conflict when it arises; conflict can be used as a positive ingredient to societal change and innovation. Consequently, in what follows, Luke's gospel will be reviewed as a "gospel of conflict."

## **8.2 WHO IS THE CHRIST? THE GOSPEL OF CONFLICT ACCORDING TO LUKE**

### **8.2.1 Introduction**

According to Malina and Neyrey (1991b:64) Jesus' ministry was "a career fraught with conflict from start to finish" (see also Borg 2006:160). The results of the emic and etic readings of Luke as presented above agree that Luke employs conflict stories in order to achieve his goal of updating Theophilus about the truth concerning the things of which he had been informed (Lk 1:4). Proper attention has so far not been given to this aspect in Lukan studies (Hultgren 1979:19). These readings have also disagreed with Green (1995:65), who suggests that the theme of conflict is only deeply rooted in the opening chapters of Luke's gospel. In fact, Jesus' ministry attracts opposition and conflict from the "early beginnings," where conflict is declared (Lk 1:1-3:28), to the ascension, where new perspectives are defined as a continuation of conflict (Lk 22:1-24:53).

In what follows, four issues will be addressed to summarily justify the point of view that Luke's gospel can be seen as the "good news of conflict". Firstly, as an aid to define and explain conflict, Luke focuses on Jesus' leadership and identity through the question: "Who is this?" At the end of the gospel, the centurion offers an alternative response that will be treated below (§ 8.2.2). Secondly, the handing over of the missionary baton by Jesus to the

disciples will also be discussed as the transfer of conflicts from John the Baptist to Jesus; and from Jesus to the disciples. As such, conflict in Luke is continuous and not closed. Thirdly, the story of Jesus is also the story of salvation that was finalised only through conflict and opposition. As a result, Jesus' death brought about repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Finally, his attitude of acceptance will also be analysed as a way of appreciating conflict and leadership as positive compliments (see Cunningham 1997, Desjardin 1997; Van Eck 2009a:9).

### **8.2.2 Conflict and identity: The centurion's confession**

The place of legitimation within the context of leadership was emphasised in § 3.3.1.3. It was argued that in Luke's gospel Jesus' leadership was legitimised twice by divine agents (Lk 3:21-22; 9:35) and twice by human agents (Lk 9:19-20; 23:47). A special place was then accorded to the centurion's declaration (Lk 23:47) because it came at the close of Jesus' earthly mission. This legitimation cancelled all the conflicts in which Jesus had been involved, as well as inaugurated a new era with new types of conflicts. It is in this vein that Tyson (1986:x) is correct in describing conflict as a literary theme in Luke's gospel.

The immediate context of the centurion's avowal is cosmic manifestations following Jesus' death: the light of the sun failed while the temple curtain got torn (Lk 23:45). From a customary point of view, these cosmic manifestations were an indication that Jesus' death had been quick and brief, unlike the normal traditional long process.<sup>256</sup> Consequently, the tearing down of the curtain confirmed Jesus as "God of the temple" (Karris 1985:106). In the same way, the reaction from the sun seemed to suggest that Jesus' crucifixion was a sign of human injustice.<sup>257</sup> The centurion was certainly familiar with the interpretation of these events. As a response, he praised God for Jesus.

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<sup>256</sup> In the Jewish tradition death and burial was a lengthy process (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:347). It was therefore irregular for Jesus to have died only at a moment in time

<sup>257</sup> With a backing from Old Testament scripture, Karris (1985:105) affirms that in terms of Jewish belief the failure of the sun was usually associated with God's act of deliverance from injustice (see e.g., Jl 2:31; Am 8:4-6). The centurion was most probably conversant with this interpretation.

The larger context of the centurion's declaration is Jesus' ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem with both the Jewish council and the Roman rulers constantly at his trial. This is buttressed by the use of the imperfect of ἤλθον in the expression οὐκ ἀληθεύσας οὐδέ τοις δικαίοις ἤλθον. It denotes a report of repeated actions in the past. Effectively, Jesus' ministry had so far been that of confrontations with both cosmic and human agents. The centurion therefore pronounced Jesus innocent from social, religious and political charges for which he had been persecuted and prosecuted. Firstly, as a verdict in favour of Jesus' social innocence, it is a protest against the disloyalty of the Jewish peasants who had not only doubted Jesus' identity in Nazareth; but who had equally rejected him (Lk 4:22-30). In Jerusalem, they (the οὐκ ἔλασσαν and the λαοὶ) even connived with the religious authorities to deliver him up for crucifixion. Secondly, the centurion wished to publicly differ with the religious defiance for which Jesus had been accused in Galilee. His testimony attested to Jesus' source of authority that had been questioned in Jerusalem (Lk 20:1-2). For him, Jesus is not a religious rival with a questionable character. Thirdly, it is a new verdict which contrasts with Jesus' picture that has been painted from his arrest to the crucifixion. Jesus is not a criminal; he had not been subversive, he had not been a "pretender" or "a deceiver". In fact, he did not violate the rules that preserved the society's solidarity and identity. He was indeed "innocent". Therefore, from a political point of view, the centurion declared Jesus δικαίον.

The centurion's pronouncement has several implications within the context of this study. Firstly, it is a recapitulation of Jesus' identity and his leadership activities. Secondly, it is a confirmation of Luke 4:18-19 in general and Luke 9:22, in particular (see the suffering servant in Is 52:13-53:12; 61). In fact, it is a recapitulation of the gospel. Luke's report in Luke 4:16-30 does not find its significance in Jesus' rejection of the Jews (because he refuses to perform a miracle). Rather, it shows the Jews' rejection of Jesus (Franklin 1994: 229). Hence, the centurion's remarks come as a confirmation of the legitimation of Jesus' dual honourship proclaimed and reiterated at baptism and at the transfiguration. When the heavens opened both at baptism and during the transfiguration, Jesus' identity and leadership were legitimated by the divine. He was then introduced into the Galilean ministry and the

Jerusalem ministry. It is in like manner that the tearing down of the temple curtain is symbolic (Lk 23:45). It gives way for human legitimation at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry. As a summary of his missionary activities, Jesus who was born with kingly credentials remains innocent at the end (see Lk 1:31-35).

The centurion's pronouncement is also a declaration that x-rays human errors in appreciating Jesus' leadership and the mission which his identity incarnated, including the conflicts he faced. According to Evans (2001:510), the centurion confessed of Jesus what he should confess of the Roman emperor. In fact, he did what all the other human characters who followed Jesus failed to do. With this declaration he therefore shifted his loyalty from the Roman emperor to Jesus. It is thus a mockery to human inability to remain loyal to Jesus. In this vein, it is a correction to what was expected of Pilate (Lk 23:4, 14, 22), Herod (cf. Lk 23:15), the disciples, the Jewish peasantry and the Jewish elite. The centurion appreciated the fact that, in spite of conflict and opposition, Jesus withstood the dissonant atmosphere that characterised his leadership.

The centurion's verdict was equally another personal confession of faith in the likeness of the crowds' and Peter's (Lk 9:19-20). It testified to what he had "seen" (*o(r)a&w*) and experienced personally. It was also a confirmation of the criminal's testimony (Lk 23:41). Jesus' activities, as well as cosmic manifestations, have served as a source of revelation. It is therefore a legitimation from personal experience! He has been opportuned to witness the miraculous deeds which Herod had wished to see but could not (Lk 23:8). It is a result of his personal experiences of the life of conflict that Jesus had lived from the beginning of his ministry. Having observed all the events that marked Jesus' ministry, disfiguring him and dishonouring him, the centurion had become a witness, and so could testify with faith that Jesus was a *di&kaioj*; innocent and righteous, indeed (Esler 1989:203). Innocence and righteousness denote an acquittal from a crime. And for sure, Jesus' leadership had been marred with false allegations that manifested themselves in the form of conflicts. Therefore, within the context, the centurion's proclamation is fitting. Luke had been the gospel of conflict. Having seen God's manifestation, as well as Jesus' steadfastness in his leadership



towards fulfilling God's purpose, he restored Jesus' dignity from a human point of view.

Finally, and most importantly, within a context where honour and shame were pivotal values of the society (see § 6.2.2.1), Jesus' innocence eventually meant a re-launch of conflicts. Viewed from this angle, Jesus' death defines another situation of challenge-riposte where he had become a victor. In such a context, retaliation was obviously pending. The declaration of honour conferred on Jesus was a trigger to new conflicts.<sup>258</sup> The centurion's remarks will further be approved by God through Jesus' resurrection. By implication, human and divine legitimation have both approved of Jesus' identity and leadership. In fact, God had "overturned the death sentence" (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:348) that had been declared by earthly authorities, and joined the centurion in declaring Jesus innocent. It is a vindication which fulfils the predictions of Mary's *Magnificat* (Karris 1985:95). This is, however, not surprising, because Jesus had earlier predicted his death and his eventual vindication in at least four different instances (Lk 9:22; 44; 17:25; 18:31-33); describing these events as a necessity (Lk 9:22; 17:25; 24:26, 46). Notwithstanding, the centurion's ruling cancelled the adversity between Jesus and his contemporaries and re-launched the debate. Henceforth, Jesus is expected to be listened to and understood in his intentions and not necessarily in his actions (Lk 9:35).

In a nutshell, the centurion's remarks are fundamental, because they came from one of the most human authoritative and respectful voices. It is attested that "as a rule the best men in the army were promoted to this rank" (Polybius, in Plummer 1977:539). It is a testimony that approves the conflicts that Jesus faced as a necessary compliment to leadership. Conflicts led Jesus to reform, transform and innovate. It was a reform that concerned both individuals and society at large. Hence, the centurion's declaration does not only summarise Jesus' person and leadership; it also defines the way forward; he remains a *δικαίον*. It marks a new beginning. This is testified by the fact that the gospel, which started with Zechariah in the temple (Lk 1:5) ends with the disciples, still in the temple (Lk 24:53). This is an inauguration

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<sup>258</sup> In this case, the remark that honour was considered as the core of the soul within first-century Palestine must be taken into consideration (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:369).

of a new beginning of missionary conflicts. The model of leadership left by Jesus in Luke is that of risk bearing and suffering; and not that of comfort: “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head” (Lk 9:58) – it is a mission of insecurity and discomfort.

### **8.2.3 Leadership: The transfer of conflict to the disciples**

Four character groups are involved in the transfer of leadership in Luke’s gospel. These are John the Baptist, Jesus, Jesus’ disciples and the invisible presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ baptism fell within the context of the ministry of John the Baptist, where Jesus became John’s legal successor from the point of view of ministry. It was a baptism that ushered him into a new ministry begun by John. In this respect, Jesus’ baptism could also be understood as an initiation into conflict situations similar to those which John already faced. Two declarations from the gospel make a blend between John’s ministry and Jesus’ ministry as that of pain and conflict. The first is Simeon’s observations: “Behold, this child is set for the fall and the rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed” (Lk 2:34-35). The second is Herod’s remark; “John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?” And Luke concludes: “And he sought to see him” (Lk 9:9). These declarations became concrete in Jesus’ leadership as he faced fierce opposition which eventually brought him to the end of his earthly ministry when he empowered the disciples to witness in his name.

The transfer of leadership from Jesus to the disciples in Luke 24:45-48 could be explained as the transfer of conflict. From the analysis in § 8.2.2, Jesus’ death did not infer the end of conflict. Instead, it meant that he had regained honour through his resurrection and that henceforth he would reign as victor. By implication, the leadership entrusted into the hands of the disciples was a legacy of inherited conflicts. This is especially evident in the context of first-century Palestine where the competition for scarce resources such as of power, authority and honour was prevalent. However, the disciples had the assignment first to function as witnesses, and second, to proclaim

(khrussw) repentance and the forgiveness of sins to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. This, the disciples would do, in Jesus' name (Lk 24:47). So far, Jesus had instructed the disciples, while he was still with them, to act in the power of his name (Lk 9:48-49; 10:17; 21:8, 12, 17). At this point, the commission is more important because it comes at the end of his earthly ministry. Hence, they are urged to wait for the empowerment from the Holy Spirit. The area of jurisdiction for the disciples extends from Jerusalem, to the ends of the earth (Lk 24:47; see also Ac 1:8). This does not necessarily mean a mission "to Israelites dwelling among all nations" as suggested by Malina and Rohrbaugh (2007:324).

In Luke's gospel Jesus had already undertaken an initiative on behalf of Israel within the context of Israel itself. It has been a mission of healing, teaching and preaching. It had equally been a mission of forgiveness and tolerance (see § 6.4.3.2). John the Baptist had inaugurated the same mission of repentance and the forgiveness of sins (Lk 3:1-14). In fact, it was a mission of such success that urged people to question whether he was indeed the Christ (Lk 3:15). At the point of Jesus' ascension to heaven, the disciples were given the responsibility to pursue the same mission to *ta e!qnh*. Of course, such repentance had already begun at Jesus' death where the multitudes who had assembled, returned home, "beating their breasts" (Lk 23:48; see also Lk 18:13).

There is a link between the commission which Jesus himself received and that which he assigned to the disciples. His initiation was sealed by the Holy Spirit when he was empowered in his dual honourship at baptism and at the transfiguration (Lk 3:22 & 9:35). This is the same empowerment that he envisaged for his disciples, when he urged them to wait for the empowerment from the Spirit (Lk 24:49) – it is an empowerment that will legitimate their leadership and enable them to face future conflicts with boldness because the evil generation seems to persist.

Jesus was aware that conflict was an integral part of leadership. Before hand, he had already warned the disciples against the aggression, opposition and conflict with political and religious authorities (Lk 12: 11-12; 21:12-15). He had equally cautioned them against family pressure and misunderstanding (Lk 21:16-18). It is therefore a ministry for which they have been schooled on

how to face conflicts and opposition. By passing the ministry to the disciples, Jesus confirmed that there is leadership continuity in Luke's gospel in particular, and in the New Testament in general. The history and the role of Israel find their glimpse of light in the leadership and ministry of John the Baptist. Jesus' mission in Luke's gospel was that of continuity from John the Baptist's mission of preaching and the baptism of repentance. At the end of the gospel Jesus commissions his disciples to be his legal witnesses. It is a witnessing that involves the bringing in of more disciples. This continuity from John the Baptist, to Jesus, to the disciples, and then to the church is highly motivated by the centurion's decree: οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῷ ἄνεμνος οὐδὲ τιμιόφιλος ἄλλοθεν ἄλλου (Lk 23:47): "Certainly, this man was innocent" (Lk 23:47).

Jesus passed the mission of repentance and forgiveness to the disciples because they had been witnesses (Lk 24:48). From an emic point of view, and from an African hermeneutical point of view, one of the proper answers to the question of Jesus' identity is that which emanates from personal experiences (see § 7.4.4.3 and § 8.2.2). Consequently, contemporary believers have also become new witnesses to whom the disciples have passed on Jesus' mission imbued with conflicts. In other words, Jesus has passed conflict unto the world's leaders as an inevitable component of leadership.

#### **8.2.4 The gospel of conflict: Not understanding and not knowing**

The conclusions from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 all agree that Jesus responded to the rejection that he suffered from his contemporaries (the disciples, the Jewish elite, the Jewish peasantry and the Roman elite) with acceptance. This was also a natural way of minimising the conflict that marred his leadership. In fact, from start to finish, Luke's gospel creates suspension and incomprehension in action, which resolves itself in conflict stories. It is in this context that the whole gospel could be described as a gospel of incomprehension and conflict (not understanding and not knowing), depicted in the question: "Who is the Christ?"

Throughout Jesus' ministry the disciples did not seem to have perceived and understood what Jesus said or did. They did not even identify him appropriately. Worse of all, they were animated with fear (Lk 9:45). As a

result, their relationship was tainted with dissonance, misunderstanding and rejection. In the same way, the women who arrived at the tomb three days after Jesus' death did not know nor remember what he had said while still in Galilee (Lk 24:4-9; Lk 9:22). On their part, the Pharisees and the scribes did not cease to murmur in ignorance and suspicion (Lk 5:30; 7:39; 11:14). In Jerusalem, Jesus' attitude and teaching in the temple caused panic with the religious leaders (Lk 20:1-2). By offering him to be crucified they rejected him as a religious rival. By beating their breasts after Jesus' death (Lk 23:49) as a sign of repentance, the Jewish peasantry proved that they were also ignorant of Jesus' identity (Marshall 1978:876-877). Likewise Pilate and Herod seemed not to have known Jesus' real credentials as the Christ. Hence, they rejected him by giving in to mob pressure. Knowledge and understanding is provided at the end of the gospel by the centurion and Jesus. For the centurion, Jesus did not deserve rejection from his contemporaries; he was innocent. Through scripture and the breaking of bread, Jesus dispelled ignorance from the disciples (Lk 24:27, 30, 44). He is truly the Christ whose death was a necessity (Lk 24:44, 46; see also Lk 9:22; 17:25; 22:37; 24:26). At the end of the gospel everyone is aware that Jesus is the manifestation of God's presence (Knight 1998:109).

Jesus understood that ignorance breeds conflict and misunderstanding. As a consequence, he responded to ignorance and conflict with perseverance, endurance, steadfastness and acceptance. At the end of his ministry he consolidated leadership by empowering the disciples to accomplish what they had hitherto not been able to do. The forgiveness offered by Jesus (Lk 23:34) as an inheritance was a testimony to his attitude of acceptance. Jesus' compassion was irrespective of the disloyalty of his contemporaries. His strength stemmed from the fact that he knew his mission and remained focus and committed to it. He stood against dehumanising structures and attitudes. He did not reject nor discard the culture and practice of his context. Rather he formed, reformed, transformed and informed his society from within, through his exemplary teaching and through his attitude. In fact, he did not even reject nor ignore any individual; instead, he challenged consciences: "Go and do likewise" (Lk 10:37; see also Lk 9:14:12-14; 22:14-23). This is what has been called in § 2.2.5 as a "missionary

legacy” for the church. Jesus’ leadership approach demonstrates that the most effective change and reform in a system is that which comes from within, and not from without.

### **8.2.5 Conclusion**

The centurion’s testimony shows that knowledge of Jesus is circumstantial and provisional. This probably justifies why the gospel of Luke could be looked upon as the gospel of conflict. In this case, “good news” should certainly not always be understood in the normal sense to mean welfare. This study has also intended to open another way of understanding “good news” as something negative that can be used positively. In summary, conflict is a universal life experience that is not common only to leaders. However, Jesus’ conflict with his opponents and his leadership approaches open up the way for leadership challenges. In other words, conflicts are an important source of inspiration and motivation. They can spur leadership, if well managed.

### **8.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

“Who is the Christ?” This is the question that animated the discussion on Jesus’ identity and the conflict in which he was engaged in the course of his leadership in Luke’s gospel. Although it is a question which seems simple at face value, its answer appears to be complex and even subtle. It is yet more complicated for an African because it is about the present identity of a person who lived in a far past and in a different context. From an emic perspective, the Christ is an enigmatic figure in Luke’s gospel (see § 5.8). From an etic reading, he is the Christ of reform and social transformation. From the African standpoint, he is the Christ of empowerment and development. These are spontaneous responses, from different angles. In a nutshell, the responses to the question of Jesus’ identity can neither be transposed from one individual (or context) to another, nor can they draw unanimity. They are contained in Jesus’ personal response: “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (Lk 9:22). This response is that which is lived and shared by individuals in their daily living. It is a satisfactory response if it enables men and women to engage themselves as solutions to the political, social,



economic, religious and ecological problems that plague humanity, especially in Africa.

The Indian tale of six blind men who discovered an elephant offers another clue to the question of Jesus' identity. In this tale the first man felt the elephant trunk and announced that an elephant was like a snake. The second felt the leg and concluded that an elephant was like a tree. The third came in contact with the tusk and proclaimed that it was like a spear. The fourth touched the elephant's side and asserted that it was a wall. The fifth held the tail and announced that an elephant was just like a robe, and the last person, having felt the ear of the elephant, was convinced that it was like a fan. They all had an idea of what an elephant looked like, but none had the full picture of the animal. Bearing in mind the dangers and pitfalls of analogies, this tale depicts possible perceptions of who the Christ is. Even though one could be taught about Jesus' identity, the best image that sticks in mind is that which is lived and experienced by each individual.

With reference to leadership and conflict, the Jewish peasantry's attitude in Luke – coupled with the experience from the period of the Reformation – confirm the fact that people always have the tendency of turning to a new movement when they feel dissatisfied with the former. At times they can be motivated by the enthusiasm of leaders or a simple curiosity to make new discoveries. On the other extreme, there are people who are immune to change; probably because of the benefits they derive from the system. However, Jesus' attitude *vis-à-vis* the Jewish peasantry and his disciples is an inspiration to contemporary leaders. Effective leaders are those who know their mission and consequently supervise the motivations of their following in such a way that they are not lured into error by their enthusiasm or because of pressure. They are leaders who either motivate their followers to stay awake with them, or they keep awake when any other follower has gone asleep. Jesus' experience on the Mount of Olives (Lk 22:39-46) is fitting in this context. It is dangerous when followers stay awake while the leader is asleep. Quite often, followers stay awake because of the unfavourable socio-political and economic situation in which they live, as a result of poor leadership. Leaders must be conscious of the fact that, as long as suffering and misery persist, its victims will continue to be demanding.

After all, from an African hermeneutical point of view, Jesus has been presented as the Christ who stands as “an answer to all human needs” (§ 7.4.4.2). Paradoxically, the present stalemate of Africa is still frightening. Many people are still dying of hunger and starvation; ethnic and tribal conflicts are still causing an increasing number of homeless people and refugees; most leaders are still self-centred, exploitative and oppressive; churches are threatened by secularism and moral degradation is on a daily rise. With this situation, the African is as worried, as the Pharisees, in respect of the timing of the kingdom of God (Lk 17:21). In this respect, Jesus’ answer remains relevant and assuring:  $\eta\theta\upsilon\ \beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \gamma\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\ \epsilon\upsilon\ \nu\upsilon\ \mu\epsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$  (the kingdom of God is [within] in your midst). An adequate prayer for the African therefore is that which is inscribed in the Lord’s Prayer: “*THY KINGDOM COME, O LORD*” (Lk 11:2; my emphasis).

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